
FRESH 'N' FRUITY

LEEDS

What are the objectives of the programme?

Fresh 'n' Fruity is a 3-year project set up to enable people in communities in Leeds to make healthier food choices. The project aims to address key inequality issues around food and healthy eating which affect vulnerable groups or people on low income experience. We do this by providing information on healthy eating and healthier lifestyles and improving access to affordable fruit and vegetables.

Timeline

January 2008 - July 2011.

Background

As a city, Leeds has a number of 'food deserts' - places where there is very limited access to fresh, good quality fruit and vegetables at an affordable price. Equally, the available data tells us that people living in deprived communities tend to lack confidence in the skills and knowledge of preparing and cooking with fresh fruit and vegetables. In the current economic climate, there is also an important focus on shopping and cooking on a budget.

Who is responsible for project delivery?

The project is delivered by the Healthy Living Network Leeds, a voluntary organisation. There is a coordinator, a support worker and a driver assigned to the project. Leeds City Council provides a strategic lead.

How does the project work?

The project consists of three main parts:

The first part of the project involves taking good quality fresh fruit and vegetables to areas of Leeds where they are difficult or expensive to obtain. To do this, the project set up various market-style stalls or sells affordable fruit and vegetables from the back of the Fresh 'n' Fruity van. They make deliveries to and aim to support other similar projects where possible.

The second, crucial, part of the project is training and awareness through the project's team of Community Health Educators (CHEs). The CHEs, after successfully completing training, are paid to do various demonstrations and events as well as a variety of sessions based around healthy eating and lifestyles with all sections of the community. These include passing on tips on healthy eating, cooking, ways to get your '5 a day' and various other health and food related subjects. Fresh 'n' Fruity had 50 CHEs at the end of 2010.

The third main part of the project is recruiting volunteer 'Activators'. Activators are people who pass on basic information about healthy eating to colleagues, friends and family after taking part in a short course with one of Healthy Living Network Leeds (HLNL) staff team or our CHEs.

Over the lifetime of the project:

- 50 people will be recruited to attend the CHE training course;



- Of the 51, 48 will be trained and will become active CHEs;
- 150 people will be recruited, trained and become Health Activators ;
- 650 people will be recruited to and attend the CHE sessions; and
- 400 regular customers will use and have access to affordable fresh fruit and vegetables.

What are the results so far?

In 2010 alone:

- We ran 107 cook and eat type sessions over the year.
- Sessions were attended by 369 people - most people attended a series of sessions.
- We made contact with 1,554 people at events in the last three quarters of the year.
- We recruited 17 people to our additional Open College Network (OCN) accredited CHE course. We recruited 131 volunteer 'Activators'.
- We ran nine regular fruit and vegetable stalls.
- We supplied 3 organisations with fruit and vegetables and other back-up to help them run their own stalls and made regular deliveries to 2 other community organisations.
- We reached our target of 400 fruit and vegetable customers a week.

At our stalls:

- 41% of stall customers surveyed reported an increase in their consumption of fruit and vegetables since the stall started.
- 36% of stall customers reported an increase in their children's or other family's consumption of fruit and vegetables since the stall began operating.
- 93% of stall customers reported that the stall had made it easier to buy fruit and vegetables.
- 92% of stall customers rated our range of fruit and vegetables 'excellent' or 'good' (and none as 'bad').
- 91% of stall customers rated the quality of our produce as 'excellent' or 'good' (and none as 'bad').
- 90% of customers rated our prices 'excellent' or 'good' (and none as bad).
- 74% of our customers use the stall 'every week' or 'most weeks'.

At our CHE sessions:

- 94 % of attendees at sessions reported enjoying something about the sessions.
- 91 % of attendees at sessions reported learning something new at the sessions.
- 32% of attendees made suggestions for improvements for future sessions.
- 80% of attendees at sessions said they were going to change something in their eating habits as a result of attending sessions (though this question was only introduced in March 2010).
- 8 of our CHEs were supported into paid employment - Assistant Manager at restaurant, Family Support Worker, Zest Food Worker (Ministry Of Food), Care Assistant, job via Employment Agency, Debt Helpline Advisor, Food Worker (part-time) and Caterer (Self employed).

Was the project evaluated and were there any follow-up activities?

The project has undergone a thorough evaluation of its outputs and longer-term outcomes. It is evaluated nationally through the [New Economics Foundation \(NEF\) wellbeing programme](#).

We evaluate against five main outcomes and use 16 evaluation tools. This includes:

- a standard Altogether Better questionnaire for beneficiaries;
- a session evaluation form for clients to tell us what they thought of and learnt from CHE sessions; and
- a 'reflective diary' type evaluation/session write-up form for Community Health Educators who run sessions and various other tools.

Fresh 'n' Fruity is also part of the Big Lottery Fund's national evaluation being undertaken by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES). This involves us sending off the standard Altogether Better evaluation questionnaire to CLES at regular intervals for analysis. These forms (the 'entry', 'exit' and 'follow-up' forms form the first 3 of our evaluation tools).

In the future, the project will be moving into a new phase to build up a volunteer model, recognising that the paid model will be difficult to sustain in this economic climate. There is a new Volunteer Coordinator to take this forward.

What lessons did you learn?

CHE training is a big success - the greatest learning point is to never underestimate the strength of individuals when given the means and confidence to make a difference. The flexibility to respond to areas of need outside our target postcodes has been very valuable in reaching outcomes.

We did not expect to find such a wide variety of people for our CHE courses. We have had people from North and South America, Asia and the Indian subcontinent various parts of Africa, Western and Eastern Europe and China as well as the UK although we have not had any Australasian CHEs.

We have struggled to properly link the supply side to the education side of the project. We successfully set up stalls to make fresh fruit and vegetables more freely available and we successfully ran training sessions to improve people's skills and knowledge. However, the original idea that CHEs would somehow guide people to the stalls is very difficult to achieve given the realities of venues, timetables and the size of the area we are working in.

We've learned that there is no profit to be had in selling fruit and vegetables.

There is a clear need to tackle food access in Leeds, however, it is not a top priority for decision makers / funders in the city. The Ministry of Food has a high profile in the city and attracts more interest from the press etc.

The initial plan was to look to become a social enterprise. Unfortunately, despite a strong evidence base, there is no customer demand to generate sufficient income. Raising prices to cover costs would be counterproductive to the aim of the project.

What are the resources dedicated to the project?

The project's budget is a total of £434, 531 over 3.5 years as part of a regional portfolio funded by the Big Lottery. Support and guidance come from NHS Leeds and Leeds City Council.

Who is the contact person for the project?

John Parkes: j.parkes@healthylivingnetworkleeds.org.uk

Website

<http://www.healthylivingnetworkleeds.org.uk/foodaccess.html>

If you have an example of a good practice that you would like to include in the database, please send an email to caroline.greene@eurocities.eu.