



Hospice Hearty Meals: Tackling food inequality during the pandemic

Donna Marie Bruce – Outpatient and Community Team Manager

St Andrew's Hospice

Abbreviated abstract: Hospice Hearty Meals was inspired by our patients in response to COVID-19. Due to reduced activity, some patients' function decreased thus affecting their ability to cook nutritious meals. Other patients, who had previously depended on family and friends to deliver or prepare meals, were impacted by shielding. SAH has been preparing home cooked meals for patients & carers who are struggling to access nutritional meals. Meals are prepared on-site and delivered to patients' homes, 3 times per week, adhering to social distancing guidelines.

Donna-marie.bruce@standrews.scot.nhs.uk



Challenges

Due to the COVID -19 pandemic, SAH had to suspend Outpatient Services and Compassionate Lanarkshire to comply with Government guidance and reduce the risk to vulnerable patients and carers. However, we provided telephone and video calls in order to continue supporting our patients/ clients. The staff undertaking these support calls identified a need in relation to access to nutritious meals. Some patients/ clients advised that due to no longer participating in regular exercise/ activates via our Outpatient Services they were losing dexterity in their hands and were therefore no longer able to prepare home cooked meals and were becoming reliant on ready meals/ snacks. Others, depended on family/ friends to support them regularly with home cooked meals and this was no longer an option. In addition, carers expressed that due to the additional caring burden on them during the pandemic and lack of respite they were struggling with additional responsibilities and pressures and therefore cooking less. In additional carers have expressed that they are fearful of visiting shops as well as having no one to stay with the patient/ client.

Strategy for overcoming these challenges

The Catering Team at SAH prepare home cooked meals daily for inpatients and staff and with a small amount of additional resource, were able to provide home cooked meals 3 times per week for patients/ clients/ carers in the community.



Donna-marie.bruce@standrews.scot.nhs.uk



Techniques and Methods

Cost projections were included in a grant application for a 12-week trial, for 12 of the most vulnerable patients and some of their carers.



A fresh, nutritious, two course meal (soup & main or main and pudding) is prepared onsite, blast chilled and packaged based on household requirements (for oven reheating or microwave). They are delivered 3 times per week by Facilities staff or volunteers, adhering to social distancing guidelines.



Donna-marie.bruce@standrews.scot.nhs.uk

Results and Conclusions

- A total of 579 meals were delivered in the first 12 weeks of the project.
- 100% of respondents rated the service as being excellent
- Feedback from patients/carers have found this service to be invaluable during these uncertain times.
- Patients/carers reported that by relieving the worry or burden of ensuring they ate well, they were less anxious and felt more able to cope with the current situation.

'Great service especially when going through such a hard time'

'This is a great service, have enjoyed the food very much. I am very grateful'

'A good help as some days my health is poor, and I don't feel well enough to cook'

Patient Story:

Anne is retired and lives alone. She has Parkinson's disease which has led to reduced mobility and ataxia (disjointed involuntary movements). Since lockdown, Anne has received less support and was struggling to make herself fresh, nutritious meals. Since the launch of Hospice Hearty Meals, Anne's sense of wellbeing has improved. She told us:

"The meals are absolutely lovely! The menu choice is good, with large portions. I feel this service has improved my health greatly by relieving some of the stresses of lockdown."



Donna-marie.bruce@standrews.scot.nhs.uk

This poster is part of the
SPPC poster
exhibition
2020
Scottish
Partnership
for Palliative Care