Hampshire Meals Services
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Health & Independent Living Support | Support at Home

Who is this service for?

If you live in the Hampshire County Council area, you can choose to receive Meals on Wheels through a service organised by the Council if you have certain needs.

You must be aged 55 or more, or be 18 to 54 years old and have at least one of the following:

- Dementia
- A learning disability
- A physical disability
- A mental health issue
- A history of substance abuse

You must also meet at least one of the following:

- You struggle to cook for yourself
- You have just come out of hospital
- You have a carer or relative who needs a break from cooking
- You are feeling unwell, either physically or mentally
- You have difficulty shopping for food

Even if you are not eligible to receive Meals on Wheels, we may be able to provide you with meals at a higher cost (Level 2).

What is the relationship between HILS and Hampshire County Council?

HILS is contracted by Hampshire County Council to provide meals on wheels across the county until at least 2028. HILS will be working closely with the County Council during this time to ensure the service develops and thrives.

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How do I sign up for meals / sign up a friend or family member / refer a patient or client?

Anyone can refer themselves or someone else for our meals services by completing a referral form on the Hampshire County Council website, or calling us on 0330 2000 103. The new client will then be sent a Welcome Pack, which includes a menu to choose their meals.

How much do meals cost?

Please see our Hampshire meals page for information on lower (non-VAT) prices.

Clients who are not eligible for the non- VAT rate will be charged £11.99 for 2-courses or £14.09 for 3-courses respectively. When you order a hot meal, you can choose to order a tea meal as well for £4.60. This is delivered at the same time as your hot meal for you to enjoy later.

When you are referred, or refer yourself, to the service we will ask you some simple questions to determine whether we are required by the government to charge you VAT on your meals. Most people who use our service are exempt from paying VAT.

How do I pay for my meals?

We will send you a bill for the meals that you have had at the end of every month. You can pay by Direct Debit, over the telephone with a debit or credit card, by cheque, or by postal order. In your welcome Pack, you will receive more details about how to pay.

Can I cancel orders?

Yes, our service is extremely flexible. Orders can be cancelled or changed at no cost if you contact us before 8.30am on the day of delivery. If you call out of hours, you can leave a message on our answer phone which will be picked up in the morning.

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Who delivers meals and performs wellbeing checks? Are they trustworthy?
Our meal delivery drivers always perform wellbeing checks when they deliver your meals. Every HILS team member has had a police record check and will always be wearing their ID badge and uniform when visiting clients.

Is it the same person delivering and performing the wellbeing checks daily?
We try to ensure the same team members deliver your meals and perform wellbeing checks wherever possible, but this may vary depending on availability and how regularly you receive meals.

Are the meals of good quality?
Our annual client survey shows that around 90% of clients consistently rate our meals as 'Excellent' or 'Good'. We are very proud of both the quality and variety of our balanced, nutritious meals, which adhere to strict national catering guidance. We have been working with specialist caterer, apetito, for over 10 years and are always striving to increase the range of meals on offer.

Will I have to eat the same meals all the time?
We have a wide selection of meals, suitable for dietary, ethnic, and religious choices. If necessary, we can bespoke our menu just for you to suit your needs. If you want to set up your own, personal menu, it is not a problem - just let us know.

is there a minimum weekly order required?
No, there is no requirement for you to have a meal every day, every week, or even every month. Our service is completely flexible and you can have the meals as little or as often as you would like.

Do you have options for dietary or religious needs?
Yes, we offer a wide range of menu options that cater to different dietary needs (e.g., diabetes, gluten-free, Halal). We can also provide Pureed, Minced & Moist, and Soft & Bitesize food for people following special diets.

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Will the food be hot on the arrival?
Yes, meals are delivered hot and ready to eat between 11.15am and 2.15pm every day. Please note, our Lunch Meals are delivered hot and ready to eat. HILS strongly recommend these are eaten at the time of delivery, and are NOT to be reheated.

Can you guarantee a delivery time?
Meals are delivered between 11.15am and 2.15pm every day. We can't give you exact delivery times, but generally we'll be with you at a similar time every day.

What happens if I'm not at home?
If you don't plan to be at home, please let us know by 8.30am on the day and we will not make a delivery. If you are not at home when we come to deliver your meal, we will always try to call you and check with your emergency contacts to make sure you are okay. If we cannot find you and are very concerned, we may call the emergency services. We call this our No-Reply procedure.

What happens if I can't physically answer the door?
If you have a key safe, we can use your personal code to access the key and enter your property. A key safe is a small, secure metal box installed on the outside of your house where you can safely keep an extra key, key safes can be opened by someone who knows the correct code. This can be helpful for people who have regular visitors who may need to gain access to the property (e.g., family, carers), or for people who might easily forget or lose their key. If you do not have a key safe and think this might be useful, these can be purchased online and installed by yourself, a friend, or a family member. If you do not come to the door or are not in the house when we deliver your meal, we will contact your family, friends, or neighbours to make sure you are okay. That is why it is important that you tell us in advance if you plan to go out when we usually deliver your meal.

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Will you let me know if my loved one is unwell?
Yes, we will inform a client's emergency contacts if we are concerned about them. In serious circumstances, if we cannot get hold of their emergency contacts, we will call emergency services.

Will you unpack the meal/will I be served the meal?
Yes, our staff can help to remove lids, plate the meal, get cutlery and cut up a meal.

Can I have more than one meal per day?
Yes, you can also order a Tea Pack