

Case Study: 'Food and Fun' – A summer holiday project to tackle food poverty and support vulnerable local families.



It is reported nationally that vulnerable families on low incomes experience particular pressure during the school summer holidays. Away from the support of a school environment, the summer holidays can pose challenges for families in terms of nutrition, learning, safeguarding, emotional wellbeing, financial security and play.

The main objective of 'Fun and Food' was to provide local families with a free hot meal in a friendly safe environment, during the school summer holiday. This was offered alongside various children's activities and tailored advice for parents.

An overarching **Healthy Norwich** vision is to build a culture where individuals are empowered to look after their own health and where communities promote healthy places to live. **Healthy Norwich** works collaboratively with its partners to achieve its ambitions. Food poverty is an area which warranted **Healthy Norwich** supported pilot for a number of reasons; to allow learning on a suitable model of delivery; to understand if this project could be shared across the city; and if so to establish a legacy of self-sustaining activity.

A key partner in the delivery of this project was NORSE Catering. NORSE Catering are the school meal providers at the local primary school where the programme was delivered. They provided both the manpower resources to prepare the meals on site and also all the food free of charge. In addition, Norwich Food Bank and local Church group were instrumental partners in being able to deliver Food and Fun as they facilitated the events, arranged the children activities and identified a team of committed volunteers to run each session. The local primary school was very supportive in offering the opportunity of Food and Fun to their pupils and families and supported the project by engaging suitable families.

Food and Fun ran over six, 4-hour sessions during the school summer holidays in July and August 2016.

Key outputs

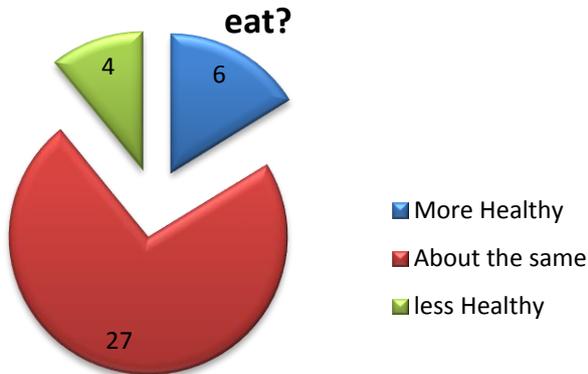
- 57 different children attended over the summer, with the busiest session hosting 49 children and the least busy seeing 33 children.
- Each session was also attended by 15-20 parents
- Overall, 260 free meals were served to children and 80 to parents
- Between 10 and 20 parents engaged with advice providers at each session
- The proportion of children in a target groups; eg those entitle to pupil premium, a free school meal, English not being the first language and those with special needs was significant.
- The FISH (Food In School Holidays) Foodbank project, received a grant of just £500.00 to deliver the 6 week programme. This funding was used to fund the children's activities, and by engaging a team of volunteers from the local church and having the food and catering staff provided by NORSE the cost of the project was minimal.

Evaluation findings

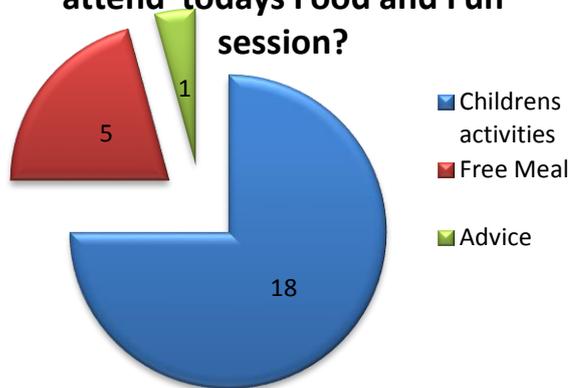
- Feedback questionnaires were completed at the sessions by 18 parents and 39 children.
- The age of the children completing the feedback ranged from 3years through to 12years, with the majority (62%) aged between 5 to 8years.
- Children identified seeing their friends and the activities on offer as the most attractive aspects of Fun and Food. 36% of children did also rate the food as being one of their preferred reasons for attending Fun and Food.
- Children were asked to rate the quality of the food provided and the graph below demonstrates 89% of the children rated the food as equal to or healthier than food they would normally eat outside of school.
- 50% of the parents who completed the feedback confirmed the school holidays is 'a bit' of a financial challenge to them, which suggest the Fun and Food did reach a proportion of its target audience.

- The main reason for attendance reported by parents, was not to be the free food offer but to be the children’s activities, clarifying the need for future programmes to include suitable activities to order to engage families.
- Parents highlighted that to be successful, future Fun and Food session must ensure the age ranges of attending children is reflected in the choice of activities on offer . In addition it was apparent that the advice sessions aimed at family health and wellbeing, were more well received and had a better proportion of parent engagement.

Children - How healthy is the food compared to what you'd normally eat?



Parent - What attracted you to attend today's Food and Fun session?



Future Learning

- By playing a coordinating/facilitating role, Norwich City Council and NHS Norwich CCG through the **Healthy Norwich** programme were able to support a new project which was funded and delivered by partners.
- There is a significant demand for this kind of programme – the school had a long waiting list for attendance as numbers of children were limited by the number of adult volunteers available.
- Providing activities for families was a good way to encourage parents to access targeted advice.
- Softer advice worked better in this kind of informal, social set up; benefits and money advice may need an alternative forum to encourage people to engage

Sustainability

As a result of the partnership with NORSE , Norwich Food Bank have been able to apply for a specific school holiday food poverty grant from Jamie Oliver’s Children Health Fund, which if awarded will offer this project future sustainability. It will also allow the Food and Fun model to be rolled out into other schools. The outcome of the Health Fund should be known by end of 2016. Hannah Worsley - Norwich Food Bank Project Manager “The club at Lakenham provided everything we wanted and lots more besides which was brilliant. We recognise partnership between agencies as so important. Having both the children's activities and services aimed at parents together in the same room worked extremely well and is something I am very keen to repeat at both the Lakenham site in 2017 and to also look at rolling out to other FISH (Food In the Summer Holidays) clubs”.

