

Food Matters

Annual Newsletter | November 2022



PROJECT FOOD

An appetite for health

Thank you for reading our latest newsletter



As I write this, it has just been reported that inflation has hit its highest level for 40 years. Overall inflation is 10.1%, but the increase in food costs is 14.5%. These massive price hikes are a huge blow to the poorest in society, who spend a much larger proportion of their income on food than everyone else.

Breaking down the figures even further makes for alarming reading – for example, according to the Food Foundation, the ingredients for a vegetable stir fry cost 45% more now than in April; processed food, on the other hand, has gone up by 15%.

We already knew that people on a low income were eating less fruit and vegetables than people on higher incomes, and that this is linked to higher rates of chronic illness. Healthy life expectancy for the poorest 10% of women is 20 years less than that of the richest 10% of women and, in the lowest income group, the rates of diet-related disease – such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, tooth decay and diabetic eye disease – are twice as high as in the highest income group.

To eat a diet in line with the Government's Eat Well Guide, the poorest 20% would have had to spend 40% of their disposable income on food – even before the recent price rises. For the richest 20%, the corresponding figure is 7%.

Back in 2006, Project Food was set up to help people develop the skills, confidence and motivation to cook and eat nutritious food. But times have changed, and these days it is as much an issue of affordability as ability: for some people, buying fresh fruit and vegetables in 2022 is simply out of the question. So Project Food is now providing hundreds of people with free fresh fruit and vegetables and nutritious home-made meals, alongside our other support.

I believe passionately that being on a low income should not mean being forced to eat poor quality food. At Project Food, we want everybody to have the opportunity to eat the food they (and their children) need, to develop healthily and avoid years of debilitating diet-related disease and mental illness.

I hope you enjoy reading what we have been doing during the last year and, given the extreme times we are living in, I hope you might consider donating to us so that we can support more people to fulfil their potential. Thank you.

Tiggy Parry, Founder of Project Food

Down on the farm

We are absolutely thrilled to have been offered the use of a local farm to provide support sessions for people with mental health issues who are struggling. The aims of the project are threefold: to enable them to develop confidence and self-esteem around food preparation and production; to allow them to spend time in a safe and nurturing space in beautiful outdoor surroundings; and to support them to improve their diet.

People will have the chance to enjoy the tranquil space and to take part in the carefully selected

activities that we will be doing on the farm. These will include tending the animals, growing food, and preparing and eating a meal together. The project is all about building the capacity and resilience of people with mental health problems: similar ventures elsewhere have shown that these types of activity can really boost people's self-esteem and profoundly affect people's lives.

We would like to thank the landowner for her vision and generosity in offering Project Food the use of her farm.



Meeting the pigs

Food and mood

Support for people with mental health issues

Project Food helps people with mental health issues to eat and cook more healthily thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund.

We offer 1:1 sessions which are carefully planned according to the individual's needs. For many this has meant learning cooking skills and gaining a basic understanding of nutrition for the very first time. Our trained volunteers help each person to develop skills and confidence, leading to increased self-esteem.

We are also running a group 'Food & Mood' course, which helps people to understand the link between the food they eat and the way they feel. Alongside



Cooking a delicious meal at a 1:1 session

cooking budget-friendly healthy dishes, the group has been picking up some gardening skills in our hospital garden. Sitting down to eat the food they have grown and cooked, and then sharing it with others is an important part of the day enjoyed by everyone - including the staff.

"I look forward to the friendliness of Project Food staff and the members of the group. Without this, I would not be motivated to break out of my Social Isolation. On top of this, I go home having



Cooking up a storm at Food and Mood

eaten a delicious nutritious meal and having been introduced to yet more new ingredients. Before Project Food, I ate a bland diet. This motivates me to think: "When I am well enough, I will have a go at this." Without these constant positive monthly experiences, I would lose heart to try to overcome my daily struggles." Jane*, who attends a regular Project Food group.

We have also embraced technology as part of this project and have created six short videos which teach people to make simple dishes by following an online tutorial. Each individual receives a recipe box with the ingredients to create the week's dish and a link to the video to 'cook along'.

Working with local NHS Community Support Workers has enabled us to reach people who find it hard to leave their homes due to their mental health issues.



Getting the Project Food garden ready for Winter

Ottery St Mary Hospital

2022 brought an exciting new opportunity for Project Food – we were offered the chance to use former in-patient kitchens in Ottery St Mary Hospital to expand our support for people there. Of course, we had to accept!

We have been helping people from Ottery St Mary and its surrounding villages with free food, nutrition advice and cooking sessions for some time, but this new Ottery hub really supercharges the support we can give.

Members of the Project Food team have been spending one day a week at Ottery Hospital since the beginning of October, and are enjoying working with other organisations to reach some of the most vulnerable people in the local community.

If you live in the Ottery area and would like to join our team of volunteers, please do get in touch. We are looking for friendly, enthusiastic people to help us teach individuals or small groups to cook and to learn about basic nutrition. We are also using the kitchens to make ready meals, and always need willing cooks to help stock up our freezers. Do please get in touch if either of these roles sounds interesting to you.

We are enormously grateful to NHS Property Services for enabling us to expand our services in this way.

To donate visit:
www.project-food.org.uk/donate

Kids' Kitchen

During the Easter term of 2022, a brilliant group of local children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) took charge of the Project Food kitchens. 'Kids' Kitchen' was a 12 week course aimed at teaching cooking skills, building confidence and helping children to make new friends.

Most of the children who attended had sensory issues surrounding food: the textures, smells and appearance of certain foods all had the potential to cause them distress. Working closely with one of our trustees, an NHS dietitian, and the parents and children themselves, Project Food developed a programme which enabled the group to try different new foods in a safe and comfortable environment. Activities such as growing cress in eggshells

and building a Lego garden kept the children entertained whilst their tea was cooking, and there was always a quiet space available for anyone feeling a little overwhelmed.

Our staff set up a private Facebook group for the children's parents, enabling them to chat and share information with each other as well as share pictures of the Kids' Kitchen children's creations at home!

This was the first time Project Food has run a group specifically for children with SEND and it was a huge success. No-one put it better than Katy's* mum who said: 'Katy* really loved and benefited from this group. Ideas were wonderful, people very welcoming and helpful, and I love the fact that it is for SEND kids and includes them because they are often an afterthought. A wonderful concept, thoroughly thought out and well executed. Praise all the way, highly commended, well done. Could not recommend enough, thank you.'

Thank you to Devon County Council for providing the funding for this.



Children enjoying Kids' Kitchen

A year in numbers



Approx. 4,400 Newsletters

were sent to people isolated and living alone, supporting them to stay physically and mentally healthy

Over 1,000 meals

were given away to people who can't cook for themselves or are living in food poverty



Over 900 free fruit & veg boxes

were given away to people living in poverty and people with mental health problems

180 recipe boxes

were given out over the holidays to families who receive free school meals



76 elderly people

who live alone and suffer from long term health problems regularly attended Cooking Made Easy in Seaton, Axminster and Chard



47 children attended

holiday hunger activities for children on Free School Meals or Kids' Kitchen for those with special educational needs and disabilities



43 people with mental health problems

attended Food and Mood, 1:1 cooking sessions or received free fruit and veg boxes and meals

28 people attended

online cooking demos for employees of East Devon District Council



15 parents and young children

received free fruit and veg boxes through the Healthy Start Scheme

Help comes in many forms

Supporting Project Food doesn't just have to be about donating money. Here are some other ways you can make a difference:



Volunteer your time
Helping us for just a few hours each month can make a huge difference to what we can achieve.

Sign up to Easy Fundraising and Amazon Smile in time for Xmas

Easy Fundraising:
<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/project-food/>

Amazon Smile: <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1173120-0>



Get active!
Why not do a sponsored event for us? Swim, run, cycle - or if you are feeling brave, all three!



Spread the word!
If you like what we do, tell everyone!

Show us some love on Social Media

 ProjectFoodCharity  ProjectFoodCIO

 project_food_charity

Elizabeth shares...

“ My daughter has been coming to Project Food holiday clubs since they started a couple of years ago and we received recipe boxes to cook at home during the school holidays. I decided to come along to a group myself after seeing a poster at a local community centre. This group appealed to me as I suffer from low mood. I love the confidence that the group is giving me in the kitchen

and the new friends I have made. I really look forward to coming here and feel very comfortable. Everyone is really lovely.

My daughter goes to a special needs school and her teacher has told me how impressive her cooking skills are. Everything she knows has come from Project Food. The holiday clubs have done wonders for her confidence.



How your donation will help:

- £10 pays for a fruit and veg box and two homemade meals for someone struggling with their mental health
- £25 pays for a recipe box for a family of four living in food poverty so that they can cook meals together during school holidays
- £50 pays for a course of tailored one-to-one cooking classes for a young single parent
- £75 enables us to run cooking groups that connect isolated elderly people who live alone
- £100 helps us to run after-school cooking clubs for children with special educational needs and disabilities

We will be enormously grateful for anything you can give

Your donation will really make a difference:

You can give a one-off donation or set up a direct debit through local giving <https://localgiving.org/charity/projectfood/> or you can send a cheque to our address below or pay by BACS.

Account Name: PROJECT FOOD Sort Code: 08-92-99 Account Number: 65853674

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