

## Catering Arrangements in Extra Care Housing

This factsheet presents the findings from a review of meals provision in Extra Care housing for a range of providers. It illustrates the diversity of approaches and offers guidance for meals and catering in Extra Care housing.

Prepared for the Housing Learning & Improvement Network by **Simon Sweetinburgh and Nigel King** of Housing & Support Partnership.

## **CATERING ARRANGEMENTS IN EXTRA CARE HOUSING**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>page</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Summary of Findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Profile of Schemes Surveyed</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Local Context for Catering Decisions</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5. Nature and Cost of Meals</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6. Arrangements for Meals Provision</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7. Take Up of Meals</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8. Payment and Charging Arrangements</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>9. Case Studies</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	
<b>Checklist of Technical Issues</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2</b>	
<b>True Meal Costs as at April 2007</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3</b>	
<b>Nutrition</b>	<b>21</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) in the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) receives a large number of enquiries about how best to arrange catering in extra care housing. Providers of extra care housing often find it difficult to achieve a meals service that is economic and sustainable for the number of people who live in the extra care development. There are also numerous technical issues that can arise around, for example VAT, health and safety requirements, benefits, charging policies...

Research by the Commission for Social Care Inspection and guidance by the Foods Standards Agency highlight that meals and nutrition are important to older residents in care homes. (See CSCI report "Highlight of the day: improving meals for older people in care homes"). There are good reasons for providing meals in relation to:

- Nutrition and well being
- A sociable activity
- Giving pleasure and structure to the day

There is no comparable guidance for meals and catering in extra care housing but provision of a meal has become one of the defining features of extra care housing. In order to provide better advice and illustrate the diversity of approaches to the provision of meals services within extra care housing a short questionnaire was sent to a range of providers of extra care housing.

This fact sheet presents the findings from this review:

- Section 2 summarises the findings,
- Section 3 profiles the characteristics of the scheme sample
- Sections 4 – 9 present the findings of different aspects of the meals services at the schemes
- Section 10 presents 4 case studies from the study sample, each illustrating different approaches and considerations of a meals service

Appendix 1 describes some of the key practical issues providers need to consider. Appendix 2 is an illustrative calculation of the real cost of meals provision in extra care. Appendix 3 provides a commentary on nutrition.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There were 8 key findings from the review, as follows:

**i) Diversity** – the review showed there are many different approaches to catering. No two schemes in the study demonstrated either the same set of circumstances or the same models of meals provision.

**ii) Variable service** – there are no national standards or requirements around meals provision. This has led to inconsistent attempts locally to set such standards – whether in terms of extent and frequency of meals, content and nutritional value, acceptable delivery mechanisms

This variability was also demonstrated in the responses of providers to questions around proper and transparent funding of the catering kitchen facilities in schemes. Proper accounting for these facilities, including detailed depreciation schedules for specialist equipment, is not always in place, and charges to the catering provider for use of the on site facility is inconsistent, and appears to vary due to concerns around market tolerance and viability of service.

**iii) Choice** – strong views were expressed about the need for tenants to have the choice of whether to take up the meals service and to only have to pay for the meals taken. However, the study demonstrated a trade-off here, with those schemes requiring tenants to pay for a meals service through the service charge demonstrating achievement of lower prices per meal and the landlords citing greater confidence in the long term sustainability of the service.

There is a conflict between the ethos of extra care housing whereby the individuals are encouraged to be as independent as possible, living in their own accommodation and putting in place a regime which obliges people to have (or at least pay for) a meal. Thus introducing an institutional practice extra care is trying to avoid.

There is also an issue about payment of Housing Benefit on meals. Charges for meals are not eligible for Housing Benefit. If meals are included in the service charge as a condition of the tenancy a standard deduction for the value of meals is made. As the cost of meals is likely to exceed the deduction, in practice Housing Benefit can pay the difference between the actual cost and the standard rate used thus it is possible for residents who qualify for Housing Benefit to get a personal subsidy on meals where they are included in the rent/service charge. The amount of ineligible charge for meals specified is deducted from peoples rent. Although local authorities can substitute their own estimate where they consider the amount to be unreasonably low.

There are no definite right or wrong answers. Providers will need to consider with their partners the best approach in all the circumstances. The approach will probably differ for example between a scheme which is 100% rented and expected to be occupied mostly by people on benefits and say a mixed tenure development where rights of owners and tenants, as well as potential conflict, will be more central.

**iv) Viability and sustainability** – there are very few schemes in the study that are confident about the commercial viability of the service and its long term sustainability. Aside from the point made above about payment through service charges, it is clear that most schemes are being subsidised in one form or other, either by:

- General local authority subsidy of ‘meals on wheels’ provision
- Non commercial operations of local authority or charitable or social landlord service providers
- Lack of charging to catering service provider for use of specialist catering facilities at schemes

In terms of sustainability, providers expressed concerns either because of the current subsidy arrangements to current operations cited above and how long that could continue for, or where commercial viability appeared to have been achieved, how long this could be sustained. Also concerns about the availability of alternative suppliers in some areas, particularly the more rural schemes.

**v) Commitment and resourcefulness of providers** – whilst few schemes can demonstrate commercial viability and full clarity and transparency of service costs, there was a real determination amongst providers to succeed in the objective of providing a viable and sustainable meals service, providing choice and affordability for tenants.

There was also clear evidence of the resourcefulness of providers. Different models of service provision had been attempted at different times, the introduction of a hot freshly cooked meals service where none had existed previously, and the demonstration of local knowledge about the availability of other service providers.

**vi) Tenant involvement** – the study found very little evidence of tenant involvement in meals services, either in terms of asking tenants what it was that they wanted from a meals service, or of seeking views around tenant satisfaction with the service currently on offer. Clearly, a dissatisfied tenant will vote with his or her feet but more attempts to design a service around the expressed wishes of tenants could be an area for further development in the future.

Some more commercial developers of extra care for sale are careful to include sample menus in marketing materials underlining how important meals are to residents. Some national contractors as part of their service regularly undertake consumer surveys.

**vii) Collaboration** - the study identified few examples of attempts at collaboration between providers, and between providers and strategic public service bodies despite the identified difficulties in achieving a viable service. This is one approach that has scope for expansion.

Economies of scale are key to achieving a viable and sustainable service, as the marginal cost of a catering staff team (representing largely fixed costs) producing additional meals is very low indeed. Demand for additional meals has been generated in on-site services by:

- The development of an outreach service into the local community
- The encouragement of other local groups and organisations to use the restaurant and dining facility at the scheme
- The development of day services at the scheme where social services will require meals provision for service users
- The collaboration between local extra care housing providers such that the catering service of one provider delivers meals to the scheme of another provider
- The opportunity for the catering service provider to provide other catering services for the landlord – e.g. sandwich service for office based staff, catering at events etc

**viii) Extra care housing facilities** – given the evidence from this study, there must be a question about the need or desirability for the provision of a full catering standard kitchen

to remain the standard provision for all new extra care housing schemes. Many kitchens are not used to their full potential, and the development of 'finishing kitchens' as a cost effective alternative may be more sensible and beneficial for smaller developments.

### 3. PROFILE OF SCHEMES SAMPLED

Requests for participation were made to a wide range of providers of extra care housing. The tables below reflect the profile of the schemes for which returns were received and demonstrate a spectrum of extra care schemes.

#### Size

	Small (up to 35 units)	Medium (35 – 55 units)	Large (over 55 units)
<b>No. of schemes</b>	6	3	2

#### Location

	City Location	Urban Location	Small town / rural
<b>No. of schemes</b>	4	4	3

#### Type

	Original sheltered upgraded to extra care housing	Purpose built extra care housing	Special client group extra care housing
<b>No. of schemes</b>	3	6	2

Other aspects of the sample:

**Providers** – returns were received from national providers, regional and local organisations.

**Tenure** - although requests were sent out to leasehold and private sector providers, the eventual sample represents only schemes for rent managed by housing associations or charities.

**Geography** – whilst requests were sent to organisations represented throughout the country, all of the sample schemes are located in the south or south west of the country

#### 4. LOCAL CONTEXT FOR CATERING DECISIONS

##### Requirement to provide meals

	RSL decision only / no external requirement	Requirement in Partnership / Framework Agreement between RSL and LA	Requirement in care contract	Requirement in SP contract	Requirement in Tenancy Agreement
No. of schemes	4	3	2	2	7

Clearly, the extent to which the nature and extent of catering provision is proscribed by local authorities through some form of Agreement will determine or otherwise the options that may be available for the provider to deliver meals service. A diversity of circumstances prevails. There was a tendency for the schemes where the landlord voluntarily offered a meals service without this being a requirement from any external authority, to also be the schemes where the right to a meals service is not enshrined in the tenancy agreement, and to be the schemes that were older or upgraded.

Where schemes are required to provide meals services by virtue of the care contract or by the Supporting People contract this reflects the local view that this is a defining feature of extra care housing. Local authorities are determining their own commissioning arrangements and developing partnerships with providers. Extra care housing and the expectations of necessary facilities and service provision are being more closely defined.

Where there are local authority requirements to provide a meals service, through any of the three routes identified in the table above, the nature of the meals requirement stipulated varies considerably. Some say little more than a meals service shall be provided. Other examples state the extent of the required service e.g. a 2 course lunch provided 7 days a week, or attempt to provide a specification for nutritional content and delivery mechanisms for the provision.

The responses to this part of the survey confirmed, more so than in responses to any other question, how inconsistent and underdeveloped is the thinking around what is the purpose of a meals service and what outcomes it is intended to achieve.

## Facilities to cook and dine

No. of schemes	Do catering standard kitchen facilities to prepare freshly cooked meals exist?		Does adequate provision for communal dining and social interaction exist?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
	8	3	9	2

The opportunity to cook on site and deliver meals for consumption in an adjacent dining area will be a key determinant of how meals can be delivered at any scheme.

Unsurprisingly, the survey revealed a strong correlation between the existence of a fully equipped catering standard kitchen and the existence of an adjoining space for communal dining.

In terms of schemes without such facilities there was also a strong correlation with schemes that were older or were upgraded former sheltered schemes. There is a strong tendency for full catering kitchens and spacious dining areas to now be standard specification for all extra care housing schemes.

## 5. NATURE AND COST OF MEALS

### Nature of meals provision

No. of schemes	2 course hot set lunch 5 days a week	2 course hot set lunch 7 days a week	2 or 3 course hot set lunch 7 days a week	2 or 3 course hot lunch (2 or 3 choices per course) 7 days a week	Snacks available at other times of the day
	1	8	1	1	2

The survey results demonstrate a strong tendency for an appropriate meals service to consist of a two-course, hot set lunch, 7 days a week. The 5 day a week example is one of the 'voluntary' service schemes without local authority requirements stipulated, but even with this example at the weekend staff arrange for a fish and chip supper from a local outlet on the Saturday night and for cook chill meals to be purchased from a local supermarket for frailer residents unable to cook for themselves.

The limits to this most popular specification – i.e. only 1 meal choice, and 2 course rather than 3 – were considered by providers to be a reflection of the difficulties involved



in maintaining a sustainable and commercially viable service. This also explains the very few examples where snacks can be made available to residents at other times of day.

This is an area of complaint of residents and visitors. Inflexible provision it is suggested is also associated with contracting with an external catering company rather than employing staff to prepare meals on site.

#### Meal prices to tenants for 2 course lunch

	Less than £3.25	£3.25 - £3.75	£3.75 - £4.25	£4.25 - £4.75	More than £4.75
<b>No. of schemes</b>	6	3	3	1(3 course)	1

The wide price range is noticeable given the consensus around the 2 course hot set lunch provision and that all schemes are in the southern half of the country. There does, however, appear to be a correlation between price and subsidy, and price and guaranteed income. Some private sector leasehold developments charge higher prices.

In terms of price and subsidy, there is a tendency for the prices at the lower end to represent depressed prices that are deliberately subsidised – either by the local authority where they can set the charges (either ‘meals on wheels’ or where they provide the catering service to the scheme), or by a charitable meals provider. Higher prices tend to represent schemes where the landlord is attempting to operate a commercially viable service.

In respect of price and guaranteed income, it is significant to note that the two schemes where the landlord provides a guaranteed income to the meals provider (as a result of tenants paying a regular set service charge to the landlord whether they take up the meals service or not) the prices charged back by the meals provider to the landlord for these meals is lower than in other schemes where the number of covers can vary and the meals provider has no guaranteed regular set level of income.

## 6. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEALS PROVISION

### Nature of provider

	Large National Catering Company	Small Local Catering Company	Local Authority	Voluntary Sector	Landlord own kitchen staff / chefs
<b>No. of schemes</b>	1	3	3	1	3

The diversity of approaches is amply demonstrated by the above table. Where private providers are used, the concern of landlords is that the landlords’ lack of ability to

guarantee the extent of meals required greatly restricts the market interest in delivering the service.

Where local authority services are provided there is acknowledgement that such services are subsidised and concern for how long this can be sustained.

Where the landlords own staff are used to provide meals there remains great concerns about commercial viability, but the study found one example of a landlord commissioning another landlord's scheme to provide a transported meals service, an example of a collaboration of mutual interest.

Other arrangements are possible to obtain meals; some particularly relate to smaller schemes or more rural areas. They include:

- Supporting residents to make their own meals
- Residents supporting each other to make meals/cater
- Contracts or arrangements with local pubs/restaurants
- Use of local take away services

### Cooking arrangements

	Freshly cooked on site in catering kitchen	Freshly cooked off site, brought ready for serving	Freshly cooked off site, requiring finishing off on site	Frozen meals brought in and reheated by kitchen staff
No. of schemes	7	3	1	2

The catering standard kitchens at most schemes are being used to prepare freshly cooked meals. Where such kitchens do not exist, then most schemes have a service that brings in freshly cooked meals from outside. Some landlords provide more than one option to their tenants – for example 'meals on wheels' or frozen food delivery and reheating.

## 7. TAKE UP OF MEALS

### Numbers of meals taken

	Ave. less than 15	Ave. 15 – 25	Ave. 25 – 35	Ave. 35 – 45	Ave. more than 45
No. of schemes	2	4	2	1	1

The evidence of quite low numbers of meals being taken at each scheme clearly demonstrates the difficulties involved in generating any economies of scale for the catering service provider.

#### Numbers of meals taken as a % of the scheme population

	Under 30%	30 – 50%	50 – 70%	Over 70%
<b>No. of schemes</b>	1	3	2	4

The study demonstrates a clear correlation between tenant frailty and take-up. Schemes which are upgraded sheltered schemes or have a broad tenant base in terms of care and support needs are mainly represented in the lower % schemes.

However, there is also evidence that schemes with a large dining area and with a relatively high take-up of meals by non residents, also generates a higher level of tenant take-up of meals. This indicates, perhaps, that such schemes have generated a lively atmosphere at meal times, and that the possibility of social interaction as well as a meal generates more interest from tenants to participate.

#### Extent of take-up by non residents

	Not available to non residents	0 – 10% non residents	10 – 20% non residents	More than 20% non residents
<b>No. of schemes</b>	1	7	0	3

There was a clear split in the study results. The 3 schemes with higher than 10% non resident meals take up all had significantly higher scores than 10%. These schemes either:

- Had a much higher % of relatives attending meals with tenants than others, and/or
- Had a day care service where service users also took a meal, and/or
- Had generated considerable interest from the public or local organisations to also use the restaurant service.

## 8. PAYMENT AND CHARGING ARRANGEMENTS

### Meal charging

	Cash collected from	Cash collected from	Cash collected from	Tenants invoiced monthly	Tenants pay landlord
--	---------------------	---------------------	---------------------	--------------------------	----------------------

	tenants for meals taken by scheme staff and passed over to provider	tenants for meals taken by scheme staff, landlord invoiced by provider	tenants for meals taken by provider at point of sale	direct by provider for meals taken	through service charge for meals taken and not taken
<b>No. of schemes</b>	5	1	4	1	2

Again, the study demonstrated the diversity of approaches in payment arrangements, and in fact most of the above categories are themselves groupings of slightly different arrangements at each scheme.

#### **Landlord charges for scheme catering facilities**

	All funded by tenants through the Service Charge	Partly funded through Service Charge, partly through meal charge	Partly funded through Service Charge, partly by charges to provider for use of facilities
<b>No. of schemes</b>	9	1	1

Whilst the study results appear conclusive, behind these results lies another story where providers acknowledge that this is an area that is still largely undeveloped. Whilst tenants of all schemes pay for the costs of depreciating specialist catering equipment assets, such depreciation rates are often broad brush and have not been tested or reviewed against the actual experience of equipment replacement needs. There has been less development in how the use of the space and equipment and energy by the service provider is properly assessed and paid for, and most providers acknowledge that to deal with this matter in a fully commercial way would be damaging to the sustainability of existing services.

## **9. CASE STUDIES**

The following four cases illustrate the diversity of approaches being taken, and outline some of the key viability and sustainability considerations in each case.

Crammer Court, Devizes – Ridgeway Housing Association

Cote Lane Retirement Community, Bristol – St.Monica’s Trust

Malmesbury Court, Yeovil – South Somerset Homes

Rowan Court, Eastleigh, Hampshire – Atlantic Housing Group

## **CRAMMER COURT, DEVIZES – RIDGEWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

Crammer Court is a scheme built on an existing sheltered housing scheme site by Ridgeway Housing Association in 2004. It comprises 50 flats (15 x 2 beds and 35 x 1 beds) and has a dining area adjacent to a kitchen which is much larger than a kitchen in a typical sheltered housing scheme but not built to catering standards.

The scheme was built with the support of the local housing authority but without any specific requirements from the authority with regards to meal provision, which is not a condition of tenancy.

The scheme is in the centre of Devizes, a small market town but one of the larger settlements in rural Wiltshire. Historically, there has not been a minimum care package requirement in order to be eligible to access the scheme; consequently there is a diversity of ages and frailties amongst the tenant population. There is now a 24 hour cover and care staff are available to assist at meal times.

The Social Services authority is now committed to using the scheme as an extra care facility, and the trend is for more people entering the scheme with an existing care package in place; 24 hour care with a single contracted provider is expected to follow in due course.

In order to support its frailer tenants at the scheme, Ridgeway has attempted to develop and maintain a meals service at the scheme.

Originally, arrangements were agreed with a local pub that provided meals daily into the scheme on the basis of pre-agreed orders. This proved a popular service with tenants but was curtailed by the pub when the emphasis of their business changed.

There are few catering businesses in a small town like Devizes and options for Ridgeway are limited. However, arrangements have been secured with a local caterer, and these have been in place and working well for over a year now. The service provides a 5 day a week hot freshly cooked lunch (2 courses), cooked offsite and brought to the scheme where the meals are kept hot in the kitchen and served out by Ridgeway staff to tenants in the adjoining dining area.

The 2 course lunch costs tenants £5, a price agreed between the caterer and Ridgeway, representing the minimum the caterer needed to charge to make a profit and the maximum charge that Ridgeway felt their tenants would bear.

Ridgeway staff consult with tenants about meal requirements for the following week and phone the following week's orders through to the caterer. Ridgeway staff collect the cash from tenants and pay the week's charges over to the caterer a week in advance. Meals can be available to non residents provided they are likewise ordered well ahead and cash collected in advance.

The arrangements between Ridgeway and the caterer are set out in a simple form of contract, and Ridgeway have also provided opportunities for this caterer to service other functions of the company, partly as an attempt to enhance Ridgeway's standing as an important client for the caterer, and one that they would not want to let down.

Numbers taking meals vary from 17-30, representing around 62% of tenants.

On Saturdays, Ridgeway have made arrangements for a local outlet to provide a fish and chip supper to participating tenants at £3.30, and for cook-chill meals to be purchased from a local supermarket for around 12 vulnerable tenants to use on Sundays.

When asked for strengths and weaknesses of these arrangements, Ridgeway replied as follows:

### **Strengths**

- Tenant choice
- Tenants only pay for the meals they receive
- As a small local caterer, tenants can influence the choice of meals
- Local caterer can respond to special requests - e.g. catering for Christmas lunch, buffets for funeral parties etc

### **Weaknesses**

- Difficulties providing care and support to vulnerable tenants at meal times
- Service vulnerable because of low and inconsistent number of meals requested

When asked if you would recommend your service model to others Ridgeway replied 'Yes' because of the strengths cited and that the service is working well and highly valued by those tenants requiring the service.

## **COTE LANE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY, BRISTOL – ST MONICA TRUST**

The Cote Lane Retirement Community is a large complex of extra care, residential and nursing care in Bristol, comprising 240 units of accommodation in total. There are extensive internal and external communal facilities, including a large catering kitchen and adjoining dining hall.

St. Monica Trust is a local private charity in Bristol, not a registered housing association, but a key member of the Beacon status award winning Bristol Very Sheltered Housing Partnership.

The catering operation of the charity produces 600 meals each lunchtime – to the tenants and residents on their Cote Lane complex, to the charity's latest retirement community at Westbury Fields, Bristol (220 units), and to other extra care schemes of the charity and of other housing associations in the Bristol area (8 outlets in total).

The catering operation employs 60 staff including 16 chefs and its management has extensive experience in the private catering sector.

Three course meals (including choices for each course) are provided 7 days a week 365 days a year. The menu is of restaurant standard and far exceeds the menu standard of any other scheme in this study.

Meal choices are based on a 4 week menu which is circulated in advance to all outlets so that orders can be taken. All the outlets have finishing kitchens and meals are sent out with clear written instructions for each outlet's non professional staff, detailing heating requirements, cooking times, storage requirements for all meals etc. The operation has two vans and uses insulated containers to distribute the meals to the outlets.

Management estimate that the operation has the capacity to provide 1000 meals a day and is actively seeking further outlets in order to work towards this optimum capacity.

There is an extensive pricing structure to the menu, but essentially the price of a three course meal is £4.10, two courses £3.55, and one course £2.55. Sundays and carveries are more, as are charges to non residents. The meal charges are set by the charity to cover the costs of the food only. Labour costs are subsidised by charitable funds.

Meal take –up averages between 60 and 65% at all outlets, and the high menu standard has been moderated to meet the requests of tenants at one or two schemes.

When asked for strengths and weaknesses of these arrangements, St.Monica's Trust replied as follows:

### **Strengths**

- Scale means we can be innovative
- Scale means we can be flexible
- Ideal environment for the training and development of young chefs who all have a development plan
- Efficient and cost effective purchasing of supplies

### **Weaknesses**

- The economics i.e. the service is heavily subsidised by the charity

The service model is clearly unique to the charity and not readily replicated by others. Nevertheless, their experience demonstrates the potential for collaboration between extra care housing providers for mutual benefit, and the need to generate economies of scale to sustain a quality and reliable catering service.

## **MALMESBURY COURT, YEOVIL – SOUTH SOMERSET HOMES**

Malmesbury Court is a 30 unit extra care scheme with good standard catering kitchen and adjoining dining area.

It is an unusual example in the study in the sense that the requirement for a meals service to tenants is proscribed by the Supporting People Authority's Steady State

contract with South Somerset Homes (SSH), which stipulates “ to provide an affordable, hot midday meal to residents in extra housing schemes”.

SSH employ their own kitchen staff to generate hot meals at Malmesbury Court and 3 other of their extra schemes. Meals so generated at these schemes are also transported to 6 other of their extra care schemes which are upgraded ex-sheltered housing schemes which lack catering standard kitchens.

Meals are provided 7 days a week and are priced at £4.00, a figure determined by SSH as the tolerance level for tenants. Currently, 23 meals are taken at Malmesbury representing 76% take up by tenants.

Cash is collected from tenants weekly in advance and brought centrally using a security service. SSH are considering the use of direct debits to eliminate such costs, the only example in the study where alternatives to cash collection are under consideration.

The SSH experience is also interesting in that the Internal Audit Service to the company has recently completed a report into the catering service. As well as identifying some costs inappropriately charged to service charges when they were costs of generating meals, the report attempts to define the appropriate costs of generating meals on site which should be properly included in the meals charge. Their work is attached as Appendix 2 and reproduced with the permission of SSH.

The auditors identify that, for the 35,000 meals generated, the true cost of this service works out at £7.10 per meal. However, by identifying fixed (e.g. staff costs) and variable (e.g. food costs) separately, they have also calculated that if the service can expand to 55,000 meals annually, then the economic cost reduces to about £5 per meal, a price that tenants could probably sustain.

Management at SSH have determined that any meals service to tenants must be run on a fully commercial basis. The challenge for the extra care managers at SSH is to see if the service can expand by increasing tenant take up at its extra care schemes and/or via collaboration with other extra care housing providers in the area.

When asked for perceived strengths and weakness of the service, SSH replied as follows:

**Strengths**

- Good quality home cooked meals that met the requirements of tenants

**Weaknesses**

- Not commercially viable in the long term

SSH are proud of their in-house service and would recommend it to others subject to the viability considerations. They are intent on trying to sustain their in house service by generating additional demand.

**ROWAN COURT, EASTLEIGH, HAMPSHIRE – ATLANTIC HOUSING GROUP**



Rowan Court is a 21 unit extra care scheme providing specialist care for people with dementia. Meal provision is part of the tenancy agreement and is charged to tenants through the service charge.

A contract for catering is in place with a major regional company to provide 21 meals a day 7 days a week, and was placed following a tendering exercise. The catering company employs a chef to generate hot meals on site using the scheme's catering kitchen, and the meals service is available to relatives and guests of the tenants, also to tenants of an adjacent extra care scheme and members of the public by prior arrangement.

The charges to guests for meals by Atlantic is set at the cost charged to them by the catering provider at £2.50. Tenants pay slightly more in their service charge (£4.50 per meal or £31.50 per week) reflecting additional charges for depreciation of kitchen equipment, energy and kitchen use charges etc.

When asked to describe strengths and weaknesses of the service model, Atlantic replied as follows:

#### **Strengths**

- Guaranteed level of service
- Reduces risks for people with dementia

#### **Weaknesses**

- Landlords loss of income to fund the catering service when flats void pending re-letting

When asked whether they would recommend this service model to others, Atlantic replied that they felt the model was appropriate for a vulnerable client group with specialist needs.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This factsheet is based on a survey of extra care providers. We would like to extend the scope of the advice and information provided and are conscious that this is an area of considerable interest to those managing schemes. Additional contributions from members would be most welcome, either in the form of additional case studies or lessons or information that members think would be of value to others. Please also let us know if there are any particular points you would like to see covered in greater detail. Please send any suggestions or contributions to Alex Billeter at [housing@csip.org.uk](mailto:housing@csip.org.uk), or by phone 020 7820 1682.

## ***Appendix 1***

### **CHECKLIST OF TECHNICAL ISSUES**

#### **Contracting for a service:**

- Specification of service crucial
- Remember problem of inflexibility of service outside “core hours” for meals
- Have your staff been trained how to monitor service and what to monitor
- One attraction is devolves responsibility of getting staff, also conforming to health and safety regulation
- Ensure contract is drawn up to minimize VAT liability e.g. on wages, basic food supply
- When does the food supplied belong to you as the extra care provider/landlord, if ever
- Does the contract adequately deal with special/additional events and demands
- Given our finding that residents are not always involved in discussion on meals the contract might include provision for periodic feedback, surveys/discussion with customers
- Does the contract include drinks with/after meals
- Cutlery, table linen/laundry etc.

#### **Health and safety:**

Frail older residents are more at risk from food contamination and poisoning. There is considerable regulation and legislation to comply with if an organisation directly provides a meals service. An Environmental Health Officer will probably make spot calls during the year. Even if catering is contracted out some responsibility will continue to rest with the landlord/care provider to minimize risk.

Some of the documents and practices expected in extra care housing include:

- Health and safety method statement
- Health and safety policy
- Food safety policy

In practical terms this means things like:

- Training of staff to necessary standards in food preparation and hygiene
- Food sampling log
- Custom complaints log/procedure
- Temperature monitoring e.g. oven, fridge, freezer

- Food delivery record
- Cleaning schedule
- Appropriate labelling/warnings/reminders
- Accident book just for kitchen
- First aid kit with blue plasters
- If carers work in kitchen they should be properly trained and change clothes before entering kitchen

### **Serving meals:**

- Who lays up?
  - Who serves?
  - Who supports residents to have a meal if they need help – has this been discussed and incorporated in care plan?
  - How is support for residents to make a meal for themselves arranged?
  - Is there any arrangement for mutual help between residents to make meals?
  - If carers help make meals or serve do they need different clothing/equipment?
  - Has provision been made for wheelchair users?
  - What is layout plan of tables/seating plan – if any?
  - How will residents preferences be obtained and decisions on menu taken?
  - What provisions is there to test quality – mystery shopper, resident and guests feedback, suggestion box etc?
- Guests:
- How flexible is provision?
  - Can drinks and snacks be provided?
  - Do guests need to book?
  - What do guests pay and how is this collected particularly when meals are a service charge item
  - Has thought been given to the ambiance of the restaurant/eating area?

### **Risks**

- What is the contingency plan in the event of for example power failure or staff not reporting/being ill?

## **Service Charge**

If payment for meals is included in the service charge you will need to consider issues like:

- Residents strongly wishing to opt out
- Special diets you/your contractor finds it difficult or more expensive to provide
- Periods of illness or holiday periods when no meals are taken
- Guests contribution
- If the schemes serves the wider community the charges to outside users

## **Maintenance**

You will need to have a policy/practice in relation to:

- Maintenance of larger kitchen appliances
- Renewals and replacement of kitchen appliances
- Cutlery/crockery/linen

**Appendix 2 TRUE MEAL COSTS AS AT APRIL 2007**

	<b>Annual Cost</b>	<b>Cost per meal (based on 35,000 meals)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
FOOD	£60,300.00	£1.72	Food expenditure for 06/07
SALARIES	£83,552.91	£2.39	07/08 salaries for cooks & percentages for kitchen assistants/cleaners
PENSION & N.I.	£12,995.15	£0.37	07/08 NI & pension
OVERTIME	£12,650.00	£0.36	Based on overtime from 06/07 plus 4.1%
ELECTRICITY	£13,891.95	£0.40	50% of additional average usage as compared to average usage of sheltered schemes.
GAS	£2,369.00	£0.07	50% of additional average usage as compared to average usage of sheltered schemes.
CASH COLLECTION SERVICE	£5,701.00	£0.16	Annual cost as for Securitas collection from schemes.
ORDER & INVOICE PROCESSING	£25,050.00	£0.72	Estimate raising order/processing invoice to cost approx. £30. £30 x 835 transactions = £25,050 (divided by 35,000 meals)
EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT/ DEPRECIATION	£2,494.28	£0.07	Cost of equipment divided by anticipated life of equipment. (Cooker £2,000, fryer £1,100, dishwasher £350 with 10 year life, and fridge £1000, freezer £750, other equipment (potato peelers, meat slicers) £200 with 7 year life).
SCHEME MGR TIME RE MENU PLANNING, ORDERING & INCOME COLLECTION	£19,425.00	£0.56	Estimate 10% of time at 7 schemes (£22383 plus 24% NI & pension = £27,754) = £2775 x 7.
ADVERTISING FOR STAFF	£1,240.00	£0.04	Estimate 5% of Personnel Assistant salary plus 24% NI & pension
PAT TESTING		£0.00	£2 per item per year. Based on approx. 7 items per year at each extra care kitchen. (Items specific to meals, i.e. potato peeler, meat slicer, freezers, hot trolleys etc)
TRAINING	£2,200.00	£0.06	22 cooks/kitchen assistants @ £100 per year (incl. basic food hygiene )
PROTECTIVE CLOTHING		£0.02	22 cooks/kitchen assistants @ £45 per year
TRAVELLING COSTS	£700.00	£0.02	£1 per day estimate (travelling 2 miles each day) to Snowdon & Pearson House
OTHER NON ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT	£500.00	£0.02	E.g. Thermometers, fly killers, replacement crockery and serving utensils, thermobox containers, oven gloves, knives etc.
CASHIERING AT SSH	£1,050.00	£0.03	2 hrs per week of Cashiers time
MISC CHARGES, E.G. HOUSING OFFICER TIME	£3,500.00	£0.10	Housing Officer time, Supported Housing Manager, Head of Community Services. Also not included costs of refitting kitchens under planned maintenance.

Fixed costs (excluding food)	£187,319.29	£7.10
All costs:	£247,619.29	

**Current (35,000 meals)**

Fixed Cost (per meal)	187k	(=£5.36)
Food Cost (per meal)	60k	(=£1.74)
Required charge per meal		£7.10

**Projected (55,000 meals)**

Fixed Cost (per meal)	187k	(=£3.40)
Food Cost (per meal)	94k	(=£1.74)
Required charge per meal		£5.14

## **Appendix 3**

### **NUTRITION**

As noted most of the literature around older people and nutrition relates to more institutional settings. It is generally accepted that good nutrition is important to physical health as well as having psychological benefits touched on in the introduction.

Malnourishment is surprisingly common. An Age Concern study suggested four out of ten older people are malnourished on admission to hospital. Standards of catering in hospital means some actually have their situation worsened, resulting in longer stays, more medication and higher risk of infection (“Hoping to be Heard: the scandal of malnourished people in hospital”, Age Concern, 2006).

Studies specifically of extra care are few. Work has however been done to show that the kind of approach possible in extra care of supporting people to make their own meals, family style dining, self service restaurants/ cafés are beneficial compared to pre-plated services common in care homes. One study concluded family style mealtimes contributed significantly to quality of life, fine motor function and body weight. (“Effect of family style mealtimes and quality of life; randomly controlled trial”, N Kristal et al, BMJ, 2006).

In care homes for older people two registration standards refer to nutrition (Standard 8 and 15). These do not apply to extra care but providers need to have regard to the issue of malnutrition. As explained approaches vary. While assessment for nutrition might not be routinely undertaken on entry, as it may in a care home, this might be offered as a service. In some bigger retirement communities one or more staff take on a “well-being” role which includes attention to nutrition.

National minimum standards for domiciliary care will apply to most extra care schemes. These require that “personal care and support is provided in a way that maintains and respects the privacy, dignity and lifestyle of the person receiving care at all times”. This includes mealtimes.

Suggestions for extra care support providers include:

- Assessment of individual's preferences and any assistance required in making a meal or eating
- Give people time to eat – create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes in the restaurant/ café area
- Provide assistance discreetly. Use serviettes. Offer finger food to those who have difficulty using cutlery and make adapted crockery and cutlery available to enable people to feed themselves
- While socialising during mealtimes should be encouraged, offer privacy to those who have difficulty with eating – this might mean different seating areas/ styles of seating in the restaurant which ideally should be considered in design and in the layout and fitting of the restaurant/ café.
- Ensure that mealtimes are sufficiently staffed to provide assistance

- Don't make assumptions about people's preferences on the basis of their cultural background – people should be asked what their preferences are
- Staff should receive training to equip them with the skills to communicate with people with dementia and communication difficulties. Visual aids (such as pictorial menus) and non-verbal communication skills may help people make choices. Gather information on preferences from people who know the person well.
- Where food needs to be puréed for an individual, use moulds to keep foods separate and indicate what they are – for instance, a fish shaped mould for fish
- Carry out regular consultation with service users on menus – involve residents in planning meals
- Involve service users in meal preparation – support people in their own home if they wish
- Ensure that fresh water is on offer at all mealtimes and available throughout the day

Presentation can be contemporary and appealing. One example was the chef of one provider making fruit smoothies as a nutritional and tempting way of presenting pureed food.

Staff should have training in basic nutrition. Signs of malnutrition include:

- Significant weight loss (over half a stone in the last three to six months)
- A recent loss of appetite
- Loose fitting clothes or jewellery
- Ill-fitting dentures
- Recurrent infections
- Inability to keep warm
- Difficulty recovering from diarrhoea
- Dizziness (prone to falls)
- Pressure sores
- Swollen or bleeding gums
- Sore mouth or tongue
- Difficulties chewing or swallowing
- Tooth decay

## Resources

Community Care is a good source of contemporary information. They have run several recent articles which can be downloaded from [www.communitycare.co.uk/articles](http://www.communitycare.co.uk/articles). At the end of each article is an excellent list of further information.

“Older people’s nutrition: cooking in care homes” – 10 May 2007

“Improving meals and mealtimes for older people in residential care” – 25 July 2007

For a more general review of what contributes to quality of life in extra care see:

“Social well-being in extra care housing”, Simon Evans and Sarah Vallelly, JRF, 2007

The Housing LIN also has a wide range of material on Extra Care Housing available from their website at

[www.icn.csip.org.uk/housing](http://www.icn.csip.org.uk/housing)

For further information or to supply additional information on the content of this Factsheet, please contact the Housing LIN at

[housing@csip.org.uk/housing](mailto:housing@csip.org.uk/housing)



## Other Housing LIN publications available in this format:

- Factsheet no.1:       **Extra Care Housing - What is it?**
- Factsheet no.2:       **Commissioning and Funding Extra Care Housing**
- Factsheet no.3:       **New Provisions for Older People with Learning Disabilities**
- Factsheet no.4:       **Models of Extra Care Housing and Retirement Communities**
- Factsheet no.5:       **Assistive Technology in Extra Care Housing**
- Factsheet no.6:       **Design Principles for Extra Care**
- Factsheet no.7:       **Private Sector Provision of Extra Care Housing**
- Factsheet no.8:       **User Involvement in Extra Care Housing**
- Factsheet no.9:       **Workforce Issues in Extra Care Housing**
- Factsheet no.10:      **Refurbishing or remodelling sheltered housing: a checklist for developing Extra Care**
- Factsheet no.11:     **An Introduction to Extra Care Housing and Intermediate Care**
- Factsheet no.12:     **An Introduction to Extra Care Housing in Rural Areas**
- Factsheet no.13:     **Eco Housing: Taking Extra Care with environmentally friendly design**
- Factsheet no 14:     **Supporting People with Dementia in Extra Care Housing: an introduction to the the issues**
- Factsheet no 15:     **Extra Care Housing Options for Older People with Functional Mental Health Problems**
- Factsheet no 16:     **Extra Care Housing Models and Older Homeless people**
- Factsheet no 17:     **The Potential for Independent Care Home Providers to Develop Extra Care Housing**
- Factsheet no 18:     **Delivering End of Life Care in Housing with Care Settings**
- Factsheet no 19:     **Charging for Care and Support in Extra Care Housing**
- Factsheet no 20:     **Housing Provision and the Mental Capacity Act 2005**
- MCA Information Sheet 1: Substitute Decision-making and Agency**
- MCA Information Sheet 2: Lawful restraint or unlawful deprivation of liberty?**
- MCA Information Sheet 3: Paying for necessities and pledging credit**
- MCA Information Sheet 4: Statutory Duties to Accommodate**
- Factsheet no 21:     **Contracting Arrangements for Extra Care Housing**
- 
- Case Study Report:   **Achieving Success in the Development of Extra Care Schemes for Older People**