



The Healthy Start Veg Box Scheme

Cambridge Food Poverty Alliance: Interim report, October 2020

Supporting low-income families to access affordable fruit and veg

In June 2020 Cambridge Sustainable Food (CSF) launched the Healthy Start Veg Box scheme pilot, in partnership with Cambridge Food Hub and Cambridge Organic Food Company (COFCO). We promoted the scheme via our alliance partners, Community Food Hubs and social media. We developed a welcome and registration document and asked participants to complete entry and exit questionnaires to capture information about their household, diet and cookery habits and where they were on the [Food Insecurity Experience Scale](#).

Eight families signed up and received a weekly box for eight weeks, delivered to their door. They choose between an organic, small fruit and veg or medium veg box, provided in exchange for a Healthy Start voucher and £2 per week. We also included a simple recipe each week, using an item in the box. During Covid-19 restrictions we followed doorstep delivery protocols developed in collaboration with COFCO and CSF. These included leaving boxes in a designated outdoors space, wearing gloves and masks and maintaining social distance. We also gave people the option of paying online or only once at the end of the pilot to minimise the exchange of cash.

Challenges and learning

One family was not eligible for Healthy Start vouchers. As a result, Cambridge Food Hub now has a phone call with each new family to explain the scheme, Healthy Start vouchers and register them if they are eligible.

Next steps

Following the successful trial and good feedback, Cambridge Food Hub is running the scheme on an ongoing basis for 10 to 12 families at a time. Families receive a weekly Healthy Start box for 3 months and can reapply to continue if there isn't a waiting list. Cambridge Food Hub is also looking at ways to expand the scheme through fundraising. We continue to promote and recruit members to the scheme.



“Communication is key – maximise your reach by promoting through your alliance, community food projects and other networks to identify families who can benefit most.”

Sam Dyer, Cambridge Sustainable Food

Outcomes

- The scheme is enabling young families on low incomes to access affordable, organic fruit and veg, delivered to their door
- Cambridge Food Hub are exploring how they can expand the scheme through fundraising from their existing members

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

