

# **Adult Social Services and Housing Directorate**

## **Adult Services Division**

### **Equality Impact Needs Assessment (1)**

#### **The Meals Service**

November 2006

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### **The Meals Service**

#### **Introduction**

This summary report sets out the findings of an assessment into the meals service undertaken within the Council's Equality Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) framework.

The assessment has been carried out at level 1 of the framework.

The meals service forms a key component of the Adult Social Services strategy of providing services that support people to live at home and within their local community. Jim Rogan (Assistant Director) commissioned the assessment with the intention of assuring the quality of the service rather than as a result of any specific concerns about the service.

#### **Contextual Information**

The meals service comprises two parts; meals provided to people in their own home and meals provided to people attending the four day centres managed and run by the council. The bulk of the service (all bar meals to one day centre) is commissioned from Apetito; a private sector company that has provided the service since July 1999. The service is provided through a contract that has recently been renewed and will expire in April 2008.

The need and benefit of a meal being provided to service users is assessed through the care planning process undertaken by care managers. Apetito regard Richmond as a good authority in terms of the user information provided and the level of routine communication relating to the changing needs of users.

#### **The Contract**

The contractual arrangements are set out in four documents. There are two contracts, referring respectively to the provisions of meals to the day centres and meals at home. Each is supported by a detailed service provision specification. The contract documents have not been amended or updated since they were originally agreed in 1999. In May 2003 the original contract was extended for a five-year period by way of a letter confirming the extension of the existing contract other than to four specified areas. These variations do not include equality and diversity related matters.

The contract has clauses setting out the Council expectation that Apetito:

- Abide by the council's equal opportunities policy and make this available to all their staff,
- Provide monitoring data relating to staff processes to show adherence to the policy,
- Abide by the expectations of the Race Relations Act 1976 and
- Abide, as far as possible, with the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for Employment (1983).

There are two areas where practice could be tightened:

1. The set of expectations is partial and out of date with no mention of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, the Disability Discrimination Act or The Disability Equality Duty,

2. There is no sense that “equality and diversity” forms a routine part of the contract review meeting discussion and I can find no confirmation that Apetito have been asked to evidence their compliance with this part of the contract during the period that the contract has been in place.

The meals service at the Tangle Hall day centre is provided by Marling Court; a residential unit adjacent to Tangle Hall. The provision of the service is funded through the Meals on Wheels budget. There is no formal review process in place other than a “welfare satisfaction (catering)” form sent by the Contracts team to each day centre and community team on a monthly basis.

### What the numbers say.

#### 1. Meals at home service.

There are two components to this part of the service. Firstly, frozen meals are provided to between 40 and 70 service users at any one time. In the first quarter of 2006, 60 individuals used the service. Deliveries are made fortnightly and warmed by the service user or carer prior to eating. Table 1 provides an overview of the 60 current service users. The data is presented as percentages.

Dimension	User Group					
	Learning Disability	Mental Health	Older People/PD	OPMH	Physical Disability	Substance Misuse
Take up of frozen meals	0%	3%	85%	2%	10%	0%
Take up by age						
18 – 64	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%
65 – 74	0%	0%	9%	100%	0%	0%
75 – 84	0%	0%	18%	0%	0%	0%
85+	0%	0%	73%	0%	0%	0%
Take up by gender						
Male	0%	50%	29%	0%	17%	0%
Female	0%	50%	71%	100%	83%	0%
Take up by ethnicity						
BME	0%	0%	4%	0%	17%	0%
White	0%	100%	94%	100%	83%	0%
Not stated	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%

Table 1. Use of the frozen meals service. Quarter 1 2006/07

In respect of the frozen meals service there is scope to provide meals that meet religious, medical or ethnic preferences or requirements. Meals from the standard menu are provided to 92% of the user group with the balance meeting medical/dietary requirements (diabetic, low salt/fat). No meals are provided to meet religious or ethnic requirements/preferences.

Table 1 shows that the primary users of this service are elderly people (aged 85+ years) with a physical disability. Overall, the gender and ethnicity profile are broadly in line with the profile for this age group with a slight over-representation by women. In respect of users in the “physical disability” category BME users and women are over-represented but the number of users in this category is low.

The bulk of the home delivery service is provided as a hot meal. On average Apetito currently deliver some 2,500 meals per week (seven day service)<sup>1</sup>. In the first quarter of 2006/07 (01/04/2006 – 30/06/2006) Richmond data indicates that 492 service users had been assessed as requiring a hot meal at home as part of the care plan. Table 2 shows the take up of this service by service type, age, gender and ethnicity during the first quarter of 2006/07. The data is presented as percentages.

Dimension	User Group					
	Learning Disability	Mental Health	Older People/PD	OPMH	Physical Disability	Substance Misuse
Take up of hot meals	0.2%	0.2%	89%	7%	3.6%	0%
Take up by age						
18 – 64	100%	100%	0%	0%	94%	0%
65 – 74	0%	0%	7%	19%	6%	0%
75 – 84	0%	0%	33%	44%	0%	0%
85+	0%	0%	60%	37%	0%	0%
Take up by gender						
Male	0%	0%	31%	22%	55%	0%
Female	100%	100%	69%	78%	45%	0%
Take up by ethnicity						
BME	100%	100%	1%	0%	0%	0%
White	0%	0%	95%	100%	100%	0%
Not stated	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%

Table 2. Use of the hot meals service. Quarter 1 2006/07

In respect of the hot meals service there is scope to provide meals that meet religious, medical or ethnic preferences or requirements. Meals from the standard menu are provided to 94% of the user group with the balance meeting medical/dietary requirements (diabetic, low salt/fat). Over the life of the contract there is little sense of meals being provided that meet religious or ethnic requirements/preferences.

Analysis of the data suggests that the vast majority of service users are identified as “older people/physical disability”. The gender profile is not exceptional but the take up by BME users is low with a total of 6 users identified (for 19 users the ethnicity is not stated).

Looking at tables 1 and 2 together the meals at home service:

- Is effectively provided to older people with a physical disability,
- BME users make limited use of the service,
- Women use the service to a greater extent than men when compared to the overall population gender profile for the relevant age groups.

## 2. Meals in day centres.

Apetito provide meals to three day centres in the borough (Ham, Twickenham and Sheen Lane). These centres provide a service to older people with a range of additional physical and emotional needs. At 18/09/2006 206 people were registered to attend the three centres.

<sup>1</sup> Apetito figures. (November 2006)

The ethnic profile of the user group is largely white. Thus, at 18/09/2006 the BME users were Ham (0%), Twickenham (10%) and Sheen Lane (1.4%) (Tangley Hall 2.4%). Overall, BME users represent 2.8% of the user population at the four centres. This figure is not exceptional when compared to the total BME population for this age group in the community as a whole.

Apetito provide an a la carte service at the three centres that they work with. Take up is predominantly from the standard menu with variants to meet medical needs. At the present time one Kosher meal is provided to meet a religious requirement.

### **Outcomes from consultation**

For the purposes of this assessment I have:

- Canvassed views from all Adults division staff,
- Met staff in the Directorate and Apetito,
- Had access to contract monitoring and quality assurance data.

This information paints a picture with the following elements:

1. The contract is reviewed regularly and there is evidence that issues identified through these meetings are addressed,
2. A quality assurance system is in place. This contains a number of elements including the monthly Welfare Satisfaction (catering) form sent out by the Contracts team, meals tasting sessions and a survey of all service users (over the year) organised by Apetito. Overall, there appears to be a high level of satisfaction with the service and particularly the hot meal service,
3. The canvassing of views has identified issues. Thus one member of staff identified problems in obtaining a pureed vegetarian meal and one centre manager identified problems in respect of food storage etc arrangements,
4. Nationally Apetito have arrangements to provide a range of ethic meals and meals compliant with religious expectations as well as meals to meet a range of medical/dietary needs through a network of specialist providers,
5. When meals are ordered Apetito are not provided with the ethnicity of users merely the type of meal required. Apetito feel constrained from advertising the range of services they can provide through the terms of the contract. This has led to some (in-house) opinion that care managers may not be aware of the full range of meals available from Apetito despite the prompts set out on Frameworki and through the induction programme for new staff which includes a session with Contracts team staff,
6. The level of quality assurance provided to the majority of users is not in place for users of Tangely Hall.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

There is a general sense that the meals service meets the needs of current users and overall there is a well-organised regime of contract review and quality monitoring. However there are a number of developments that this assessment has identified and which might improve the service in the context of equality and diversity. These are particularly concerned with contract monitoring and the overall accessibility of the service. In total, these recommendations are designed to increase the profile and accessibility of the meals service and meet individual need. The recommendations are:

#### **Contractual Arrangements**

1. Discussions should be held with Apetito to update the contract to comply with current legislative requirements,

2. The quarterly contract review agenda should include equality and diversity as a standing item. Themes to explore include Apetito compliance with legislative requirements and more general developments within the service. Within this, consideration should be given to Apetito literature relating to the diversity of meals they can offer, being distributed to teams.

#### Quality Assurance

1. A quality assurance regime should be put in place to monitor the diversity as well as the quality of meals offered at Tangle Hall. Particular emphasis should be placed on the availability of meals to meet the religious and ethnic requirements/ preferences of users,
2. Consideration should be given to re-naming the “welfare satisfaction (catering)” form to reflect its contemporary focus and purpose.

#### Commissioning

1. Team managers and care managers should be briefed on the range of meals available to meet the range of ethnic and religious requirements/preferences. This should enable them to ensure that they are alert to requirements/ preferences of users when considering the meals service as a part of the care plan,
2. The age profile for users of the hot meal at home service is slightly lower than those receiving the frozen meals services. Population data suggests that the take up of ethnic foods might be higher but this is not the case. Team managers should remain mindful of this when considering care plans submitted for approval,
3. The profile of users regarded as having a physical disability is interesting. Although the numbers are small BME users are over-represented in respect of frozen meals and under-represented in respect of hot meals. Managers and staff may wish to reflect on why this is the case,
4. It might be sensible to link staff briefings on the outcomes of this review into developments for staff and managers recommended in the access to assessment EINA.

#### Overall

1. Although there are some anomalies in the service I do not think that much would be gained from undertaking an EINA 2 at this stage. This assessment has identified a number of development issues and it would seem more appropriate to undertake a further data review in 12 months time to gauge the impact of these on extending the take up of the service by users with particular religious, cultural or ethnic requirements or preferences.