

Early Years and Food

Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Project

Stakeholder Bulletin

Summer (June, July, August) 2021

This is the 7th edition of our stakeholder Bulletins 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 Summer months (June, July, August) as the Trailblazer programme reaches the final year of the project. (can't quite believe I'm saying that)

Final Year of the project

As we enter our final year of the childhood obesity trailblazer project we will now be working in the background to look at the sustainability and legacy to what has been a fantastic journey so far. We've achieved so much in the most testing of circumstances and it's vital that, if we are serious about improving the food environment in the early years, this work continues in some form for the medium – long term. We have a number of national and local levers available to hook into in order to sustain this momentum so plenty of upcoming opportunities to utilise... As we move along the road map with the national restrictions lifting it's hoped that we can start to realise some of our original vision with live cookery demonstrations in Children's Centres and to increase the engagement and co-production with parents in the final year of the project.

Progress Update

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

Over the last few months we have been working with our partners at Family Action, District Council colleagues and our integrated wellbeing service 'Your Health Your Way' to utilise available funding streams to help support the expansion of the FOOD club provision across Nottinghamshire. I am very pleased to announce that we have managed to secure funding to increase the number of FOOD clubs in Nottinghamshire from the current 10 FOOD clubs by a further 20 clubs throughout the County.. By this time next year, there will be 30 FOOD clubs (many of which will be hosted by Children's Centres) providing access to healthier, affordable foods for up to 1500 families on a weekly basis. This will give Nottinghamshire the largest network of Family Action FOOD clubs in the country.

When we set out with the vision for the childhood obesity trailblazer programme we had aspirations that the project would have a positive impact on the wider food system maybe 2-3 years post project delivery. To see this type of impact in highlighting Children's Centres as community food assets is so positive to see during actual project delivery.

I think the important thing to note about this expansion is that not only does it increase accessibility to healthier, affordable foods for families during such challenging times, the FOOD clubs will also bring a hub of support for families to access a range of other services during the times they collect their food.

In addition to this, our Children's Centre service are having a big recruitment drive this summer. The hope is that we can recruit a large network of volunteers who will be ready to start actively volunteering at our FOOD clubs across the county. This will be a fantastic opportunity for a volunteer to gain experience and skills in customer service, financial management, stock control and catering as well as making a massive contribution to their local community.

Nottinghamshire's Implementation lead Omar Guari said ' *"It has been great privilege to take on the challenge of setting up over 20 new FOOD Clubs across Nottinghamshire County. Through the roll-out*

...giving children the best start

of this program, we will be reaching hundreds, and potentially thousands of new members across the county offering food support, community building and much more. On top of this, we will be saving tons of food from going to waste, which means we will be helping the environment as well as our local communities! If you want to know more please get in touch!"

mansfieldfoodclubs@family-action.org.uk

Action Area 2 – Healthier @ Home Meal kit concept

Our prototyping journey in testing out the Healthier @ Home meal kit concept moved into a small delivery phase pilot at Butler Hill Children’s Centre over the summer. Nottinghamshire County Council School meal service have put together a 10-week recipe plan which included the ingredients for a main meal and pudding for a family. 10 families have taken part in the pilot and collected their meal kit from the Children’s centre with all of the ingredients needed, as well as an easy to follow recipe card that families can use to help prepare this meal at home.

This pilot phase will bring about so much learning for the meal kit initiative and will help us develop longer term plans for this concept. Will let you know how it’s been received in our Autumn Stakeholder bulletin due out later this year



Staff and volunteers at the Children’s Centre weighing and measuring the ingredients for the meal kit



Meal kits prepped and ready for collection

BBQ Tacos prepared by a family collecting the meal kit



Action Area 3 – Promotion of Healthy Start

Healthy Start continues to be in the headlines with Marcus Rashford writing an [open letter](#) to health professionals about the importance of promoting it.

The expansion of Healthy Start is also a key recommendation in the [National Food Strategy](#)

A recent important extension was made to the Healthy Start scheme, extending it to “British children (aged under 4 years old) whose parent/guardian meet the financial eligibility criteria and are excluded from claiming public funds as a consequence of their immigration status, or their lack of immigration status”. More information is on the Healthy Start website [here](#)

We are beginning to see an increase in the uptake of Healthy Start in all Trailblazer areas which is really encouraging.

| Uptake of Healthy Start by District (Trailblazer areas) (The percentage of eligible people that have signed up to and are benefiting from the scheme) | | |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Uptake October 2020 | Uptake July 2021 |
| Ashfield | 57% | 64% |
| Bassetlaw | 47% | 57% |
| Mansfield | 55% | 60% |
| Newark and Sherwood | 48% | 55% |



This means that 252 more families were accessing the Healthy Start scheme in Trailblazer areas in July 2021 than in October 2020-a 10% increase.

We can all do our bit to encourage families to check whether they are eligible for Healthy Start and if so to apply.

A useful tool to start the conversation with families is to encourage them to take a couple of minutes to look at the Healthy Start eligibility calculator [here](#)

If you have any questions about Healthy Start and how we can help you promote it please don't hesitate to contact us:

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

As a contributor to our innovative, test and learn Childhood obesity project, our partners at Food for Life are supporting seven nurseries to work towards a Food for Life Early Years Award, embedding a healthy food culture that incorporates food quality & provenance; food education; food leadership; and communities & partnerships. Food for Life are also actively engaging in the surrounding reflective research and practice forums galvanised by the COT project, including the Community of Practice.



Find below a few key headlines around the progress so far:

- The large majority of settings are well engaged, submitting evidence against the award criteria and communicating with our Senior Awards Officer to seek support for their journey through the award.

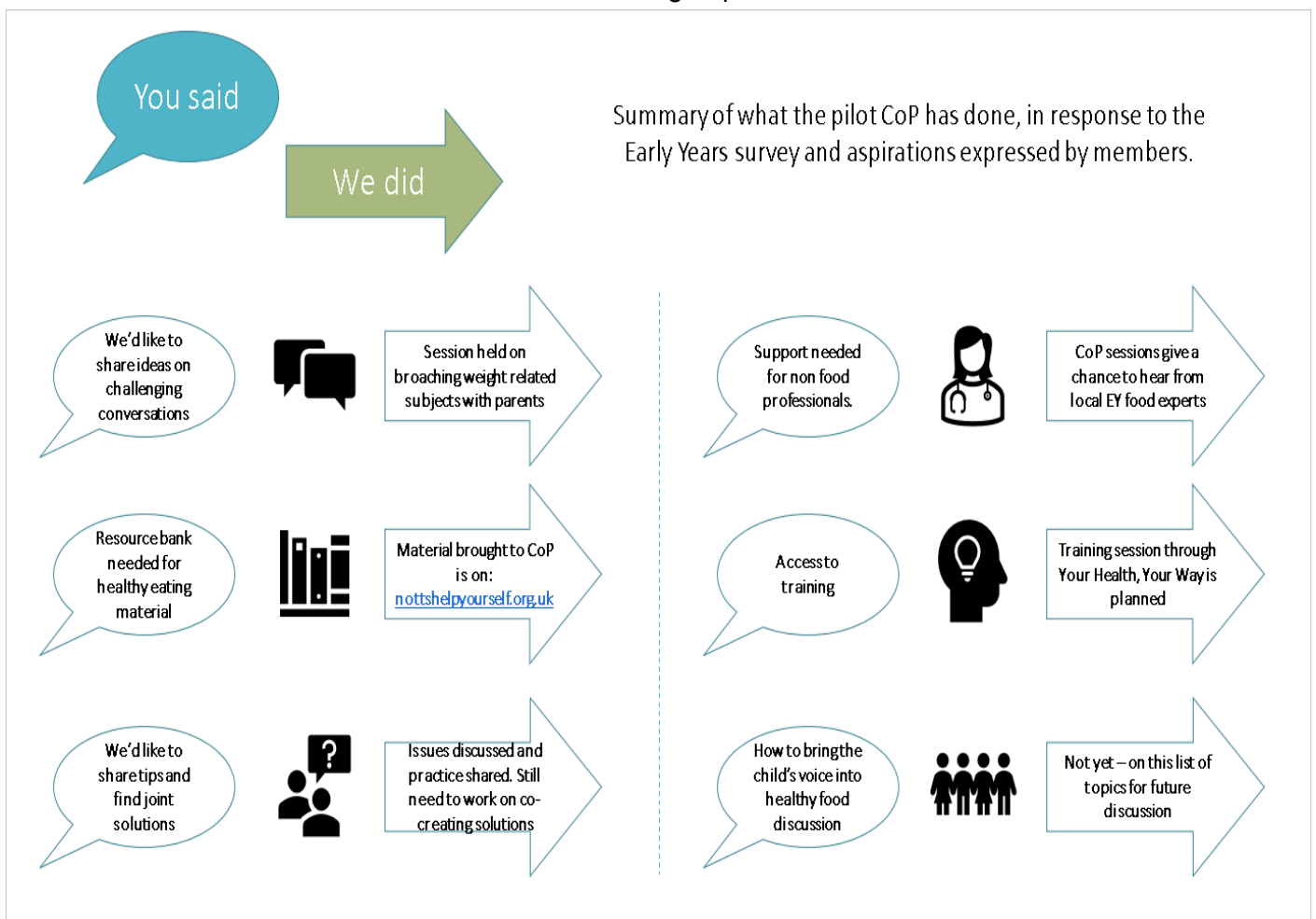
- Most of the settings are completing criteria that focusses on the Food Quality & Provenance elements of the award. This emphasis is expected, given the focus on working with the nursery cooks to gather a baseline of evidence on the nutritional content of menus. The priority for the next Q will be to solidify the work in this area and to support the settings to move towards embedding the food leadership and food education elements of the award.
- One of the settings, has begun submitting full and detailed evidence against other award criteria, detailing how they are beginning to consult with children and parents about food preferences / family meals and incorporating food-based artwork (including placemats designed by the children) into the rooms where the children eat.
- One of the settings, has been in discussion with the Food for Life team about how they might add a kitchen to their nursery to support them to move away from purchasing frozen meals.

Activity 6. Food and Nutrition – Community of Practice

We have been working with our delivery support partner ‘Shared Intelligence’ over the last few months to define and establish a community of practice for those stakeholders involved in influencing the home and community food environment within the early years. The community of practice is essentially regular sessions to meet with peers, share best practice, challenges and work together in supporting each other in relation to improving the food environment for families with children in the early years.

Our pilot focussed on the Ashfield district and we successfully engaged with 10-15 stakeholders at each meeting and facilitated 4 meetings throughout April – July 2021. Each meeting we would explore 2 topics in more detail. These topics were highlighted as discussion points and areas of interest within the Nottinghamshire Early years survey delivered in April 2020.

A detailed evaluation of the CoP is currently taking place and will be available in the Autumn but you can see below some of the actions we took forward as a group.



Action Area 7 – Consistent Healthy Eating messages.

We have been busy rolling out Loughborough universities <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. 200 licences have been purchased through the trailblazer with around 180 licences activated by practitioners. An evaluation to measure the impact of this training within practice will be taking place throughout the summer with a further report due in the Autumn.

One Early years practitioner from a setting in Bassetlaw has said "Most children when starting to explore different foods for the first time develop a tendency to refuse some foods and this is a significant challenge we face at meal times within settings. We have never had any formal training around this and so the child feeding guide training has been a great learning platform to in provide our staff with the strategies to support these children more effectively"

Evaluation

With the main ethos around the childhood obesity trailblazer being about the learning rather than the outcomes it is vital that this learning is gathered in a systematic way. We have been working with the trailblazer's delivery support partner 'Shared Intelligence' as well as our own evaluator 'Billson Consultancy' to help gather this evidence throughout the summer. This has involved the facilitation of focus sessions with the project team, 121 interviews with key stakeholders and most importantly consulting with staff and families benefiting from the project. Our Baseline report is available now which focusses on the process part of the Childhood obesity trailblazer with a further report due out in the Autumn around the impact at an individual level. Please do drop me an e mail if you are interested in receiving a copy of any of the reports mentioned within this bulletin.

Thankyou

Once again thanks to everyone reading this for your support and with the success of the childhood obesity trailblazer so far. We will keep you updated with developments in Autumns stakeholder bulletin due out in November. In the meantime we are due to present our progress so far at the Trailblazer learning assembly on 14th/15th September and you can register to attend this webinar through this link <https://lgaevents.local.gov.uk/lga/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=437747&eventID=1274&traceRedir=2>

Don't forget we also have a new home on Nottinghamshire County Councils website aswell 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>

Please do get in touch if you would like to find out more about any part of our Project in Nottinghamshire.

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