

FSA *What's Cooking?* Cookery Clubs

Final Evaluation Report

Prepared for Food Standards Agency
 COI Communications

Prepared by EdComs

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Executive Summary

Background

There is wide acknowledgement that many young people lack the necessary knowledge and skills and/or opportunity to acquire the skills to prepare and cook healthy, nutritious meals. Changes to lifestyles and work patterns mean that young people are less likely to see and help their parents/carers prepare meals from scratch at home. In addition, the changes to the food technology curriculum mean that young people have been given fewer opportunities to cook in school. However, recently there appears to have been a significant turnaround and the dearth in practical cooking skills has started to receive attention. Indeed, over the last few years the government, food-related agencies and organisations have developed initiatives to reintroduce practical cookery for young people in schools. Moreover, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) have recently announced that from 2011 it will be compulsory for every 11-14 year old to take part in hands-on cookery lessons, placing practical cooking back on the agenda.

The Food Standards Agency's *What's Cooking?* programme is already in place as an existing initiative which aims to address the lack of practical cookery skills amongst young people. *What's Cooking?* was introduced as a pilot in the North East in 2005. In 2006 the FSA commissioned Continyou to roll out a total of 92 clubs across a range of settings with young people in the North East. The clubs' goals were to provide practical food opportunities and to help young people to:

- be aware of the importance of following a healthy diet;
- have the necessary skills to prepare and cook healthy food;
- make more informed choices about the type of food and drink they consume;
- follow correct food hygiene and safety procedures.

The FSA commissioned EdComs to evaluate the *What's Cooking?* programme, in the North East, particularly in relation to the impact it has achieved on participants and organisations involved.

Objectives

The purpose of the evaluation was to identify the impact of the *What's Cooking?* clubs amongst participants and coordinators. The broad aims of the evaluation were to:

- Identify the different ways in which clubs were set up and run in a range of settings.
- Explore participants' experiences of the *What's Cooking?* Club including level of enjoyment and engagement.
- Examine the key outcomes amongst participants of the *What's Cooking?* club, particularly in relation to the four key food competences.

- Determine the drivers and barriers to setting up and running the *What's Cooking?* clubs.
- Identify methods for sustaining the *What's Cooking?* clubs in the future.

Methodology

The research approach was carried out in three stages as follows:

- **Stage 1: Benchmark research – before the clubs started**
 - Survey with participants (195 received)
 - Survey with coordinators (68 received)
 - Six telephone interviews with Local Authority representatives
- **Stage 2: Initial impact research – four to six months after the clubs started**
 - Impact survey with participants (146 received)
 - End of year survey with coordinators (47 received)
 - Twelve case study visits to clubs
 - Six telephone interviews with Senior Management Team
 - Four group discussion with coordinators
- **Stage 3: Longer term impact research – eight to ten months after the clubs started**
 - Impact survey with participants (49 received)
 - Nine telephone interviews with coordinators
 - Six telephone interviews with Local Authority representatives

Main findings

Set up and targeting clubs

- The cookery clubs were delivered using a variety of approaches and a range of settings. The content and aim of the clubs focussed around cooking and increasing participants' interaction with food. Many coordinators used the clubs to target those who they thought would benefit from taking part in an out-of-hours club. Those who kept the club open to anyone were pleasantly surprised at the popularity of the club. Coordinators appreciated the level of autonomy and flexibility and felt this helped to set up clubs which met their needs and fitted in with their setting circumstances.
- The factors responsible for the successful delivery of a club were:
 - An enthusiastic individual to run the club
 - A suitable venue and equipment
 - Varied activities e.g. visits, games and competitions
 - Support from individuals within the setting, wider community and the local authority
 - Quick access to funding

Impact on participants

- The majority of participants found the clubs very enjoyable (75%) or quite enjoyable (23%). As the following list indicates, at least 85% of participants who completed the post- questionnaire reported that they had learnt something (either a lot or a little) as a result of taking part:
 - How to cook food/meals (92%)
 - How to prepare ingredients for meals (90%)
 - How to be hygienic when preparing food (89%)
 - The difference between healthy and unhealthy food (87%)
 - How to prepare food safely (86%)
- Involvement in the *What's Cooking?* clubs also had a positive influence on participants' attitudes to healthy eating. The most notable outcomes amongst participants were:
 - A greater understanding of the benefits of eating healthy food and cooking with fresh ingredients.
 - Evidence to suggest intentions to eat more healthily.
 - Evidence to demonstrate participants were starting to try foods from a broader range of food groups.
 - A greater involvement and frequency in cooking at home.
- There were also a number of personal and social benefits which were brought about by participation in the club. Some participants were reported to display greater confidence and independence as well as develop social and teamwork skills. The coordinators also noted the inter-generational relationships developed through club participation. In many cases, the food which was cooked was taken home. Some dishes cooked at the club were prepared again at home by parents or by participants.
- There was evidence to demonstrate that each of the core food competences were delivered in the sessions. Knowledge and skills in relation to food preparation and food handling, food hygiene, and diet and health were delivered implicitly and covered in depth throughout the course of the clubs. The findings from the coordinators questionnaire indicated that a slight increase in participants' knowledge and understanding of all the core food competences. It was less likely for aspects of consumer awareness to be delivered and many coordinators found it difficult to address this without it turning into a theory based lesson. Some clubs also included other activities, such as visits to restaurants, celebration events, cooking for groups, and selling and serving food. These activities helped to sustain interest amongst participants, as well as provide different experiences for them.
- Due to the low response rate achieved for the second wave of the participant questionnaires at Stage 3, it is difficult to draw reliable comparisons and conclusions about the longer term impact on participants. However, the data gives an indication towards a sustained impact in the following areas:
 - Skills and knowledge relating to food preparation and food hygiene

- Frequency of cooking at school.
- At Stage 3, many coordinators reported that participants continued to show an interest in food and noted that participants were starting to become more involved in cooking at home. They felt that the opportunity to interact with food had influenced participants' food choices and willingness to try new foods. Indeed the Stage 3 participant questionnaire indicated that participants continued to eat a greater range of food types following their involvement in the clubs.
- Discussions with coordinators and Local authority representatives at Stage 3 also indicated that there had been a sustained impact on participants in relation to the 'softer skills'. They noted that participants had displayed greater levels of confidence, a sense of achievement and generally more positive attitudes. Some also noted that it helped to effectively focus participants who had previously experienced behavioural problems.

Impact on club settings

- The evaluation also found evidence for new food related clubs/activities taking place following participation in the programme and, most notably, in nearly one in five cases the *What's Cooking?* clubs had kick started a permanent cookery club.
- Senior management teams in schools noted that the clubs helped them to work towards raising general awareness of healthy eating amongst pupils. They also felt the clubs addressed wider aims and initiatives such as Extended Schools, Every Child Matters Agenda and evidence to help achieve the National Healthy Schools Status awards. Moreover, at Stage 3, many club coordinators referenced the way in which *What's Cooking?* linked to the recent Licence to Cook consortium and the commitment to entitlement by the DCSF. Therefore they were very well prepared to run the clubs in order to meet this agenda.
- The Stage 3 interviews demonstrated that the clubs had helped to strengthen links with others in the community and that relationships have continued as a result. In addition, other activities have been noted to take place even after the clubs finished.

Support

- Coordinators often reported that they lacked support from others to run the club. Many relied on the goodwill of volunteers or ran the club themselves. Coordinators who received external support from experts and visitors to help deliver some sessions, found it extremely valuable. Other problems encountered in running the clubs related to the following:
 - Transport provision for participants – this meant that some participants were unable to attend as they did not have a way of getting home after the club had finished.

- Access to, or late, funding – this led to some clubs starting late
 - Lack of support – this meant that numbers of participants had to be restricted and that coordinators felt overburdened from managing the club alone.
- Support from local authorities was also reported to be mixed. Where support was offered, this was greatly appreciated. Local authority representatives who were fully involved helped to spur the clubs on and arrange meetings and events so that several clubs could share their experiences and ideas. Those who did not have support felt quite isolated and suggested it would have been useful to have support, particularly when setting up their club.

Sustainability

- Due to the popularity of the clubs, most coordinators who responded to the end of year questionnaire (38 out of 47) wanted to sustain their clubs. Indeed the interviews at Stage 3 revealed that many clubs had continued beyond the funding period. At this stage, the factors coordinators felt were responsible for sustaining the clubs were:
 - The flexibility of the programme allowing coordinators to choose their own themes, participants and settings
 - Enthusiastic volunteers and Senior Management Team support.
 - Use of existing and new community networks
 - Joining up with other initiatives
 - Acquiring a suitable venue and equipment
 - Developing enterprising ways of funding.
- Those who did not continue to run the clubs felt they did not have the time, resources or support to sustain the club and could not run it alone. Encouragingly, discontinuation was not due to a lack of interest from participants.

Conclusions and recommendations

- The overall *What's Cooking?* programme was found to be extremely flexible. This meant that:
 - Coordinators could tailor the clubs to meet their own specific aims and objectives
 - Different themes could be adopted
 - Different audiences could be targeted
 - A range of delivery methods were used
- Food competences provided a clear framework for teaching about diet, food preparation and hygiene. However, consumer awareness was taught less frequently and therefore had a weaker impact on participants.
- Support from volunteers and senior management was crucial for the success of the clubs and helped to develop community links.

- Barriers were more likely to relate to practical delivery constraints rather than a lack interest from participants
- Greatest impact related to the experience and opportunity for participants to interact with food. This led to:
 - Changed attitudes & behaviour
 - Greater willingness to try different foods
 - Development of life skills.
- Impact also extended to those beyond participants and evidence suggested that skills were being used at home. Impact also occurred for the setting, through links being built with the wider community.
- Most clubs have continued to run beyond the funding period.

The findings from the evaluation indicated that the following steps would help with the delivery of cookery clubs in the future:

- Set up support networks and cluster groups so coordinators can meet regularly to discuss issues, successes, ideas and community support.
- Consider that some clubs will be run by non-specialists, who require a greater level of support and guidance with filling in forms and running the club.
- Provide ways for new clubs to access advice from those who have run a club before.
- Provide detailed information about funding, such as timing and confirmation letters, so coordinators know when to expect it and it can be identified more easily.
- Clarify the level of support required from volunteers and provide ideas for recruiting others to help run the club.
- Offer advice and ideas on how all the core competences, particularly consumer awareness, can be delivered in a fun and enjoyable way.

1. Background

In July 2006 the Food Standards Agency (FSA), an independent Government Department, commissioned ContinYou to roll-out the *What's Cooking?* cookery clubs across the North East of England. A total of 92 *What's Cooking?* clubs took place in 12 local authorities in the North East and included secondary schools, children's homes and youth clubs. Participating organisations within each authority were given funding to run the cookery clubs outside of schools hours. The FSA provided funding and guidance materials to support the set up and implementation of the clubs.

The clubs built upon the earlier pilot, which took place in 2005 and based on its success, the Agency identified the need to provide other children and young people with the opportunity to learn more about food and develop skills across the four broad food competency areas of: diet and health, consumer awareness, food preparation and handling, and food safety. These competences would give young people aged 14-16 years the skills required to:

- be aware of the importance of following a healthy diet;
- have the necessary skills to prepare and cook healthy food;
- make more informed choices about the type of food and drink they consume;
- follow correct food hygiene and safety procedures.

The FSA commissioned EdComs to evaluate the *What's Cooking?* programme, particularly in relation to the impact it has achieved on participants and organisations involved. This report outlines the key findings from all stages of the research process.

2. Research objectives

The broad aim of this research was to evaluate the impact the *What's Cooking?* clubs had amongst a range of key audiences:

- *For students involved:*
 - Measure levels of enjoyment and satisfaction with *What's Cooking?*
 - Gauge students' understanding of the purpose and role of *What's Cooking?*
 - Explore and measure the overall impact achieved for students who have participated in *What's Cooking?* clubs in relation to the four core competences, both in the short and long term.
 - Determine the wider benefits of *What's Cooking?* for students beyond the school environment.

- Identify how the *What's Cooking?* club could be improved for students in the future.
- Identify whether any gaps in knowledge or skills exist that *What's Cooking?* could address in the future.
- *For What's Cooking? Coordinators i.e. those who are involved in organising and running the sessions*
 - Explore overall satisfaction with the *What's Cooking?* Initiative.
 - Explore views on guidance material, and provide guidance for future refinement of this material.
 - Gauge the impact of *What's Cooking?* on coordinators' skills and confidence in delivering skills required.
 - Identify any gaps in subject areas covered by clubs that would be of benefit.
 - Explore practical/logistical and attitudinal drivers and barriers to setting up and running the *What's Cooking?* clubs.
 - Determine successful strategies for setting up and running the *What's Cooking?* club.
 - Identify the perceived impact of the clubs among pupils, including take up of and response to/engagement with *What's Cooking?* among participants.
 - Identify strategies for sustaining *What's Cooking?* in the future.
- *For additional school staff:*
 - Assess the effectiveness of the process to setting up the *What's Cooking?* cookery club including identification of pupils, location and approach.
 - Identify how the process of establishing the *What's Cooking?* club impacted on the school.
 - Explore practical/logistical and attitudinal drivers and barriers related to the set up and running of Cook-it!
 - Explore any issues regarding funding, including looking at the different ways in which schools used the funding.
 - Assess how *What's Cooking?* club relates to wider school aims and policies concerning health and diet.
 - Explore perceptions of the impact of the clubs among pupils, including take up of and response to/engagement with Cook-it! among students.
 - Assess satisfaction with the funding process and level of autonomy given by the LEAs.
- *For Local Education Authorities:*
 - Explore the nature of the relationship between the Government Office Region and the LEA in relation to the *What's Cooking?* scheme
 - Assess the effectiveness of the funding process
 - Identify ways in which the funding process could be improved
 - Assess the different funding models adopted by LEAs

- Identify successful models of funding and liaison between LEAs and schools.
- *For participating parents:*
 - Explore drivers and barriers to becoming involved in *What's Cooking?*
 - Gauge levels of satisfaction and enjoyment from participating in *What's Cooking?*
 - Assess their understanding of the purpose and role of *What's Cooking?*
 - Assess the perceived value of *What's Cooking?*
 - Identify the influence of participation in *What's Cooking?* on:
 - changes in home cooking methods/procedures at home
 - changes in home/family food purchasing behaviour
 - changes in preparation and consumption of different food types
 - changes in following basic food hygiene principles
- *For external stakeholders such as local providers of food, National Healthy Schools Standards (NHSS) representatives, nutritionists, dieticians :*
 - Identify their awareness of, and role in, the *What's Cooking?* clubs
 - Assess their perceived value of *What's Cooking?* programme
 - Assess opinion on the appropriateness of the schools' approach to *What's Cooking?*
 - Explore the perceived success of *What's Cooking?* in the participating schools
 - Identify their suggested improvements to *What's Cooking?*
 - Identify how well integrated *What's Cooking?* is in relation to other healthy schools initiatives.

3. Methodology

The methodology comprised a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, as outlined below.

3.1 Qualitative research

Stages 1 and 2 comprised the following qualitative research methods:

In depth telephone interviews with Local Authority representatives

A telephone interview was conducted with a representative from six participating local authorities before the clubs were due to commence. Each interview lasted around 30 minutes.

Case study visits

Please see the appendix for a copy of the case study visit summaries. A total of 12 case study visits took place in participating schools and organisations. One visit took place in 10 local authorities and two took place in one local authority (this is because we were unable to visit a case study club in one of the other local authorities). The types of organisations visited were as follows:

- Seven secondary schools
- Two special schools
- One children's home
- One middle school
- One community centre

The following activities were undertaken during each case study visit:

- Observation of the cookery club in operation
- One to one interviews with the coordinator and individuals running the club
- A group interview with participants of the cookery club
- One to one interview with the head teacher or Senior Management Team (SMT)
- One to one interview with external representative (where applicable)

Interviews with Senior Management Teams in participating schools

A telephone interview took place with a member of the senior management team from six clubs. These were in organisations that did not take part in the case study visits. The SMT interviews took place towards the end of the school term in July.

Group discussions with coordinators from organisations not involved in the case study visits

Four group discussions took place with coordinators who had not participated in the case study visits. Two groups took place in Newcastle and two groups took place in Middlesbrough, therefore allowing access for coordinators from a range of local authorities. Each group discussion lasted around 1½ hours and took place towards the end of the programme. The local authorities represented by coordinators were:

- Middlesbrough
- Durham
- Hartlepool
- South Tyneside
- Northumberland
- Sunderland
- North Tyneside
- Redcar and Cleveland

The group discussions took place at the end of the summer term in July.

Stage 3 involved discussing the longer term impact and the sustainability of the clubs with club coordinators and local authority lead contacts.

- In-depth telephone interviews with six local authority representatives. Most of whom, had taken part in the evaluation in stage one. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes;
- In-depth telephone interviews with nine club coordinators. Nine coordinators out of the twelve that were previously interviewed during the case study visits in stage two of the evaluation. The following local authorities were involved in this stage;
 - Hartlepool
 - North Tyneside
 - Durham x 2
 - South Tyneside
 - Gateshead
 - Northumberland
 - Sunderland
 - Stockton on Tees

3.2 Quantitative research

Stages 1 and 2 comprised the following quantitative data collection methods:

Coordinators' benchmark questionnaire

A self completion benchmark questionnaire was distributed to every coordinator of the What's Cooking clubs before the clubs were due to commence. A total of 68 questionnaires were received.

Coordinators' end of year questionnaires

A self completion questionnaire was distributed to every coordinator of the What's Cooking clubs at the end of the school year 2006-2007. A total of 47 questionnaires were received. Some 17 respondents were based in Special schools. The tables below show the coordinator questionnaire sample breakdown by school type.

Table 1: Coordinator questionnaire samples by school type

School type	Benchmark	End of year
Primary / junior/ infant	7	3
Secondary	37	31
Middle	2	1
Pupil Referral Unit	2	2
Special school	17	5
Youth scheme	0	5
Children's home	0	0
Total	68	47

Participants' pre- and post-club questionnaire

A total of 13 organisations were recruited to administer pre- and post- self completion questionnaires with participants. The organisations were as follows:

- Seven secondary schools
- Two primary schools
- One Special school
- One middle school
- One children's home
- One pupil referral unit

A total of 195 pre-club and 146 post-club questionnaires were received. The pre-club questionnaires were administered before the participants commenced the programme and the post-club questionnaires were administered with participants between three and four months after they had started the programme.

The tables below show the participant pre- and post-intervention questionnaire sample breakdown by age and gender.

Table 2: Participant questionnaire samples by gender

Gender	Pre	Post
Boys	63	40
Girls	132	104
Total	195	144 (2 NA)

NB. NA indicates No Answer

Table 3: Participant questionnaire samples by age

Age	Pre	Post
7-10 years	16	10
11-13 years	142	96
14-16 years	16	22
17-18 years	2	1
19-21 years	0	1
22 + years ¹	15	7
Total	191 (4 'NA')	137 (9 'NA')

NB. NA indicates No Answer

Stage 3 also involved a third questionnaire completed by the original participants who took part in the programme during the academic year 2006/2007. The Stage 3 questionnaires were completed 5 months after finishing the original *What's Cooking?* clubs.

Quite often, when using the method of tracking surveys, the total sample size achieved is likely to decrease over time. Because the evaluation took place well over an academic year and involved young people from different settings

¹ This age group refers to parents who took part in the *What's Cooking?* clubs

it was likely to decrease due to young people leaving schools, children's homes and youth clubs. The final sample achieved for the participant final stage questionnaires during Stage 3 was 49.

3.3 Data collection and timings

The following table provides an overview of the data collection and timings for each element.

Table 4: Data collection and key timings

Research element	Key timings
Telephone depth interviews with Local authority leads	September 2006
Coordinator benchmark questionnaires	September 2006
Participant pre-intervention questionnaires	October 2006 to February 2007
Participant post-intervention questionnaires	March to June 2007
Case study visits	April to June 2007
Group discussions with coordinators	July 2007
Telephone interviews with SMT	July 2007
Coordinator end of year questionnaires	July 2007
Stage 3 telephone depth interviews with Local authority leads	November & December, 2007
Stage 3 telephone depth interviews with case study club coordinators	November & December, 2007
Participant final questionnaires	November & December, 2007

3.4 Quantitative Reporting

With the exception of the coordinators' end of year questionnaire, all data is reported as percentages. Due to the low base size of the coordinator questionnaire (47 responses) the data from these has been reported according to the number of respondents. This is also referenced in chart and table titles throughout the report.

Due to the low response rate achieved for the third round of participant questionnaires it is difficult to draw reliable comparisons and conclusions about the longer term impact on participants. However, the data gives an indication towards a sustained impact. Findings have been reported where the data indicates a sustained impact. This data is provided in Section 5 of this report.

Significant differences between sub-groups are reported at both 95% and 99% confidence levels, as marked with asterisks (*for 95% and ** for 99%) in the body of the report.²

4. Main findings

4.1 Setting up the cookery clubs

4.1.1 Motivations for becoming involved

Nearly all coordinators reported that the main aim of running the clubs was to provide an opportunity for young people to become involved in cooking food. Many coordinators also agreed that the sessions had to be fun and enjoyable for participants and encourage them to have a greater interaction with food.

'[The aim was] to raise awareness of food as a subject. This was our idea of putting the fun back into food and teaching them the basics without realising it'.

'One of the main focuses was to let them try new food. Things they don't get at home'.

[Coordinators]

Indeed, coordinators expressed how important it was to young people to learn how to cook and almost all of participants who completed the pre-club questionnaires (96%) thought that learning about preparing and cooking food was either very/quite important.

For those in Special schools and children's homes, the coordinators also commented that they wanted to help young people develop independent living skills. In particular, they wanted to help young people learn how to cook proper meals and gain confidence with using potentially dangerous equipment such as ovens and knives.

In addition to developing skills in young people, the cookery clubs were seen to be an important way of helping schools to address components of the Every Child Matters agenda, particularly being healthy, staying safe skills for life and enjoyment and achievement. Respondents who took part in senior management interviews also agreed that the cookery clubs helped to support schools National Healthy Schools Status (NHSS) and apply for higher level awards such as the Silver and Bronze awards.

A couple of coordinators, interviewed as part of the qualitative research, from schools and organisations that already had an existing cookery club reported

² Confidence levels indicate the likelihood that differences are statistically significant or 'real'. At the 95% confidence level, there is a 5% chance that reported differences are attributable to sampling error and therefore not 'real', while at the 99% level, there is a 1% chance that differences are attributable to sampling error.

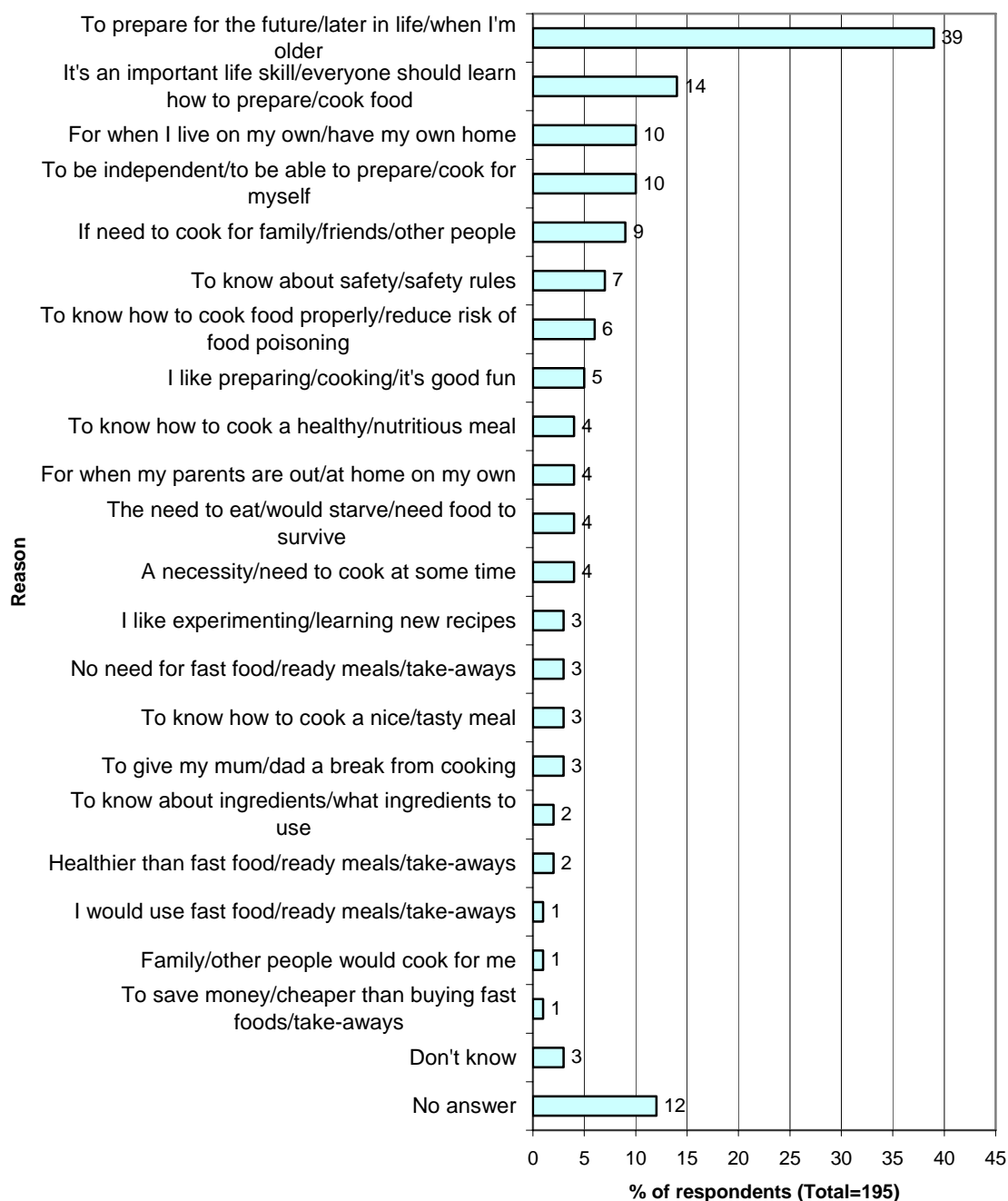
that their involvement helped to provide a proper structure to the club and often enabled them to expand it so that a greater number of young people could take part.

Overall, it was evident from the evaluation that most clubs were set up by an individual who was very enthusiastic and keen to provide the opportunity for young people to cook.

The expectations of the participants reflected those noted by the coordinators. Findings from the pre-club questionnaire highlighted that almost a third of participants thought that the club would cover the practical activity of 'cooking'. Of those participants who stated what they wanted to learn, 26% wanted to learn to cook, 16% wanted to learn how to cook different types of food/meals and 8% wanted to learn how to cook healthy meals.

The chart overleaf indicates the participants' reasons for why it is important to prepare and cook food.

Chart 1: Reasons for perceived importance of learning how to prepare and cook food (pre club)

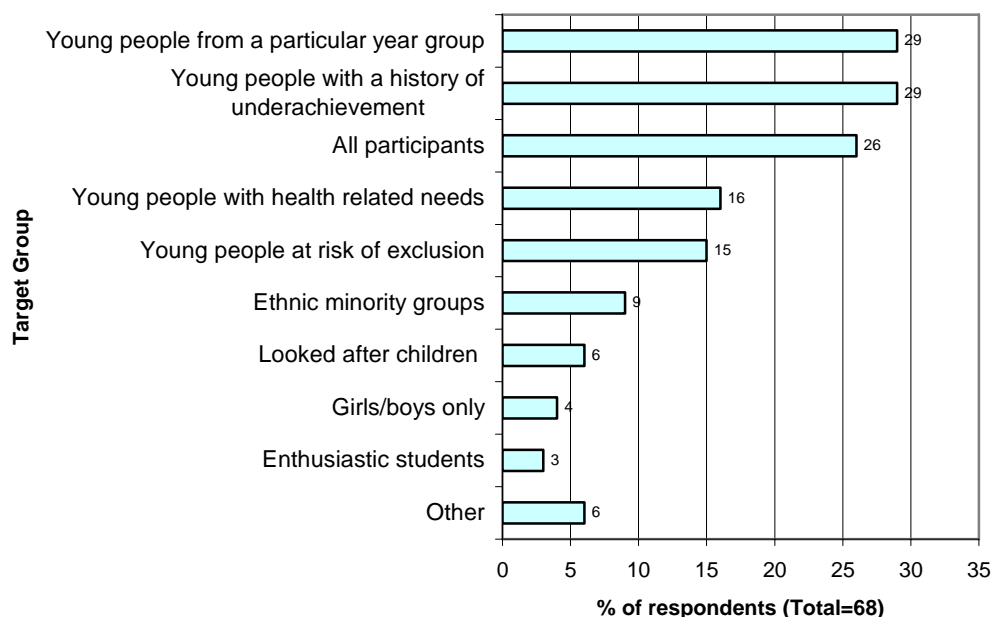


The most important reasons all focused around the practicalities of independent living and preparing for their future. The top three reasons were: 'that it was important for their future/when they were older' (39%), 'It is an important life skill/everyone should learn' (14%), 'For when I live on my own' and 'To be independent' (10% each).

4.1.2 Recruiting and targeting participants

Many coordinators also indicated that they wanted to target specific groups of young people who they felt would benefit from taking part. The chart below indicates the groups which coordinators planned to target through the club.

Chart 2: Groups to be targeted through the cooking club (coordinator benchmark questionnaire)



The chart shows that there were different groups which were targeted through the club. Over a quarter (29%) indicated that young people from a particular year group would be targeted and the same proportion also indicated that they would target young people with a history of underachievement. Around a quarter of respondents stated that they would target all participants. It was less likely for coordinators to state that they would target according to ethnicity or gender.

Coordinators gave reasons for targeting particular groups of young people who they wanted to participate in the clubs.

To provide access to healthy food – *‘We targeted the vulnerable ones, you only have to look at them really to tell if they have healthy food at home. We focused on the ones who would benefit most’.*

To encourage participation in after school activities – *‘Mine was to hook onto the disaffected kids in our school, to show them other things they could do after school’.*

To be able to offer intense work with young people who need more help – *‘Some of the Special Educational Needs kids who had difficulties’.*

in the lessons, I didn't feel I could give them the proper time to in the lesson which were more impersonal. After school you can give them more time and build relationships'.

To provide increased experience for those who are interested in a career related to food – *'we targeted more able and gifted students who had already chosen it as a career direction and were passionate about food'.*

[Coordinators]

Many of the coordinators reported that they offered the club to anyone who was interested and were very surprised at the level of interest shown by students. This often led to an oversubscription and consequently coordinators had to select young people to take part. Coordinators appeared to be quite creative in the selection process and some stated that they asked young people to take part in a proper selection process whereby application letters were submitted and interviews took place. Coordinators felt this added quite a lot of credence to the clubs. Some coordinators tried to address the level of popularity and created a rotation system which meant they could offer it to a larger number of participants. However, many commented that they were only able to offer it to a small number of participants; this was due to certain constraints such as limited space, equipment and staffing.

Overall, the findings indicate that the nature of the cookery clubs enabled all young people to take part and that it would not be restricted by ability or level of interest. Indeed, many coordinators noted the positive impact the club had on those young people who were usually lacking in motivation (please refer to Section 4.6.10 for more details).

4.1.3 Deciding on club themes

In addition to the themes of healthy eating and cooking, many coordinators indicated that the club would adopt a certain theme or focus. The benchmark questionnaire data indicated the following were popular themes which coordinators intended to cover:

- International food or food from around the world
- Cooking for an event
- Food competences
- Cooking for different groups of people and in the community
- Themes relating to the time of year e.g. Christmas, Easter
- Healthier fast food e.g. healthy pizzas, healthy fish fingers, healthy burgers
- Five-a-day.

Coordinators who developed a theme for the cookery clubs commented that it helped to give them a focus on the types of food that were prepared. In addition, for those in Special schools and clubs which included primary participants, the theme gave a focus for curriculum topics such as studying lifestyles in different countries.

4.2 Running the cookery clubs

4.2.1 Setting up and club formats

Most coordinators (32 out of 47) reported that they ran one club throughout the year. Six stated that they ran two clubs and four ran three clubs. Coordinators were less likely to run more than three clubs.

Most coordinators (38 out of 47) reported that they ran the clubs once a week. Two respondents stated that they ran their club once a fortnight and four respondents ran it once a month. One respondent ran the club once a term. There were also two respondents who ran their cookery club as a one-off event. The data from the questionnaire indicates that most clubs took place from November 2006 to May 2007.

The majority of clubs (41 out of 47) took place after school. Respondents also stated that clubs took place at weekends (five clubs), schools holidays (two clubs) or during lunch time (one club) and the data indicated that the clubs were not restricted to one certain time. Seven respondents stated that their clubs took place in curriculum time; these were mainly Special schools. A total of 43 out of 47 clubs took place in the school and five clubs took place in an out of school setting.

The table below outlines the ages of the participants who took part in the clubs, as reported by the coordinators.

Table 5: Age of participants involved in the clubs (end of year coordinator questionnaire reported as number of respondents)

Age of participant	Number of respondents (total 47)
Under 11 years	7
11-12 years	29
13-14 years	34
15-16 years	19
17-18 years	7
18+	4
Parents and family members	6
No answer	3

The table shows that coordinators were most likely to identify that 11-14 year olds were involved. A lower number of coordinators indicated that participants were aged 18 and over and six clubs included parents or family members.

4.2.2 Type of activities undertaken

The type of activities that participants mainly spoke of were the practical cookery tasks. This led them to have a strong recall of particular recipes they made as well as the experience of tasting new foods and drinks. The following

types of activities that form the cooking process were recalled by the participants during the case study visits:

- Choosing ingredients and recipes (dietary needs, ingredients/where foods come from, recipe alternatives)
- Buying foods (supermarket visits and food budgeting)
- Preparing foods (food safety and hygiene, chopping skills)
- Cooking (cooking methods and using different equipment and utensils)
- Serving foods and tasting/eating (sitting down as a group to eat the food they had prepared and made)

There was a wide variation in the types of food cooked in the clubs. Some of the common foods were:

- Pasta dishes
- Pizzas and pizza breads
- Meat and vegetable stir fries
- Healthy fast food e.g. fish fingers, chicken nuggets, burgers
- Fishcakes
- Vegetable and Meat kebabs
- Fruit kebabs
- Muffins and biscuits
- Smoothies

The participant questionnaire findings revealed that the main activities that were remembered by participants were 'making and tasting smoothies' (18%), 'eating and tasting food and drink' (16%), 'cooking and learning to cook' (14%), 'working as a group/making friends' and 'making a cake/cakes' and 'making curry' (each cited by 10%).

The post-intervention questionnaire also revealed that over a third of participants (38%) had been surprised about the activities they had taken part in. The main surprises noted were how nice the food was (5%), how enjoyable it had been (4%) and how well participants had cooked/made successful recipes (3%).

4.2.3 Models of running the club

It is important to note the cookery club coordinators varied in role and expertise in delivering cooking sessions with young people. Some were specialist food teachers or had catering experience, while others considered themselves to be non-specialists e.g. other teachers, youth workers or extended schools managers, who did not have experience of teaching about cooking. This affected the way in which the clubs were implemented and the support required in running the clubs.

Overall, coordinators were very positive about the level of autonomy they were given to run their club and agreed that this was a key strength. The

flexibility meant that a range of cookery club approaches have developed and that schools/organisations could run a club according to their own needs.

'The very few restrictions was a good thing. You weren't tied down to schemes of work. You can be creative'

Many appreciated the way in which the flexibility created cooking clubs with a relaxed and informal environment where young people wanted to learn about cooking and food. Overall, coordinators also felt it was very important that the clubs were not an extension of regular lessons and wanted them to be kept informal.

'If you make it too obvious you are going back to teaching and it's a lesson and you lose your fun'

[Coordinator]

The following models are those which appeared to be successful and could be replicated by others who wish to organise a cookery club:

Extended schools model

This was the most common model, whereby the club is offered as an 'after school' activity, which forms part of a school's Extended services activities. The cookery club can be one of many activities on offer to young people. This model helped coordinators to identify a role for the cookery club beyond the funding period by incorporating the funding required into Extended schools budget.

Primary to secondary school transition model

In some cases secondary schools used existing partnerships between schools, and offered the cookery club to primary schools as part of their primary transition project. This model worked either by secondary students running cookery clubs in the primary schools or the primary students attending the cookery club in the secondary schools. This appeared to provide many benefits for the schools involved: students became familiar with secondary school environments, relationships between older and younger pupils were developed and links between schools strengthened. In addition, it helped to embed healthy eating messages to younger students.

Enterprise model

This model involved participants cooking food for a café or 'after school' club. The food cooked was sold to others taking part in after school activities or to young people, members of the community or teachers using the café. This approach helped the club to feel very realistic for participants, taught other skills such as presentation of food and customer service. The income from the food sold was then reinvested back into the club, therefore helping with its sustainability.

Using school caterer

This model was less common and devolved the responsibility of the club to the school catering manager or staff. This sometimes meant that the cookery club took place in a working kitchen where the only equipment available were large pots and pans which were used for catering for large groups. However, the benefit of this was that the cookery club was being delivered by a catering expert and provided access to basic ingredients through wholesalers, therefore cutting the cost of purchasing food for the club.

Using a local catering college

This model was also very uncommon but appeared to be successful. This model comprised the use of a local FE college, which has proper catering facilities in a learning environment. Young people attended the college once a week after school and undertook a course run by a qualified catering teacher. The benefit of this model was, again, that the course is being run by an expert but the downside was that the funds and spaces were limited, and it was less likely for the club to be sustainable over time with out external funding. In addition, it meant that young people had to make their own way to the college rather than it being held in their own setting.

Involving parents and family members

Some clubs invited in parents and family members to actually take part in the club. The advantage of this model was that there were more adults to support supervise and encourage healthy messages to be taken back to the home. In addition, this model helped to build better relationships between parents and the school and created an informal, less threatening environment for parents who were reluctant to come into the school. The other benefit of this model was that it provided opportunities for parents and children to work together and allowed parents to see their children develop cooking skills.

4.2.4 Other activities and events

Many coordinators mentioned other activities that took place during the course of the cookery clubs. The aim of these activities was to offer a varied content to the club as well as provide participants with different experiences. The activities that took place included the following:

Visits from experts

- Visits from experts such as local chefs and caterers to demonstrate and support the preparation of different dishes.
- Visits from specialised roadshows such as ‘the pizza maker’, ‘the Smoothie Road Show’ and ‘the Junk Food Roadshow’.
- Visits from food hygiene assessor to deliver Basic Food Hygiene Certificate course.

Visits out

- Visits to restaurants to show young people foods cooked in restaurants, develop social skills and partnerships.
- Visits to grocers, market gardens, allotments and supermarkets to show participants how to choose foods and the variety of foods available during different seasons.

- Residential visits to professional catering schools.

In-house events

- Competitions between participants such as 'Ready Steady Cook' and 'Cook offs'.
- Evening meal events where parents, older people, volunteers or members of the community were invited as guests to have a special meal prepared for them.
- Events where students were invited in from primary schools, such as a children's party for Year 6 transition students.
- Charity events where different foods were cooked and sold to raise money for different charities as well as the cooking club.
- Meals for the participants to mark special occasions such as celebration events and Christmas meals.
- The set up of coffee shops and cafes to raise money from the food cooked and to help sustain the club.

Coordinators reported that offering these events helped to sustain interest and engagement with young people, as well as give them a sense of achievement. In addition, many coordinators indicated that the clubs offered more to participants than just cooking food; it also helped the participants to gain the social experience of meal times, serving and eating together.

'It makes it more real because you make real meals and eat them, so it's social as well.'

'They are sitting around a table and not eating from a tray'

[Coordinators]

4.2.4 Use of Radiowaves

The What's Cooking clubs were offered a special package from Radiowaves, which comprised audio recording equipment, training and software. The Radiowaves package was designed to be used to document participants' experiences of the What's Cooking club as well as encourage research/interviews with others about the club and healthy eating. Seven out of the 47 end of year questionnaire respondents indicated that they had taken part in Radiowaves. Of these, six reported that their participants found it very or quite enjoyable and only one reported that it was not enjoyable. The qualitative feedback from coordinators and club participants who took part in Radiowaves was largely positive.

'It's quite straightforward. You get a mic [sic] and software and someone trained. We're using it for jingles and what's coming up. It's put on the intranet'

'We're trying to stop the other departments hijacking it! they love it, they pick the jingle and come out with rap songs...and when someone'

*comes into the cooking club they are interviewed on the school radio.
They do like it'*

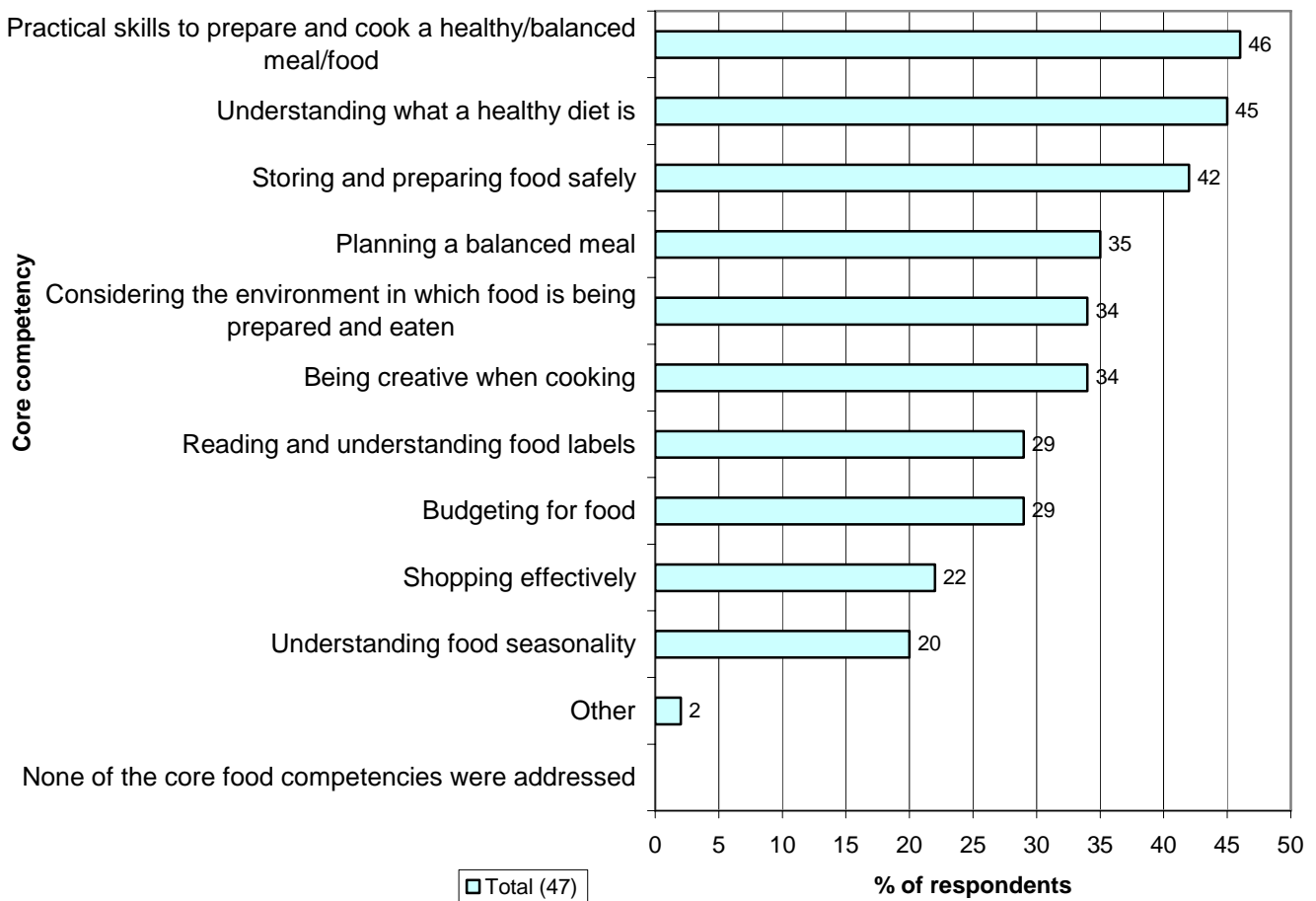
[Coordinators]

For those who were not involved, they reported that they found it quite expensive, although they could have been misled by thinking they had to pay the regular package price.

4.3 Delivering the core food competences

The following chart indicates the range of core food competences which have been covered in the cookery clubs.

Chart 3: Coverage of core food competences in the cookery clubs (Coordinator end of year questionnaire as reported in number of respondents)



The chart shows that food preparation and handling skills, diet and health and food hygiene were covered by most clubs. It also shows that it was less likely for skills relating to consumer awareness to be covered in the club. This was also evident in the discussions with coordinators and participants, which is outlined in subsequent sections in this report.

There was evidence from discussions with coordinators to demonstrate that the core food competences were taught through the cookery clubs. In the main, coordinators had developed ways to deliver the core competences implicitly and stressed the importance again that delivery did not feel like a standard lesson to participants.

'It was difficult. We had a chat around the table; I didn't want to give homework. You've only got two hours anyway. I tried to talk about it during demonstrations'

'I've tried to keep away from board activities and to make it like a lesson because they are giving up their own time and it won't go down that well'

[Coordinators]

Coordinators discussed the way in which the food competences were covered during the clubs, which are evidenced below.

Food hygiene and safety

In all cases the core competences in relation to food and hygiene and safety, were covered in each lesson, e.g. by coordinators ensuring participants followed basic food hygiene rules and safety procedures every time they attend.

'When the students come to the club now, they instinctively come in and wash their hands, tie their hair back and get their aprons on'

Some coordinators also brought in food hygiene 'experts' to discuss the principles of food hygiene and some participants took the basic food hygiene certificate course.

Food preparation and handling skills

This competency was also covered through the delivery of the clubs. Coordinators tried to cook different dishes each week and use different cooking methods. The practical nature of the cookery clubs meant that participants were handling food and preparing dishes themselves. The coordinators reported that the funding also enabled them to purchase ingredients they would not normally be able to buy through their regular budgets. This allowed participants to experience cooking dishes with different ingredients.

'We covered unusual ingredients, such as working with fish...also herbs and species'

'The funding enabled us to buy more luxury foods'

[Coordinators]

Consumer awareness

The findings indicated that some aspects of consumer awareness were less likely to be addressed through the clubs. Many stated that they discussed seasonality and food miles but other aspects such as budgeting and labelling were more difficult.

'We struggled with labelling but the rest were fine'

'They prefer the practical work but I found it difficult fitting everything in'

[Coordinators]

Some coordinators had developed games and activities to help participants learn about labelling and pricing and these appeared to be successful in engaging young people, particularly those which they could relate back to the foods/dishes they eat.

'I did a logo competition; they had to identify the product. It addressed consumerism'

'We talked about how far a banana had to fly, they enjoyed that'

'We gave them a challenge to buy and produce a healthy lunchbox for £5 but they had to get the cost as low as they could'.

Some coordinators also covered the price differences between 'take away' food and food prepared using fresh ingredients to show participants the difference in cost. In addition, there were a few cases where the cooking club was part of a wider programme and participants could make posters advertising their food.

Diet and Health

This competency was also integrated into the cookery sessions. Coordinators reported that they discussed with participants the importance of eating healthy food and ensured that the types of food cooked contained healthy ingredients or cooked using healthier methods. Some coordinators invited in visitors, e.g. one invited a representative from the Primary Care Trust, to talk to participants about eating a balanced diet.

'We had a food and nutrition lady in and they were fascinated by what she told them. It is raising awareness'

[Coordinator]

4.4 Support received in delivering the cookery clubs

The table overleaf indicates the support coordinators received from different individuals to help them run the club.

Table 6: Support received in running the clubs and usefulness of this support (Coordinator end of year questionnaire reported as number of respondents)

Support	Number of respondents (Total 47)	Number of respondents (Useful)
School support staff e.g. classroom assistant	22	20
Other school staff	18	16
Food technology technician	14	14
Local Healthy Schools Coordinator	13	7
ContinYou	13	9
Local nutritionist / dietician	12	11
Professional chef	12	9
Another coordinator	11	11
Parents and carers	10	9
Local supermarket / food supplier	9	4
School catering staff	5	4
Older students /young people	5	1
Staff from other schools/centres	4	4
Professional caterer	4	3
Youth support workers	3	3
School nurse	3	3
Community centre staff	1	1
Care staff	1	1
Other	7	6
No answer	4	NA

The table shows that most support was sourced from other staff within the school or organisation. Just over a quarter of coordinators stated that they received external support from local Healthy Schools coordinators, a local nutritionist, a dietician and a professional chef. Just over quarter (13 out of 47) also indicated that they received support from ContinYou.

Those who had support from school staff, including support staff and food technology technicians, found this support most useful. Interestingly, all coordinators who used another coordinator for support found this useful. This indicates the value of bringing coordinators together to provide mutual support.

4.4.1 Support from volunteers to run the cookery club

In some cases, volunteers were brought in to help with preparing food and helping participants to cook. These were often other staff members, parents or a family member such as an older son or daughter. However, in most cases coordinators found it difficult to receive support from other staff in school and consequently ran the club alone.

'I have done it myself, staying after school until 6pm but other people can't or wont commit to that'.

[Coordinator]

4.4.2 Support from ContinYou

The awareness days provided by ContinYou were said to be useful. However, some of the non-specialists would have liked these days to focus on how to actually set up the clubs as they felt they had limited knowledge about cooking as well as implementation. Coordinators felt that ContinYou provided information and support when asked and offered 'reactive' support when queries were submitted. The type of support that was sought by coordinators mainly related to completing termly forms, namely that they were complicated and needed to be submitted too frequently.

Coordinators mentioned that the guide was useful, particularly for those who had limited knowledge on food and cooking. They felt it contained a good level of information required to set up a club.

'I grabbed a few ideas from it, if you didn't want to spend a lot of time, it was all there for you'

'It was a good foundation to start off with'

[Coordinators]

4.4.3 Support from Local Authority leads

There was a variation in the nature and level of involvement of the local authority leads. The local authority leads who adopted a 'hands on' approach appeared to fully support schools in setting up their What's Cooking? club. A good model of local authority support includes:

- setting up a cluster group
- visiting schools
- helping coordinators to complete the action plans
- organising celebration events and competitions.
- encourage involvement from the wider community such as local restaurants, supermarkets and food suppliers.

Other leads appeared to have taken a 'light touch' approach and only made themselves available for advice to coordinators about setting up, and accessing funding for, the What's Cooking? club. The leads also saw it as their role to set up What's Cooking? hubs and

Where support from Local Authority leads was provided, it was greatly appreciated. Coordinators from areas where support was provided felt that this had been invaluable and had helped the clubs in their area to gather momentum. In addition Coordinators found it useful to meet on a regular basis as this helped to:

- Discuss problems encountered and how these could be overcome
- Identify partners in the local area and share contact details of visitors
- Share ideas and successful strategies

- Arrange community wide events and competitions between clubs
- Provide support and information for filling in forms.

Indeed, those coordinators who did not receive support stated that this would have been useful to them.

'I don't know of anyone else in [region] engaged in this, I felt quite isolated like we are doing our own thing.'

'You need someone to get in touch with all the other clubs and see what they are doing and then have meetings and feedback'

[Coordinators]

4.4.4 Support in the future

Coordinators suggested that it would also be useful to also have detailed case studies on how cookery clubs have been implemented in other schools or even to meet other coordinators to hear their experiences and ask questions. This is particularly needed for those who are non-specialists. A smaller number of coordinators wanted greater support to help them make the most of Extended schools partnerships and other initiatives. Setting up cluster networks would be useful for future clubs so that clubs in each area can share experiences and ideas as well as offer each other support.

4.5 Problems encountered in delivering the cookery club

Overall, the delivery of the cookery clubs often appeared to rely on an enterprising and dedicated member of staff who gave up their own time. While there was a great deal of enthusiasm shown, it meant that running the club was a burdensome task. However, there was a sense that the level of effort and time put into running the clubs was worthwhile.

'It's the hardest and most rewarding thing I have ever done'

'Even if you don't feel like teaching it at the end of a long day, seeing those children all ready to cook motivates you'

[Coordinators]

The problems encountered by coordinators mainly related to resources either in the form of staff, funding or equipment to run the club:

- **Finding staff and volunteers to deliver of the club**

Some coordinators reported that they found it difficult to recruit other dedicated volunteers to take part as it relied on individuals to give up their own time.

'I would have liked more help. Asking people to stay in their own time is hard, it was just me, I was responsible for everything'.

Some coordinators also reported that recruitment of volunteers was difficult because of the CRB checks that needed to take place, which delayed their involvement.

- **Transport**

Lack of transport was sometimes highlighted as a problem. This was mainly an issue for clubs based in semi-rural or rural areas and special schools, where young people rely on specially organised transport to take them home from school. Coordinators commented that this limited access to the club for those participants whose parents could not pick them up.

'We considered transport because they all get transported to and from school. There's no funding for being dropped off, so we had to target those who had someone pick them up. Quiet a few slipped through the net'.

'Transport is a problem being in a semi-rural area, school buses go home at a certain time so you have to make arrangements. Although parents are invited to attend, a lot don't want to.'

[Coordinators]

- **Access to funding**

The findings from the coordinators' questionnaire indicated that 40 out of 47 respondents were dissatisfied with the programme's funding methods. Some coordinators mentioned that it was difficult to access the funding provided to run the clubs. Funds were reported to be late and/or difficult to source through bursars and coordinators had to call their local authority to chase funding codes and timings. They agreed that it would be useful if they received a letter stating when the funding would be paid into the school system and the code it would be given so it was easier to identify it. Coordinators also requested to have the whole funding up front rather than in stages as this helped to meet large costs required at the beginning of the club, for example buying equipment and arranging venues.

- **Participant numbers**

As mentioned previously the number of participants subscribing to take part in the club sometimes proved to be problematic. Coordinators mentioned that they felt it was important to keep the club to a manageable size, otherwise it can become unwieldy and loses impact. However, they agreed that this also depended on the type of facilities and adults available.

4.6 Impact on participants

Overall, the findings indicate that the cookery clubs have had an extremely positive effect on participants. Participants have demonstrated a range of outcomes relating to cooking skills and healthy eating. In addition, a range of social outcomes have been noted as a result of participation in the clubs.

4.6.1 The cookery club experience

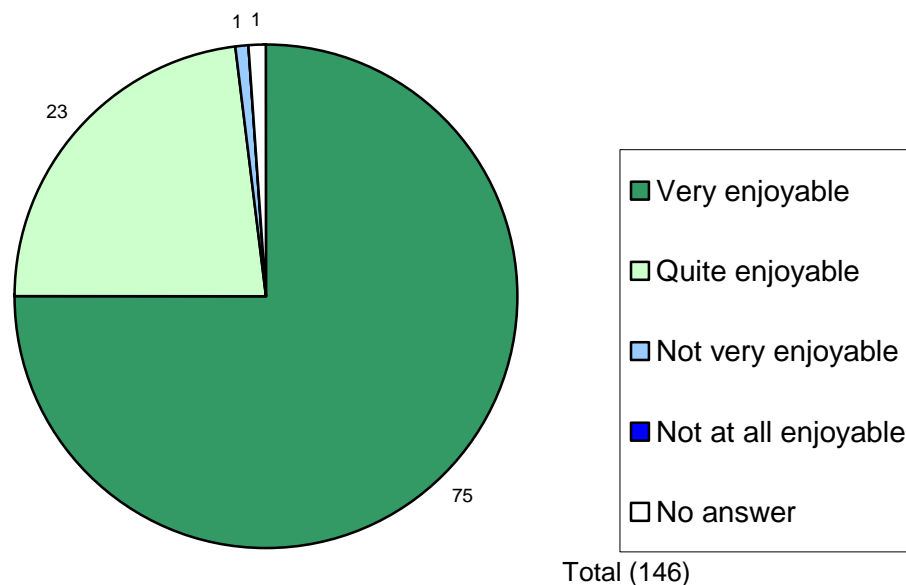
Overall, the interaction with food was seen to be the most enjoyable aspect and had a very strong influence in encouraging young people to become more interested in food.

'For me, you hear on the television and in the newspaper "my child won't eat healthy food", but they will try it if you are enthusiastic about it and they are involved in preparing it. They are learning without realising and it's fun.'

[Coordinator]

The chart below indicates the level of enjoyment experienced by participants of the cookery clubs.

Chart 4: Participants' enjoyment of being involved in the What's Cooking? Club (post club)



Almost all participants who completed the post club surveys (98%) said that they had found the club very or quite enjoyable, with over three quarters stating that it was very enjoyable. Discussions with participants revealed that they particularly enjoyed being able to cook for themselves and then taste the foods they had made each week either as a group or by taking home the dishes they had made. They also really enjoyed socialising and getting to know other participants in the group.

'It's been really good, fun and you get to learn how to cook which will help later on in life'.

'It's nice to be at school, cooking and having a laugh too'.

[Secondary school participant]

Many club coordinators and members of school senior management teams commented on the level of commitment displayed by participants. They had been impressed that most participants returned each week and felt this demonstrated their true commitment. This was particularly important in clubs with participants who had school attendance problems and/or learning and behavioural difficulties.

'The participants have absolutely loved it, they've even wanted to come in during the school holidays and that's something. They've enjoyed the responsibility and the credit they've been given'.

[Primary club coordinator]

'It's something to do, somewhere to go after school'.

[Secondary school participant]

Young people who participated also appreciated that they did not have to pay to take part and saw this as a positive aspect of the club. They compared the club favorably to other cooking sessions they had taken part in at school.

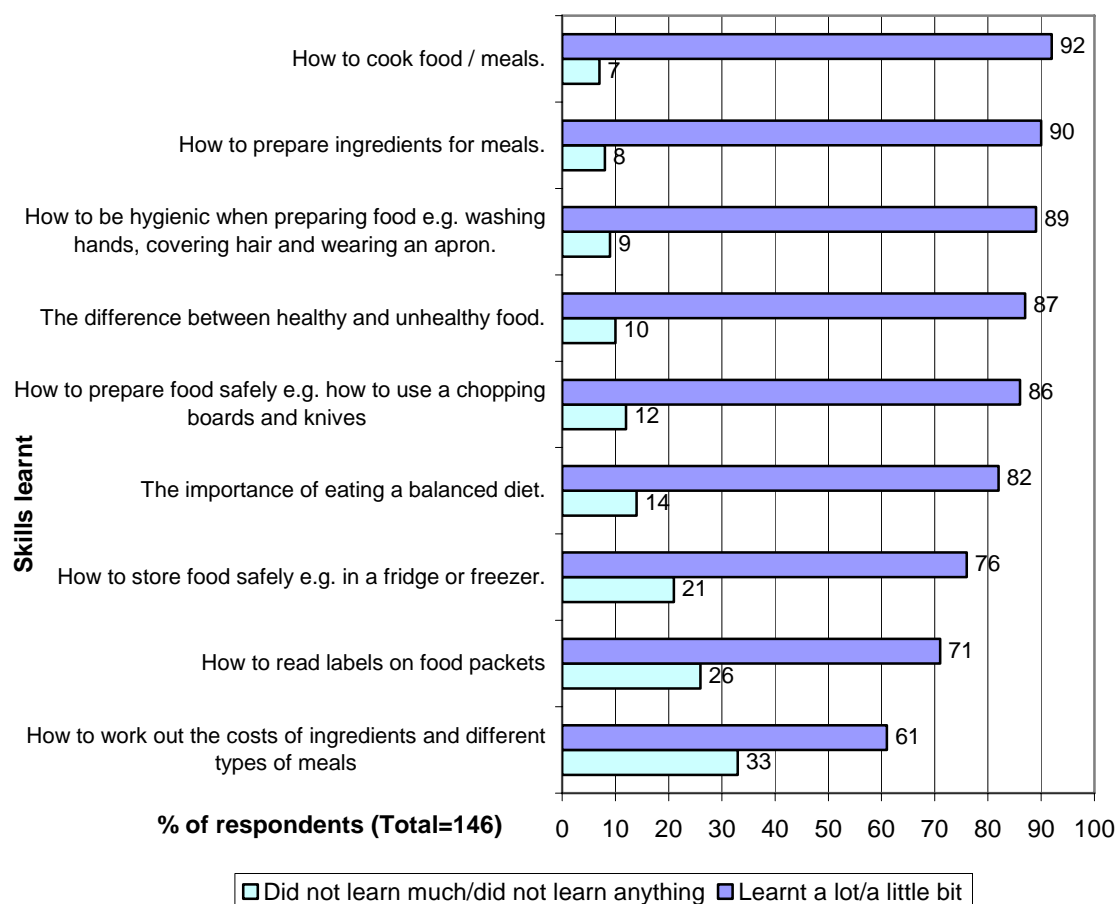
'You get to make a range of different meals that you can take home and it doesn't cost anything. That's one of the main things that I liked because it was free. When you're in school you have to bring your own ingredients or you're given them and so you know what you're making. Here it's different'.

[Secondary school participant]

4.6.2 Overall impact in relation to the core food competences

The chart overleaf indicates the core food competency skills participants felt they had developed through the cookery clubs.

Chart 5: Skills which participants felt that they had learnt since participating in the clubs (post club)



The chart shows that in most cases learning outcomes have been achieved in relation to all of the core food competences. Indeed, over 80% of participants stated that they had learnt how to cook food, prepare ingredients, how to be hygienic and how to prepare food safely. In addition a majority also felt they had learnt about diet and health such as the difference between healthy and unhealthy food and the importance of eating a balanced diet. A lower proportion of participants indicated that they had learnt a little or a lot about food storage, labeling or costing. This is not surprising since these aspects of the core food competences were less likely to be covered in the cookery club sessions.

In addition, coordinators were asked to state their target participants' current knowledge and understanding relating to the core food competences both at the beginning and towards the end of the clubs. The following table shows the difference in knowledge and understanding at these two points in time.

Table 7: Coordinators' rating of participants' knowledge and understanding of the core food competences.

Participants' current knowledge and understanding of...	Very good or quite good Average score (coordinator benchmark questionnaire)	Very good or quite good Average score (coordinator end of year questionnaire)
What a healthy diet is	2.23	3.43
Food hygiene	2.31	3.43
Food safety e.g. storing and preparing food safely	2.05	3.20
How to read and understand food labels	1.55	2.85
When particular foods are in season	1.64	2.58
The comparative costs of different foods	1.50	2.82

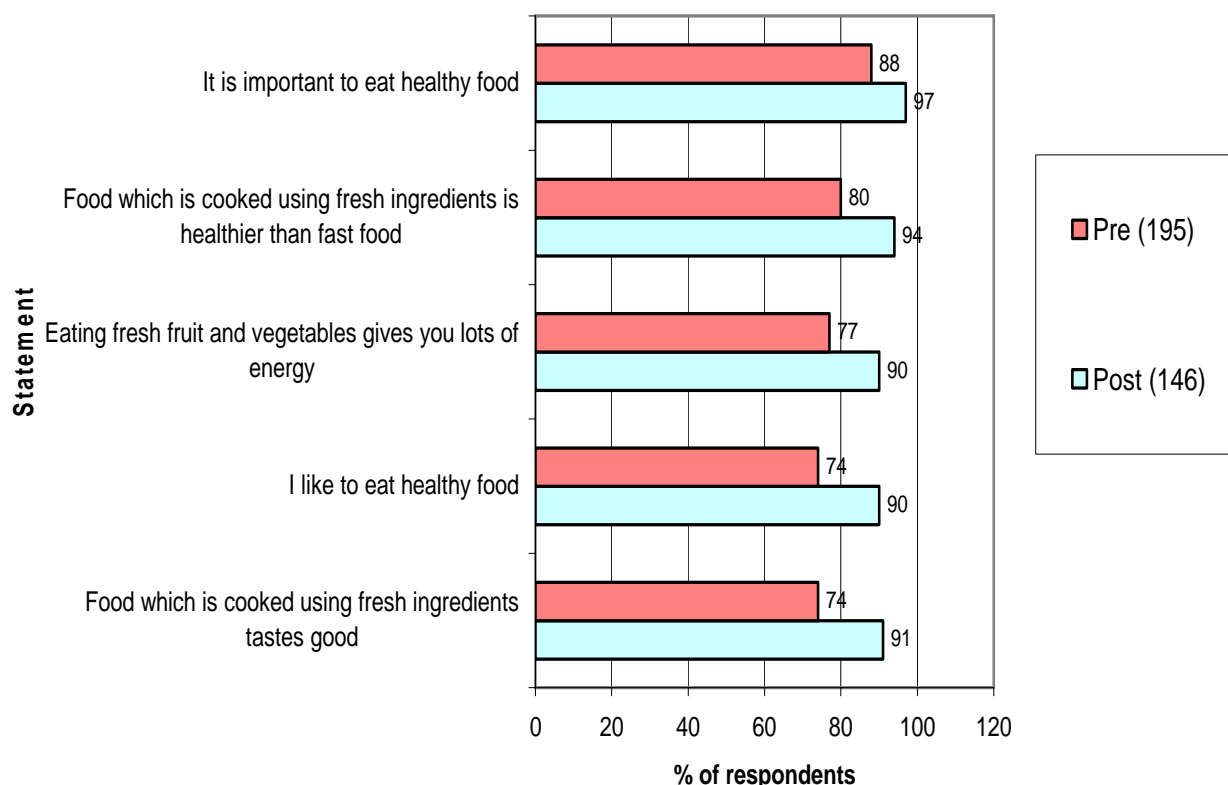
NB. Due to the difference in base sizes, the data in this table has been reported using average scores (a score has been applied to each rating, from very good = 4 to very poor = 1). This allows for comparisons to be reported between the two datasets.

The table shows that coordinators were more likely to rate their participants' knowledge as very good or good on all aspects of the core food competences at the end of year stage.

4.6.3 Overall impact on diet and health

The chart overleaf indicates the extent to which participants agreed with attitudes towards healthy cooking and eating.

Chart 6: Participants who strongly agreed or agreed with statements about healthy food (pre and post club)



The data in the chart above shows that there was a significant increase** in the proportion of participants who either strongly agreed or agreed with all the statements above about healthy food from their pre-club to post-club experience (except 'It is important to eat healthy food'). This indicates that the cookery club had a positive impact on attitudes towards eating healthy foods and using fresh ingredients. The greatest increase was in relation to views on the taste of food that has been cooked with fresh ingredients (74% pre versus 91% post).

Many participants also showed a strong awareness of the importance of healthy eating during the case study visit discussions.

'I think it's really important because if you don't you just have processed foods and they're not as healthy for you'

'If you don't make something yourself you don't know what's in it'
[Primary school participants]

'If you just eat unhealthy food then you get fat'

'Healthy cooking and eating is very important because you learn things for when you're older and maybe when you are a parent you can then make a variety of things for your children'

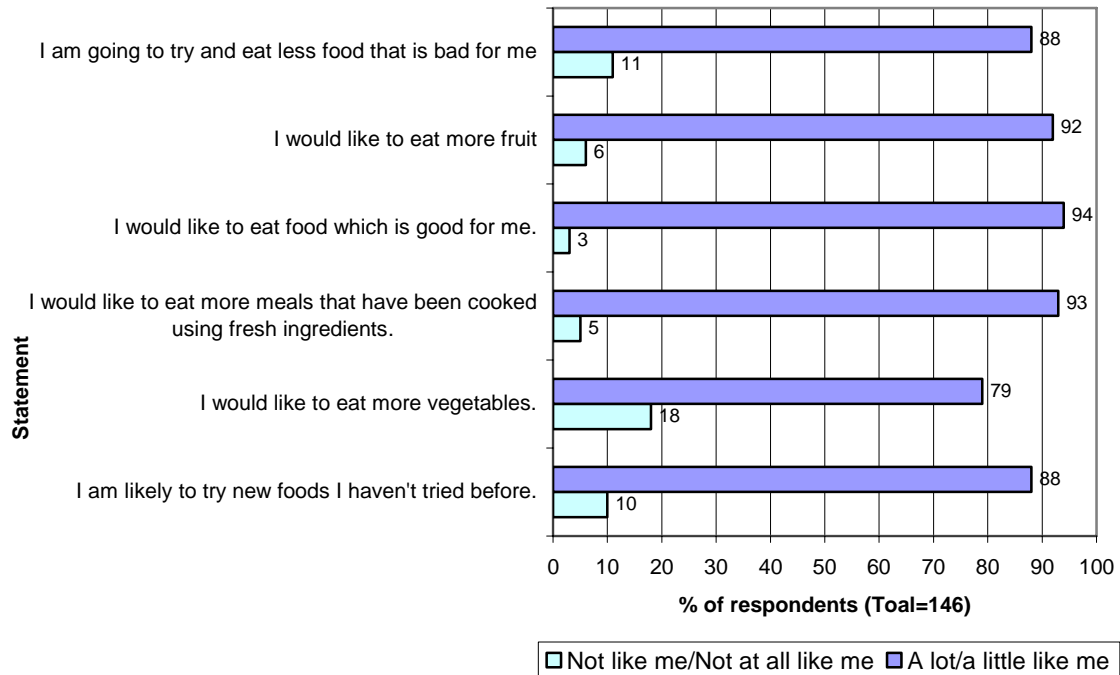
'If you ate chocolate all the time it would make you ill, it's about a balanced diet and that is when you don't have too much of the same thing, so it's all about five a day and all that'

[Secondary school participants]

4.6.4 Impact on attitudes towards food

Following their involvement in the club, participants were asked to state their attitudes towards different eating habits as shown in the chart below.

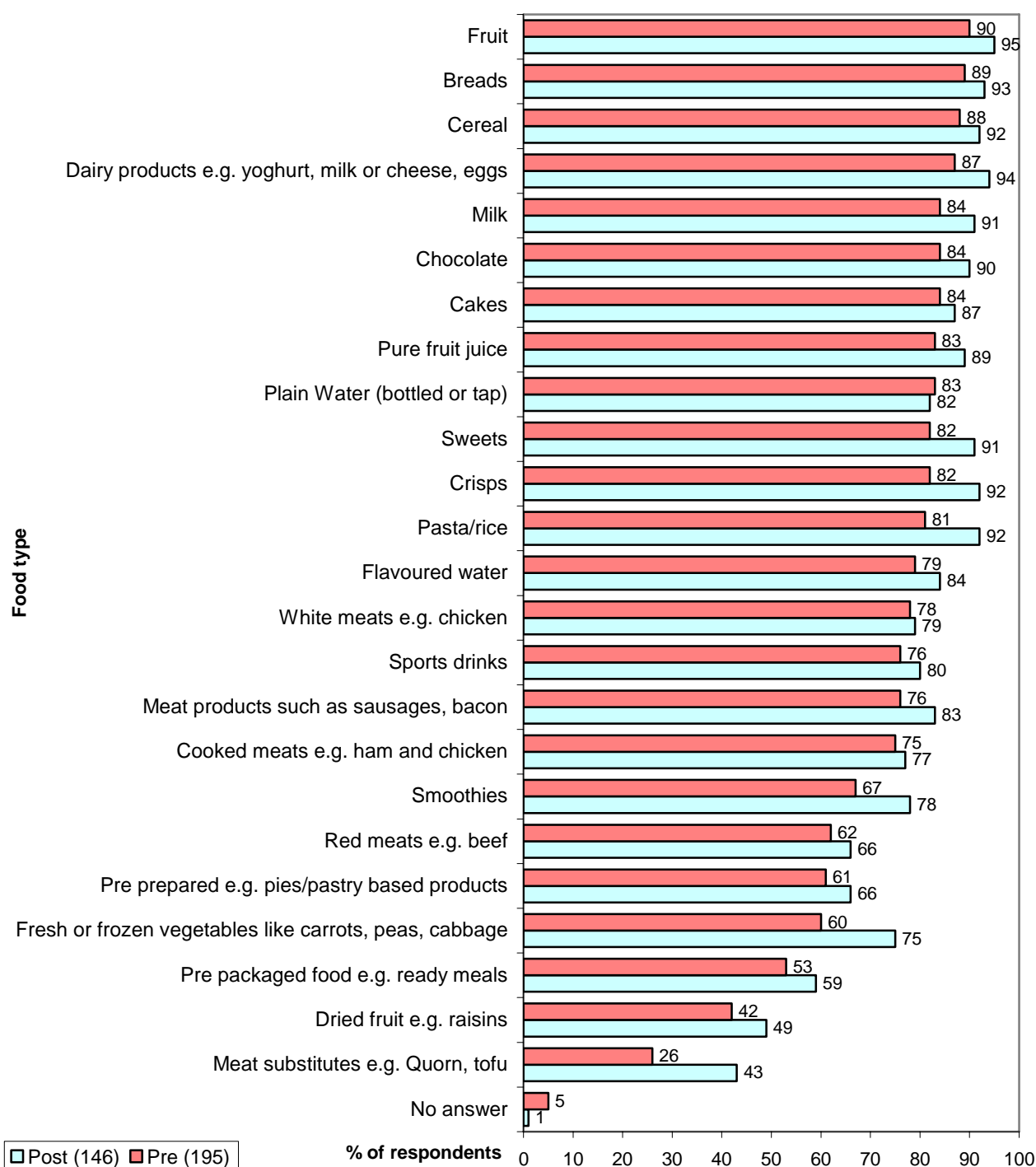
Chart 7: Impact on intended eating behaviour (post club)



The findings show that in all cases, participants indicated they would like to eat more healthily. In particular, the majority of participants (94%) thought that they 'would like to eat food which is good for them' compared to only 5% who didn't think that statement was not like or not at all like them. Most participants also indicated that they 'would like to eat more meals that have been cooked using fresh ingredients' (93%) and 'would like to eat more fruit' (92%). These findings show a real intention to follow a healthy diet.

There was also a significant difference in the foods that the participants said they liked before and after taking part in the clubs, as shown in the following chart.

Chart 8: Foods participants like to eat (pre and post)



The following foods that participants significantly liked more after they had completed the What's Cooking? Clubs are as follows:

- Meat substitutes (26% to 43%^{**})
- Fresh or frozen vegetables (60% to 75%^{**})
- Pasta/rice (81% to 92%^{**})

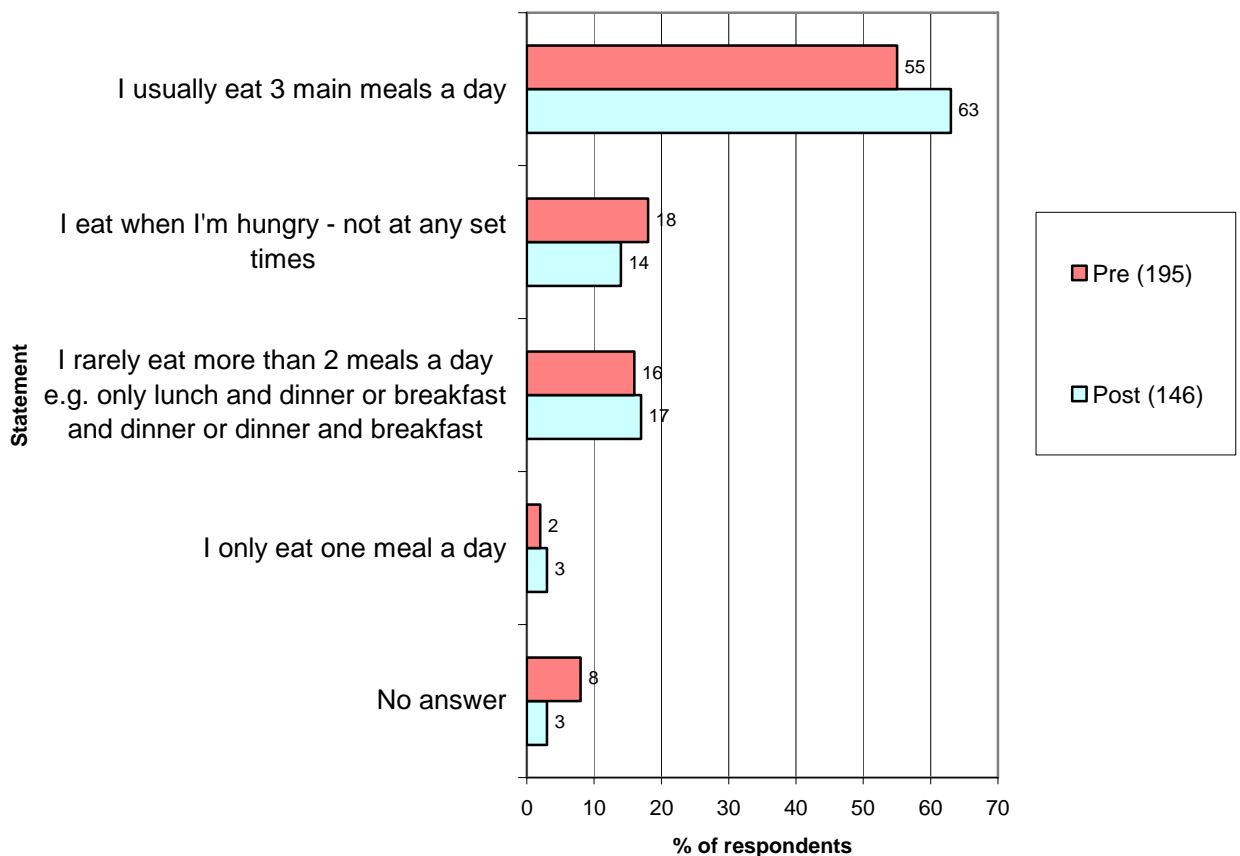
- Crisps (82% to 92%**)
- Smoothies (67% to 78%*)
- Dairy products (87% to 94%*)

It is interesting to note that the data shows that a greater number of participants indicated that crisps and sweets have increased as a food that participants like. One reason for this is perhaps participants after learning about balanced diet and the importance of eating all foods, felt more confident in revealing that they liked crisps and sweets.

4.6.5 Impact on eating habits and food choices

The following chart demonstrates participants' reported daily eating habits.

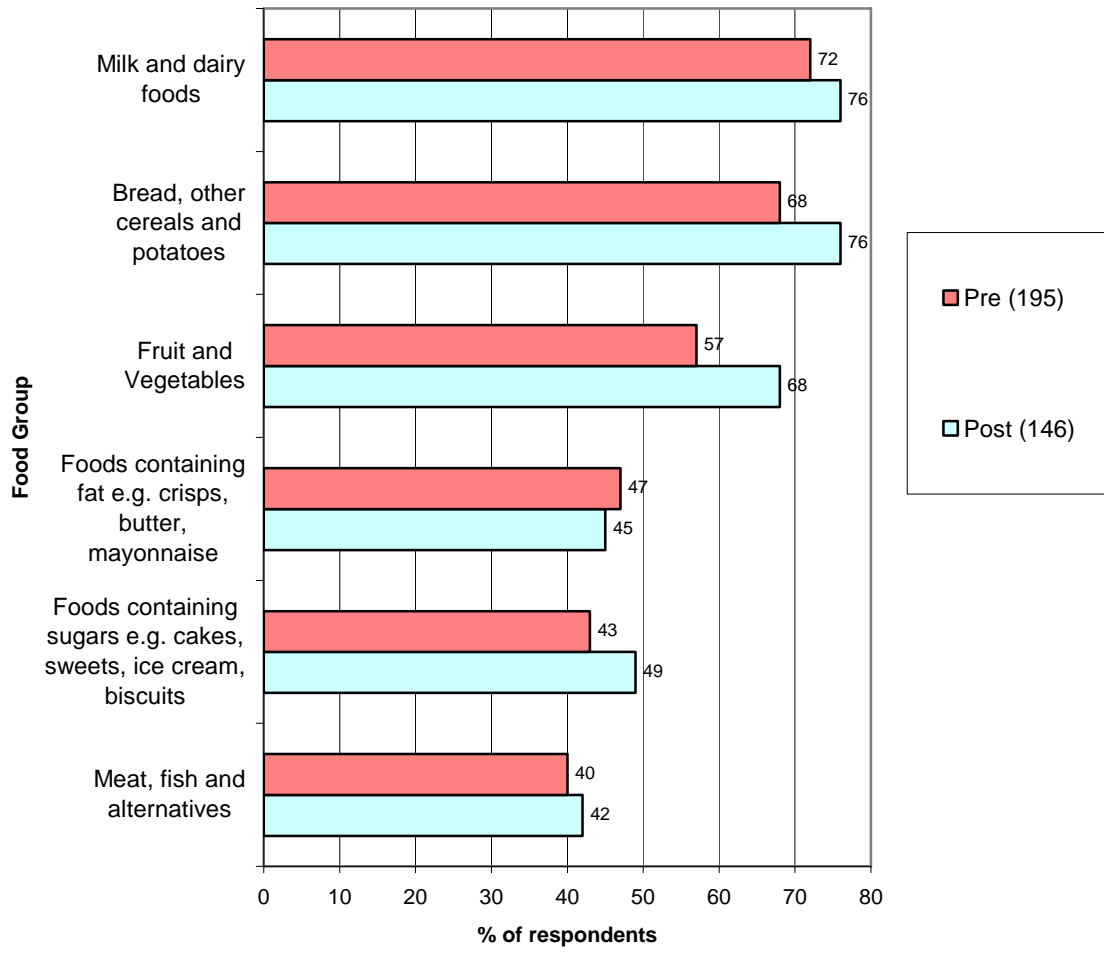
Chart 9: Statements participants felt best describes their eating habits on an average day (pre and post club)



The chart shows that there has been an overall change in reported eating habits. The proportion of participants who stated that they eat three meals a day has increased from 55% to 63%. However, this finding is not statistically significant; it is merely indicative of a significant difference that may have been found if sample sizes were larger.

The pre and post questionnaires asked participants to report their food choices from a list of different food groups which make up the eatwell plate. This is shown in the following chart.

Chart 10: The different food groups participants eat from every day in relation to the eatwell plate (pre and post club)



Most food groups, which make up the eatwell plate, have increased since the participants took part in the club, with fruit and vegetables increasing the most from 57% to 68%. The proportion of participants indicating that they ate from the food group 'foods that contain fat' and 'meat fish and alternatives' has remained fairly consistent.

Discussions with participants and coordinators revealed that the clubs had given participants the opportunity to try foods that were new to them, for example, meat substitutes, exotic fruits, vegetables and dried fruits. By having the opportunity of seeing, handling and tasting new foods participants developed a greater willingness to choose and eat different foods.

'You find out about taste and make different foods that you never have heard about'

[Secondary school participant]

'My mum liked it because you do things you wouldn't normally. I ate cheese and she was astounded'

[Primary school participant]

'Stuff that I wouldn't normally eat I've eaten, like mushrooms. I didn't like onions too before [taking part in the club]'

'I would never have thought to put sultanas in cous cous but it tasted really nice'

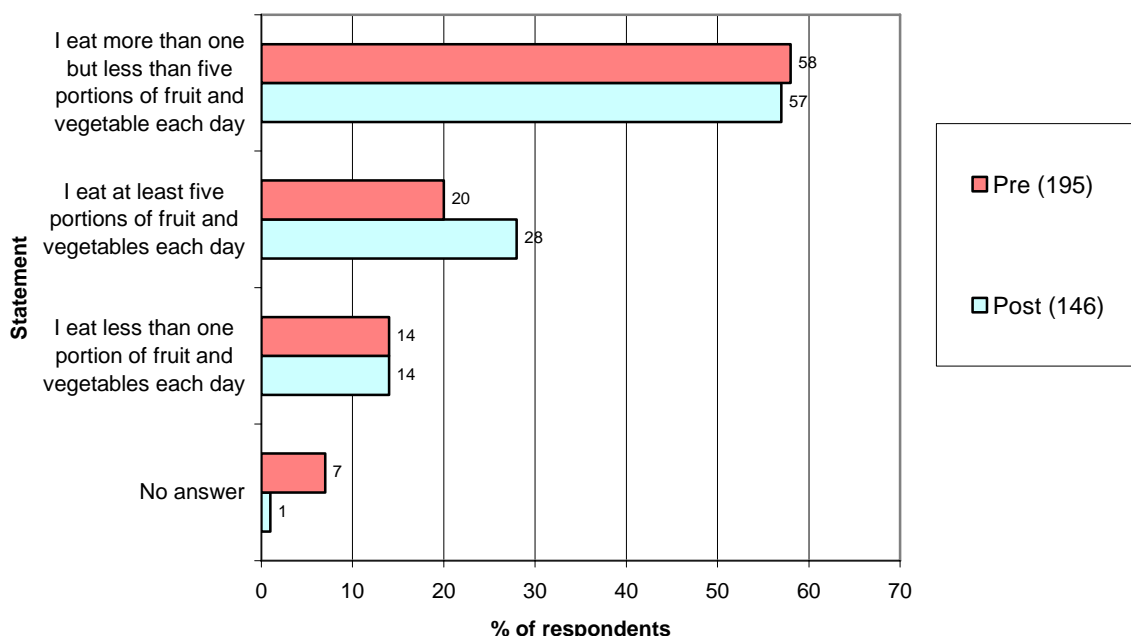
[Secondary school participants]

The coordinator end of year questionnaire also highlighted how enjoyable they thought participants had found tasting new food and drink. A total of 45 out of 47 coordinators indicated that tasting new foods and drinks had been very/quite enjoyable for participants.

4.6.6 Impact on eating fruit and vegetables

Participants were asked to tick a statement that best described the amount of fruit and vegetables they eat every day both before and after taking part in the club. This is shown in the chart below.

Chart 11: Statements which participants feel best describes the amount of fruit and vegetables they eat a day (pre and post clubs)



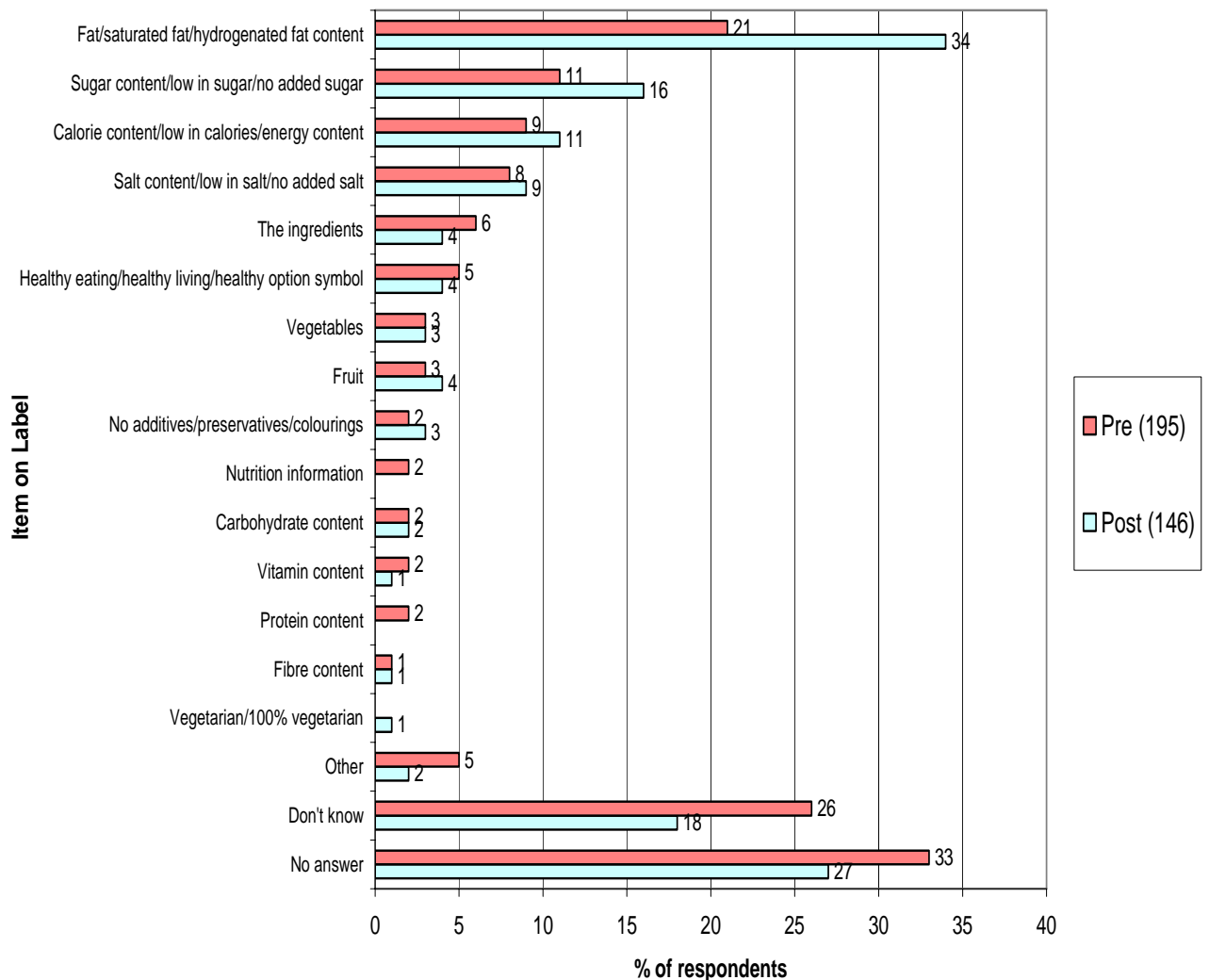
The chart shows that the amount of participants who felt that the statement 'I eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day' increased from 20% (pre) to 28% (post). This is not statistically significant, but it may indicate that participation in the cookery clubs could have made a contribution to the

increased consumption of fruit and vegetables (a significant difference may have been found if sample sizes were larger). Although there are little differences in proportions indicating other options pre to post, a higher proportion answered the question in the post phase. This could indicate a greater awareness of their eating behaviour after the club, or indeed, an increased consumption of fruit and vegetables.

4.6.7 Impact on consumer awareness

The chart below indicates the impact on participants' knowledge and understanding in relation to labels on food products.

Chart 12: What participants listed they would look at on a food label, if they were to look at food labels when choosing healthy food products (Open ended question pre and post)



There has been significant changes in the proportions of participants responding to this question i.e. 59% either 'did not know' or did not reply in the

pre stage, with this proportion being only 45% in the post. Therefore this indicates that learning about food labels has taken place.

In particular, there was a significant increase in the proportion indicating that they would look at fat content.

Some participants found learning about the consumer awareness less enjoyable than the cooking as it involved 'theory' rather than 'practical work'

'I thought the first week we were going to be tasting and making things but we just did work in our books'

[Primary school participant]

However, in some clubs, participants learnt about consumer awareness through supermarket visits and activities such as a supermarket sweep game, looking at different packaging on food, analysing special offers. These were very popular with the participants.

'Making it into a fun competition, it took half an hour in ASDA. We gave them a recipe and they were looking at the labels, trying to find the highest fibre for the lowest price'

[Coordinator]

4.6.8 Impact on food preparation and food handling

When asked, approximately a third of participants (33% pre and 37% post) were aware that grilling was a healthier cooking method. Over half of participants (57% pre and 61% post) also knew that steaming was the healthier way of cooking vegetables. The impact on participant's knowledge of cooking methods was also evident in the discussions with participants.

'It's quite important because you get some people that only eat junk foods and everything deep fat fried. People think that foods that are deep fat fried are really unhealthy, which they are but they wouldn't be as much if you cooked them in a different way'

'Dry frying food to make it more healthy'

[Secondary school participants]

Coordinators also suggested that they had thought participants' confidence of handling, preparing and cooking foods had increased since taking part in the clubs and therefore this had had a knock on positive affect on participant's attitudes towards foods.

'They're more at ease with using knives and handling raw meat'

[Special school club coordinator]

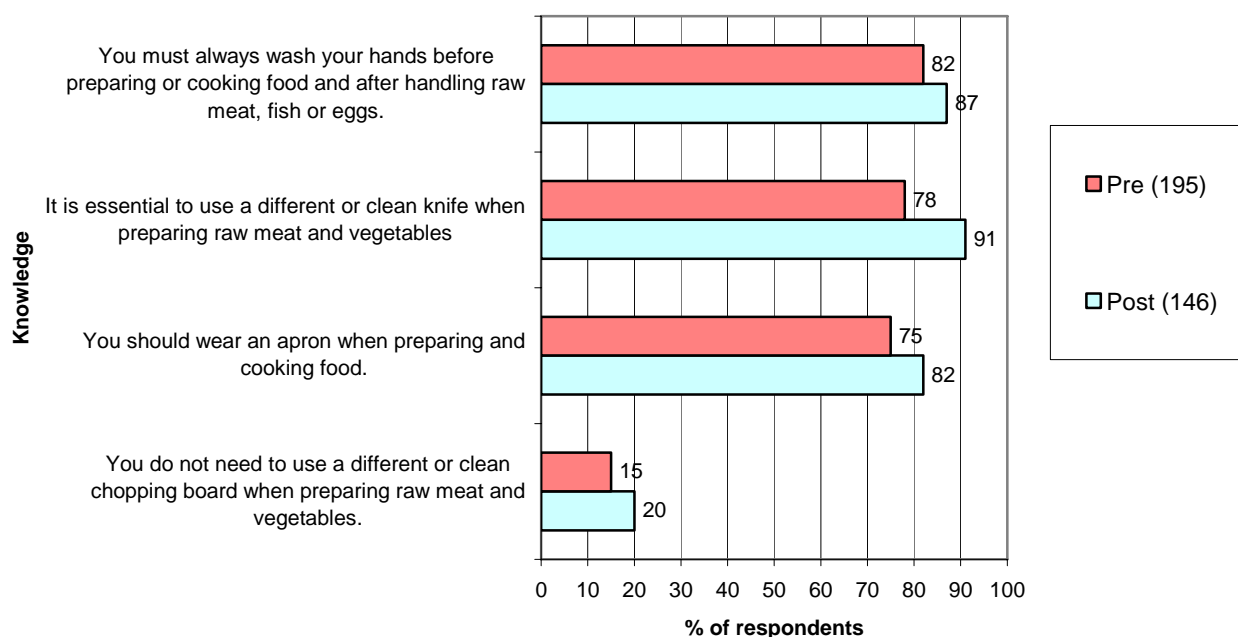
'I'm not scared of raw chicken now!'

[Special school participant]

4.6.9 Impact on knowledge of Food hygiene and safety

The following chart shows the impact of knowledge on basic food hygiene and safety principles.

Chart 13: The amount of participants who answered ‘true’ to a selection of statements about food hygiene and safety (pre and post)



Participants showed a strong knowledge in relation to knowing the various aspects involved in food hygiene. There was a significant increase particularly in the proportion of participants who agreed with the statement ‘It is essential to use a different or clean knife when preparing raw meat and vegetables’ (increasing from 78% of participants agreeing with this statement to 91% of participants**). The proportions indicating ‘false’ to ‘the negative’ statement ‘You do not need to use a different or clean chopping board when preparing raw meat and vegetables’ increased pre to post (56% to 66%) however this was not a significant increase.

The impact on understanding of food hygiene was also reflected in the discussions with the participants.

‘If you go to the supermarket and buy frozen food you need to put it straight in the freezer when you get home’

[Primary school participant]

‘When you wash your hands you have to do it thoroughly and wash in the bits in between your fingers because that’s where loads of the bacteria goes’

'When you cut meat you have to wash your hands straight afterwards'

'When you cut meat on a board you have to wash it and use a separate one for vegetables'

'When you get things out the oven you have to always wear an apron and use oven gloves'

[Secondary school participants]

4.6.10 Impact on personal and social skills

As well as the club affecting participant's attitudes towards food, cooking and healthy eating, the club has also had an impact on personal and social skills. Coordinators and senior management team members noted the following wider benefits that the clubs had achieved for participants, as outlined below.

- **Behaviour and attitudes towards school/learning**

Many club coordinators commented on how the club had been beneficial for helping some participants with improving their behavioural problems by helping them have a focus.

'Some children with behavioral problems have been absorbed in the cooking sessions'

[Secondary senior management team member]

'We have children with bad behavioural problems. The club gives them opportunities to be with other students and the good behaviour seems to rub off of them, which is really beneficial'

[Coordinator]

'Cooking seemed boring before I started the club but now I really like it because I know more too'

[Secondary school participant]

- **Self confidence and the development of independence and achievement**

Involvement in the club had resulted in raised self-confidence amongst participants. Coordinators felt this had occurred because the clubs had given participants the chance to work creatively on a project they had not done before and then they were able to see, taste and show others the dishes they had been responsible for creating.

'I had a letter from the parent of a very low ability girl who didn't speak for three months saying how much she had enjoyed it and her confidence had come out. At the end when we took them to a hotel she sat next to me and never stopped talking'

'The confidence in themselves and their cooking'

[Coordinators]

At a few of the clubs some young people who had participated in the club sessions took on roles to help younger participants. Not only did this role increase young people's confidence but it also helped them with their independence and to be proud of their own abilities and skills.

The coordinator end of year questionnaires also revealed that most coordinators (43 out of 47) thought that the club had been very/quite positive in developing young people's independence skills.

- **Teamwork and relationships**

Most participants worked in groups during the clubs activities and for some participants this was a particular achievement. The clubs also helped participants to build positive relationships with coordinators and support staff.

'It definitely gives you a positive feeling and it does have a big impact on the students. Individually, and they also learn how to communicate and form relationships between them'

[Coordinator]

Participants reiterated that they had fun taking part in the club sessions. For some clubs, the involvement of sitting down to eat with others in the group really aided their sense of belonging to the group encouraged them to socialise with others. At other clubs, a visit to a local restaurant also helped participant's social skills in the wider community.

For the clubs which involved parents, the findings showed that it was an effective way of bringing parents and children together.

'It's a way for parents to come into school with their child and still be cool'

'It's a great time for us to spend time together outside of the normal home environment'

[Parents]

- **Qualifications and career choices**

Some of the participants had been given a chance to gain an extra qualification in food hygiene and safety. Coordinators said that this had been particularly important for those participants who usually didn't do well academically and had never gained any formal qualifications before.

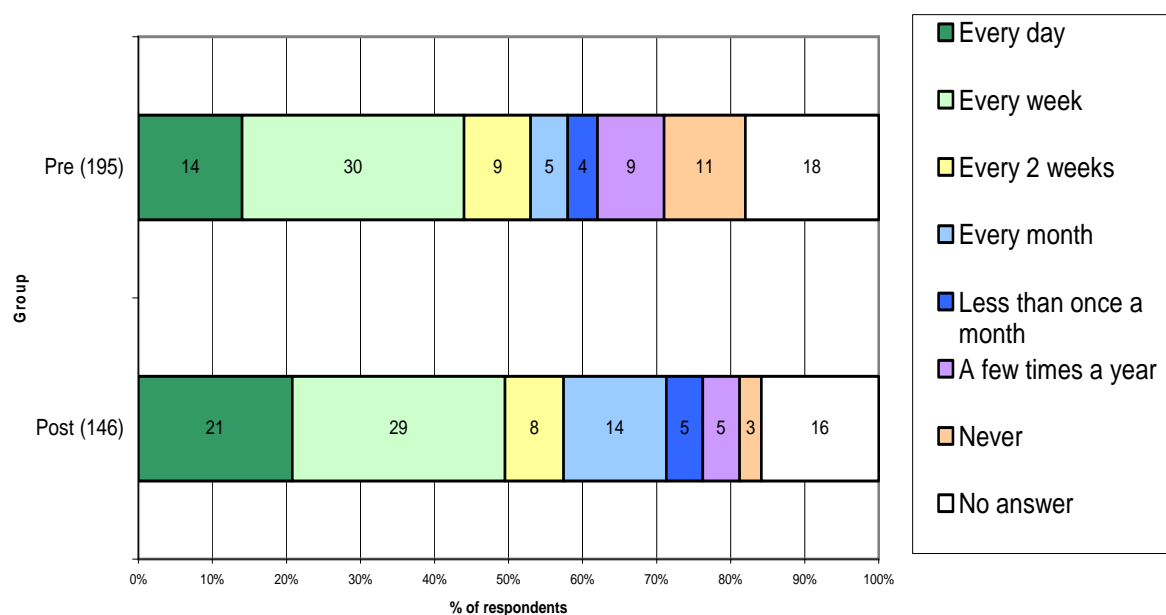
The experience had also encouraged some individuals to think about pursuing careers in catering.

'We have a couple of young boys who want to be chefs. It has given them the confidence to go a step further.'

4.7 Impact on cooking at home

The following chart shows the frequency that participants stated they help to cook at home.

Chart 14: The frequency participants help a parent or carer to cook at home (pre- vs post)



The proportion of respondents who stated they help a parent or carer cook at home ‘every day’ increased from 14% to 21% and in addition, the proportion of respondents who help a parent/carer ‘a few times a year’ or ‘never’ has reduced from 9% to 5% and 11% to 3% respectively. Although this data is not statistically significant, a significant difference may have been found if sample sizes were larger. It is possible therefore that the clubs had an impact on participants’ cooking behaviour at home.

The findings from the qualitative discussions found additional evidence for differences in experiences of cooking at home. Parents and carers had also been told of the kinds of skills participants had developed and noted that they had developed an element of trust in allowing their children to cook, particularly for children with special needs.

‘My Aunty told me I could do all the cooking at home now’
 [Secondary aged participant]

‘Parents have low confidence in letting their children cook or help out in the kitchen. They do not trust them with utensils and equipment. However, it is encouraged at the club to learn how to cut and how to

open an oven. This in turn will increase parents/carers confidence in their children too'

[Special school club coordinator]

Many of the clubs encouraged their participants to take home food and drinks they had made during the club sessions. Coordinators noted that participant's really enjoyed, and felt proud of, taking food home and sharing it with family members.

'When you take the food home you feel dead proud of yourself and think "Wow I made that"'

[Primary school participant]

In some instances, the types of dishes cooked were chosen with home cooking in mind, so participants could replicate them at home and parents could buy ingredients themselves. Coordinators noted that some participants cooked dishes again at home.

'We did a hundred and one ways with mince. We tried to get them to make meals they could do at home'.

'We gave them a bag of vegetables we made soup with to take home and do the recipe at home and the number of parents that came back and said they had that soup every week!'

[Coordinators]

Parents who participated in the clubs also found that it had prompted them to think more about the types of food they served at home.

'I think adults are sometimes worse [than children] at trying new things. You think you know what you like and you just keep cooking the same food'.

'I don't' like spicy things and I wouldn't normally make something like that but it was really quite lovely'.

'It's made me think about what is and isn't healthy any more'.

[Parents]

As well as taking foods and drinks home, some clubs provided a cooking resource pack which contained recipes and dietary information. There was also an example from one club visited who offered participants a pack of cooking utensils at the end of their club sessions as a prize for taking part. This was another method/idea to aid enthusiasm and to continue cooking at home.

'Usually at the beginning of the session a couple of the participants run in and say "I made the ham and pasta bake at the weekend". That's

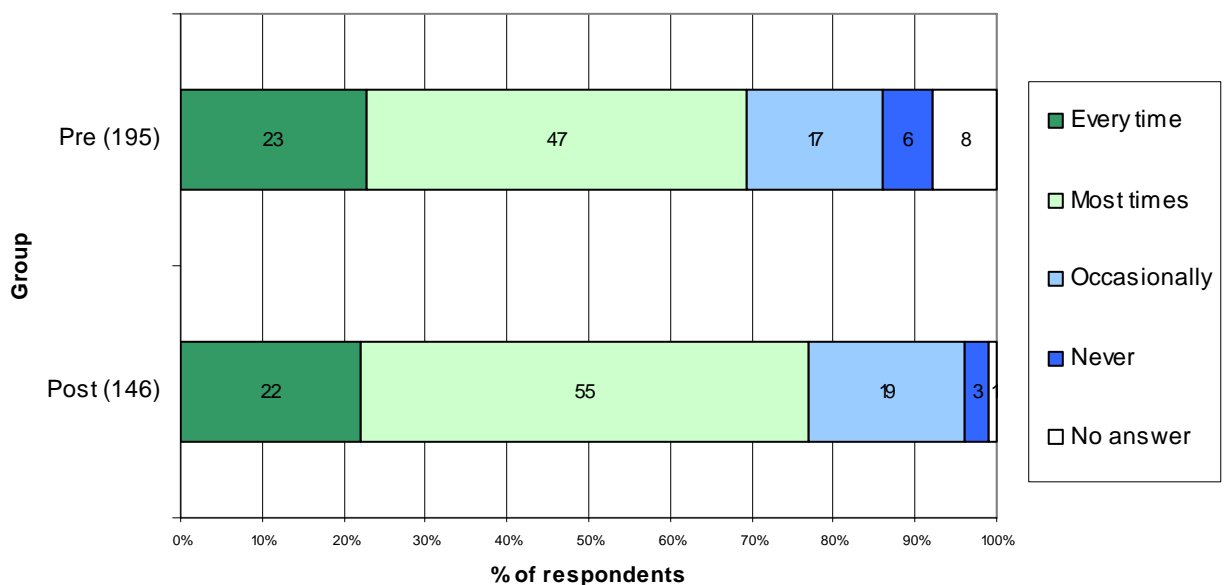
why I think it's good that I give them the recipes to take away. I don't know whether they would go out and find a recipe if they weren't given it and that's important to acknowledge but it's good that they may open it up and have a look at it and see if they can do it. If they read the recipe then there is a chance that they go away and put it into action'
 [Primary school club coordinator]

'It's really good that you get to take the recipes home because you can get to show them and make them for people at home'
 [Secondary school participant]

4.8 Impact on involvement in food shopping

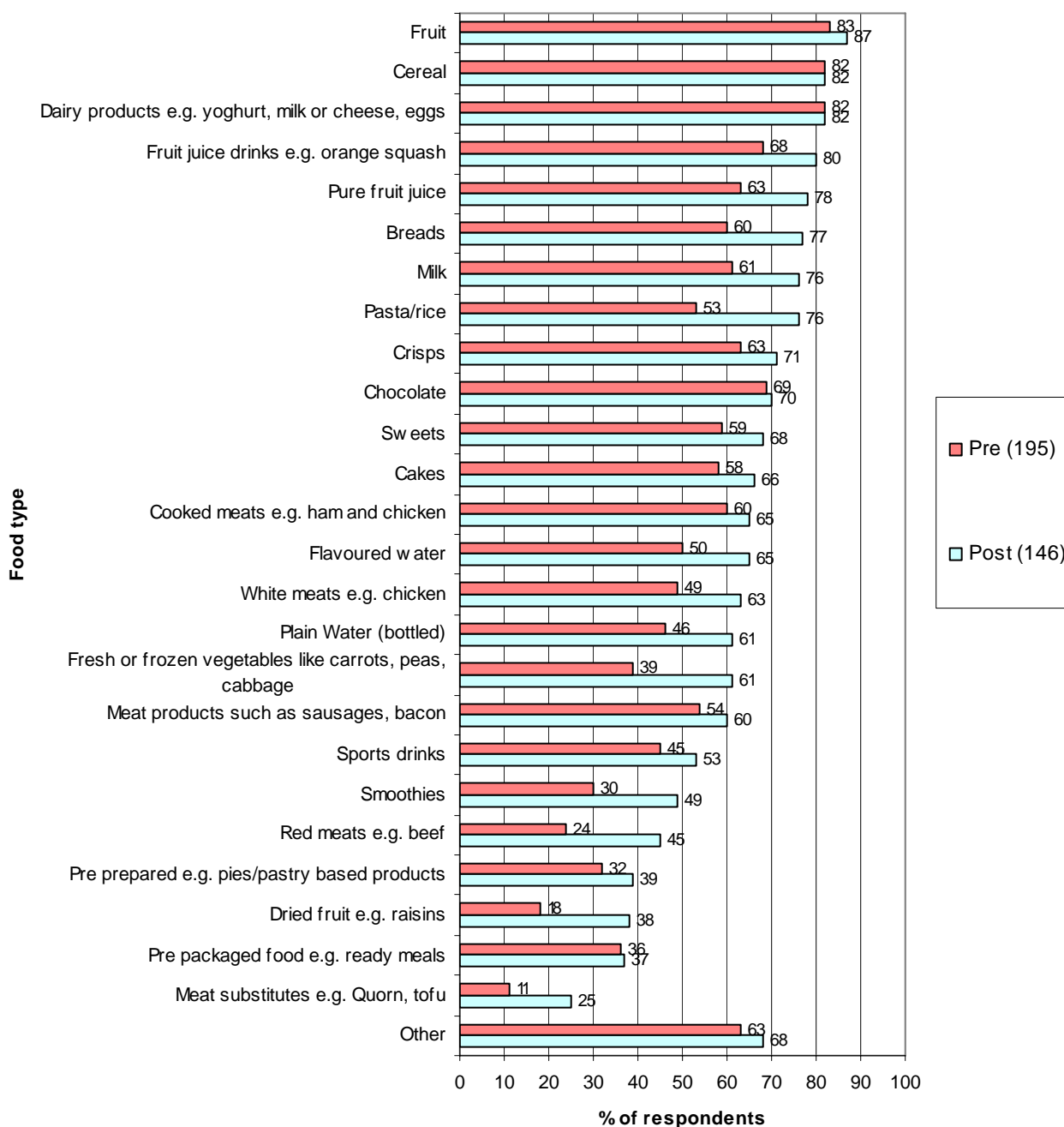
Participants were asked about the number of times they accompanied their parent or carer to the supermarket or food shop as well as the types of food they ask to be bought.

Chart 15: Frequency of accompanying parents/carers to buy food in a shop or supermarket



The chart shows an increase in the proportion of participants who stated that they accompanied their parents/carers most times when shopping for food (47% pre vs 55% post). However, this increase is not significant.

Chart 16: The foods that participants ask their parent/carer to buy from a food shop or supermarket



The most common items that participants asked their parent/carers to buy from a food shop/supermarket were: Fruit, cereal and dairy products. Interestingly, nearly all responses increased from the pre club questionnaires to the post club (not just the healthy foods). The findings could suggest that the club experience has changed participants' attitudes and experiences towards certain foods and helped broaden their choice in the foods they eat.

In particular there has been an increase in the proportion of participants requesting the following foods:

- Pasta/rice (53% to 76%**)
- Dried fruit (18% to 38%**)
- Red meats (24% to 45%**)
- Fresh or frozen vegetables (39% to 61%**)
- Smoothies (30% to 49%**)
- Meat substitutes (11% to 25%**)
- Breads (60 to 77%**)
- Pure fruit juices (63% to 78%**)
- Milk (61% to 76%**)
- Flavoured waters (50% to 65%**)
- Plain water (46% to 61%**)
- White meats (49% to 63%*)
- Fruit juice drinks (68% to 80%*)

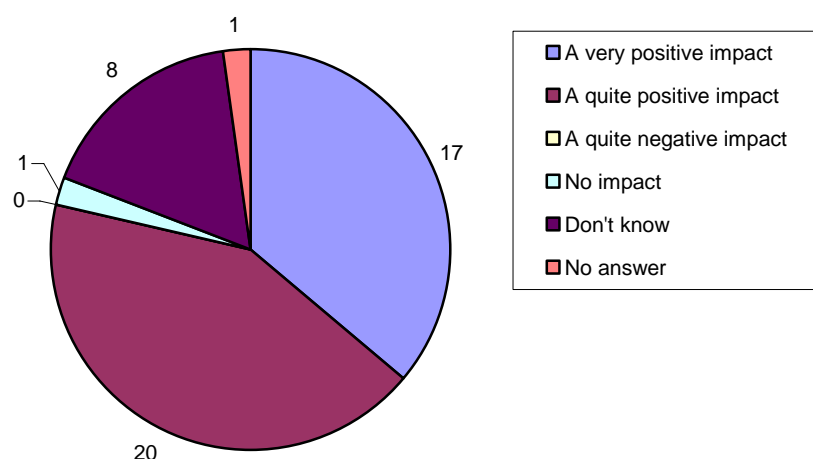
This indicates that participants are requesting food from a broader range of food groups.

4.9 Impact on wider schools' and organisations' aims

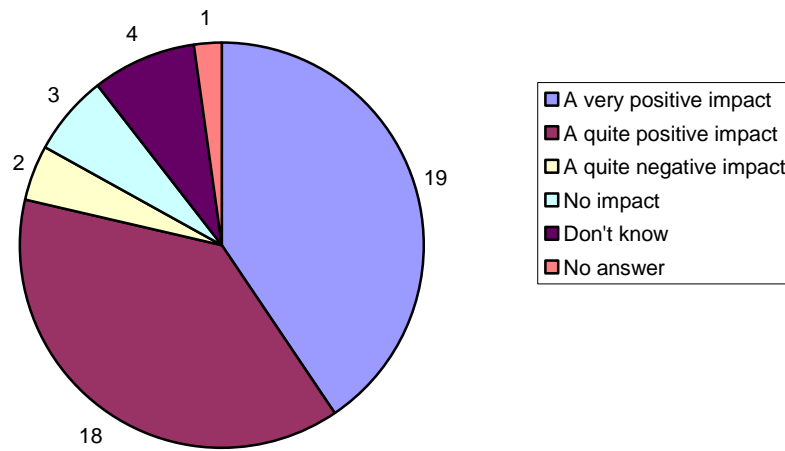
The charts below indicate the impact the cookery clubs have achieved for the wider school/organisations.

Charts 17 to 21: Impact on wider aims (coordinators' end of year questionnaire reported as number of respondents) (Base=47)

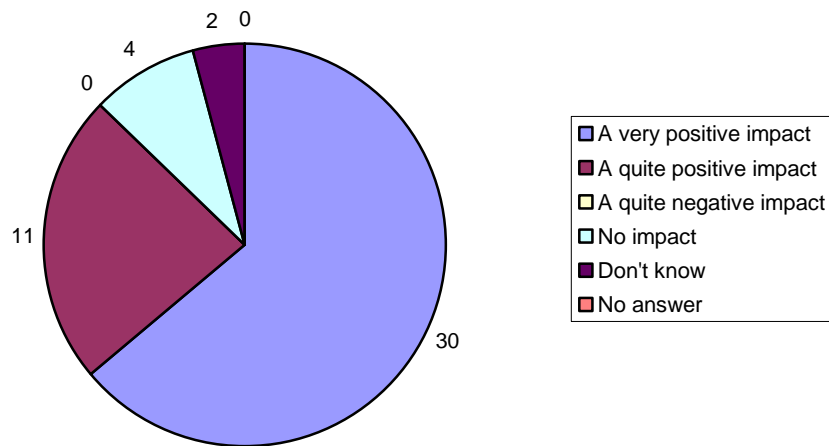
To support the school development plan



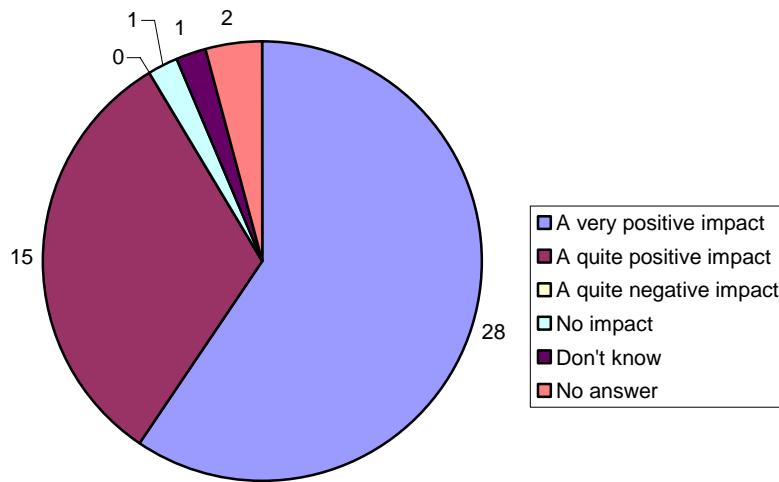
To meet areas of the curriculum



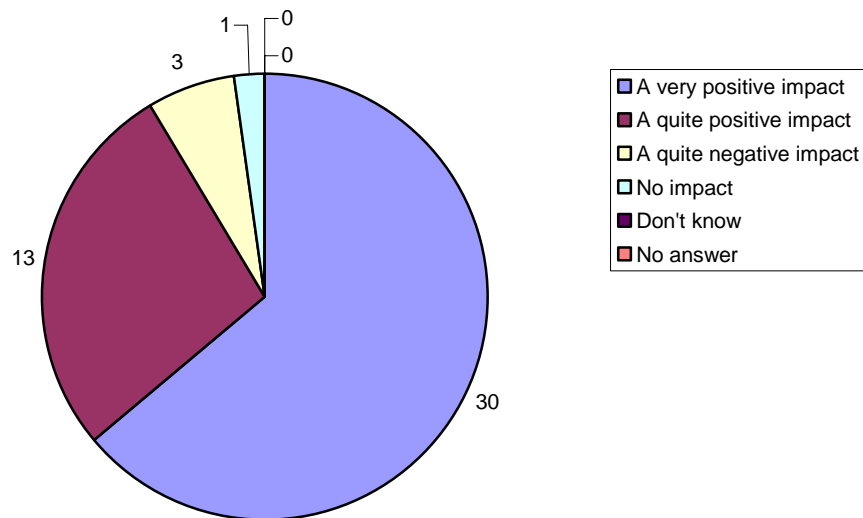
To help meet healthy schools criteria and aims



To expand extended schools opportunities



To promote healthy lifestyles



The charts above show that in most cases the cookery clubs had a very positive impact on other wider school aims, namely, promoting healthy lifestyles, meeting healthy schools criteria and aims and expanding extended school opportunities. Nearly half of respondents stated that the club had a very positive impact on meeting areas of the curriculum and supporting the school development plan.

The interviews with senior management teams (SMT) from schools that participated in the clubs also gave a useful insight into the impact of the cookery clubs on the wider school. SMT representatives reported the following benefits that had been achieved as a result of the cookery club taking place:

- Evidence to help the school achieve the healthy school status or receive healthy schools awards.
- Helps schools to meet its aim in raising awareness of healthy eating amongst young people, which was felt to be of particular importance in areas of deprivation.
- Enables the school to send out good news stories to parents and the wider community.
- Forges links with other schools, FE colleges and local businesses.

'It seemed to fit nicely with our agenda of developing an understanding of healthy eating and appreciating food. It coincided nicely with the changes we had made to our catering and menus in school'

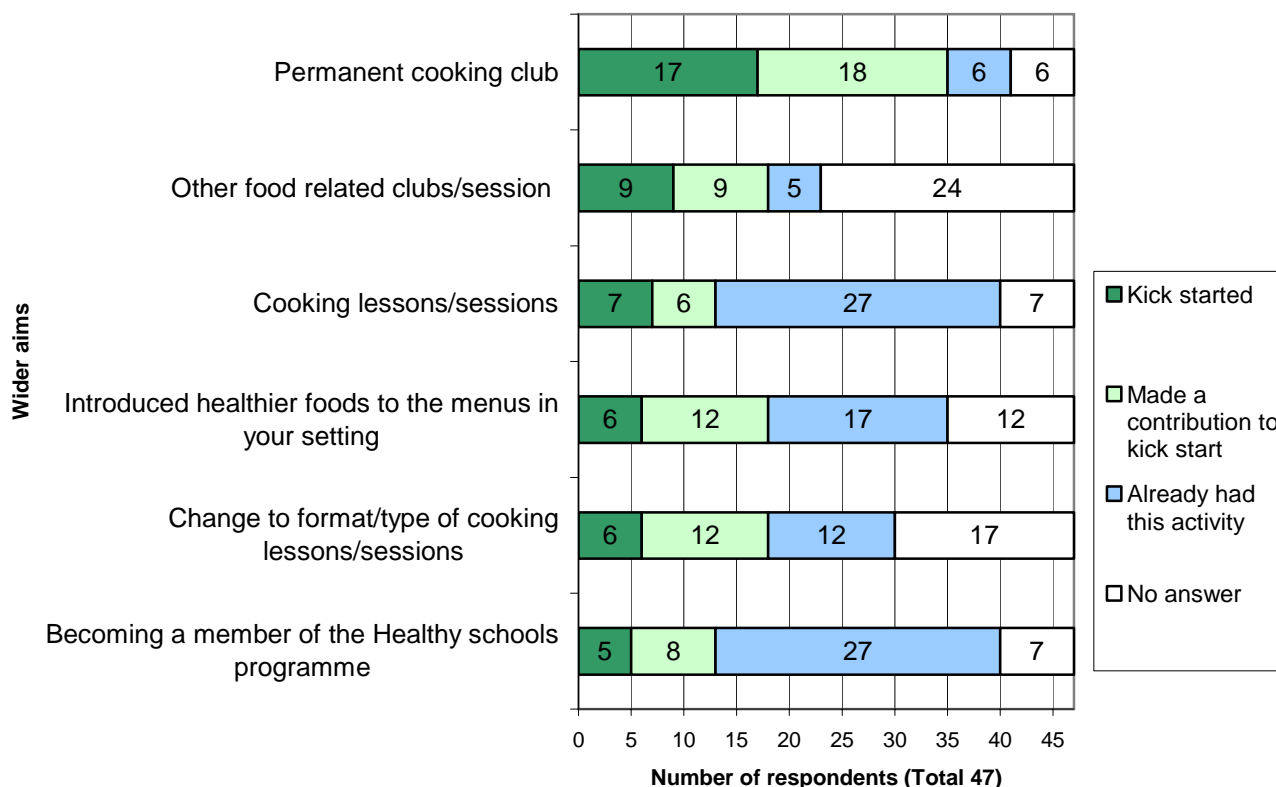
'The main aims for us were that it was a change to build some bridges with local primary schools'

'We're dead keen to keep a scheme like this going, especially with our types of catchment area, they really benefit from schemes like this.'

[Senior management representatives]

Coordinators were also asked the extent to which their involvement in the programme had helped to initiate other activities in their setting, as shown in the following chart.

Chart 18: Extent to which the scheme has kick started other activities (Coordinators' end of year questionnaire reported in number of respondents)



The chart shows that a third of respondents (17 out of 47) stated that involvement in the programme had kicked started a permanent cookery club in their setting. A further 18 out of 47 indicated that involvement had made a contribution to kick starting a permanent cookery club in their setting. A smaller number of respondents indicated that the involvement in the scheme had kick started or made a contribution to kick starting other food related clubs (18 respondents) or cooking sessions (13 respondents). The chart also shows that in some cases the clubs have contributed to changes in the format of cooking lessons (18 respondents) and food offered to young people (18 respondents). The 'other' activities included the introduction of the food hygiene certificate and special activities for primary schools.

4.10 Sustaining the cookery clubs

The questionnaire indicated that the majority of coordinators (38 out of 47) stated that they planned to run the club in the future. For the small number who did not plan on sustaining the clubs, the main barriers were lack of funding, limited access to a suitable venue and lack of staff. Overall, most coordinators and SMT who were interviewed were very keen to keep the clubs sustainable because they had seen the degree of impact that had been

achieved for young people involved. Some were unsure about how they were going to do this with out the funding, while others had developed their own strategies or accessed funding from elsewhere to keep clubs in operation.

The following sustainability methods should be considered to address some of the common problems encountered in running the clubs.

- **Funding from existing budgets**

Some schools had the benefit of being able to access extended schools budgets and Technology College funding to continue the club beyond the funding period. One SMT explained that the clubs had achieved so much impact that the local authority was going to set aside funding so they could continue next year.

- **Funding from external sources**

Some schools and organisations have placed bids from other external community funds to help them. Coordinators indicated the following funding sources:

- Youth Opportunities Fund
- Big Lottery fund
- Sponsorship from local businesses local businesses
- Education Business Partnership
- School Food Trust

- **Enterprise projects**

In some cases, the cookery club has developed into larger projects across a school. For example, one organisation had set up a café to sell food, which also gave ownership to young people about the type of food cooked. The income from this was fed back into the cookery club to pay for food.

- **Developing partnerships**

Partnerships with local organisations appeared to be a useful way of gaining support to deliver the cookery clubs. There was evidence for longer term partnerships being developed with restaurants, catering colleges, local supermarkets and grocers. The partnerships enable coordinators to take advantage of expertise and donations of food, which help to keep the club sustainable.

- **Fundraising events**

One club had prepared and sold food on special charity days such as Children In Need and Comic Relief. They then split the funds to be sent to the charity and fed back into the club.

- **Charging for the club**

Some coordinators mentioned that they would start charging a nominal or voluntary fee for the club so that it could continue. Not everyone felt this was an ideal approach as it would potentially exclude those who could not afford it. In addition, the original outlay for equipment had been made,

coordinators noted that they were in a better position to continue the club by charging only a small amount.

- **Offering time off in Lieu for volunteers**

The use of volunteers helps to address funding issues and sometimes they could be offered time off in lieu instead of payment for their time.

5. Main Findings: Longer term impact

Section four of this report highlighted the findings from Stages 1 and 2 of the research. It was decided to fully report on Stages 1 and 2 but not Stage 3 because sample sizes in Stage 3 were too low and therefore significant differences between Stages 1, Stages 2 and 3 were less likely to be revealed. Any positive quantitative findings reported in section 5 are those which can be inferred to merely indicate a sustained impact.

The Stage 3 telephone depth interviews provided an opportunity for coordinators and local authority representatives to reflect on the longer term outcomes of the clubs. This helped to strengthen the findings from Stages 1 and 2.

Overall, Stage 3 identified longer term impact in relation to:

- Impact on participants
- Impact on home life
- Impact on the club setting and wider community

It also demonstrated that most clubs had sustained in their own way.

5.1 The longer term impact and achievement gained from the *What's Cooking?* programme

The discussions with club coordinators and local authority representatives five months after the end of the initial *What's Cooking?* clubs took place. The interviews revealed that the impact of the programme had been sustained. Importantly, overall impact continued to be widespread and the clubs had influenced knowledge and awareness of food amongst participants. The findings also showed that the clubs had affected home life and the wider community.

5.1.1 Impact for participants

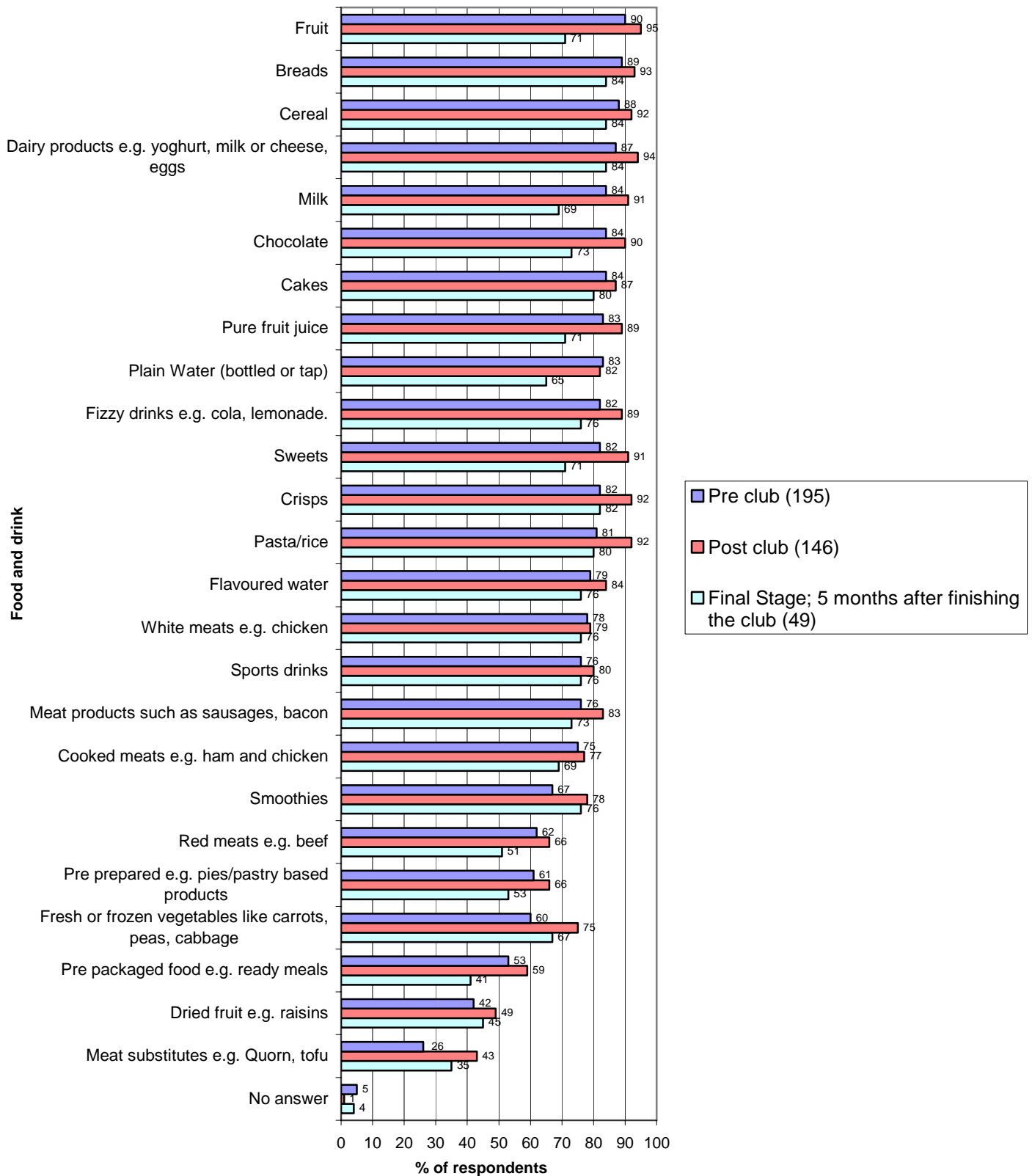
The discussions with coordinators and local authority representatives also support and expand on the findings presented from the participants' quantitative research.

- **Impact on food/drink likes and dislikes**

Club coordinators and local authority representatives spoke strongly about the experiential aspect of the *What's Cooking?* clubs. The clubs had provided participants with a space to experience and learn about foods. For many participants the club provided them with the opportunity to prepare, cook and taste food and dishes that they had seen for the first time. This new experience had a knock on effect on participants' own food choices, tastes and knowledge about different foods.

During all stages of the participant questionnaires, participants were asked to indicate the foods/drinks they liked. The chart overleaf shows the findings from all three stages.

Chart 19: Foods and drinks that participants said they like to eat or drink (participant quantitative research – all stages)



The chart shows that there was a significant increase between pre and post

club experience in the range of foods participants said they liked. These certain foods were as follows:

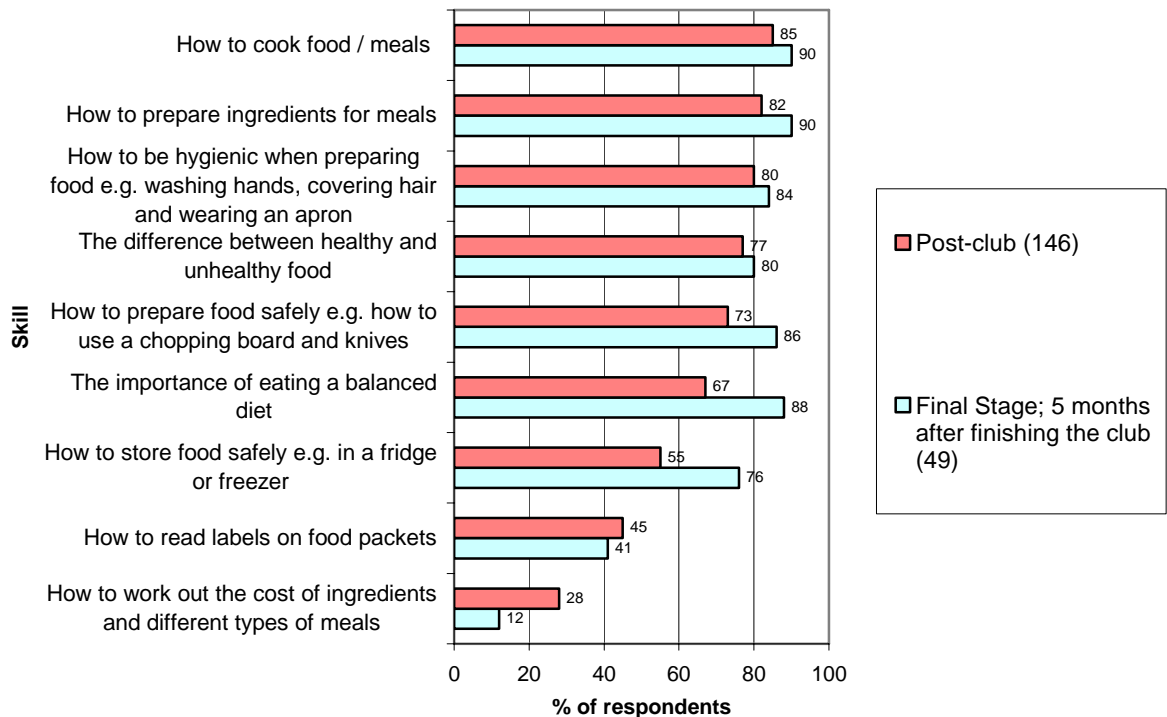
- Meat substitutes e.g. Quorn, tofu (increased from 26% to 43%**)
- Fresh or frozen vegetables (increased from 60% to 75%**)
- Smoothies (increased from 67% to 78%*)
- Pasta/rice (increased from 81% to 92%**)
- Crisps (increased from 82% to 92%**)
- Sweets (increased from 82% to 91%*)
- Dairy products (increased from 87% to 94%*)

However, the sustainability of these foods/drinks was not shown to be significant in the final stage of the participant questionnaires due to the low base sizes. It may be possible to also infer that directly after taking part in the clubs participants were enthused from the cooking experience and therefore were more likely to say they liked more foods/drinks. After five months the appeal of different food types decreased as the immediate effects of being involved in the clubs and having contact with different food/drinks lessened.

- The frequency with which participants claimed they eat foods containing fats has changed over time: the number of participants who said they eat food containing fats, has decreased, while the amount saying they never eat this type of food has increased
- The number of participants eating regularly has increased: those who selected the statement 'I usually eat 3 main meals a day' increased and those saying 'I rarely eat more than 2 meals a day', decreased.

- **Impact on knowledge, understanding & awareness (the food competences)**

Chart 20: Shows the extent to which participants felt they had learnt certain skills from taking part in the cookery clubs (participant quantitative research – post club and final stage)



The chart shows that there is an overall increase in the number of skills participants felt they had from taking part in the club. There were significant differences from the post club experience to five months after finishing the club in the development of the following skills; the importance of eating a balanced diet (increased from 67% to 88%**) and how to store food safely (increased from 55% to 76%**). Interestingly over the long term, fewer participants said they had learnt how to work out the cost of ingredients and different types of meals. This finding is consistent with some of those in Stages 1 and 2 which revealed that the ‘consumer awareness’ was a core competency which coordinators delivered less frequently and was therefore unlikely to be a skill sustained over time.

Comparing the data between pre, post and final stage data relating to participants’ knowledge of food hygiene and safety could also indicate a possible change to participants’ knowledge and understanding in the longer term. It can be inferred that:

- Participants’ knowledge about how to store fresh foods appears to have changed. A greater proportion of participants indicated that freezing food was the best way to store it when asked in the final stage of the research.

- Participants' knowledge of the following has also increased:
 - The importance of using clean knives when preparing raw meat and vegetables
 - Washing hands when preparing and cooking foods
 - Wearing an apron.

- **Impact on skills for life and self development**

Many clubs focused on the development of basic cookery skills to equip participants with skills which were felt to be useful for the future. The focus on basic cookery enabled participants to raise their knowledge and confidence in food preparation and cooking.

'It's about young people to gain the knowledge and understanding so they have the confidence to put baked beans in a recipe instead of kidney beans'.

[What's Cooking? coordinator, Northumberland]

'The students are getting older and some are living semi-independently. We're focusing on healthy living and independent living. It's so important for them to be able to buy ingredients, to cook a meal, to clear away, working in a team and developing social skills and handling money'.

[What's Cooking? coordinator, Hartlepool]

'The life skills they picked up enabled them to have the techniques and skills that you and I use every day, like boiling a kettle, making a pan of pasta. For them that was a very unique and individual thing to learn'.

[Middlesbrough local authority representative]

Coordinators recognised changes amongst the club participants in relation to their attitudes, self esteem and confidence. Some also explained the difference the club had made for those with behavioural difficulties and how the club had positively changed participants' attitudes towards education and work.

Coordinators also mentioned that the club also gave participants a strong sense of belonging to a group and the development of their team working skills helped give participants a sense of responsibility. In addition because participants were required to work well with others, their communication and teamwork skills improved.

The programme was also recognised as a good motivator to encourage participants to get involved in other clubs and initiatives currently available.

'The girls who attended the What's Cooking? club, have now joined the girls group at the community centre youth club where they have made so many new friends'.

[What's Cooking? Coordinator, Gateshead]

What's Cooking? also gave some participants the opportunities to develop interests they were not aware of before taking part. For example, the appeal of being a student mentor or leader and wanting to pursue further education or careers in food related subjects or employment.

5.1.2 Impact on participants' home life

Many coordinators reported an increase in cooking at home as participants recalled stories of trying out recipes during the week after the *What's Cooking?* club.

'So many children tell you that they have made the recipes again at home they say things like "Miss I made the lasagne for my dad"'.

[What's Cooking? coordinator, Northumberland]

It was not just the young people who had picked up important independent living skills: Coordinators found that adults had benefited from gaining skills that changed attitudes towards food and cooking.

'It's surprising but very few parents actually cook now from scratch at home. A few will say that they cook and want their children to follow in their footsteps but the majority doesn't. Each week they were saying that they were now really keen to use the recipes that they take home from the club. They would come in saying that they had made a pasta dish or a chicken dish and that their son or daughter had helped them'.

[What's Cooking? Coordinator, South Tyneside]

The introduction or increase in cooking at home also meant that participants enjoyed sharing the experience of cooking with family members. In this case the activity of cooking could therefore be seen as a good way to develop relationships with people at home.

The quantitative research with participants also revealed a possible change to participants cooking behaviour at home. A larger proportion appeared to report cooking at home 'every week' five months after the end of the club to what they had said before taking part.

5.1.3 Impact on the club setting and the wider community

Involvement in the *What's Cooking?* programme also impacted on the club setting and wider community by acting as a catalyst to bridge relationships,

providing a basis of knowledge which could be shared and helping to raise the profile of the healthy living message.

- **The bridging of relationships – internally & externally**

Because some of the clubs involved a variety of different people, participants were given the opportunity to develop new and existing relationships with people they would not normally work with. For example, there were quite a few cross generational clubs where participants worked alongside their family members. Other clubs brought together young people of different ages and from different schools. Coordinators also commented that being involved in the programme had helped them to build relationships with the participants, young people and their parents alike.

As well as relationships being built within the clubs, the programme also provided a bridge from the club to the local community. Relationships were built between; schools, further education colleges, youth clubs, children's homes, the Primary Care Trust, Sure Start, fitness centres, local chefs and local community centres and groups such as allotments and facilities for older people. Therefore, in some situations, *What's Cooking?* had helped to reinforce a sense of inclusiveness and a broadening of attitudes towards others. Many clubs opened their doors and invited people to either, join in the club, use their facilities and/or organise events for people who do not usually attend the school/club. For example, one of the clubs opened up as a restaurant to the local community and another organised a Christmas event for local older people.

- **Inspiration & the sharing of knowledge**

Other people in the settings not involved in *What's Cooking?* also benefitted from ideas and equipment purchased during the programme. The activities and theory work that participants had worked on could also be used for other projects and for evidence in Ofsted and other inspections.

'Two groups of students come from mainstream schools to use the cooking rooms to do their GNVQ level one and two catering qualifications. They are actually using the What's Cooking? structure, planning and the party ideas theme. All the great ideas and planning is there, there's no point in reinventing the wheel.'

[*What's Cooking?* Coordinator, Hartlepool]

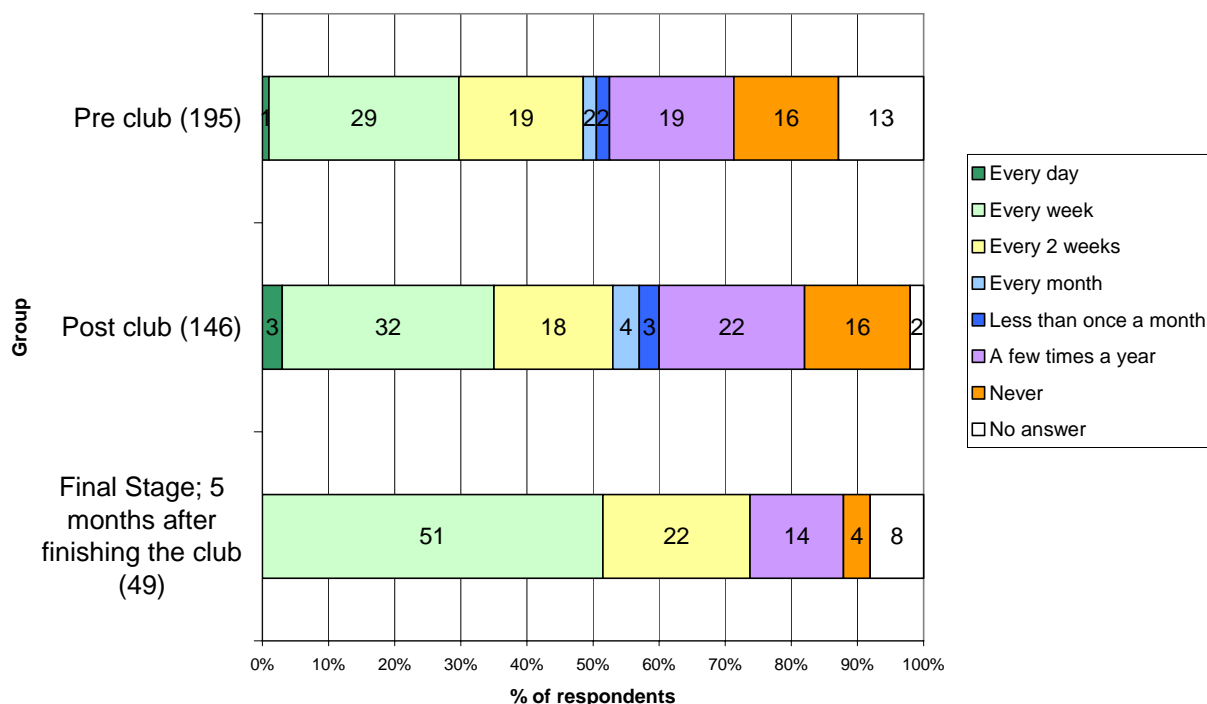
Coordinating the programme in a number of schools across the authority or taking on the responsibility to run the club had given local authority representatives and club coordinators great experience in project management which would equip them well with skills for future initiatives.

- **Raising the profile of the healthy eating message**

The *What's Cooking?* programme was seen to contribute to the overall drive across local authorities in the North East to increase knowledge, change attitudes towards food and promote healthy lifestyles. By introducing basic cooking skills to young people and adults, both local authority representatives and coordinators felt that the programme supported other initiatives, such as the National Healthy Schools status, Eco schools and a Licence to Cook (which is planned to be rolled out nationwide in 2008).

Findings from the participant quantitative research indicated that there had been a great shift in the amount of cooking participants of the programme reported doing during school hours since taking part in *What's Cooking?*. This may indicate that schools are placing greater importance on practical cooking skills.

Chart 21: The frequency of cooking at school in school hours reported by participants (participant quantitative research – all stages)



The final stage participant questionnaire showed that just over half (51%) of respondents said they cooked at school 'every week' in curriculum time compared to just 29%** who said this before taking part in the programme. The amount of participants who said they 'never' cooked at school had also decreased from pre club experience (from 16% pre club to 4% in the final stage**).

5.2 The sustainability of the What's Cooking programme

5.2.1 Have the original clubs been sustainable?

Encouragingly, across the North East, the majority of clubs have continued from their initial set up during the academic year 2006/2007. Those clubs that have continued have mainly used funding from Extended schools or their schools' own budget.

The reasons why some clubs were unable to continue were mainly down to a lack of funding and/or limited support, rather than no desire to continue.

Of the majority of clubs who have continued club coordinators have learnt to adapt the programme to better fit their needs by:

- Using different aims and themes
- Involving other participants
- Running for a limited time
- Downsizing the clubs

Encouragingly, the clubs which received a lot of support were able to run more clubs, either for different participants (e.g. an inter-generational group, or a single parents group), or they had been able to run extra clubs at different times, e.g. at the weekend or during school holidays.

5.2.2 Successful strategies to a sustainable *What's Cooking?* club

For those clubs which had sustained club coordinators and local authority representatives highlighted what they thought were the main drivers to their success and why they had been able to continue the *What's Cooking?* programme in their setting. These drivers are highlighted below.

- **Flexibility of the programme**

Coordinators agreed that the programme was not too prescriptive so that each club could be made bespoke to their individual needs. This meant that coordinators and participants had quite a lot of freedom to make their own plans about how the funding was spent and the creativity in the decision over the activities they ran to engage the participants.

'We had to allow the What's Cooking? scheme to be run uniquely to each school. It had to be run to whatever requirements they needed. For example, we had a special school involved so theirs was actually with older students than originally intended.'

[Local authority representative, Middlesbrough]

The flexibility of the programme also meant that clubs could be developed to include different groups of participants. Those clubs which were able to include a cross generational group of participants were particularly successful.

'During the evaluation of our clubs one headteacher wrote "The students and adults have gained so much through this project. In relation to healthy eating, food preparation and working as a team. It has been a wonderful experience. We hope it will become a regular feature for our parent/pupil participation and Family Learning programme".'

[What's Cooking? Coordinator, South Tyneside]

- **Enthusiastic volunteers and support from the senior management team in schools**

The clubs who had motivated leaders and volunteers to organise and help deliver the programme were very successful.

'Where it has worked well is where people have come forward, supported the group, didn't want payment but have got something else out from the experience for themselves like an educational link so they can go off and do a qualification or just to engage with the young people in a different way'.

[Middlesborough local authority representative]

'The clubs where the leaders are really fired up by the principal and the whole ethos, then they have managed to continue and secure funding'.

[North Tyneside local authority representative]

Where clubs were run in schools, buy-in from the rest of the school, especially the headteacher, was fundamental to its success. Clubs were particularly sustainable where headteachers supported the aims of the programme and could see the positive impact on individuals and the school environment.

'Approach the head teacher at the outset. It's all about getting the head teacher on board from the word go, getting the right coordinator, getting everyone on board and then importance is given to it'.

[North Tyneside local authority representative]

- **The importance of making use of community support networks**

Those clubs who had continued, as well as having great support from those who helped set up and run the club, they also had built good community

relationships and partnerships. Some clubs made strong links with other clubs in the authority, other schools, the Primary Care Trust and local businesses.

In the local authorities where the programme was very successful, events had been organised for all *What's Cooking?* clubs to take part in. These celebration events brought together a variety of different people who had been involved in the programme. Activities at the events included; a Ready Steady Cook type of competition, presentations of certificates and open discussions amongst all participants and club coordinators to learn and share ideas.

- **A good fit with other aims and initiatives**

The *What's Cooking?* programme connected well with schools and other organisations that currently support a healthy living ethos and/or had a wider agenda focused on business, technology or sports, etc. The programme also did well if it was a major focus of the local authority's agenda.

As already mentioned, the programme also fitted in well with other initiatives, i.e. Healthy Schools Status, A Licence to Cook, Every Child Matters and New Nutritional Standards for Schools. The initiatives reinforced the similar messages of the *What's Cooking?* programme, helped to instil practical knowledge about food choices and aided the clubs' success.

- **Suitable venue & equipment**

Access to suitable facilities for cooking was very important. Most clubs used their schools' or local schools' kitchen or food technology rooms. Other clubs had to make the most of the limited facilities they had by just doing activities focused on food hygiene and safety or the preparation of food and then visit other schools or colleges to run the cooking activities.

- **Enterprising ways of fundraising**

The clubs which have continued with the *What's Cooking?* programme have had to seek alternative routes of funding. Clubs have taken a number of different paths, some being very enterprising. A selection of some of these funding methods are listed below;

- Using Extended schools funds
- Using study support funds from the schools' own budgets
- Entering competitions and bids for grants
- Obtaining sponsorship from local businesses
- Charging participants/asking for a small donation/asking participants to bring in their own ingredients
- Selling products made at the club to the local community
- Organising fundraising events
- Hiring out of school facilities, i.e. classrooms and halls.

6. Conclusions

The overall *What's Cooking?* programme in the North East was seen to be extremely flexible. This meant that club coordinators could tailor the clubs to meet their own specific aims and objectives. The flexibility allowed for creativity in the themes of the clubs, the different audiences who the programme involved and the variety in methods of how the clubs were run.

Although the flexibility of the programme was praised, coordinators also liked to have the structure of the food competences to use as a framework and focus. Coordinators and participants responded well to most of the food competences about diet, food preparation and hygiene. However, consumer awareness was covered in the club sessions less frequently and coordinators struggled for creative ideas to raise participants' knowledge in this area.

Support was crucial for the success of the clubs. The clubs which had a good availability of volunteers, and were well supported by senior management, were particularly successful and resulted in wider and longer term impact and achievements. Support did not just come from within the club settings, many *What's Cooking?* clubs involved a network of people from the local community to run activities and/or offer information and advice. Community involvement was varied and ranged from; local shops and supermarkets, healthcare professionals, to a supply of vegetables and fruit from local allotments. The community involvement helped bridge relationships with others outside the club setting.

The clubs which experienced difficulties in the delivery of the *What's Cooking?* programme were more likely to relate to practical constraints e.g. a lack of volunteers, facilities and equipment, rather than a lack of interest from participants.

The *What's Cooking?* programme in the North East had a wide impact on; participants, home life, the club setting and the wider community. The two greatest achievements of the programme was the overall food experience and opportunity which the programme provided and the environment to bridge community relationships. The actual experience and opportunity participants had interacting with food led to; changed attitudes and behaviour, a greater willingness to try different foods and an increase in skills. All were seen to be skills which would be useful to participants in the future.

Encouragingly, in the North East most clubs have continued in their own way now the managed roll out has come to an end. This further highlights the success of the programme. The main recommendations to be considered for future roll out are as follows:

- Provide local contacts available to help the programme
- To make sure coordinators are not alone in the set up and delivery of the programme. Local support and training should be identified and

communication between clubs in the same area or who have run the programme before should be encouraged.

- To ensure that the funding remit is clear and the paperwork burden for coordinators is reduced.
- To create delivery and activity ideas for the food competency, 'consumer awareness'.
- To provide background information on how the programme fits into wider education policy and to promote how *What's Cooking?* links in with other initiatives.

The findings from the evaluation indicated that following steps would help with the delivery of cookery clubs in the future:

- Set up support networks and cluster groups so coordinators can meet regularly to discuss issues, successes, ideas and community support.
- Consider that some clubs will be run by non-specialists, who require a greater level of support and guidance with filling in forms and running the club.
- Provide ways for new clubs to access advice from those who have run a club before.
- Provide detailed information about funding, such as timing and confirmation letters, so coordinators know when to expect it and it can be identified more easily.
- Clarify the level of support required from volunteers and provide ideas for recruiting others to help run the club.
- Offer advice and ideas on how all the core competences, particularly consumer awareness, can be delivered in a fun and enjoyable way.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Case Study visits

Club A

Background

This *What's Cooking?* club involved young people aged 11-16 years from children homes and looked after care, in a suburban area. Ten to thirteen participants attended each session that ran over a number of weeks during October 2006 to August 2007. The club's theme was Healthy Eating and Independent Living Skills.

Setting up the club

The club was set up to address a real need to improve the food provided in the local authorities children's and foster homes and to help these young people develop their independent living skills. The club coordinators sent a letter to all young people in the local authority who lived in looked after care and children's homes, inviting them to take part. The coordinator also made use of a large network of people from across the local authority; a local FE college, a school nurse for looked after children, a healthy schools facilitator, school improvement strategy staff, PCT staff, social services and the children's homes managers. This helped to provide staff and support to run the club.

Running the club

The club ran every week after school at a number of different venues; children's homes, an FE college and a local community hall/room. The club covered a wide range of themes and activities during their participation:

- A focus on five a day by preparing fruit salad, vegetable crudités and dips.
- Young people visited an FE college with a professional chef, where they looked at food hygiene and made pizzas and burgers from scratch.
- Some young people worked towards a Food Hygiene Certificate based on work completed at the FE college visit.
- A visit to a supermarket to buy ingredients on a budget.
- Worked in groups to prepare, cook and then taste dishes as part of a three course meal.

The core competences were covered in an implicit way and adapted to fit around the participants' needs. These included; importance of food hygiene and hand washing, air miles and food labels.

The impact of the *What's Cooking?* club

The young people really enjoyed taking part in the club, particularly the practical cooking side because most of the participants did not normally cook there or have the chance to cook at home. The club had a huge impact on the participants involved; it increased their independent living skills and confidence, knowledge of healthy eating and food, young people's food choices, developed/built on relationships and some of the participants worked towards gaining a food hygiene certificate. The club also had an impact on the staff involved; it developed their own food choices and what they make for their children and helped set up and establish a strong network across the local authorities fostering services, residency homes and local health services.

Club B

Background

This club took place at a special school located in a rural area which caters for children aged 6-19 years who have profound physical and learning disabilities. The club's theme was to prepare and cook recipes from around the world for two after school clubs which took place at the school.

Setting up the club

The aim of the club was for students in Key Stage 3 to prepare dishes which were cooked and served for two separate after school clubs, one for juniors and one for seniors. The coordinator sent out a notice to all key stage three form tutors to invite students to take part. The coordinator of the club also had the role as the school's extended schools manager and extra support was provided by senior management team members and the local authority's Healthy School's coordinator.

The club

The club was run twice a week during the school day and used the food technology facilities in school. Participants were involved in preparing and making food that would be appealing to other young people attending the after school clubs. Recipes such as mini pizzas, and vegetable kebabs were cooked.

The impact of the *What's Cooking?* club

All participants enjoyed taking part. They particularly enjoyed the experience and opportunity of handling and tasting different foods (this encouraged sensory development, such as touching and feeling dry pasta and smelling herbs). The young people's confidence and knowledge of healthy eating and cooking increased too.

Club C

Background

This club was run at a rural, school and community college for year sevens, eights and nines. The club theme was 'International foods'.

Setting up the club

The general aim of the club was to get young people cooking and give them an opportunity to make recipes they did not usually have the time to do during their food technology lessons. The club was set up by the head of technology who also taught health and social care. Club sessions during the autumn term were run for year nines, the spring term was for year eights and the summer term, for year sevens. The coordinator asked students to volunteer to take part. At first, there wasn't much enthusiasm amongst year nines to take part in the club, but by the spring term year eights were very motivated to sign up and take part.

Other staff helped out at the club on a casual basis a school governor, a member of the senior management team and an NQT teacher.

The club

The club ran once a week for a couple of hours after school. The main focus of the club activities was on practical cookery and getting participants familiar with using different recipes comprised of different and unknown foods. Each week, the participants made a dish each from a selection of themed national dishes from around the world such as foods from; Spain, India, China, Greece and Mexico. At the end of each session, participants were able to take what they had made home.

The impact of the *What's Cooking?* club

Once involved, all participants' thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the club. The main reason for this enjoyment was because the experience of taking part in a cooking club had been a new one and they had enjoyed sharing this experience with people at home.

'It's really good that you get to take the recipes home because you can get to show them and make them for people at home'

[Club participant]

The staff also felt that they had improved their own skills from the experience. Everyone involved had particularly liked the affect that the club had had on their relationships with other students and staff.

'It's nice because you know people there, everyone is from your year group but at the same time you get to work with people you don't normally'

[Club participant]

An article was also written in the local newspaper about the club and this helped raise the profile of the school.

Club D

Background

This club was set up by a community centre group for girls aged 11-16 years in an urban/inner city area.

The club's theme was 'Healthy eating for girls'

Setting up the club

The club was set up and ran by two youth and community leaders. They wanted to target a club just for girls, particularly to include the primary year six/age 11 age group. They advertised the club at the community centre where they already ran many activities for young people but they wanted the opportunity to offer something a bit different.

The club

Because the community centre had inappropriate facilities, the club was run once a week during the evening at a local school. A mini bus was hired to take the girls to and from the club venue back to their own home or area. Between six and eight girls attended the sessions each week. During the club sessions, the girls took part in the following activities; planning a healthy and balanced meal on a budget, activities about food hygiene and safety, making dishes from recipes and recipe alternatives for particular diets. They also had a visit from a PCT nurse to talk to them about nutrition for females and they all visited a local supermarket to look at the promotion of products, posters and advertising. Each week, the girls completed a diary about the session and were then able to take what they had made home.

The impact of the *What's Cooking?* club

Most participants attended each week which the coordinator thought was a good indicator that the young people had enjoyed the club. When at the club the participants took responsibility for what they made and they either formed new friendships or developed relationships with original friends. The coordinators had received requests from some of the girl's friends who didn't attend the club to see if they could.

Club E

Background

This club was set up at a special school for 11-19 year olds in an urban/inner city area.

The theme of the club was 'Preparing and cooking foods for events'.

Setting up the club

Past experience of a cookery club at the school was not very positive because they had been run on an ad hoc basis with very little structure.

The school had a coffee shop that made drinks and snacks for staff and pupils to have at break times. The *What's Cooking?* club was set up for those who

were interested in developing their cooking skills and for anyone who wanted to volunteer at the school's coffee shop. The club was also seen as a way of developing pupil's voice and communicating skills.

The coordinator of the club, who was also responsible for managing the coffee shop, decided to set up the club for students aged between 11-14 years from Key Stage 3. Lots of support was also provided by the deputy head and the Healthy Schools coordinator at the local authority. The coordinator and participants all wanted to use the club as a way of preparing for events.

These were; a Christmas Carol service for local older people, a party for year six transition students and a summer picnic for school leavers.

The club

The club was run after school once a week and special transport arrangements were made to take the students home after the club had finished. During the club sessions throughout the academic year 2006/2007 the participants helped design, prepare and make food for three events. The following activities were involved in the events;

- The Christmas party for older people

Participants researched on the internet for recipes and ideas, made mince pies and individual Christmas cakes for each guest. All recipes were written using Wigits for participants with speech and language difficulties. The students then designed and put together hampers for the party guests. On the day, the guests were served Christmas party food and the drama group at the school put on a Christmas pantomime

- A children's party for transition year 6 students

The participants designed menus, invitations, a party welcome banner and party pack for the year 6 students. They made all the party foods and at the party served their guests.

The club was also involved in using the Radiowaves programme to conduct their own evaluation of the *What's Cooking?* project in their school. This gave an enjoyable and rewarding opportunity for young people with SEN to conduct their own interviews and talk about their experiences.

The impact of the *What's Cooking?* club

All participants got a lot of enjoyment from taking part, particularly from the practical based activities and the general experience of planning events. The least preferred activity was the theory based work. However, this was seen by staff as fundamental to the participant's learning and so they could reflect on what they had done. A variety of skills through educational and fun routes, were gained by all involved. People from the local community and outside of the school's immediate environment were involved and therefore the participants were able to increase their confidence and communication skills.

'There's a lot of stigma attached to this place [referring to the special school] and so the What's Cooking? club is good for breaking down those barriers. Two lads from the mainstream came here to help out

with the club and the party celebration event for the year six transition students'

[A Deputy Head]

Club F

Background

This *What's Cooking?* club was set up in an urban/inner city secondary academy school to provide cooking experience for children from three local primary schools.

The theme of the club was 'Bread'

Setting up the club

The aim of the club was to bridge relationships with primary schools in the local area by offering its facilities, equipment and different types of lessons to primary school pupils who wouldn't have the opportunity to have a varied cooking experience in their own schools. Three separate primary schools took part in the project, involving children from year's four to six. Year eight students from the secondary school also got involved and volunteered to help out at each session.

The club

The club took place once a week in the secondary school's food technology rooms during the school afternoon. Each primary school attended the clubs on a weekly basis over one term. The coordinator/head of food technology at the secondary school planned the club's activities; these were similar to the structure of a food technology lesson. The following topics/activities were covered over the term;

- Participants looked at the topic of 'carbohydrates'; why they are needed, foods that have them in, portion sizes, the importance of a balanced diet and slow/quick release energy in carbohydrates
- Participants tasted different types of bread
- They baked their own bread (two breads, one they ate warm and another they froze for another session where they made healthy sandwiches)
- Primary students had to design a model of a sandwich out of sponge
- During the last session participants made six different sweets to take home in a little bag that was designed as a gift for the end of term

The impact of the *What's Cooking?* club

The secondary school established good relationships with local primary feeder schools by giving primary children the experience of working and being in a secondary school environment.

Most primary school participants had told their teachers that they had enjoyed the club and visiting the secondary school. They also had said that they had shared their experience with friends and family.

'My Aunty told me I was going to do all the cooking at home now'

[Club participant]

The primary school support staff had been pleased with the practical activity in the sessions which the children do not get the chance to cover in their own schools.

There was also a positive affect on year eight secondary school pupils who had helped at the club. The experience had given them some work experience of working with younger children.

'The year 8 students have learnt how to interact with the younger children. They also see what the teachers at the school have to do before the lessons in food technology and how they need to prepare so much. Because of this, they act differently when they attend their own food tech lessons; they have more appreciation of the teacher and the subject'

[Club coordinator]

Club G

Background

The club was set up at this suburban primary school by an outside coordinator who was running a number of *What's Cooking?* clubs with different schools/young people's organisations in the local area. This club was open for young people and their family members.

The theme was 'Cooking for life'

Setting up the club

The club at this primary school is part of an ongoing project sponsored by the local authority and an outside agency. The ongoing cooking project has been running over four years and has involved a number of different primary, secondary and other organisations. Because the club had already been set up and run in other venues the coordinator felt well supported and prepared. The main aim of the club was to educate children and their parents/carers about healthy eating, cooking, a balanced diet and food choices. It encouraged the importance of building relationships and cooking alongside friends and family.

At each session there were 12 participants, nine year six pupils and their family members (i.e. grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, sisters and brothers).

The club (when, where, what)

Reading and understanding a recipe and practical cookery was the overarching focus of the session's activities. Each week the group made a three course meal which was nutritionally balanced. When the meal was ready all participants and staff sat down to a set table to eat what they had just prepared.

Each session the types of activities the participants learnt were;

- Learning how to follow recipes

- Learning how to set a table
- Understanding food hygiene and safety
- Gaining knowledge about food miles and food labeling
- Evaluating the cooking experience and the taste of the food each week

The impact of the *What's Cooking?* club

The club was very popular at the school as it was oversubscribed. There was already a waiting list for the next time the club was to run at the school.

Further requests had also come from other schools and organizations to have the club run in their setting.

By taking part all participants shared their enjoyment and enthusiasm of being involved in the cooking process. The activity of sitting down to eat what they had made as a group and being able to take home the left over foods to show others was particularly appealing.

'When you take the food home you feel dead proud of yourself and think "Wow I made that".'

[Year six participant]

The participants spoke of learning new skills and gaining more knowledge about a balance diet, food hygiene and safety and food budgeting.

'I was getting something out of the oven and one of the children said "where's your oven gloves?" and I thought that really meant a lot, the information had gone in and they've taken it really seriously'

[Coordinator]

Many young participants also spoke of their surprise in trying new foods and the changes in their food choices.

'My mum liked it because you do things you wouldn't normally. I ate cheese and she was astounded'.

[Year six participant]

Club H

Background

This club was set up in an urban/inner city special school for 11-19 year olds. The club did not have a specific theme but all activities were focused on getting participants to try new dishes and learn about different food preparation skills.

Setting up the club

- People involved in the club; the Headteacher, head of food technology and the Healthy Schools coordinator

- A need in the catchment area to raise students' awareness of healthy eating and lifestyles.
- The scheme supports the school's extended schools programme and it fits in well with Every Child Matters agenda too
- What's Cooking! also helps the school to achieve their NHSS award as well
- Wanted to offer the club to just year 10 students because they are the only year group that do not receive cooking based lessons

The club (when, where, what)

- Practical cooking; chicken and vegetable stir fry, chicken curry, fruit salad, apple tart, tuna and pasta bake.

The impact of the What's Cooking? club

Take up for the club was low – only two students attend

- For those who did take part they enjoyed it and found the experience to be fun, particularly the practical cooking and preparing different dishes
- The club helped to increase the participants' confidence and willingness to try new things
- Helped students think for themselves
- Students became more at ease with using knives and handling raw meat
- Students developed belief in themselves, knowing that they can actually do something rather than always saying that they can't
- Strengthens the schools other attempts to encourage healthy eating amongst students
- Helps support various agendas and awards the school is working towards in the area

'They've tried things they wouldn't normally try'

'It's important to cook so I don't end up living on pot noodles all my life!'

[Participant]

Club I

Background

The club was set up in a suburban middle school

International cookery

Setting up the club

- Increase young peoples knowledge, attitudes and experiences of healthy eating and cooking from scratch
- Tackle long term issues involving obesity
- Cooking and eating on a budget

- Five members of staff from the school were involved (2 technology teachers, 2 TA's and the Deputy Head) so there was a sufficient amount of support
- Found communication with everyone that was involved in the club very confusing (people from ContinYou, FSA and the local authority)
- Because of the large amount of people involved in the running of the scheme knowing where to send information and correspondence was also very confusing
- The What's Cooking! guide was useful for initial ideas and structure

2 x groups of 16

Year 8 students

- Young people that will be soon leaving the school
- Young people who are having problems socially
- Young people who were having problems at home/personal issues

Young people who are at risk of being obese

'It was a really difficult choice to be honest; we could have done the same club again with every child in year eight without any problems, apart from time. All the children in the school could have benefited in some way or other'

[Club coordinator]

The club

After school

- The preparing and cooking of international dishes
- Comparing takeaway foods with dishes made from scratch
- Alternative diet recipes
- Using ingredients that can be used to make lots of different dishes
- Restaurant visit to a local Italian
- Theory intertwined with practical activity (food hygiene and cutting skills)
- Catering for a year 6 and year 8 leaving party

The impact of the What's Cooking? club

- Enjoyed
- Participants are committed and attend every week
- Learnt lots because started from the basics and learning from scratch
- Tasting of new foods (different fruits and vegetables and Quorn)
- Responsibility of organizing and preparing food for a party
- Improved participants behavioural issues, confidence and general attitudes towards school
- Students and staffs relationships improved and students respect the time that staff had taken to run the club

- Opportunity to cover very different recipes than the limited recipes covered during food technology, therefore expanded young people knowledge of foods
- Staff have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and found it very rewarding, an important aspect of their work life and their teaching practice
- Helped maintain the Healthy Schools award

'I didn't think I'd enjoy the club quite as much as I have. It's been so beneficial for the children and so beneficial for us (the teachers). It's been about doing things that you don't normally do, like starting to cook completely from scratch. Last week we had fresh coriander. One of the students said "we're going to use a plant?" they couldn't believe that they were going to cook with a plant. That kind of experience you're never going to get again, it's quite fulfilling really and it makes a big difference'

*'Impact on the school, it had such a positive impact on the year 6's when they had their party. It was really important for the year 6's that the year 8's had made them their party food and it was quite a big deal. It also brought in an interest in food and cooking'.
'It definitely gives you a positive feeling and it does have a big impact on the students. Individually and also how they communicate/the relationships between them'.*

[Club coordinator]

Club J

Background

This club was set up in a suburban RC mixed comprehensive
Theme; Core food competence focused

Setting up the club

- Interested in the relationship between a young persons diet and their behaviour, appearance and self esteem
- School had addressed lots of issues that affect students by running themed classes and clubs but they had never targeted healthy eating and cooking
- Increase knowledge and awareness of healthy eating
- Run club for improving students personal skills and give them a sense of accomplishment
- Run a cookery club that was personal and bespoke to their students

Year 7 to 9 students

10 week club

Students who have used or use the school mentors

The club

Club ran on one day a week during school term. On that day the club would visit the supermarket for an hour during the school day and then cook after school for 2 hours.

- All core competencies were covered in a very practical manner and were the focus of each session
- Practice of cooking skills; baking, boiling, frying
- Food hygiene; washing hands, tying hair back, wearing an apron, cleaning surfaces and utensils and washing foods
- Visited a supermarket each session to buy recipe ingredients
- Prepared, cooked and ate meal together
- Visited a fish market
- Visited a Chinese restaurant

The impact of the What's Cooking? club

Enjoyed cooking for themselves and tasting new foods

- Were focused and involved in discussing plans for the next session
- Participants found the club fun and felt that they had learnt lots too
- Huge affects on participants confidence
- Increased participants knowledge through learning the core competencies in an implicit way
- Participants developed other skills such as team work, listening skills alongside cooking skills
- Strong links with the PSHE curriculum
- Helped enforce the respect aspect amongst students (part of the Ever Child Matters school policy)
- Mentors keep parents up to date about the club and this helps parents have an insight into how their children are getting on at school
- More cooking at home; parents trust young people and young people want to get involved

'When the students come to the club now, they instinctively come in and wash their hands, tie their hair back and get their aprons on.'

[Club coordinator]

'It's not work, it's fun and it's learning in a different way'

[Participant]

'This kind of activity will have lasting benefits'

'The atmosphere is light-hearted and social'

'It's not so much dietary, it's a lot more to do with having that social time with students and letting them interact with each other'

[Club coordinator]

Club K

Background

This club was set up at a rural secondary technology college.

'General healthy eating' theme

Setting up the club

- The school had already obtained their Healthy Schools Award and had been doing a lot in school to raise awareness of balanced diets
- To continue raising awareness of healthy eating and healthy choices

10 participants (7 girls and 3 boys) from years 7 to 9

The participants were self selected

- People involved in club; Deputy Head, Health coordinator, Food technology teacher/transition teacher and SEN Teaching assistant
- Close involvement with Healthy Schools coordinator
- Found the number of people/different roles people involved in running the scheme had, very confusing. A sheet/list of all contacts/network needs to be made of everyone who is involved and how to contact them

The club

- After school
- One off food diary and keeping their own work books
- Practical cooking; mince pies, omelet's, sausage rolls/cheese and onion pasties, Mexican wraps, Soya substitute curry and choosing their own recipe to adapt
- Hopes to be able to go on visits to local restaurants so they can speak with the chef and see what happens behind the scenes
- Celebration event planed for all the What's Cooking! clubs in the local authority

The impact of the What's Cooking? club

- A lot of the children had not cooked before so it was a new experience for many
- Some children with behavioral problems have been absorbed in the cooking sessions
- The club encouraged 'Pupil voice' through asking the young people what they want to make and letting them control what they are going to make
- Positive impact on the participants because they are attending every week
- The club has had an impact on the participants knowledge and understanding of healthy cooking in a gradual way – had to start from the basics because of limited knowledge. Some of the participants didn't think they would be talking about their diets and their choices in foods.
- Many students do not cook at home and neither do their parents – getting them involved in the process of cooking proper foods.

- The club is in its early stage and quite low key quite low key, people are just finding their feet and responsibility. Once the club is more established more links will be made with the community and they will get the school council involved

'What is nice is that we have a very diverse group from the gifted and talented to special educational needs children. There's a nice mix they're all gelling together'

[Club coordinator]

'It's better than when you do cooking in school in year 7 and 8 because then you just make cakes and biscuits and you don't make any meals or savory things too'

[Participant]

Club L

Background

Urban/inner city
Catholic Secondary Girls school

Parents and young people cooking together fun and healthy dishes – Team work

Setting up the club

- There were lots of other clubs going on, but not cookery. It was thought that the club may be appreciated by those with a real interest in cookery and that it might help them decide whether they wanted to take food tech for GCSE
- The school wanted to offer something different because no where else was offering something where parents and students could cook together
- Parents and students Year eight pupils
- The club has reached out to students in deprived areas and they have brought in their mums and other family
- Headteacher, food technicians and food technology teacher were involved in the set up and maintaining the functioning of the club

The club

After school

- Started with the basic preparation skills and making soup
- Moved onto more complicated dishes week by week including; spices and multicultural food, preparing fish and meat.
- The recipes were pre set and students did not know what they would be making until they got to the class

The impact of the What's Cooking? club

Lots of enthusiasm and enjoyment

- Participants built their confidence by taking part
- Young people and parents/carers supported each other
- Many new skills had been learnt by all from preparing food and cooking (food hygiene, food budgeting, food and the seasons)
- Parents said that the club had changed their attitudes and knowledge too e.g. lots of parents used jarred sauces and they were really surprised as to how easy it was to make a sauce from scratch
- The club encouraged participants to try new foods and ingredients
- The club has encouraged students who normally do not bring food into lessons to cook in the club
- The school gained some publicity in the local paper about the cookery club
- Together the parents and students bring the healthy eating messages home
- Team work was a really important part of the club, it built up the students confidence/ The students are cooking more at home and talking about what they've made at home, at school

'It's made me think about what is and isn't healthy more'

[Participant]

'For kids it shows them that they have options when it comes to food and that there are lots of different things they can eat'

'They've really enjoyed it; you can see over the course how it has boosted their confidence in cooking'

[Club coordinator]

'I enjoy spending time together with my daughter because we are doing something positive that she really likes to do'

'It's a great time for us to spend time together outside of the normal home environment'

[Parent]