



Early Years and Food

Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Project

Stakeholder Bulletin

Winter (December, January, February) 2020

This is the 6th edition of our stakeholder bulletin to keep you updated with the latest developments around the progress of the Childhood Obesity Trailblazer in Nottinghamshire. This edition will be an update of progress for the Winter months (December, January, February) as the Trailblazer programme reaches the halfway point of what has been a very interesting 18 months.

Half way review & reflections.

As with any project the childhood obesity trailblazer has not followed a simple path, but this is the beauty of this project, we are not bound by key performance indicators or targets to meet and every twist and turn has resulted in more and more learning points which has enriched the projects learning journey. We started the project with a vision that we would have our Children's Centres bustling with children and families accessing a plethora of fresh, healthy produce whilst watching live cookery demonstrations, we had visions of big networking events for Early Years providers to come together and share ideas and learn new recipes and tips to improve their settings food environment. Unfortunately, this vision was not possible due to you know what, but we have shown great resilience in Nottinghamshire, a trait which runs through the back bone of the families within it. We have simply 'got on with it' and it is with this attitude that we have seen so much great work taking place within the Early Years sector around improving the home and community food environment.

Progress Update

Action Area 1 - Children's Centres as a Community Food Asset

The FOOD clubs at Harworth and Ravensdale Children Centres are going from strength to strength with families now able to have regular access to healthier affordable foods in those areas. Harworth now has 52 members with a regular attendance of between 30-35 families and Ravensdale up to around 25 members and near enough all of them accessing regularly. Unfortunately, due to covid restrictions the FOOD clubs are currently being facilitated by staff and not volunteers as originally intended, but even this is a major positive with our early years workers loving seeing families again after such a long time.

Emma from Ravensdale Children's Centre said : "I live in the local area and very near my Children's Centre (Ravensdale) As I know some of the families really well I was able to promote our food club while I was out and about walking my dog! The families were really eager to sign up and now turn up every Friday to the FOOD club. Some families even turn up a day early. The food delivered is really good and we have a wide selection of fruit and vegetables and other food items to make up a healthy".

Jane from Ravensdale Children's Centre said "The food club has given families the opportunity to try a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables that they wouldn't normally purchase from the supermarket due to the cost. We have also been able to sign-post them to the Healthy Start vouchers. As an Early Years Practitioner seeing the children has been so lovely, we have been able to give them craft activity packs to take home to keep them occupied during lockdown"

Momentum is really picking up with the FOOD clubs set to be expanded to 2 further sites in Ashfield and Ollerton in the spring.

We are already seeing a ripple effect of the impact of the Trailblazer within Nottinghamshire as we are currently working through a model with Family Action whereby, we have the potential that by the end of the project we could have up to 30 active FOOD clubs in the county with many of them being hosted by Children's Centres. Many of these extra clubs will be externally funded by various funding grants and

...giving children the best start

local District Council budgets so our partners are really seeing the added value of the FOOD clubs to increase access to healthier affordable foods for families within each locality.

Action Area 2 – Meal kit concept

The beauty of the test and learn ethos of the trailblazer programme is that we can test out many new interventions without the need to meet certain key performance indicators or targets. It's a freedom of expression and allows greater creativity and collaboration. One such example of this is the pilot we delivered with Venner Nutrition.

The aim of the pilot is to provide families with a week of plant-based healthy food, a meal plan, recipe booklet, vitamin D supplementation and nutrition education creating significant impact that improves eating habits, teaches economical and healthy cooking skills and empowers healthy lifestyle changes.

We delivered this pilot with families from 2 priority neighbourhoods within the Ashfield and Newark & Sherwood districts. The families were selected by the schools from the reception class whom are in receipt of pupil premium along with a mixture of universal parents. Families were also recruited from family support referrals via the Children's Centres and parent ambassadors recruited to support the development of the Childhood obesity trailblazer.



The pilot proved to be a huge success with so much learning gained from the families receiving the box and we intend to utilise this intelligence to continue our journey with Venner but also to help refine our own meal kit concept using the school meals supply chain. We have a more detailed report here that I can share so please do contact me if this of interest.

We have started working with our delivery support partner <https://sharedintelligence.net/> and they will help further refine our meal kit concept throughout the spring in two Children's Centres we haven't yet worked with as part of the Trailblazer. We have taken the feedback from the focus groups we delivered in November and incorporated that into our new brand identity which we intend to call '**Healthier @ Home**' meal kit would welcome any thoughts on this idea and any comments on a potential logo design out of the following 3 options?



Option 1



Option 2



Option 3

Action Area 3 – Healthy Start

Some supermarkets are adding extra offers when people spend their Healthy Start vouchers in their shops. The Coop, Tescos and Iceland all have extra £1 offers. Lidl offers an extra £1.15 and Waitrose £1.50. You can find more details [here](#)

We have produced lots of materials to help you promote Healthy Start, including a digital poster, newsletter article, social media post and presentation to share with teams. Contact us if you'd like us to send you any of these or if you'd like us to come and talk to your team/organisation (see contact details for Kate and Kathy below).

From April 1st 2021 the value of each Healthy Start food voucher increases from £3.10 to £4.25. Eligible families with a child under one receive two vouchers a week, so they will have £8.50 a week to spend on fruit, vegetables and milk. More information can be found [here](#)

All breastfeeding Mums in Nottinghamshire now receive a free bottle of Healthy Start vitamins at their birth visit, given out by the Healthy Family Teams (bottle fed babies don't need them at this stage as vitamins are added to formula milk). All pregnant women in Mansfield, Ashfield, Newark and Sherwood receive a free bottle of vitamins and information about Healthy Start early in their pregnancy.

Remember that vitamins can still be collected from many of our Children's Centres. This has continued during lockdown. People eligible for Healthy Start can collect vitamins for free in exchange for their voucher. People that don't qualify for the scheme can still buy Healthy Start vitamins for 80p (pregnant and breastfeeding women) and £1.60 (vitamin drops for babies and children). Find a Children's Centre [here](#)

Kate Whittaker has started a new role as Public Health and Commissioning Manager at Nottinghamshire County Council, based in the Children's Integrated Commissioning Hub. Kate will still be involved in the Trailblazer and continue work on Healthy Start. There will be good opportunities to link all our work into the recently launched [Best Start strategy](#)

Kathy Holmes has joined Kate in working to continue to raise the profile of Healthy Start. We want to ensure that people know about the scheme, check if they are eligible and are encouraged to sign up for it. We're developing our action plan for Healthy Start over the remainder of the Trailblazer. Any thoughts/ideas welcome!

Kate Whittaker kate.whittaker@nottsc.gov.uk Kathy Holmes kathy.holmes@nottsc.gov.uk



HEALTHY START

Families on certain benefits can receive
FREE fruit, veg, milk and vitamins.

Find out if you qualify
www.healthystart.nhs.uk
or telephone **0345 607 6823**

NHS Give Your Family
a Healthy Start

...giving children the best start

Action Area 4 & 5 - Food and Nutrition knowledge and skills for early years providers

We have now confirmed our 7th and final setting who will work with our partners at the Soil Association in meeting the standards required to gain the <https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/early-years> award. Ryan House Day nursery will be our Rushcliffe setting and will join West Bassetlaw Day care (Bassetlaw) Kidsgrove Daycare (Mansfield) Serendipitys Day Nursery (Newark) Good Foundations Nursery (Gedling) Creative Hands Childcare (Broxtowe) and Learning Tree 2 (Ashfield) a more detailed article has been written by Nursery world with more details about the award and a fantastic case study from Laura at Learning Tree.

<https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/features/article/health-nutrition-obesity-lead-on>

This will mean we now have a good spread across Nottinghamshire in settings working towards the gold standard, and receiving support to help them build on the fantastic work they have already been doing with regards to the community food environment within each setting. As part of the work of the childhood obesity trailblazer we would like this gold standard to have a wider system impact than just those settings who are working towards the Early Years award.

This is where the community of practice will be useful to help share this learning. In simple terms a community of practice means “regular sessions for the early years sector to meet with peers, share best practice, challenges and work to support each other in relation to healthier food provision and consistent healthy eating messages within their setting”

We are starting this community of practice within the Ashfield district as a pilot and then aim to roll this out to wider areas of the county. We hope to engage a relevant practitioner from day care settings, Children’s Centres, Healthy family teams, District council and our Early Childhood Services team. More information about the community of practice and a brief around membership can be found within the attached documents to this bulletin.

Action Area 6 - Consistent Healthy Eating messages.

We are now at the point where by we will be rolling out the Loughborough University’s <https://www.childfeedingguide.co.uk/> training to support practitioners with hints, tips and techniques to support fussy feeders both in early years settings and in Children’s Centres.

Three practitioners per Children’s Centre team will be put forward for the training within their locality whilst Early Years providers will be asked to complete an expression of interest and submit this back to earlychildhoodservices@nottsc.gov.uk by Friday 2nd April 2021:

At this stage we only have a limited number of licences so we will be allocated them based on the responses received but we will look at how we can spread this training wider if it proves successful.

Thankyou

Once again thank everyone for reading this and for your support with the success of our work so far. We will keep you updated with developments in the Spring stakeholder bulletin due out in May. In the meantime we are due to present our progress so far on a national webinar on Wednesday 10th March facilitated by Public Health England around healthy weight so we will make sure a recording of this is sent around our networks for your interest. We are also taking part in 2 morning webinars facilitated by the Local Government Association on the 8th and 9th March. This will be a good opportunity for the team to share progress, challenges and learning to not only the other 4 trailblazer sites but also other local authorities interested in this area of work. We also have a new home on Nottinghamshire County Councils website as well as on our Notts help Yourself portal with the links below.

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/health-and-wellbeing/healthy-weight/childhood-obesity-trailblazer>

<https://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/advice.page?id=nXz7TUkComl>