

social



**TECHNICAL
HANDBOOK**

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INTRODUCTION

This technical handbook is designed to support staff and volunteers, who are organising and delivering social eating in community settings. Its purpose is to provide guidance around the planning, set up and delivery of cook and eat sessions for older people. This content has been created in conjunction with our project partners and with specialist input from Cracking Good Food. It forms part of our Social Eating Guide, funded by Ambition for Ageing.



This project has been kindly funded by:
Ambition for Ageing & The National Lottery Community Fund

Bolton
at **Home**



This technical handbook and accompanying guide was written in collaboration with a range of partners.

Both proudly designed by TLC: Talk, Listen, Change, April 2020

Cook & Eat

BENEFITS OF APPROACH

We have found that sessions where participants help prepare and/or cook a meal together have several benefits:

- Rebuild confidence about cooking and encourage people to cook from scratch at home
- Rekindle enthusiasm for food and eating
- Promote understanding of healthy eating and what makes a nutritionally balanced meal
- Cooking together can act as an icebreaker and support interaction and collaboration during social eating sessions
- Older people have the opportunity to cook traditional favourites and also try new tastes and recipes

“ We’ve made some really tasty meals including curry, Kedgeree, cheese and potato pie. We love the option to cook from scratch and am already feeling hungry. ”

“ Really looked forward to it - marked it on my calendar -want to carry on - Involvement, felt valued and part of everything. Two-way process; felt listened to. Contributed to creating something together. ”

“ Could smell it cooking, changing the way I cook. High quality food and wonderful company. ”

Participants, Cracking Good Food cook and eat session

Cook & Eat

BUDGETING SESSIONS

Venue hire

Staffing costs

Volunteer travel expenses (if you are involving volunteers)

Purchase of equipment if not provided by venue
(see below for a full list of suggested equipment)

Fresh ingredients to cook with, for each session

Store cupboard ingredients

If you are struggling to find funding to purchase equipment, you could consider:

- Putting a call out in your local community – so many people have too much equipment and may be happy to donate it. You will need to check that cooking equipment such as pots and pans, cutlery, utensils and crockery are in good condition and wash them thoroughly before using
- Approaching local shops and businesses to negotiate deals on any surplus stock or to see if they might wish to support your social eating activities through donating equipment
- Charging a small amount for people to attend sessions or introducing a “pay as you feel model”

“

People like the idea of cooking and eating together, and each group wants to continue with the sessions once the social eating sessions come to end. To make this possible to become sustainable, we have put a charge of £2-2.50 per session, this will help to build funds up, so it will cover the costs for the future cook and taste sessions

”

Rachel, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing

Cook & Eat

MARKETING SESSIONS

Learning

- We found that older people didn't respond to publicity encouraging them to "learn to cook" or offering "cooking lessons". This wasn't an effective hook to get people along to sessions and a common response from older people was "I already know how to cook". Instead, talking about "cook and eat" or "cook and taste" and focussing on the social aspect, proved more successful.
- When setting up cook and eat sessions in an area, significant time and resource needs to be invested in building relationships and finding the mechanisms to direct market to people – either through door-knocking or linking with community groups that are effective at reaching local people.

YOU ARE INVITED TO:

FREE SOCIAL COOK & EAT SESSIONS
FOR OVER 50's

'Bringing people together to share a meal is a great way to create new friendships and support'



'I learned some great tips about cooking for one'



'I really enjoyed meeting new people from my area and the food was so tasty.'



We look forward to cooking and eating with you at
Carisbrook Street, Harpurhey, Manchester M9 5UX

Tbc 28 May | 25 June | 30 July
27 August | 24 September | 29 October

To book your **FREE** place and transport contact:
Dale on 0161 205 5143 or Jamie on 0161 448 4227

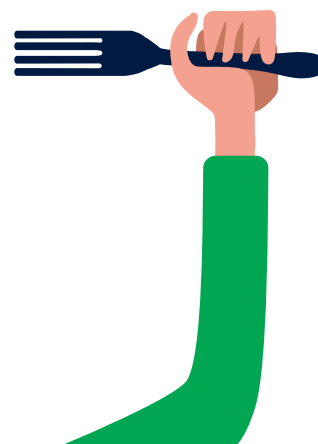
INCLUDES: A lunch & a meal to take home - please bring a food container







Example poster from our Didsbury Cook and Eat Sessions for older people



Cook & Eat

FINDING A VENUE

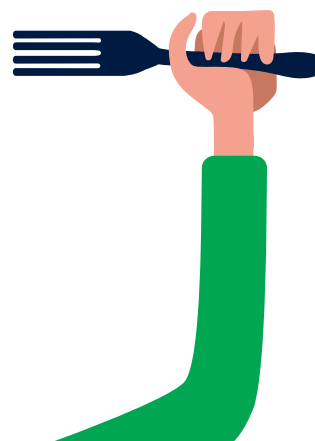
As a minimum, your venue for cook and eat sessions will need to have:

- A room
- Tables and chairs
- Access to a cooker
(portable gas hobs are a good option if you have funding)
- Access to hot and cold running water
- A sink for hand washing
- A separate sink for dish washing
- Toilet facilities

Venue Checklist			
Venue Room Name and Address:		Main contact:	
		Tel No/Email:	
FIRE ESCAPE:			
Clearly visible	YES	NO	Alarm Sound:
Escape Door Location:			Meeting point:
Smoke Alarm (can it be de-activated?)			Location of cooker isolation tap:
Fire extinguishers located:			
ROOM/KITCHEN:			
Adequate lighting for room size:	YES	NO	Type:
Cleanliness and Tidiness:			Hot Water Signs: YES NO
Cables and wires: (Not trailing across floor/Frayed/Taped down)			
Flooring type (Carpet/wooden etc):			Non/slip: YES NO Secured: YES NO
Location of room in building:			
Ventilation (Fans/Windows):			
First Aid Kit available:	YES	NO	Complete venue's Accident Book? YES NO
Fire Blanket available:	YES	NO	
TOILETS:			
Location:			Disabled: YES No
CAR PARK LOCATION:			
Smooth/uneven surface:	Lighting adequate:	YES NO	Ramp access: YES NO
ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING VENUE'S EQUIPMENT:			
Tables:	Cooking utensils:		
Cookers:	Electrical equipment:		
Facilities we have access to:			
Hob Oven Washing PA system Hot/Cold Water Tables/Chairs Crockery Cutlery			
ON THE DAY:			
Team report to:			
Location for team to unload equipment:		Nearest Car park, if off premises:	
Tidying and cleaning up arrangements:			

Please also see the section on "Finding the right Venue for Social Eating", which contains more detailed guidance about finding venues that work well for older people.

Example checklist form, used by our project partner, Cracking Good Food.



Cook & Eat

EQUIPMENT LIST

This is not an exhaustive list but it covers the basics needed to run a session. It is based on a group of 12 participants, working as a whole group, with some tasks undertaken in smaller groups. Note that the equipment required will vary depending on the venue and what they provide and also the number of participants and the format of the session.

Kitchen Essentials	Cleaning Products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aprons • Baking sheets - 4 • Can opener - 1 • Casserole dish - 2 • Colander - 2 • Cooling racks/trivets - 3 • Frying pans (medium sized) - 2 • Grater - 2 • Knives (cooks and paring) - 12 • Mixing bowls (large sized) - 6 • Ladle - 1 • Measuring jugs - 4 • Mugs and plastic glasses - 14 • Teaspoons - 12 • Plates - 14 • Potato masher - 2 • Rolling pins - 6 • Serving spoons - 2 • Slotted spoon - 2 • Soup/dessert spoons - 14 • Storage boxes for equipment • Chopping mats and grips to stabilise - 12 • Pans with lids (small and medium sized) - 2 of each • Table covers (vinyl for wiping and ensuring clean work area) - 2 • Cutlery sets (knife, fork, soup spoon, dessert spoon) - 14 • Tinfoil, cling film, baking paper • Veg peelers - 6 • Weighing scales - 2 • Wooden spoons - 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bin bags, • Compost bags • Food bags • Brushes and scourers • Food caddy for food waste • Hand-wash and hand towels • Rubber gloves • Tea towels and cloths • Washing up bowl • Cleaning products • Detergents and antiseptic cleaning products



Cook & Eat

SOURCING FOOD

Many communities are now linked to Food Pantries that provide surplus unwanted food from supermarkets, at a greatly reduced cost. Food purchased from these can either be paid for upon collection or via a standing order when delivered, depending on the organisation operating the food redistribution and your own community's needs. Fareshare Greater Manchester is a large-scale provider, who can also signpost you to smaller food redistribution organisations. There is often a lot of short dated fresh fruit, vegetables, dairy, meat and fish available as well as a lot of highly processed food that we would strongly urge communities to avoid. Focus instead on fresh ingredients and cook that from scratch.

Wherever possible, buy seasonal fruit and vegetables. Buy loose produce; enabling you to buy only what you need as well as it being free from packaging and, therefore, more environmentally friendly. Asian supermarkets and traditional fruit and veg shops are far more affordable than mainstream supermarkets.

Several of our social eating projects have explored using a “grow and eat” model, where participants work together with volunteers to learn how to grow their own produce on land in the community. Projects have found that this has enabled them to cook simple meals (such as soups or stews) at a reduced cost.

Spices and herbs can be purchased cheaply in larger quantities from Asian supermarkets and grocers' shops – 10 times the quantity and almost half the price!

Store Cupboard List

- Bouillon
- Lentils
- Brown rice
- Oats
- Sugar, honey
- Yeast extract
- Cornflour
- Dried fruit
- Cinnamon
- Tins of fish
- Spices – Coriander, Cumin, Paprika, Chilli Powder/Seeds
- Herbs - Thyme, Parsley, Rosemary, Oregano, Mixed herbs
- Dried beans e.g. kidney, pinto, butter beans (only if you have a pressurecooker or able to soak overnight)
- Long life dairy alternative milk
- Salt and Pepper
- Tins of tomatoes
- Wholewheat pasta
- Wholewheat noodles
- Rice pudding grains
- Cooking oils
- Soy sauce
- Garlic granules
- Mustard
- Flours

Cook & Eat

PLANNING A SESSION

- Allow at least half an hour to set up before participants arrive and allow a longer set-up time for the first session
- Put the tables together, wipe down surfaces with anti-bacterial spray and set out equipment and ingredients
- Welcome participants as they arrive
- Everyone washes their hands and put aprons on
- Introduce the session, and cover housekeeping and health and safety
- During your planning, decide whether you want the session to be fully or part participation, bear in mind the age, capability and mobility of the group. For large numbers, a demonstration may be best; ensuring everyone can see each stage of the preparation and cooking process
- When deciding what to cook, think about the teaching skills that can be used in lots of recipes such as knife skills, measuring and weighing
- Try to cover a range of types of dishes, like sauces, soups, stews, pastries, pies and puddings
- When running the first few sessions make sure that you cover basic skills such as how to peel and chop safely – you can find video clips showing correct techniques at: www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/
- Allow at least 20mins for everyone to sit and enjoy the food together, this is an important element of community cooking, as many anecdotes are shared along with reflections. Confidence is a great barrier to cooking from scratch and it is at social times, that these barriers are often overcome
- Ensure equipment is properly put away at the end of the session (counting items back into boxes or checking them off on a list.)



Cracking Good Food. Example Lesson Plan

Time	Teaching and Learning Activities What will we be doing to pursue learning outcomes?	How will learners work? Whole class Groups of similar/mixed ability. Pairs or similar/mixed ability. Individual work. Other way of working	How will I assess learning? Watching / Listening to learners. Question & answer. Written work. Quiz. Test Monitoring activity. Feedback	Are there support and challenge methods? Different tasks / roles / groups. Support (give detail) Scaffolding. Questioning Extension/ simplification
6.00	Tutor: welcome, register. Housekeeping, health & safety, hand-washing, aprons on. Overview of the session. What's to be cooked Allergies & any info needed to know about participants (PPTs)	Whole class	Watching	No
6.15	Demonstration of how to cut Julienne veg for the appropriate veg and how to cut the other veg for a stir fry (i.e. mange tout, spring onions, broccoli) Whole group to chop veg	Demonstration of safe knife handling/ compost bin / how to chop garlic & certain available veg Whole group feedback	Watching and listening to learners Question and answers	Health & Safety implications / volunteers closely monitoring with Tutor. Cleanliness. Asking group to show others if anyone is unsure - peer learning. Clean down and wash up ready for next stage
7.00	Discussion introduction bases of a stir fry (garlic, ginger, soy sauce, sesame oil) What can be added (sources of protein nuts, meat, egg, pineapple, what spices or herbs etc Using up left overs Rice or noodles	Smelling and tasting. Discussion about spice or not spice. Whole class	Listening to learners Question and answer	Supply plenty of sample spoons to taste safely. Nutritional information 5 a day and why? Older people have a higher protein needs but smaller appetites. Suggest little and often. Complex carbs better for energy.
7.15	Demo cooking noodles (put to one side) Discussion about Pot noodles I compare (pot noodles manufactured to be addictive - poor nutritional content)	All work together learning from each other. Peer learning through social engagement	Watching and listening to learners Question and answers	Ensure work surfaces are cleaned down. Every- one has a safe place to work in. Environment is calm and relaxed.
8.00	Demonstration: cooking of small stir fry, explaining the stages, tasting for all to experience. Split in to 2 groups one group to cook for the other group	Split in 2 groups to cook	Watching and listening to learners as well as tutor. Question and answers	Start getting group to clean down/wash up if finished/ return equip to boxes.
8.30-9.00	Eat! Finish.	Whole group	Discussion re expectations/ reality, tastes, skills learnt, how much easier than thought, feelings of achievement/better mental health, new ambitions of how it could be developed etc.	Social cohesion, the most important element of the session where discussion is open and frank.
	What to cook next time ?			

Note to teacher - be mindful of abilities for cutting, lifting, holding. heavy pans - use smaller pans - eyesight/ hearing and chewing & moving around.

**Example lesson plan,
used by our
project partner,
Cracking Good Food.**

Cook & Eat

TICK LIST & RECIPE CARD

A dish tick list, like the one right enables people to easily identify dishes that they would like to cook together. At the end of each session, partners / cooking leaders would circulate the dish tick list, so that the group could decide which dish will be made for the next session; firmly leaving control within the group.

Sweet and Sour Chicken Stir Fry





- 1 tsp Oyster Sauce (Note 2)
- 1/4 tsp salt
- THICKENER
- 1 tbsp cornflour / corn starch + 2 tbsp water , mixed together
- STIR FRY
- 1 ½tbsp peanut oil (or vegetable)
- 1 garlic clove, minced or finely chopped
- 1 onion, halved and sliced
- 400 g / 13 oz chicken thigh fillets, cut into bite size pieces (Note 3)
- 1 red capsicum / bell pepper, cut into bite size pieces
- 1 green or yellow capsicum / bell pepper, cut into bite size pieces
- 1 can (8oz/250g) canned pineapple pieces in natural juice. Separate pineapple from juice.
- Sliced shallots / scallions for garnish

Sauce

- 80g white sugar
- 140 ml apple cider vinegar
- 3 tbsp pineapple juice (from the canned pineapple pieces)
- 3 tbsp ketchup
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp soy sauce, light or all purpose

Method

1. Mix together Sauce ingredients. Mix together Thickener in a separate small bowl.
2. Heat oil in a wok over high heat. Add garlic and onion, cook for 1 min.
3. Add chicken and stir fry until it is white all over but still pink inside.
4. Add capsicum and stir fry for 2 minutes.
5. Add sauce ingredients, stir until sugar has dissolved and the sauce bubbles.
6. Add thickener, simmer and stir constantly. Cook until it thickens to a syrup consistency - about 3 minutes.
7. Stir through pineapple pieces (just to warm) and remove from stove.
8. Serve with rice, garnished with shallots if desired.

Example recipe card



Cook & Eat

TICK LIST & RECIPE CARD



Chinese Stir Fry



Spaghetti Bolognese



Savoury Pancakes



Pizza



Mexican Quesadillas



Pasta with Savoury Sauce



Omelettes



Vegetarian Tagine



Lean Burger & Wedges



Meat Hot Pot



Fishcakes with Poached Egg



Chicken Jalfrezi



Shepherds Pie



Slow Cooker Goulash



Fish Goujons

Cook & Eat

CREATING YOUR OWN STORE CUPBOARD

Having a well-stocked store cupboard can save huge amounts of time and talking about store cupboard essentials can help participants get prepared to try cooking new recipes at home. These suggestions are really to give you some ideas when talking with your group about store cupboards and how they can create one at home. Ask people what their favourite items are and build a discussion around this. Stock up on things when you see them on offer.

- Selection of flours for cooking and baking
- Pasta – great for quick meals
- Rice – for curries, chillies and casseroles
- Lentils, pulses and grains – great for soups/stews and using to bulk dishes out for sauces, bases of meals
- Beans – butter beans/ kidney beans/borlotti beans-added protein and texture
- Tuna/sardines/ salmon/anchovies – great in salads, sandwiches, pasta dishes
- Baked beans – Great source of fibre and protein
- Spices – chilli, turmeric, cumin, pepper, salt, coriander, garam masala, paprika etc - a little spice livens up food tremendously and can turn a bland dish into something new and exciting. Buy in an Asian shop and share amongst your group - so much cheaper!
- Herbs – a couple of basics like mixed herbs, or rosemary, thyme, oregano can really perk up soups, stews and pasta dishes
- Other seasonings and flavour enhancers include soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, honey, vinegar, balsamic vinegar etc
- Stock cubes/dried bouillon add depth and richness to foods
- Oils can include vegetable, rapeseed, olive and sesame

Cook & Eat

HYGIENE & SAFETY

Cracking Good Food recommends that at least one adult running the cooking session has an up to date Level 2 Award in Food Safety. A checklist around food hygiene and safety is included below.

Compliance and registration:

If you handle, prepare, store and serve food occasionally and on a small scale, there is no need to register as a food business. Registering with your local authority as a food business may be necessary when providing food on a regular and organised basis. Registration still applies where regular food handling takes place, even if your organisation is not-for-profit. There is further guidance on this and food safety/hygiene in the resource section below. Click to download a larger version.

Food hygiene and safety checklist

We recommend that you use this checklist at the start of each cooking session as well as regularly updating your risk assessment. This will reduce the risk of accidental injury and help to keep everyone safe. If you identify other hazards specific to your cooking area, add them to this one.

Session details

Date of session:

What is the group cooking:

Number of people attending:

Tick off each task when you have completed it

- Explain what you are about to cook and what equipment will be used. Ask participants what they think could be hazardous and what they can do to make the activity safe. By involving them you create an awareness of potential risks and give them ownership of safety.

Personal hygiene & Safety

- Tie long hair back
- Wear clean aprons that are only used for food preparation (PVC-coated aprons should be wiped with hot soapy water before and after use)
- Roll up sleeves
- Wash hands with soap, handwash or a sterilising rub, and repeat if they blow their nose, cough or sneeze into their hands, touch their hair, any cuts or spots.
- Remove aprons before going to the toilet, wash hands in the toilet sink and re-wash in the classroom sink before they return to cooking
- Cover any cuts or sores with a blue plaster

- Wear flat shoes to cover and protect feet
- Store outdoor coats away from the food preparation area
- Not attend the session if they feel sick or unwell
- Ensure the cooking area is clean and safe
- Make sure that emergency evacuation procedures are in place and are understood by everyone
- Arrange furniture so that it is safe and practical
- Consider the safe positioning of wheelchair users
- Clean work surfaces with soap and warm water before each session
- Make sure that the floor is clean and dry (wipe up any spillages immediately).
- Scrub all equipment, especially chopping boards, using detergent and hot water after each session
- Put equipment away clean
- Wash tea towels after each session

Safe food storage

- Cooked and raw ingredients should be kept covered and separated during both storage and preparation
- Store raw meats below cooked meats in the fridge
- Frozen foods should be stored in a freezer -18c or below, refrigerated food at 0-5c
- Food prepped during the session should be stored at the correct temperature until eaten or taken home

Equipment

- Always demonstrate the safe use of all equipment for participants to copy
- Adults must always closely supervise children
- Oven shelves must be adjusted before putting items in a hot oven
- Oven gloves must always be used to carry hot pans
- Pan handles should be kept turned inwards (not hanging over the hob side)

Knives

- Knives must be locked away when not in use
- Knives and sharp equipment, such as skewers, should be counted out and in
- Appropriate knives must be used according to the job, age and ability of the participants
- Chopping boards must always be used with knives
- The bridge and claw safe-cutting techniques must be taught and supervised
- Knives must be washed up separately and not left in the washing-up bowl

Electrical items

- All electrical equipment that is fixed, transportable or portable should be inspected, tested and maintained at least once a year, in accordance with the Electricity at Work regulations, and should be certified for safe use by an authorised person.

- The use of electrical equipment by participants must be closely supervised by an adult helper who fully understands how the appliances work
- Suspected malfunctioning equipment should not be used
- Equipment must be switched off and unplugged before cleaning
- Blades and beaters should be washed up immediately and stored in a safe place after use

Taste testing

- Do not return a used spoon into the food after tasting
- Food for tasting should be warm, not hot

Allergic reactions to food

- Participants should have provided information of any known allergies or intolerances to food or cleaning materials, special dietary requirements, or religious or cultural beliefs that prevent them handling or tasting certain foods
- Participants who many need medication during a cooking session should have been identified, and an authorised person must be on hand to administer medication, if required. First aid provision should be available at all times while people are on the premises, in line with its health and safety procedure
- Take care when using recipes which include ingredients known to commonly cause allergic reactions, such as nuts
- Food donations, such as eggs, should be accepted only if you are confident that they are safe to eat

Disposal of waste

- Line all waste bins and use separate bins specifically for food waste only
- Any sharp-edged waste, such as open cans, should be wrapped and disposed of safely
- All waste must be disposed of at the end of the session and bins washed and disinfected. Compost all food waste and recycle where possible

Example of food hygiene and safety checklist

Cook & Eat

INSIGHTS FROM DIDSBURY

Location: Southway Housing Trust Grove Lane Sheltered Scheme

Cost: Free for participants

Frequency/timing: Monthly sessions lasting two hours, over a period of 18 months.

Venue

The Southway Housing Trust sheltered scheme was chosen to host the sessions as it was:

- Easily accessible by public transport
- On ground floor level
- Had suitable facilities for the age group
- Timings for delivery of cook and eat sessions fitted into the room usage schedule
- Available free of charge, due to Southway Housing Trust partnership

The venue had previously hosted a “luncheon club” in the past, which had ceased due to staff changes within the sheltered scheme.

Guests were seated around 4 large round tables which were set up with chopping boards and aprons.

Working in Partnership

Cook and eat sessions were delivered in partnership with Southway Housing Trust, who provided a staff member to support with the following aspects of co-ordination and delivery:

- Recruitment of participants for the sessions
- Phoning participants to remind them about upcoming sessions
- Booking the necessary transport for participants
- Attending the sessions and having conversations with participants to help them feel welcome and to get to know them
- Clearing up after the session

Having a staff member, whose focus was on building relationships with participants and encouraging participation, was felt to be key factor in the success of the Didsbury cook and eat sessions.

A day in the life of our cook and eat sessions

Setup and welcome

- Guests were welcomed with a smile and an offer of a cold/hot beverage.
- Assistance given where necessary with putting on aprons and storing walkers and personal belongings (always in sight and within easy reach).
- Portable induction hobs and a display of ingredients were set-up at the front of the room and we ensured that they were clearly visible to all participants.
- It quickly became apparent that many participants were familiar with the venue; they had places they liked to sit and established social groups. We made sure to warmly welcome new members and invite them to sit at a table.
- Some participants would go to the bathroom to wash their hands. For those with less mobility, a Cracking Good Food team member would take a wash bowl, soap and towel for them to wash their hands at the table; allowing another opportunity to interact and get to know each participant.

Delivering the session

- The participants were a very social group and would chat amongst themselves quite easily. Occasionally to get the session started we would need to gently focus their attention!
- Once everyone was settled the cooking organiser would introduce the session, reminding everyone of house rules, collect Tupperware for them to take food home in. They would also introduce the rest of the team, which included a cooking leader and, where possible, two volunteers and then explain what was going to be cooked.
- A small number of ingredients, along with the necessary utensils and bowls were distributed to each table; tasks were allocated being mindful of each person's abilities e.g. one lady had arthritis feeling unable to peel, she was happy to help with collecting peelings in the food caddy.
- Participants who initially didn't want to participate were equally welcomed to sit, watch and enjoy the social aspect.
- The initial food prep tasks were key as they acted as an ice breaker whilst participants got to know each other. The cooking leader and organiser would go around each table demonstrating knife skills, ensuring everyone was engaged and comfortable with the tasks, to whatever level they wished to be involved. As the sessions progressed, we found that tasks were completed much quicker, which enabled more 'catch-up' time.
- Discussions about food and fun informative activities such as Cauliflower Bingo, Sugar Game High, Higher and Lower Salt Intake, Freezer Options were facilitated by the cooking organiser, whilst the cooking leader began cooking.

- The cooking leader would then demo the cooking, stopping at crucial stages to explain what was going on. We had one person requiring halal and easily accommodated this through separate cooking hob and pan. Age related nutrition advice would be discussed e.g. elderly have a higher protein requirement, how to manage low appetite, the age appropriate Eatwell plate. Volunteers encouraged discussions around these points and shared hints and tips making sure everyone had the opportunity to share their views.
- After the discussion, the tables were cleared and wiped down and laid ready for lunch, including a glass of water. Salt was available on request. Participants were served at the table and where time allowed and it was appropriate to do so, the CGF team would also sit to enjoy the meal with the participants, once the Tupperware was filled with a portion of food for each participant to take home.

Additional information

- Recipe sheets formatted with larger print and photos, were distributed at the end sessions.
- We also circulated a 'dish tick list' so the group would decide which dish was made for the next session, firmly leaving control within the group.

What helped to make the cook and eat sessions successful?

Team

- Having team members who were of varying ages to engage with the group on all levels.
- Even something as basic as making tea and coffee, being polite, approachable and turning up on time all helped with relationship building.
- Having volunteers to help with clear-down and being slick with our presentations, ensured the participants had more time to socialise to the very end of the allotted time resulting in the residents forming bonds and were far more relaxed and at ease with one another.

Overall approach

- Eating together is such a social experience and a natural setting for conversation and socialising.
- Giving a level of control to the group so they could lead on what's being cooked next session and decide on what level of involvement they wanted to have each week.

- Having the right environment. Grove Lane (Southway Housing Trust) has a wonderful large warm and welcoming room and facilities that we were able to utilise and arrange in a way that enhanced learning and socialising within the group.
- Having a genuine passion for not only cookery but the willingness to share this enthusiastically with the residents that attended. Passion and enthusiasm can be contagious!
- The attitude of the residents themselves. Despite some of them being a little anxious (e.g. about meeting people for the first time and also not believing they can cook very well for example) they were all very positive and willing to engage and try new things.
- People learned as individuals but they enjoyed being part of a group and learning together.
- Having a good level of communication – a staff member from Southway Housing Trust contacted the participants ahead of each session to remind them and to sort out transport where needed. Dates for sessions were all agreed and set well in advance.

Session content

- Including a food prep activity to act as an icebreaker initially and then as the participants got to know each other and became team workers.
- Maintaining a level of ‘mystery’; they never knew what activity was coming nor how much fun, along with learning, it would bring.
- Enabling opportunities for people to reflect on past experiences and share with others.

Physical aspects

- Having an understanding of the age group, in terms of dexterity, mobility and their outlook enabled us to sensitively and respectfully accommodate some of their needs. This included how we marketed the sessions and we avoided phrases like “learn to cook”, so as not to patronise and alienate older people.
- Being flexible and able to adapt. Some of the residents had physical and cognitive issues (e.g. dementia, mobility issues and arthritis). We were able to get them all involved and they helped with lighter tasks e.g. food preparation, collecting food waste, distributing dish tick list sheet, handing food containers out and bringing items to the tables.

Food

- Always offering choice; for example, some residents were less keen on vegetables than others so there was a wide range to choose from (as opposed to bringing just one or two types.)

What did we learn about engaging marginalised communities and older people who are very socially isolated in cook and eat sessions?

- Traditional views and tastes can be overcome providing the approach is respectful, in small doses and acknowledgement is shown regardless of whether they choose to or choose not to adopt.
- Just remembering the smallest detail about a person can help to make them feel valued.
- People may feel they are letting 'you' down personally if they're unable to make the next session, reassurance that you're looking forward to seeing them when they're next able to make it helps.
- Gentle acknowledgement should they have missed a session helps to make people feel a part of something and valued.
- When people are socially isolated and alone, they are not always aware of what is available in the community and more often than not their mental and physical health begins to deteriorate. It's important to focus on these groups and create awareness and at least give them the option to participate.
- Engaging people in cook and eat sessions also enabled us to notice any changes in older people's personal circumstances. We could see if someone was losing lots of weight or if someone's mood appeared low, if this is not how they normally presented.
- It was helpful to have the Southway Housing Trust staff member at the sessions, as they built strong relationships with participants which supported engagement.

Cook & Eat

FURTHER INFORMATION

Food sourcing:

Fareshare Greater Manchester

www.fareshare.org.uk/fareshare-centres/greater-manchester/

Foodbanks and pantries in Greater Manchester:

www.greatertogethermanchester.org/find-support/food-banks/

Cooking:

Video clips showing correct techniques for peeling and chopping:

www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/

Health and Safety:

Help and guidance on keeping people safe and healthy and safe in the workplace and when volunteering and protecting others from risk of harm.

www.hse.gov.uk/

Guidance on risk assessment including templates

www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/

Guidance on preparing food on premises:

Guidance on providing food in a village hall or other community setting.

www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/providing-food-at-community-and-charity-events

Guidance on registering as a food business

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/register-a-food-business#volunteers-and-charity-organisations

Guidance on premises compliance

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/setting-up-a-food-business

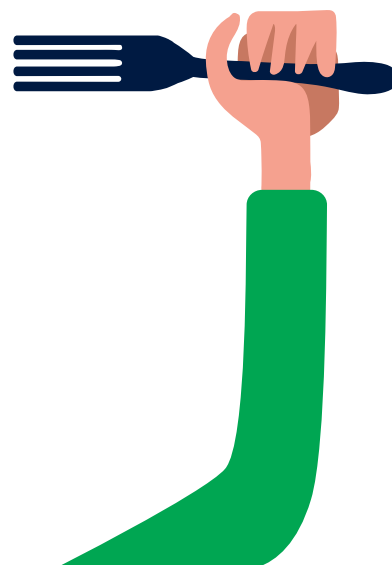
Best practice with regards to food preparation and production:

Guidance on producing food safely

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/managing-food-safety

Guidance on food hygiene

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/food-hygiene-for-your-business-0



Diversity & Inclusion

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Our project aimed to reach people who were socially isolated, through the provision of social eating activities. Some of this provision was locality based and some was targeted at specific communities, for example:

- Men from the Somali community in Bolton
- Women refugees and asylum seekers in Bolton
- The Chinese community in Beswick, East Manchester
- Men from BAME communities in Rochdale and surrounding areas, who were experiencing low mood and anxiety
- Men in Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale

All our social eating projects aimed to work in a way that was inclusive. There was diversity in attendees across all our projects, particularly in terms of people with long term conditions and carers. However, targeted provision engaged larger numbers of people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. One project, Huddle Up in Halliwell, was particularly successful at bringing together a diverse mix of people from the local Asian and White British communities. Their project had a specific community cohesion focus, and venue choice combined with the social eating host's established knowledge of the local community are seen as factors impacting the success of this particular project.

Diversity & Inclusion

UNIVERSAL DESIGN PRINCIPALS

Some examples of what this means in terms of social eating are:

- Considering whether access to the venue is via step or ramp
- Thinking about how food will be served and whether it is more inclusive for it to be plated up, rather than self-service
- Sourcing utensils and peelers that are easy to use for people who have lost dexterity in their hands, if participants will be helping with food preparation or cooking
- Thinking about the staff/volunteers required to ensure that everyone is welcomed and included
- Using visual prompts and aids as well as written menus
- Considering if venues and menus are culturally appropriate for everyone who might want to participate.

Further information about Universal Design Principles and how to use this approach can be found here: www.universaldesign.ie

Diversity & Inclusion

REACHING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Involving people with long term conditions

All of our projects attracted participants with long term health conditions. Some health conditions can affect people's dexterity or vision, which can impact on their ability to use standard cutlery or easily feed themselves. Making adjustments to how food is served and providing gentle assistance to participants who need extra support has been key. Creating relationships of trust and getting to know people has helped people feel able to disclose health issues and to talk about their needs. Asking the individual what would help them to feel more comfortable is important.

Physical and mental health conditions which become increasingly likely with advancing age, and are of particular relevance to social eating are:

- Diabetes
- Arthritis
- Kidney and bladder problems
- Dementia
- Parkinson's disease
- Glaucoma
- Cataracts
- Osteoporosis
- Enlarged prostate
- Alzheimer's disease
- Macular degeneration
- Cardiovascular disease

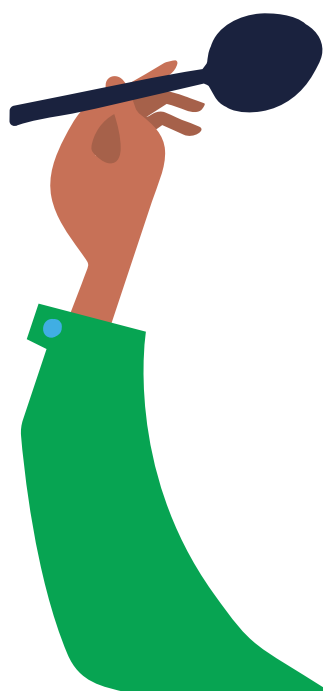
Diversity & Inclusion

REACHING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

For people with dexterity issues, you could consider:

- Serving foods which may be easier to eat, that can be cut easily or that don't easily fall off cutlery (an example would be serving peas mixed with mashed potato, so they are easier to eat). Consider serving finger foods, if people are struggling to hold cutlery.
- Serving food plated and bringing it to the table for people. This helps to reduce people's anxiety about serving themselves food in front of others, which can be an issue if people are struggling with dexterity or have a visual impairment.
- Using cutlery that is easier for people to grip – there are a range of different models available.

Consider using aids and prompts for people with memory issues or reduced cognitive functioning. Visual menus can be a helpful tool and prompt. Ensuring contrast between the food and the colour of the plate can help to stimulate appetite.



Ensure that people don't feel pressurised into eating in front of others. Sometimes people may feel self-conscious eating and it may be easier for them just to come along and enjoy a hot drink and a chat, especially at first.

Be aware that people may have hearing impairments and may struggle to hear and participate in conversation. Consider this when planning seating arrangements.

Diversity & Inclusion

REACHING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Involving BAME communities

Partnering with the right organisation

Your organisation may already work with BAME communities, however, if not, then partnering with organisations that have good reach into these communities, is important. Partnership working can also help ensure that different voices are heard during co-design and co-production at the start of project.

Our projects in Bolton found that working together in partnership with local organisations rooted in the Somali community and in refugee and asylum seeker communities enabled them to create a tailored social eating offer and engage large numbers of people from these communities.

Choosing the right venue

Locating social eating in places where BAME communities live was important and meant that projects could use door-knocking and conversations to reach out to people. One of our projects based in Bolton, which was open to all from the local community, had a specific aim to increase community cohesion. They chose a community café venue located within a church building, but also accessed by a wide range of individuals within the local community. The person who hosted social eating already had strong links and relationships with a diverse range of community groups and people who used the venue.

Age restrictions can be difficult when working with refugees and asylum seekers

One of our projects found that some of their social eating participants had been assigned arbitrary ages by their Home Office case worker. Another project tried to set up a social eating project with a local charity for refugees and asylum seekers but found that most people were of working age and did not meet the age threshold of being over 50.

Word of mouth has been crucial

Being trusted organisations with established links in the BAME communities enabled projects to publicise their social eating activities effectively. Having conversations with key people in the community also helped projects hear about and reach some of the most isolated people. Locating social eating in places close to BAME communities was also important and meant that projects used door-knocking and conversations to reach out to people. Good links with Job Centre Plus also enabled the project working with refugees to connect with those who had recently arrived in the UK.

Timing of activities

Projects working with Muslim communities found that timing activities so that they did not coincide with Friday Prayers was important. One project, working with Somali men, found that holding social eating on a Friday afternoon from 2pm worked well. Creating a relaxed atmosphere where people could come and go as they please and didn't have to arrive for a set time was also seen as key to success.

Cooking and food

Food is seen as an important hook for engaging with BAME communities and has been both an incentive to attend and an icebreaker; an easy way to start conversations.

Being able to provide a hot meal that is meat based has been important, in terms of engaging people from BAME communities, although projects have also cooked a vegetarian accompaniment. Meat needs to be halal and the person cooking be trusted to prepare food correctly. Greater use of meat has meant that these projects have had a higher cost – normally between £3-5 per person.

One project working with women found that having an “open access” kitchen area was useful, as people are able to watch as things are cooked and share tips and advice. Although there were designated volunteers who led on the cooking, other participants were still actively involved in the process and their expertise valued.

Cooking familiar foods from participants' cultures was seen as key, especially in the early days of the social eating projects. One of the projects aimed at men from a diverse range of BAME communities tried rotating recipes from the different cultures represented in the group. The learning was that people were not as motivated to attend if the food being cooked was not from their own culture.

Projects found that it worked best to introduce healthy eating ideas such as using less oil, sugar and salt and including more vegetables, gradually, once relationships with participants are established. Projects found that diabetes was a common health issue and providing food appropriate for diabetics was important.

Single gender activities can be beneficial

Projects found that being targeted specifically at men or women was beneficial. One project working with refugees and asylum seekers found that women were more likely to attend if they knew it was a safe space where only other women would be attending. Another, which has been mainly attended by men from the Somali community in Bolton, felt that the single gender focus...

“ ...takes some of the awkwardness away. ”

Volunteers have been key to success

Volunteers are identified as key in these projects; allowing a more flexible approach to food preparation and cooking. In some projects, volunteers were given a budget, purchased ingredients and either part-cooked or fully cooked food at home and then brought it to the social eating venue. Having volunteers who shared the same language as participants was also seen as helpful, particularly if project workers weren't bilingual.

Receiving free food can be problematic, in some communities

One of the projects received feedback from the local Asian community that free food can be perceived as being in receipt of “charity” and that this is a barrier to attending. For this community, the learning has been that offering free food can act as a barrier rather than a hook and that a pay as you feel model, low cost meal, or bring and share might work better. It has also made partners think about using different messages to reach different people within communities – emphasising the social rather than the food may be a bigger pull for some.

Diversity & Inclusion

REACHING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Involving LGBT communities

The learning also demonstrates that generic social eating activities are not always successful at engaging people from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community, or that people do not feel confident sharing this information on feedback forms. If your organisation does not already have good reach into the LGBT community, then partnering with organisations that have established relationships is important. Working in partnership can help ensure that the voices of LGBT participants are heard during co-design and co-production work at the start of projects and can help you create a more targeted offer.

Involving Carers

Several projects have engaged with carers and have emphasised the importance of flexibility and adaptability to support people to participate. Southway Housing Trust and Cracking Good Food supported an older carer to bring her daughter (who she cares for) along to the cook and eat session, as she otherwise would not have been able to participate. Other projects talked about the importance of ensuring that carers had the time and space to talk to other participants, not just their partner, during the sessions and organising seating plans or groups to support this.

Diversity & Inclusion

FURTHER INFORMATION

Diversity and Inclusion:

Practical guidance on equality, inclusion and diversity:

www.equallyours.org.uk/equality-and-human-rights-in-practice/

Information about using a universal design approach:

www.universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/

Information about catering for people with diabetes:

www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/enjoy-food/eating-with-diabetes/10-ways-to-eat-well-with-diabetes

Eating:

The Caroline Walker Trust provides a range of information and resources about eating well, including specific resources for older people. These can be purchased or downloaded for a donation

www.cwt.org.uk/

The Alzheimers Society has information on eating and drinking for people with dementia

www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/daily-living/eating-drinking

Useful Organisations:

Lesbian and Gay Foundation

www.lgbt.foundation/

Befriending Refugees and Asylum Seekers

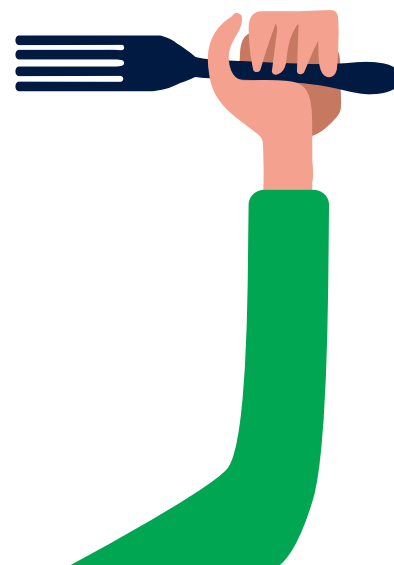
<https://www.brassbolton.org/>

Bolton Solidarity Community Association

www.boltonbsca.com/

Carers UK

www.carersuk.org/



The Right Venue

UNIVERSAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Finding the right venue for social eating is one of the key factors for success. Gathering ideas and feedback about suitable venues can form part of any initial co-production and asset-mapping work with older people. If there are some people who want to be actively involved, they could be invited to help look around venues, although, it is important to consider whether the venue is accessible to all the people the project aims to reach.

Universal Design Principles

Some examples of what this means in terms of social eating are:

- Considering whether access to the venue is via step or ramp
- Distance people have to walk to reach toilet facilities (counting the number of walking steps)
- Considering whether there is space between tables to allow for easy movement for people who use mobility aids
- Whether there is flexibility to have furniture in different formations, to ensure that everyone can hear and participate.

Further information about Universal Design Principles and how to use this approach can be found here: www.universaldesign.ie

The Right Venue

EXAMPLES OF VENUES

Examples of venues used by our social eating projects:

- Sheltered housing schemes
- Churches and Mosques
- Community allotments
- Community cafés
- Museums
- Local fire station
- University halls of residence
- Community centres and community hubs
- Local bowling club
- Local dance studio
- Private businesses – for example local pubs or cafes, garden centres with cafes

“

It's warm, a nice room with big windows, you can see what's going on. It's different to looking out of your own window.

Participant, Bolton.

”

“

The venue has to be right for the client group. For us this meant being accessible to women who are disabled and a friendly, welcoming environment. We have had issues of racism in the past choosing venues that are in areas that are not so welcoming to refugees.

Carol, BRASS, Bolton.

”

Using sheltered schemes

Several of the social eating projects used sheltered schemes as a venue for activities. Benefits are that the scheme forms a local hub with cooking facilities and a cohort of residents, however, there have also been some challenges:

- Sometimes cooking leaders had difficulties gaining access to the building, as the Scheme Manager was busy seeing a tenant and therefore wasn't available to let cooking leaders in. The solution was for the cooking leader to be given a spare key for access.
- Projects found that bringing people in from outside the scheme into communal areas can create tensions. It is important to remember that this is home for the people who live there. Sometimes residents may not want to participate in the sessions and communicating well and keeping an open dialogue with residents can avoid tensions developing. In particular, organising sessions which are only for non-residents, can create tensions.

The Right Venue

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- How do you plan to prepare the food – do you want to be able to prep and cook or just reheat?
- How do you want to serve food? Do you want people to be able to help themselves or will food be served plated?
- Furniture – it is formal or occasional? Are there side tables to put drinks etc? Can tables be moved around to create different formations?
- Room temperature and ambiance – does it feel like somewhere you would want to spend time?
- Does the eating environment look inviting? It is relaxing and calm? Are distractions such as the radio and TV kept to a minimum?
- Is it clean and easy to move around the space? Is there enough room for people with mobility issues to be able to move around?
- Is it possible for people to be offered the choice between sitting in their wheelchair or in an ordinary chair?
- Are chairs easy to stand up from? Make sure the sitting position is not too low.
- Are the toilets easily accessible? How far is it to walk to the toilet from the dining area?
- Are there any hazards that could cause slips, trips and falls?
- What happens during seasonal weather – for example is ramp/steps at the entrance gritted in winter?
- Can people travel safely to the venue throughout the year? Is there parking available and is it well lit at night?
- Is the venue well known in the community? Is it easy for people to navigate their way to the venue, or is it difficult to find?
- Is the entrance to the venue accessible? Is there a ramp? Do people have to walk up steps to reach the entrance?

The Right Venue

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Other learning from our experience of delivering social eating:

- When using a religious venue, consider whether this presents a barrier to people from a diverse range of backgrounds attending. It is useful to think about whether the venue is culturally accessible to people from different religious communities and what meaning the venue/building has for the people to be engaged.
- Some projects found that socially isolated people are less likely to go to a venue which already has an established group of people. This can create anxiety and a fear of being an outsider, leading to further exclusion.
- Being able to seat people around one large table can be helpful in terms of facilitating group conversations, however, this can also make participation difficult for people who have hearing difficulties or who speak English as an additional language. Ideally, a venue space should have the flexibility to group tables in different formations.

Case Study

Huddle Up in Bolton made a successful transition from using a church building as a social eating venue, to using a community space attached to a mosque in Halliwell, Bolton. They continued to attract a diverse range of people (both Muslim and non-Muslim) to social eating activities, after they changed venues.

The strong and established relationships that the social eating organiser had already built with participants and the local community seem to have been a key factor in people continuing to attend, after they changed venues.

Where social eating activities took place in areas that are home to a greater variety of community groups, activities and venues, participants formed friendships faster, as there were more places outside their homes where they could arrange to meet outside of the social eating activities. Sharing information about other local activities could therefore help to strengthen social connections beyond the social eating space.

The Right Venue

KITCHEN MANAGEMENT

Having a well-designed kitchen layout makes food preparation more efficient. FoodSync advises that the following aspects ensure good kitchen layout and management:

1. **Storage:** Ingredients must be kept fresh and free from contamination and at the right temperature depending on the product. Utensils and small equipment must be easily accessible.
2. **Food Preparation:** Veg or meat, raw or cooked, it is vital to segregate different types of food during preparation.
3. **Meal cooking:** The location of the cooking equipment is vital to a smooth operation.
4. **Service:** Efficient kitchen design means being able to serve the food easily either through a pass/hatch or doorway where access is clear without disrupting the kitchen flow.
5. **Cleaning and washing:** Plates, glasses, cutlery etc need to be washed and ready for re-use between sessions or sometimes within the same session. A wash-up area that allows for adequate space for sorting and handling in conjunction with an appropriate type of dishwasher is essential. Having space to load dirty pots and dry clean pots when there are high washing up demands speeds up the process.
6. **Waste management:** Essential in a hygienic operation. Waste that needs to be disposed of includes food wastage, grease, general rubbish and recyclables. Waste storage containers must be kept away from food locations with suitable ventilation and free from pests.
7. **Walls, floors and surfaces** should be easy to clean and not absorb grease, food, water, harbour pests and not cause water to pool.

The Right Venue

TRANSPORT TO VENUES

Considering people's journeys and routes to and from social eating activities is key to ensuring attendance. Check whether the venue is close to a bus, train or tram stop or if it is within easy walking distance of the homes of the people you hope to engage in social eating activities. As people age, they may develop mobility issues or visual impairment and even short journeys may require a taxi. If planning afternoon or evening sessions, also it would be helpful to consider whether the venue is in a location that feels safe to travel to/from after dark.

“ If people are housebound, they are likely to be the most isolated. Paying for a taxi to an event or first session of a project is a way of allowing people to attend without worry. Providing transport takes away concern about how someone might find a venue they are not familiar with it. Once people attend a session and make a couple of contacts, they might share transport or travel together by bus. This is something the facilitator can actively encourage by suggesting people who live close to each other travel together. ”

Cathy, Southway Housing Trust

It is possible to support people to travel to the venue, by building links with local:

- “Ring and Ride” or “Local Link” Service
- Taxi services
- Volunteer Driver Services

Some of the social eating organisers also opened up conversations about car-sharing, within their groups.

The Right Venue

HEALTH & SAFETY

These are the aspects of health and safety that the partners considered essential; however, it is important to carry out your own risk assessment at the venue you choose and for the specific activity you are delivering. There are links to websites on the Further Information page at the end of this section, to help you put everything into place to ensure you operate in a healthy and safe environment.

- Space must be designed in such a way that safe and convenient movement around is possible
- There must be clearly marked, safe, emergency escape routes
- The space must be free from slip and trip hazards
- Exits should be clearly signposted and free from obstruction in case of an emergency
- Every precaution should be taken to prevent fires and contain them when they break out. Emergency devices should be placed in different part of the kitchen, be appropriate to the risk (e.g. deep fat frying – extinguishers and fire blankets suitable for hot oil fires) and be regularly serviced by an appropriate engineer
- First aid kits should be kept in an obvious and accessible place, ideally mounted on a wall
- Cups and plates should not be overfull, in order to avoid the risk of spills for older people with a tremor

Compliance and registration

If you handle, prepare, store and serve food occasionally and on a small scale, there is no need to register as a food business. Registering with your local authority as a food business may be necessary when providing food on a regular and organised basis. Registration still applies where regular food handling takes place, even if your organisation is not-for-profit. There is further guidance on this and food safety/hygiene considerations on the Further Information page at the end of this section.

The Right Venue

FURTHER INFORMATION

Guidance on universal design principles and inclusion:

Information about using a universal design approach:

www.universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/

Practical guidance on equality, inclusion and diversity:

www.equallyours.org.uk/equality-and-human-rights-in-practice/

Health and Safety:

Help and guidance on keeping people safe and healthy and safe in the workplace and when volunteering and protecting others from risk of harm.

www.hse.gov.uk/

Guidance on risk assessment including templates

www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/

Suzy Lamplugh Trust has a range of information and resources about personal safety, including lone working:

www.suzylamplugh.org/Pages/FAQs/Category/personal-safety

Guidance on preparing food on premises:

Guidance on providing food in a village hall or other community setting.

www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/providing-food-at-community-and-charity-events

Guidance on registering as a food business

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/register-a-food-business#volunteers-and-charity-organisations

Guidance on premises compliance

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/setting-up-a-food-business

Best practice with regards to food preparation and production:

Guidance on food hygiene

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/food-hygiene-for-your-business-0

Guidance on producing food safely

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/managing-food-safety

Involving Volunteers

INFORMAL APPROACHES

Many of the social eating projects have used a relaxed and informal approach to volunteering, where participants “get involved” and “help out”. This approach seems to have worked well, with participants offering to “help put away, do the pots” and a sense of “everyone mucking in”. Partners talked about recognising “volunteer qualities” in participants – “ability spotting” – and then asking those people to help out.

The emphasis has been on people helping as an extension of their participation, rather than volunteering being seen as a separate, formal, process-driven role. Partners feel that this approach has also been beneficial in avoiding some of the hierarchies and power dynamics that can come when people take on a more formal volunteer role. It also enables people to feel they are helping in a way that is spontaneous and does not require them to make a regular commitment of time or to go through a recruitment process.

“

**I enjoy meeting everyone...I help out as well.
I enjoy it, I enjoy helping.**

”

Participant, Huddle Up, Bolton at Home

Involving Volunteers

FORMAL APPROACHES

Cracking Good Food, who delivered cook and eat sessions, brought in volunteers from outside the group, to help in more structured and formal roles. For these sessions, volunteers helped to bring valuable additional capacity and assistance with set up, cooking tasks and session close down. Volunteers also socially interacted with participants during the cooking sessions and activities and this additional capacity helped to ensure that everyone is welcomed and supported to participate.

The BAME focussed projects delivered by Befriending Refugees and Asylum Seekers and Bolton Solidarity Community Association in Bolton, both involved volunteers in planning and preparing food at home, which they then delivered to the venue. Volunteers managed a small budget, shopped and bulk-cooked from scratch in their own homes. There can be considerations around food safety/hygiene and registrations, if volunteers or workers are regularly preparing and cooking food at home. It is possible to obtain food business registration for people's homes and supporting volunteers to go through this registration process would seem to be a positive solution that allows for a flexible approach to food preparation and cooking.

Involving volunteers in more formalised roles in social eating appears to be

Benefits

- Participants are involved in food preparation tasks and may need extra support from volunteers, in order to participate fully
- There is a larger group size and there is a need to have volunteers helping with "hosting", welcoming and chatting to participants during the sessions. This may be particularly helpful in the setup stages of social eating activities, when relationships and connections between participants are only just forming
- Food is being cooked from scratch on site and volunteer help is required with preparation
- Food cannot be prepared on-site and volunteers can prepare food at home and bring it to the venue (note that there may be considerations around food hygiene and food business registration for the volunteer's home)
- Help is needed to promote the project; volunteers who are well networked and connected within the community can act as champions and can help with distributing publicity and spreading the word
- There is no budget to pay staff and there is scope for a team of volunteers to deliver social eating activities

Involving Volunteers

CREATING POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

It is important to remember that volunteers come with a range of different motivations, expectations, skills and life experiences. In order to offer them a meaningful experience, it is important to have opportunities to get to know volunteers and to check in about how they are finding things. Research ¹ demonstrates that volunteers are more likely to stay involved when the following factors are present:

- Enjoyment
- Feeling like they belong to the organisation
- Feeling like they are making a difference
- A culture of respect and trust

It is also important that the volunteer feels that taking part is a free choice. It can be helpful to talk about mutual expectations, rather than obligations, when working with volunteers.



1. McGarvey, A. Jochum, V. Davies, J. Dobbs, J. and Hornung, L. (2019) Time Well Spent Report London: NCVO https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/volunteering/Volunteer-experience_Full-Report.pdf

Involving Volunteers

ROLES & TASKS

Mapping out all the tasks that are involved in your social eating activity can help to identify what and how volunteers could help. If people are already interested in volunteering, talk to them about what they enjoy, what they feel they are good at and what tasks they think they could help with.

Volunteer role descriptions help everyone to be clear about the:

- Purpose of the volunteer role
- Key tasks involved
- The difference volunteers will make
- Support, training and any out of pocket expenses that are available
- Skills, experience and personal qualities that volunteers need to have
- Screening checks that the person needs to go through before they start volunteering – e.g. whether references and/or a DBS check are required

Key points to consider when designing volunteer roles:

- What activities will volunteers be doing? When and where do they take place?
- What is the difference that the volunteers will be making? What their impact?
- What skills, experience, personal qualities do volunteers need to have?
- What availability do volunteers need to have?
- What training (if any) do they need to do? (e.g. food hygiene training, safeguarding training)
- Who will welcome, induct and support volunteers?
- What equipment will they need to do their role effectively?
- Are there any risks associated with involving volunteers in this area of work?
- What steps can you take to minimise risks? Will volunteers need to go through any screening checks (e.g. references or DBS checks?). This online tool helps you to check if a role is eligible for a DBS check
<https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check>
- Does the role need to include a statement about safeguarding vulnerable adults?
- What insurance cover do we have in place and does it cover volunteers (always check with your insurance provider)

Involving Volunteers

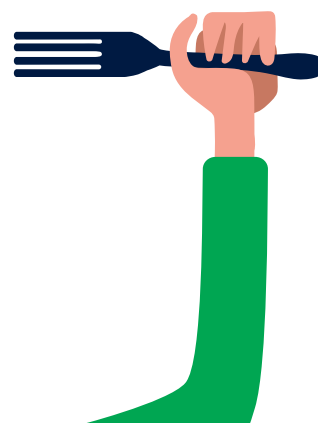
ROLES & TASKS

Now consider:

- Will the role be attractive to prospective volunteers? Will it be enjoyable? Does it offer opportunities to connect with others? If a role is too monotonous, unfulfilling or does not appear to have any impact it will be difficult to attract and retain volunteers
- How will you get to know the volunteer and understand their motivations, expectations, what they bring to the role and what will make it a positive experience for them? You may want to have an informal conversation with people, or have a more formalised volunteer interview
- How will you ensure volunteers feel supported, recognised and a sense of belonging in this role?

Volunteer Role	
How you'll be making a difference	
What the role involves (key tasks you'll be helping with)	
What this role offers	This role provides the opportunity to:
Your skills, experience and personal qualities	We are looking for volunteers who are:
Screening checks (e.g. references, DBS check if required)	
The time commitment	To get the most out of this role, you will ideally be available for
Location (where the activity takes place)	
Training	Before you start this role, you will need to complete:
Support	Your point of contact will be: There will be regular opportunities to check in about how things are going.
Volunteer Expenses	We are able to reimburse out of pocket travel expenses for public transport or car mileage. If you volunteer over a mealtime, we will either provide a meal or reimburse up to £X towards out of pocket meal expenses (you must provide a receipt).

Example volunteer role description



Involving Volunteers

REIMBURSING EXPENSES

When involving volunteers, it is usual to reimburse out of pocket expenses that they incur in order to volunteer. Reimbursing out of pocket expenses makes volunteering opportunities accessible to a diverse mix of people. Not doing so can create barriers for volunteers on lower incomes.

Out of pocket expenses means the actual expenses volunteers have incurred. Depending on the budget available, reasonable volunteer expenses that could be covered include:

- Travel, including to and from the place of volunteering (this could be public transport cost or mileage)
- Meals and refreshments (for example, if someone is volunteering over a mealtime)
- Care of dependants, including children
- Equipment such as protective clothing
- Administration costs, e.g. postage, phone calls, stationery used in the course of volunteering

It is recommended that the volunteer provides copies of travel tickets, a record of mileage or other receipts, to support any claims for expenses. Volunteers can be given money for expenses upfront (e.g. bus fare for their next episode of volunteering), but make sure you obtain a copy of the ticket or receipts from them for any expenditure.

HMRC provides further guidance about reimbursing volunteer expense:

<https://www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses>

Involving Volunteers

FURTHER INFORMATION

Guidance on involving volunteers in your organisation from NCVO

www.knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/volunteers-and-your-organisation

Guidance on recruiting and managing volunteers from NCVO

www.knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/volunteers

Information from the Disclosure and Barring Service

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/

Information from HMRC about Volunteer Expenses:

www.gov.uk/volunteering/pay-and-expenses

Volunteer Centres in Greater Manchester –

Volunteer Centres can provide specialist guidance and support about involving and managing volunteers:

Volunteer Centre Manchester:

www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/volunteer-centre-manchester

Volunteer Centre Salford:

www.salfordcvs.co.uk/volunteer-centre

Action Together Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside:

www.actiontogether.org.uk

Bolton CVS:

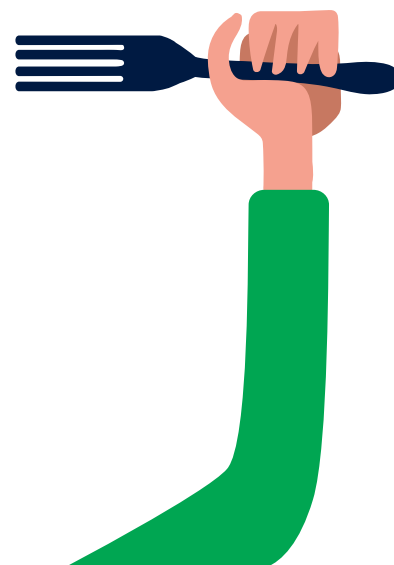
www.boltoncvs.org.uk/volunteering-services

Bury Voluntary, Community and Faith Alliance:

www.buryvcfa.org.uk/volunteering/

Thrive Trafford:

www.thrivetrafford.org.uk/volunteering-trafford/



Nutrition & Malnutrition

THE RISKS & SIGNS

Malnutrition is a serious condition that happens once a person's diet does not contain the correct quantity of nutrients (energy, protein etc), 1 in 10 people over the age of 65 are undernourished or at risk (Age UK, 2014). An overwhelming majority of these live within the community (93%).

A lack of proper nutrition can be caused by:

- Not having enough to eat
- Not eating enough of the right things
- Being unable to process food effectively once eaten.

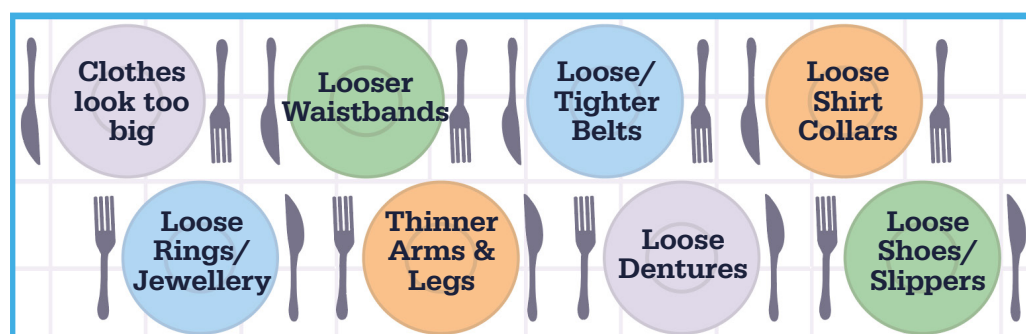
Older people, their carers and families should be informed about the markers for malnutrition, its causes, effects and consequences within the context of good nutrition in later life.

The causes of malnutrition are both social and clinical:

- Underlying disease
- Decreased mobility
- Depression and mental health issues
- Limited transport to go food shopping
- Social isolation and poverty

Some of the consequences of malnutrition include impaired immunity, increased risk of infection, poor wound healing, skin breakdown with ulceration, increased risk of falls, memory loss and confusion, fatigue and decreased muscle function. Symptoms include weak muscles, feeling tired, irritability, poor concentration, finding it hard to keep warm, depression, skin bruising and delayed wound healing.

Spotting signs of malnutrition:



Key signs to look out for

FoodSync, 2020

Nutrition & Malnutrition

HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION

If you are concerned for an individual's welfare, there are some tips for opening up the conversation. Direct discussions around weight loss may not be appropriate.

Instead, chat about how people are living their lives:

- What did you have for your tea?
- How do you get your shopping?
- What do you like to eat?
- Are you a good cook?

Then look to find out more information about:

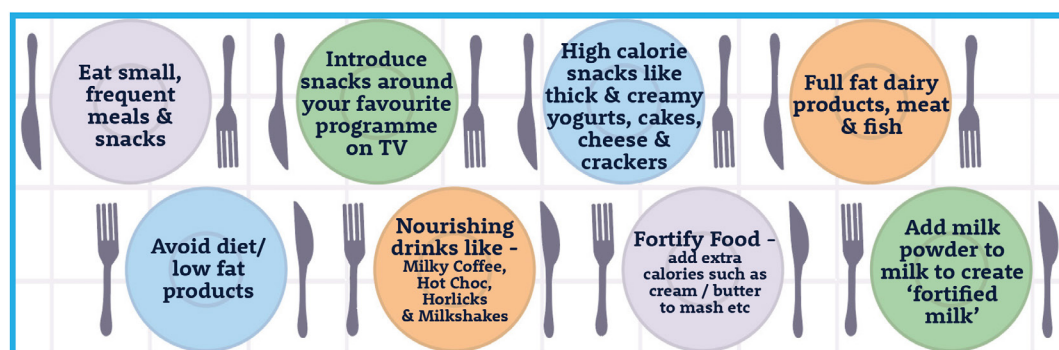
- Their dietary habits
- Challenges they may be facing
- What they know about what they should be eating
- Family members and carers may be influencing their relative's diet so sharing information to take home is important.

As we age, we may not be able to eat as much. So, we need to get more energy from eating less. Generally, the opposite for younger adults trying to be healthy!

Nutrition & Malnutrition

SELF CARE - DIETARY ENHANCEMENT

Guidance provided by Age UK, Caroline Walker Trust, Local Authorities and the NHS are great sources of practical support to help enhance diets. (See the Further Information page at the end of this section).



Tips for eating more

FoodSync, 2020

As suggested in the above diagram, there are ways to fortify meals by adding extra calories. Foods can be 'fortified' to be made more nourishing. Increasing calories and therefore energy levels:

- Add butter, mayonnaise and grated cheese to vegetables and potatoes
- Add grated cheese or cream to soup scrambled eggs or sauces
- Add extra ice-cream, cream, evaporated milk, custard to stewed / tinned fruit, cake, milky puddings and pies
- Spread thick butter on bread, scones or chapatti
- Add cheese, cream evaporated milk, croutons, pasta to soup – choose 'cream of' or 'condensed' varieties
- Add mayonnaise, salad cream and dressings generously
- 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder can be added to 1 pint of full cream milk to double the protein and calcium content. This fortified milk can be used in place of ordinary milk
- Use fortified milk (as above) on cereals and in tea/coffee
- Used fortified milk when making sauces – add extra cheese or cream
- Make coffee, hot chocolate with fortified milk rather than hot water

In dietetics guidance, fortification is dairy based. If someone is lactose intolerant, then lactose free alternatives can be substituted. If someone requires non-dairy fortification, please seek further advice from a qualified health professional.

Nutrition & Malnutrition

HYDRATION & NUTRITION

Hydration

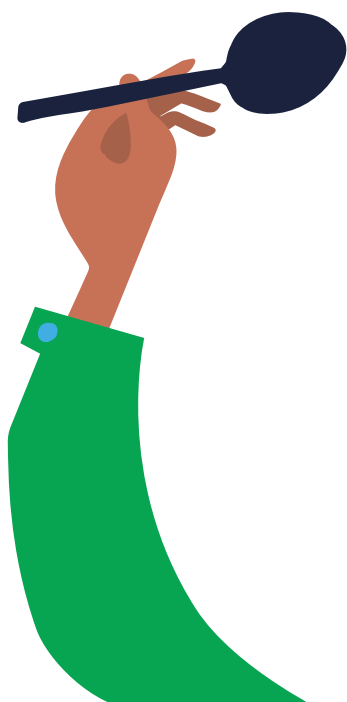
The risk of dehydration is much higher in older people. Water is required to ensure the body functions correctly. With ageing, body water stores decrease, thirst sense is reduced and kidneys are less able to concentrate urine, putting older people at risk of dehydration. Access to water can be a life and death issue for older people. Becoming dehydrated may result in; pressure sores developing, unpleasant taste in the mouth, drowsiness, confusion, constipation, urinary tract infections and altered cardiac function. The following factors mean that it is necessary for older people to take in 1.5-2 litres of fluid per day: people's kidneys are less able to reabsorb water, water can be lost through sweating (thin skin), thirst sensation can be lost and older people are also more likely to be on medication.

Preventing and treating dehydration:

- Offer fluids regularly.
- Ensure liquids are easily accessible and within reach.
- Encourage consumption of fluids with medication.
- Provide preferred beverages.

Nutrition

Cost considerations should not override the need for adequate nutritional content in the planning and preparation of food for older people. Typically, a 2-course meal can be provided for £1.50 per head, if carefully planned and ingredients are shopped around for. Low-cost supermarkets and International food stores typically offer the best value.



Nutrition & Malnutrition

MENU GUIDANCE

Types of menus

Having a varied menu that reflects the tastes of your participants is key to ensuring that people come back time after time. Take into consideration, not only cultural influences, but also dietary requirements such as gluten free and having on offer options that people might not have otherwise considered such as vegetarian meals.

Community lunch menu ideas

The following menus assume that the social eating participant consumes an adequate breakfast, snacks, drinks and another light meal per day.

Steak and kidney pie, carrots, broccoli, mashed potato, trifle, fruit juice, water.

Haddock mornay, peas, cauliflower, chipped potatoes, bread and butter pudding, fruit juice, water.

Red lentil dhal, spinach and chickpea curry, yogurt raita, side salad, rice/chapatti, banana, fruit juice, water.

Indonesian fish curry, rice, stir-fried vegetables, banana fritters, fruit juice, water.

Rice and peas, Jamaican fricasseed chicken, sweet potato, side salad, semolina pudding, fruit, juice, water.

Checklist of key considerations in menu and recipes

- Does the food look appealing? Is there a combination of textures, flavours and colours?
- Does the food smell appetising? Do unpleasant smells (within the venue) interfere with eating?
- Is the food served at the right temperature for slower eaters?
- Are hot and cold drinks available at all times? Is the tea freshly brewed rather than stewed? Are people given drinks in appropriate cups/mugs/glasses? Are milk and sugar added to taste for each person?
- Are second helpings possible? Would certain people benefit from a second helping or an additional portion to take home.

Nutrition & Malnutrition

SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

Energy and protein guidance

For many community members, who are socially isolated, their daily food consumption habits may fall short of the recommended daily intake. As a guide, this would be a suggested breakdown of energy and protein, by eating occasion:

Breakfast:	380Kcal	8g Protein
Main meal and dessert:	500Kcal	15g Protein (lunch and then same at dinner)
Snacks and supper:	400Kcal	4g Protein (consumed throughout the day)
Milk for drinks (400ml)	264Kcal	13g Protein (assuming full fat milk)

This would give an intake of approximately 2050Kcal and 55g Protein.

Where individuals are not consuming two main meals plus desserts per day, then 40% of Reference Nutrient Intake should be applied to boost nutrient intakes.

For example:

Main meal and dessert 840Kcal 22g Protein

What portion sizes provide adequate nutrition?

Meat / fish / eggs

Meat 120g (raw) or 90g (cooked weight)
Omelette 2 eggs Fish 120g-150g (raw)
Cold meats for salads 90g (cooked)

Vegetables (all cooked weight)

Raw veg, tinned tomatoes, baked beans 80g

Potatoes and other starchy foods

(all cooked weight)
Potatoes – boiled, creamed, roast 90g
Potatoes – chips, sauté, duchesse 120g
Rice 120g Pasta 160g

Cheese and biscuits

30g cheese and 3 biscuits

Cakes and Biscuits

1 digestive biscuit 15g
Tea cake 60g
Fruit scone 60g

Sandwiches

Cheese 45g Meat 30g Fish 45g

Sweets

Milk pudding 120g Trifle 120g
Sponge 90g Stewed fruit 90g
Jelly 120g Custard sauce 90g
Tart 90-120g Crumble 90-120g
Canned fruit 90g
Fruit – apple / pear / orange 120g / banana 90g
Ice cream (2 scoops) 60g

Nutrition & Malnutrition

FURTHER INFORMATION

NHS guidance

About weight in later life

www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/keeping-your-weight-up-in-later-life

The Caroline Walker Trust

Provides a range of information and resources about eating well, including specific resources for older people. These can be purchased or downloaded for a donation

www.cwt.org.uk

The Malnutrition Task Force has a range of free guidance and resources

www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk

The Social Care Institute for Excellence

Provides guidance on eating well with dementia

www.scie.org.uk/dementia/living-with-dementia/eating-well/

The Alzheimers Society

Information on eating and drinking for people with dementia

www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/daily-living/eating-drinking

State of the Nation: Older people and malnutrition in the UK today

www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/programmes/malnutrition-taskforce/mtf_state_of_the_nation.pdf

Older people eat well literature review

www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Older-people-eat-well.pdf

On Your Own: Older Adults' Food Choice and Dietary Habits

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5946198/

