



Healthy Food in Early Years

Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Project

Venner Nutrition Pilot Report (Nottinghamshire)

1 Context/background

The Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Programme aims to look at different ways to tackle childhood obesity, share learning and best practice to encourage wider local action and develop solutions to local obstacles and consider further actions government can take to enable ambitious local action and achieve change at scale. www.local.gov.uk/childhood-obesity-trailblazer-programme

Nottinghamshire County Council is building on its broader whole system approach around the community food environment, to develop food skills, access and support for families with children in the early years.

The project in Nottinghamshire aims to:

1. Make access to affordable healthier food for families easier
2. Improve quality of food provision through early years settings
3. Enable parents to develop good eating habits with their children
4. Improve healthy eating consistent messages

Venner Nutrition Ltd (also “Venner Nutrition” or “Venner”) is an award-winning social enterprise founded in Finland and launched in the UK during the summer of 2020, helping families participate and learn about sustainable healthy, affordable cooking and eating. They have already successfully delivered nearly 14,000 healthy and nutritious food boxes in Finland and are hoping to transfer this learning to the UK. Venner’s nutrition and education initiative or intervention is a sustainable and empowering solution for all families and is not income dependent. They have a unique way of engaging and supporting families that are paying and those who cannot. They deliver nutritious, plant-based food, along with providing vital new cooking skills and nutrition awareness to the most vulnerable families in society.

2. Objectives

The aim of this pilot was to:

- Provide families with a week of plant-based healthy food, a meal plan, recipe booklet, vitamin D supplementation and nutrition education
- Improve eating habits,
- Teach economical and healthy cooking skills
- Empower families to create healthy lifestyle changes

The pilot worked with families from 2 priority wards within the Ashfield and Newark & Sherwood districts of Nottinghamshire. The families were selected by the schools from the reception class who 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 Centre’s and parent ambassadors recruited to support the development of the Childhood obesity trailblazer.

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3. Methodology

Families received a box of food, which contained all of the ingredients for 5 evening meals, light snacks and vitamin D supplement. They also received a recipe book with instructions on how to prepare and cook the meals each day. The cost of each Venner Nutrition Box was £53 (although free to participating families) and the food was sourced from Morrison's supermarket (pictured below). The pilot was delivered week beginning 7th December 2020 and the follow up impact survey delivered week beginning 14th December 2020.

Number of families receiving a Venner Nutrition Box – 58

- X 20 delivered to Leamington Primary school
- X 28 delivered to St Joseph's Catholic School
- X 3 delivered to Parent ambassadors
- X 6 delivered to Summer House Children's Centre, Sutton in Ashfield.



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5. Results

Overall the pilot was received very positively from the priority communities, a true multi-agency approach was adopted within the Leamington community with neighborhood policing teams increasing engagement and presence with families through supporting the delivery of the boxes to the family's homes. Children's Centre staff also delivered some of the boxes to the families that they are working with. At St Josephs RC school in Ollerton the school adopted a whole school approach with families collecting the boxes at pick up for those families who drove to school, and teaching staff delivering boxes home to families who hadn't driven to school. Further data from the survey follow up can be found below.

- 22 survey responses were received from the 58 boxes distributed (38%)
- 50% of responses (11) stated that their family benefited **quite a lot** from the Venner nutrition boxes in terms of healthy eating and cooking more, a further 28% (6) stated their family benefited **a lot** and a 23% (5) **a little**.
- The most popular dish within the recipe booklet was the lentil bolognese with the least favorite being the roasted veggies with quinoa and lemon dip
- 52% of respondents (11) used all of the ingredients and cooked all of the recipes
- 78% of respondents (17) **have made the recipes again or are planning** to include as part of their regular weekly meal plan
- 64% of respondents (14) stated the recipes were '**just right**' in terms of being easy to make, 23% (5) stated they were easy with 1 participant saying that they were difficult.
- 50% of respondents (11) **visited** the supporting recipe videos via the website
- 45% of respondents (10) stated that their family **learned something new** by using the Venner nutrition boxes and its recipes, such as trying new ingredients or learning new cooking skills. 27% (6) **learned quite a lot**.
- 41% (9) of respondents stated that the Venner nutrition box changed their families eating habits in any way such as increasing the vegetable content of meals **a little bit**, 23% (5) changed **somewhat**, 18% (4) **quite a lot** and 9% (2) **a lot**.
- 23% (5) of respondents stated they had paid a **little bit more** attention to the health aspects of their daily diet since receiving the Venner nutrition box. 23% (5) paid **somewhat more** attention, 14% (3) paid **quite a lot more** attention and 9% (2) paid very much more attention.
- 32% (7) stated that receiving the Venner nutrition box **increased the number of meals they cook at home**. 54% (12) stated they **already cooked meals at home** before the Venner nutrition box.

Vitamin D supplement

- 32% (7) of respondents stated they **already used Vitamin D supplement** regularly and have an awareness of the benefits
- 27% (6) of respondents used the vitamin D supplement supplied and the awareness of the benefits increased, they were also inspired by the Venner box to continue to use a vitamin D supplement.
- 14% (3) stated they used the vitamin D and **would like to use it also later due to the awareness of its benefits**. However, due to their budget they felt they would not have the opportunity to purchase vitamin D in the future

5. Healthy Start

The Venner pilot provided an opportunity to make families more aware of the Healthy Start support available to them. The fruit and vegetable voucher would also be a great follow-on from the recipe support and meal planning provided by Venner.

After the survey has been completed, and to create another touch point with the pilot families, Healthy Start information was sent out as part of our ongoing support of the families participating in the pilot. They also have access to the Venner Nutrition platform and recipe archive which they can use for inspiration and know-how for creating delicious meals with produce received through Healthy Start.

6. Feedback

"I really enjoyed the convenience of this box. It also helped to increase the amount of vegetables at almost every meal as there was often enough for lunch the next day. Some really great ideas. We will definitely use these recipes again (have already done the soup and roast veggie quinoa but swapped for cous cous for a change.) The only thing we didn't love were the oat cakes but I plan to experiment and try again. Thank you for letting us be part of this project."

"We received a baby vitamin liquid, not a plain vitamin D supplement (not a criticism, more for feedback purposes). I enjoyed the recipes and I will definitely cook some of them again, the toddler was at least persuaded to try and did eat the roasted veggies."

"It was a fantastic box and well received. My son enjoyed helping me cook for the family and he also learnt new skills doing so"

"Brilliant idea, good to include the kids too with the book and basket. Thankyou"

"I thought this was a really thoughtful idea, thank you for letting us be apart of it. Plus it's always nice to try new things. Thankyou ☺"

"Main advantage has been the kick start to cooking more veggie meals."

"Brilliant idea for getting everybody involved with the cooking"

"The children weren't very keen but did try the recipes i myself loved them not a huge fan of cauliflower but tasted amazing in the lentil Bolognese and oven bake"



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7. Next Steps for the childhood Obesity Trailblazer

- Scope out the potential to roll out a small pilot based on a model where by some families pay for this service on a subscription basis with access to the food, recipes, nutritional support and online forums. This would then offset the costs for those families who cannot afford this to ensure they have access to this affordable healthier food option. This pilot would be delivered within those communities in Newark & Sherwood and Ashfield having already received the box.
- Work with Venner to Investigate how we can link in the Healthy Start vouchers and vitamins to future boxes delivered in Nottinghamshire and around the country.
- Venner to further refine the box to be more suitable for a family of 4 and therefore decrease food wastage and cost.
- Venner to enhance and launch the online support platform and test out with previously engaged families.
- Utilise the intelligence gained from this pilot to inform and refine NCC Healthier @ Home meal kit.

8. Photos



30 Venner boxes waiting at St Josephs school ready for collection.



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