

**Type:** Street Food/ take-away  
**Country:** Birmingham, UK



## Why it is a good practice?

Full of Chaat, originally established as a Street Food project in 2017, was due to experience their busiest summer to date having been allocated a spot at the European Street Food awards and had plenty of festival work lined up. When COVID-19 restrictions were put in place and all, but essential businesses were instructed to close, street food traders were forced to close without any access to financial support. Owner Sarah Ventre, found a way to pivot through the crisis by delivering food to regular customers and taking part in the meals for NHS workers, serving the community and ensuring she could keep key staff members in employment.

## About

Sarah Ventre founded Full of Chaat in February 2017. She was already working in private catering but made the decision to focus on launching a street food set-up as a side project. After securing a spot at the award-winning Digbeth Dining Club in Birmingham, business was booming and Full of Chaat quickly became a household name in the city. After the lockdown Sarah spent three weeks planning ways in which she could adapt her business to serve the community. Initially, Sarah and the team began serving regular customers by driving to their homes and dropping off hot meals on their doorsteps once a week. When the 'Meals for NHS' initiative was set up with the aim of delivering free hot meals to frontline workers, Sarah applied for the scheme via the NCASS Work Opportunities system. It was this way that she got involved with the charity and was often providing up to 200 hot meals a day to NHS workers.

The first few weeks were very emotional for the Full of Chaat team because the Intensive Care staff on shift came out looking exhausted but were really looking forward to a delicious, hot meal. Sarah and her team were making regular drop-offs at their local hospitals and built up a rapport with many staff members. Not only were the Full of Chaat team allowed to stay in employment during the pandemic and keep the business functional, but they were also being given a purpose to get up each day in the knowledge that they were providing a much-needed source of comfort and energy boost to frontline workers.

## Healthy

When Sarah got the opportunity to work with Meals for the NHS, her initial concern was whether they would want Chaat or something completely different like traditional sausage and mash, for example. In fact, they wanted the Chaat menu because it was the ultimate comfort food – healthy, homely and nutritious, combining meat with lots of vegetables. The aim was to prevent key workers from needing to visit vending machines whilst on duty and to ensure that they didn't need to go home after a long, 16-hour shift, to cook their own meal during a time when many didn't have the time to go food shopping.

## Ethical

Through Sarah successfully pivoting Full of Chaat, she supported the local community through a number of ways;

- By ensuring essential workers are getting one nourishing meal a day
- Keeping employees in work giving them a sense of purpose during difficult times
- Supporting members of the community by supplying them with nutritious meals

Follow Full of Chaat's story

