

CHAS Fresh Meals: Nutritious and Delicious

*Kirsten Keegan - Hospitality & Hotel Services Manager
Children's Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS)*

As the cost of living crisis deepens, many families supported by CHAS are feeling the devastating effect of rising prices. Parents often cannot work due to caring responsibilities, and experience huge utility bills maintaining complex equipment required for their children's health. Families are finding it harder to eat, or eat well.

In response, CHAS piloted a **fresh meals delivery service**, reacting to crisis, supporting families when they needed it most, delivering freshly prepared, healthy food.


Related publications:

- Scottish Government, Best start, bright futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022-2026. (2022)
- Fraser et al, Children in Scotland requiring palliative care (ChiSP report) (2015)



kirstenkeegan@chas.org.uk

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Motivation

“Families I see don’t have a choice in whether or not they can turn the heating off as their home needs to be a set temperature for the child. The child’s machines also need to be on constantly to enable them to breathe and stay alive.” **Monica, CHAS Income Maximisation Team**

Many families supported by CHAS live in Scotland’s most deprived areas. Life with a child with complex medical needs often results in additional expenses, such as regular hospital visits, specialist equipment and increased utilities bills to run this equipment. Family members are often less able to work due to caring responsibilities. Our Income Maximisation Team are witnessing an increase in food poverty among families due to inflation. Parents tell us they are struggling to offer nutritious meals, or in some cases feed their families at all.

Children with a life-shortening condition are **50%** more likely to be living in the most deprived parts of Scotland compared with the least deprived.

25%
of families live in
Scotland’s most
deprived areas

35%
of families will
regularly
attend hospital



Our Approach

“We eat the same day after day. Pasta or rice. Can’t afford to eat properly.” Parent

The meals delivery service was delivered as a short-term pilot from Rachel House Children’s Hospice. The service reacted to extreme crisis, delivering freshly prepared meals to children and families facing significant social or economic challenges. Our hospice catering team prepared healthy meals for the whole family and volunteers delivered these twice a week. The test period was initially for four weeks, but we extended this for a further four as the families supported continued to face financial and social pressures.



RACHEL House Menu - Week 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Cauliflower Soup 	Lentil Soup 	Carrot & Coriander Soup 	Greenpea with Mint Soup 	Fish Friday 	Chicken Satay & Rice 	Roast of the Day 
Chicken & Lentil Curry with Rice 	Spaghetti Bolognese 	Steak Pie 	Southern Fried Chicken with Dirty Fries 	Apple Crumble 	Fresh Fruit Salad 	Sticky Toffee Pudding 
Macaroni Cheese 	Quiche & Wedges 	Baked Potato with Various Fillings 	Vegetable Noodles with Sweet & Sour Sauce 	Pizza 	Cauliflower & Potato Bake 	Sandwich with Cake or Soup 



Results and Conclusions

- Four families, 16 individuals supported with 386 meals
- All families reported that the service saved time, energy and importantly cost, and offered improved quality of life
- Aligned with the CHAS Cost of Living Crisis Appeal
- Service extended, with regular referral and review meetings to identify and allocate meals to the families most in need



“The food parcels have made a huge difference to our family, in such a difficult time. We’ve been nourished by the beautiful food and the care and kindness it takes to get it to us.” **Parent**