Raising awareness of food schemes

After conducting a piece of research into the uptake and spending potential of Healthy Start vouchers, it became clear that awareness of the scheme was low with some frontline staff. We also established that awareness of other schemes such as Free Breakfast Clubs, School Holiday Enrichment Programme (Food and Fun) and to a lesser extent, free school meals, was low.

Through partnership working between Cardiff and Vale Public Health Team, Cardiff Council’s Money Advice Team and the Cardiff and Vale University Hospital Board dietetic team, we developed a training package to support frontline staff to raise awareness and uptake of food schemes.

We adopted a train-the-trainer approach to maximise reach. Key members of staff undertake Level 2 training, then cascade Level 1 training to frontline staff. The training encompasses information about what the schemes are, eligibility and accessibility. Information about food banks, food co-ops, nutrition information and Nutrition Skills for Life courses are also provided.

Through sourcing and reviewing information about the different food schemes, we produced a suite of resources to facilitate training delivery, and support frontline staff during consultations with clients:

- Full training package and resources
- Supporting toolkit for frontline staff to use with clients
- Posters and flyers encouraging clients to research and ask advice team on food schemes
- A question on Healthy Start for the question flow during money advice consultations
- A survey to better understand why clients don’t access food schemes

We successfully delivered our first train-the-trainer session on the 16th of May. Staff from various organisations such as Housing Associations, Cardiff Council’s Money Advice Team, Help Me Quit and Wellbeing4U attended. Feedback was very positive, with interest already being expressed for the next training session.

This activity was assisted by financial support and other advice from Food Power.
www.foodpower.org.uk
Our challenges and learning

Challenge 1: Scale of the project
There are over 700 frontline staff in Cardiff who would benefit from the training, but time and resources were limited. The ‘train the trainer’ approach enabled a smaller group to cascade the information within their own teams and/or organisations.

Challenge 2: Uncertainty around food schemes
Throughout this project, there was a lot of uncertainty surrounding the changes around Universal Credit and how this will affect the eligibility criteria of the food schemes. Consequently, the training slides and toolkit will need to be regularly updated as more information about the situation surfaces. Universal Credit changes also affected the timeline of the project delivery.

Challenge 3: Schemes are not universal
Although this project will help people access crucial support to help with food access, schemes are not always available. For example Food and Fun does not run in every school in Cardiff and people’s local shop might not accept Healthy Start vouchers.

Our next steps

- Those who attended the train-the-trainer session will continue to be supported to deliver Level 1 training to frontline staff.
- The feedback from the session will be utilised to improve the next training session, which is due to take place in September.
- We will also consider the feasibility of rolling out the training Wales-wide to further improve the uptake and awareness of the food schemes.

“It was an excellent reminder of what is available.”
Training attendee

Our key achievements and impact

- We have successfully run our first train-the-trainer session, and the Level 1 training will be rolled out to frontline staff in the near future
- Once frontline staff have received the Level 1 training, they can use their knowledge and resources to signpost clients towards the relevant food schemes. This will hopefully increase the uptake and awareness of the food schemes amongst those who will benefit the most from them.
- Resources have been created for frontline staff to facilitate their consultations with clients

This activity was assisted by financial support and other advice from Food Power. www.foodpower.org.uk