

# COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVES



Community Food Initiative 2019-2021

## Healthy food, healthy families

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## Foreword

At **safefood**, we are immensely proud of our role funding Community Food Initiatives (CFIs) since 2010. By supporting sustainable projects which have a focus on food, we're helping to develop lifelong food skills and influence healthier choices. This local approach can have a lasting impact on the health of children, adults and their wider communities across the island of Ireland. We look forward to the future work of CFIs and the transformative effect they can have.



**Ray Dolan**  
Chief Executive  
**safefood**



The Community Food Initiative is a special programme with a host of positive impacts. As a local development company, we in SECAD Partnership aim to enable more sustainable and inclusive communities. We support initiatives that are accessible and effective, that have a positive impact for the whole community, and designed to prioritise building the capacity of those who are most in need of support. We are proud to be coordinators of the **safefood** Community Food Initiative and would like to express our sincere thanks to all involved from the volunteers and participants in the various activities across the island of Ireland, to our partner CFI Leaders and to our colleagues in **safefood** – thank you.

**Ryan Howard**  
CEO  
**SECAD Partnership CLG**



## Introduction

2019 saw the start of the next three-year phase of the Community Food Initiative (CFI) programme. The CFI programme developed by **safe food** has been running since 2010 to create awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and to provide families throughout the island of Ireland with the skills and knowledge to be able to provide healthy food options for themselves and their families.

The CFI 2019-2021 has allowed people to gain new skills and knowledge, and to connect with other people in their own communities. During this round of funding, the CFI implementing organisations have faced extraordinary challenges but through switching to different delivery formats have continued to run as normal. Despite a significantly increased workload, the CFI leaders ensured that the CFI played a crucial role in empowering people to develop the skills that will enable them to provide healthy food for their families. In 2020, this empowerment spread across entire families as more children became involved and learned how to prepare and cook healthy meals. Participation in the CFI allowed children and parents to interact and learn together to a much greater extent than in other years.

The CFI provided a very welcome boost to participants and managed to support the needs of a diverse audience throughout the island of Ireland. The joined-up approach followed by all the organisations involved, allowed the CFIs to adapt content to meet the needs of their participants. The use of online and physical resources such as videos, posters, and leaflets provided the opportunity to reinforce messages after each session. Through the various communication channels used, the CFI leaders provided more support than before outside of the sessions and the participants supported one another to understand the content and discover ways to overcome challenges. During 2021, work has continued as the CFI leaders have endeavoured to find new ways of delivering healthy eating messages and involving people in their projects.

This booklet is not a 'how to' guide but more of an aid to help organisations to design their own activities that will support the needs of their own clients. We have provided summaries of some of the community events and small projects that were developed and delivered by the CFI leaders during 2019-2021. If you would like more information on any of examples provided, the contact details of each CFI leader can be found at the back of this booklet.





## Community Food Initiative funding programme (CFI) 2019-2021

The Community Food Initiative programme 2019-2021 is funded by **safefood** and administered by SECAD Partnership CLG (SECAD). Since 2016, SECAD has worked with **safefood** to develop and deliver the CFI and to provide a link between **safefood** and the CFI Leaders.



**safefood** was set up under the British-Irish Agreement and is an all-island implementation body with a general remit to promote awareness and knowledge of food safety and nutrition issues on the island of Ireland (IOI). Organisations delivering the programme are from both Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI); five projects in NI and nine in the ROI.



SECAD Partnership CLG (SECAD) is a community based, not-for-profit enabler of rural development and social inclusion. For over two decades, SECAD has supported individuals and groups to develop approaches and plans to address issues. These include local volunteer-based services, creating employment & social enterprise opportunities and bottom-up environmental initiatives.

## CFI Themes

The focus of the CFI 2019-2021 is to support families with children up to the age of 12 years under the following themes:

1. Supporting an increased awareness/knowledge around healthy eating
2. Healthy shopping
3. Budgeting and food/meal planning skills
4. Cooking skills
5. Improving the availability and access to safe and healthy food in the community and complementing existing structures that offer healthy options such as community cafés and community events
6. Preventing food waste and promoting food safety and hygiene

## CFI Leaders

The main role of the CFI leaders is to act as a champion for the CFI in their area of operation. This is achieved through:

Bringing together organisations to form a local CFI Steering Group to identify and promote best practice under the CFI themes

Organising with the support of their CFI Steering Group, two community events each year

Designing and delivering, assisted by the Steering Group, two to three small projects that provide support to participants under two or more of the 6 CFI themes

Coordinating the CFI locally and managing the expenditure

One CFI leader organisation is recruited from each of the nine Community Healthcare Organisation areas in the Republic of Ireland and the five Health & Social Care Trust areas in Northern Ireland. The CFI Leaders are:

1. Ballyhoura Development
2. Carlow County Development Partnership
3. County Armagh Community Development (CADC)
4. Co Wicklow Community Partnership
5. Dublin Northwest Partnership
6. Galway City Partnership
7. Inishowen Development Partnership
8. IRD Duhallow CLG
9. New Lodge Duncairn Community Health Partnership
10. Northern Area Community Network (NACN)
11. Offaly Local Development Company
12. Resurgam Trust
13. South Tipperary Development Company
14. Triax Neighbourhood Management Team (TNMT)



## Steering groups

Once the CFI Leader has been appointed, the first task is to bring organisations operating in that area together to form a local CFI Steering Group. The purpose of the local steering group is:

To support the design and delivery of two community events each year and to identify participants to support through the three small projects.

To promote best practice under the CFI themes.

To work with existing organisations and structures in their area to build long term sustainability for similar activities into the future.

## Community events

The purpose of the two community events is to share the healthy eating message with the wider community and not just with the people who take part in the small projects. The community events provide the opportunity to bring agencies/organisations together in one place to provide information to the public about healthy living and cooking.

## Small projects

The CFI leader facilitates two to three small projects each year that promote healthy eating and food skills under one or more of the 6 CFI themes, which are tailored to meet local needs. These initiatives follow a programme approach, where possible, to support participants over a period. Qualified experts are engaged to provide training or to speak at events as each activity should provide a learning opportunity for the participants.





## Helpful tips from CFI leaders

The CFI leaders have provided feedback on their experiences while planning and implementing their projects during 2019-21. We hope you will find this helpful when planning your own project.

### Support for the families

- At the start of a number of the small projects, staff were appointed to support the families and to maintain regular contact with the participants through phone calls, texts, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger. Staff were also a point of contact by phone or text if a participant ran into difficulty while cooking a meal at home.
- During one online project, the support worker cooked the meal while the participants watched on zoom. Some participants cooked their own meal at the same time and found this useful.
- The same participants requested that the project be extended because they were enjoying the experience and really valued the support. They bought their own ingredients during the 2-week extension and were able to contact the support worker if they ran into difficulties while shopping or cooking.
- Digital platforms such as text and WhatsApp enhanced contact between support workers and participants also allowed support workers to step back and allow participants to support one another. Support workers kept in touch with sharing useful videos and resources to participants.
- The choice of language is very important. Plain English and clear instruction are a must, especially while promoting the project to encourage maximum sign up.
- It is important that participants feel that they are part of a project and not receiving charity.
- At the start of the pandemic (March 2020) CFI Leaders found that they were working with families who never had to ask for help before, because they suddenly found themselves out of work. Their involvement in

the project concealed from family and friends the fact that they were receiving assistance from some of the agencies involved in the Steering Group.

- A lot of unexpected literacy issues were uncovered. Providing alternative forms of communication such as YouTube videos or recipes with step-by-step pictures were useful in this situation.
- Involvement in the project reduced tensions in families with teenagers. The teenagers were encouraged to cook, and the family sat down to eat together after making the meal because everyone wanted to discuss their experience of cooking and what they thought of final product.
- Participants were encouraged to put into practise the skills they had learnt. For example, one CFI leader gave the participants vouchers instead of an ingredient pack so they could do their own shopping. Support such as providing tips on making a list and how to read food labels was provided.

### Support agencies & organisations

Support agencies and organisations were delighted to be involved with the CFI as it provided the opportunity to:

- maintain contact with existing clients and meet their families.
- work with hard-to-reach families.
- showcase the value and benefits of their project to leverage funding for their projects from other sources.



## Children's involvement

- Parents were encouraged to involve their children in the preparation of the meal. Some projects encouraged children to join in on the Zoom chats along with their parents. For in person attendance, project organisers encouraged parents to bring their children along.
- Children loved using the **safe food** YouTube videos when cooking.
- Children enjoyed cooking other recipes from the 101 Square Meals recipe book, which was provided in hard copy to most participants.
- An indication of their enthusiasm and sense of achievement - the children wanted their own certs for taking part!



## Providing ingredients

- A strong link with the local supermarket was developed and was key in projects which involved providing ingredients to the participants.
- Huge excitement around the time of the delivery was seen, with children waiting at the door to see what they were getting and what they would be cooking that week. This meant that it was important to deliver the ingredients at the same time each week to establish a routine.
- Interest in taking part was seen to be higher earlier in the week (Monday – Wednesday), therefore delivery of ingredients on these days would increase participation and maintain enthusiasm.
- One project encouraged families to walk to the local shop to collect the ingredients to incorporate exercise.

## Trying new things

- The projects provide an opportunity to show people how to use equipment and ingredients that they may not have used before.
- Many families did not have small pieces of equipment such as weighing scales or rolling pins. They were reassured this was not to be seen as a barrier to cooking and shown how to use other equipment such as cups for measuring ingredients.
- People tried food that they would not have considered trying before. When people are on a low income, they will not risk spending money on food that the family might not eat, but as the ingredients were provided for them, they were willing to try new ingredients such as, using celery in a stew or soup.
- Tips were provided which included advice on freezing and using leftovers and kitchen hygiene.
- Useful information was provided through organised webinars. Nutritionists or dietitians gave presentations on healthy eating for families and the attendees had the opportunity to ask questions.
- Advice and guidance on topics such as reading labels, which many participants found intimidating gave participants confidence when doing their own shopping.

## Participant feedback

Feedback from participants was encouraged

- Photos, videos and texts were sent to leaders documenting participants progress through the cooking process.
- Participants were encouraged to feedback their families' thoughts on the meal, their experience and if they would cook the recipe again.
- Cook at home versions of popular take-away dishes were a huge hit. Families were delighted to be able to replace take-aways with their own home cooked versions and were surprised that they tasted so good.
- There was a definite change in shopping behaviour and less take-aways were bought during and after participation in the projects.
- Lots of participants had not used zoom or other video platforms before. It provided the opportunity to show people how to use online technology.
- The impact of the project was measured by asking participants to complete a survey before and after taking part.



## safefood resource hub

**safefood** has developed a range of online, video and print resources that can be used as part of programmes that support and encourage people to develop skills and knowledge around healthy eating. Resources are available to download on the CFI hub at [www.safefood.net/cfi-hub](http://www.safefood.net/cfi-hub) and hard copies of some print resources are available to order by emailing [info@safefood.net](mailto:info@safefood.net).

Some of the resources that the CFI leaders found most useful were:

- 101 Square Meals recipe book
- Recipe videos
- Setting up a home routine - Ten ways to keep active & healthy at home
- How to involve kids in the kitchen
- Food Pyramid and The Eatwell Guide
- **safefood** START campaign
- Handwashing
- Family meal planning
- Food safety
- Healthy snack ideas
- Family budgeting
- Screen time limits
- Old-school active play - games for indoors and outdoors

The resource hub can be found on the **safefood** website: [www.safefood.net/cfi-hub](http://www.safefood.net/cfi-hub).

Follow **safefood** social media channels for up-to-date information, recipes, and tips



## CFI leaders, community events & small projects

Examples of the community events and small projects run by the CFI leaders are included in pages 12 to 40.

### Ballyhoura Development

#### Community event

CFIs are encouraged to add value to their activities through other sources of finance or through joining with other organisations to host events or deliver projects. Ballyhoura Development merged one of their community events with 'Ballyhoura science day' as both events were targeting a similar cohort and shared a similar format. A greater community impact and reach were achieved by joining the events under the one roof. This free family event was hosted by Ballyhoura Development CLG and funded by **safefood** and the Science Foundation of Ireland. Practical support in organising the event was provided by the University of Limerick (UL), the Science Foundation of Ireland, Ballyhoura Heritage & Environment, Ballyhoura Beo and Croom Development Association.

The well attended, full day event took place in Croom Sports Hall, with demonstrations and talks timetabled throughout the day. Steering Group members manned information stations and the collaboration with UL, fostered through the Steering Group, was of particular benefit as a resource for attendees at the event.

Attendees received an event pack containing materials relevant to the CFI themes which included the **safefood** 101 Square Meals recipe book and advice leaflets on different aspects of healthy living. They also received a copy of the Healthy Eating Toolbox booklet that was developed by Ballyhoura Development in partnership with some of the CFI project groups and six students from the MSc in Human Nutrition & Dietetics at the University of Limerick. Participants could visit all the different activity stations which included: Learn the Science of Superheroes, mini zoo, climbing wall, mobile laboratory, children's entertainment, and art & crafts.



A cookery demonstration took place with the chef explaining how to cook healthy recipes from the 101 Square Meals recipe book. Families that participated in the demonstrations were given sample tools and ingredient packs to take home which included measures, herbs and spices, and ingredients to support them to recreate the meal.

Participants of the CFI were involved in the event, showcasing three small projects from 2019 at their own stand and presenting one of the scheduled talks. Participants were interviewed by the facilitator and answered questions from the audience and shared what they gained through their involvement in the project.

As part of the wider educational efforts around the CFI themes, there was a station dedicated to the "Know Your Food Pyramid Challenge" where cooking equipment was provided as prizes to the five fastest participants. This allowed increased engagement with the general public around healthy eating and proved very popular with the 200 parents who entered the competition.

## Small project

Ballyhoura's small project was based in the village of Hospital, Co Limerick during September and October 2020. It was coordinated by Hospital Family Resource Centre who recruited the families and supported them to attend. Youthreach Hospital provided the use of their training kitchen during the five weeks.

The project was delivered in person but due to Covid-19, the class was divided into two to allow for social distancing, this resulted in a more intimate learning experience. Six parents, and eleven children of primary school age took part in the weekly sessions to learn how to cook dishes that were fun and easy to prepare.

Recipes were sourced from the **safe food** 101 Square Meals recipe book and ingredients were supplied through CFI funding. Parents allowed their children to be hands-on with the food preparation and cooking to learn basic cookery skills and to better understand how dishes came together using easy to follow recipes and ingredients.

Each week parents and children went through the Healthy Eating Toolbox provided by the UL students which was developed under the guidance of Dr Anne Griffin who is a lecturer in Nutrition and Dietetics at UL. The Toolbox includes information on food safety & hygiene, healthy eating, healthy lunch boxes, understanding food labels, food waste, and food budgeting. A folder was given to each family at the start of the course which included the Healthy Eating Toolbox and the recipes and guidance that they received from the tutor each week. This enabled them to build a personal journal of learning, which in turn helped them to continue to make long term changes in their home cooking after the completion of the programme. They were presented with the 101 Square Meals recipe book during the final session.

Each family had the use of a full teaching kitchen which provided the space to learn how to cook a complete dish from start to finish including how to read a recipe, measure ingredients, chopping up raw food and cooking. Not only did the families learn to cook but they also improved their overall communication skills and learnt to share a workspace and equipment whilst having fun with their families.

The tutor, provided by Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board (LCETB), was excellent at putting the children and parents at ease. Families enjoyed each weekly session and were fully involved in all aspects of their own learning.

The provision of ingredients was a really important element of the small project, and the experience of delivering remote small projects during lockdown strongly highlighted the need that existed within the community. It levelled the field in terms of access to ingredients and added greatly to the engagement in this and the other CFI events and projects that Ballyhoura Development facilitated throughout the Covid-19 lockdowns.

The feedback from the project was very positive, showing all the children and their parents loved the weekly cookery sessions. The provision of the ingredients each week through the CFI funding was a very positive element as the families did not know what they would be cooking each week, and this really added to the fun and excitement of the classes. Some of the families attending were very vulnerable and therefore the provision of the ingredients meant they could attend without being under pressure due to costs.

Agencies working together to provide either funding for food, information, teaching space or other resources was a very positive aspect of the overall project and its delivery in the community. Due to its success, the family cookery programme showcased here has continued to be offered by the Hospital Family Resource Centre as a mainstream support to families.





## Carlow County Development Partnership



### Community event

This evening event centred around a cookery demonstration that was held in St Joseph's National School in Hacketstown, Co Carlow in December 2019. It consequently had a Christmas cooking theme with interactive cooking demonstrations, tastings, and a question-and-answer session throughout the evening. The event was hosted by Carlow County Development Partnership in conjunction with St Joseph's National School and Hacketstown Community Group who helped with the promotion of the event.

The cookery demonstration was hosted by a well know chef, and the professional delivery of the event enhanced the reputation of the CFI locally. It demonstrated to the community and the participants the importance of the work of the CFI for the Steering Group members which resonated with the participants. As a result of the event, there was huge interest in participating in the small projects in 2020.

During the evening the chef spoke through the following useful hints and tips:

- planning and preparation of ingredients
- how to make dishes go a little further

- the importance of having a shopping list
- healthier alternatives
- how to safely store and freeze foods and how to use them in alternative ways.

Feedback was extremely positive, with the event still spoken about in the locality as being a success. On the evening, participants of the small projects received their certificates of participation, which provided an opportunity to speak about the work of the CFI and the benefits of taking part in the 2020 programme.

### Small project

The purpose of Carlow County Development Partnership's small project was to enable the participants to gain new skills around the preparation and cooking of meals for their families that they could easily replicate again at home. The focus being recipes that they could prepare and adapt for several different meals and school lunches.

The six-week, practical, skills-based project was delivered virtually via Facebook Messenger and supported by WhatsApp between October and December 2020. Overall, 37 participants took part, split into two groups.

Recipes were based on popular dishes purchased from takeaways and were referred to as “Fake-away”. The project enabled participants to replicate their favourite take away foods in a healthier, more nutritious, and cheaper manner.

The provision of the ingredients provided a great incentive for participant engagement. Although participants were provided with an ingredient box at the start of the project, they needed to pick up meat from the local butcher shop on a weekly basis. Feedback from the participants showed many would not usually have shopped in a butcher shop and because they were going in to pick up the meat for the classes, they were also buying other fresh produce in the shop.

Each participant received all the ingredients for each recipe but were required to pick up meat from the local butcher weekly. The pack also included a copy of 101 Square Meals recipe book, portion plates for both children and adults as well as other materials provided by **safefood** and other organisations that would be relevant to the group.

During the sessions, the tutor referred to **safefood** resources and encouraged participants to read them. These included top five tips for quick meals, eating on a budget, cheaper cuts of meat, how to get children to eat healthy food, shake the salt habit, serving sizes, tips to reduce portion sizes, top ten ways to make your dishes healthier, drinks, weekly meal planner, and why family meals matter.

Key messages in the classes focused on ingredients from the food pyramid and the importance of these in the diet, kitchen hygiene, fridge, and pantry maintenance along with preparing a shopping list, meal planning, leftovers, ideas for healthy breakfast and healthy snacks.

There was an emphasis on simple recipes and a back-to-basics approach to cooking such as how to make a basic sauce like tomato ragu, a move away from ready-made sauces that contain high levels of salt and sugar and batch cooking soups, sauces and main meals from scratch which can be frozen. The tutor gave the participants ideas on how to make meals stretch further and how to prepare for multiple meals at once. Estimated costs of each meal were provided and the tutor would discuss how this compared to other shop bought /

takeaway alternative which are seen as ‘quick’. In the run up to Christmas, one session was dedicated to how to prepare a typical home-made Christmas dinner.

The project encouraged self-reflection and evaluation by looking at participants own behaviour around food including eating, cooking and shopping habits. The classes were very interactive with dialogue and questions encouraged with the tutor as well as with other members of the group. The CFI leader contacted each member of the group on a weekly basis to offer encouragement and to help if needed.

Creating a WhatsApp group was a fantastic way of engaging and bringing a social element. The WhatsApp group allowed the tutor and the CFI leader to maintain contact with the participants between classes and the participants to share their successes, and experience with each other in an informal environment. Recipes were posted to the group during the week to allow the participants to prepare before classes.

Participants engaged with great interest and were keen to learn and upskill their cookery knowledge. Many questions were asked and answered along the way and people loved the fact that they could take part in this cookery class in their own home. It alleviated much stress for many, as for various reasons they were unable to leave home. Using the Facebook Messenger app provided a perfect platform for the groups to enjoy, bond and learn together with participants posting photos of each meal they prepared at home. Much was learned and friendships were made through people sharing ideas. All participants shared a keen interest in joining cookery courses in the future.



## County Armagh Community Development (CACD)

### Community event

CACD decided to run their community event over two evenings in December 2020. Each session was highly interactive with the facilitators maintaining engagement through various activities to reinforce learning. Participants were encouraged throughout both sessions to share information and to ask questions.

The first session introduced the Eatwell Guide, which demonstrates how each food group contributes to achieving a healthy, balanced diet, and explained how to use a portion plate effectively.

The second session concentrated on food labelling and the use of the 'Change 4 Life Food Scanner app'. The traffic light labelling system used on food packaging was also explored. The presentations were delivered by trained Good Food Toolkit facilitators who had received training from dietitians from the Southern Health & Social Care Trust (SHSCT). The Good Food Toolkit is used to help people understand and enjoy healthy eating and to ensure that the nutrition information provided is accurate and practical.

The focus of the two sessions was to introduce parents of children who are attending a local nursery or primary school, to the concepts of healthy eating. Parents would then go on to take part in one of the small projects. The

school was very helpful in promoting the CFI programme and the recruitment of parents to the events.

Each participant received an information pack containing resources from a breadth of organisations along with a child and adult sized portion plate which were provided by **safefood** along with the following **safefood** resources, 101 Square Meals recipe book and healthy eating leaflets. The SHSCT also provided a leaflet on keeping teeth healthy, a toothbrush and toothpaste. Resources from the pack were incorporated into the two sessions.

In advance of the sessions, the participants were requested to download the free Change 4 Life Food Scanner app onto their phones. During the session participants had the opportunity to scan food products found in their kitchen to look at the nutritional information on them and ask questions. Facilitators organised activities for the participants which included filling in food diaries and how to use the portion plates.

A WhatsApp group encouraged the parents to support and encourage one another around healthy eating and the facilitators were able to use the group to reinforce the messages provided during the sessions. Feedback from parents indicated that they found the two sessions informative and helpful, and the free Change 4 Life Food Scanner app was particularly useful when they were shopping for their families.





## Small project

CACD ran an online, six-week programme titled 'Cook It!' in early 2021 via Microsoft Teams. Eight parents and fourteen children took part in the programme which was delivered by two Investing for Health Officers from Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. Each week tutors, who had received Cook It! facilitation training, delivered a presentation on a different element of the Eatwell guide and demonstrated a recipe to correspond with the topic that week. The Cook It! format offers hands-on, practical experience on cooking and preparing food, as well as improving knowledge of healthy eating and food safety. To encourage maximum participation parents were consulted as to the time which would suit them to run the session.

Each week, the participants collected a bag of ingredients from the local supermarket which allowed them to practice cooking the meal that had been demonstrated that week. Participants were encouraged to share photographs of their family preparing the meal or to show the result on the WhatsApp group. Interaction between the participants was encouraged during and between the sessions.



The weekly sessions were as follows:

	Recipe Demonstrated	Food for Health Topic
Session One:	Chicken Tikka & Salad	Food for Health: introduction to the Eatwell Guide, basic food hygiene at home practical cooking
Session Two:	Wheaten Bread and Carrot & Lentil Soup	Finding out about Fibre: potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates food group
Session Three:	Rainbow Rice	Fabulous Fruit & Vegetables: fruit and vegetables food group
Session Four:	Gammon & Leek Pasta	Counting on Calcium: dairy and alternatives food group
Session Five:	Chicken Curry	Protein Providers: beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins food group
Session Six:	Ulster-style Pizza	Oils and spreads and foods high in fat, salt and sugars, food labelling

Each participant received a Cook it! certificate at the conclusion of the project and there was very positive feedback from participants:

"we loved it...Bobby made 2 loaves again this morning and they're gone already. The kids couldn't get enough of it. And as for the soup they've asked for more to be made tomorrow and Bobby wants some for work too so I'm going to try and double/triple the recipe"



## Co Wicklow Community Partnership

### Community event

The focus of this online community event was Nutrition & Family Wellbeing. A CORU registered dietitian presented via Zoom in May 2021 with an opportunity for audience questions. The event was coordinated and hosted by County Wicklow Partnership assisted by the CFI Steering Group members.

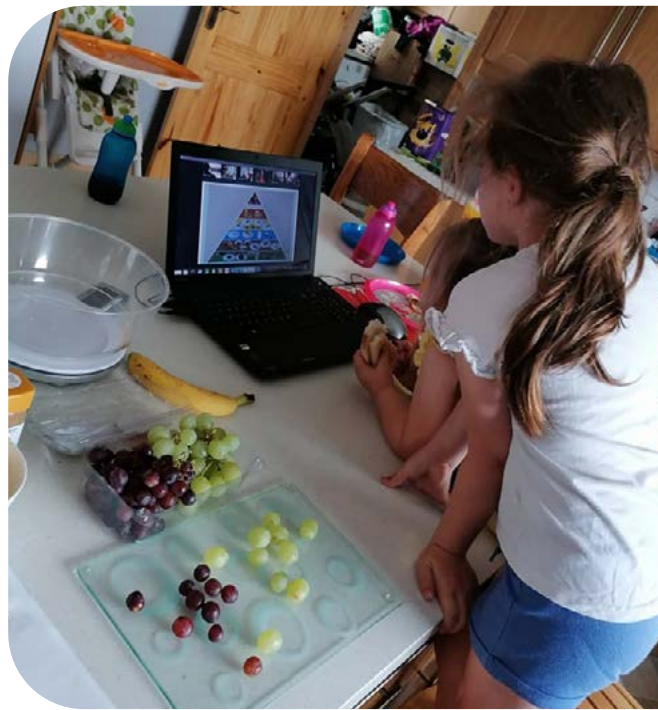
Thirty-nine people attended the event live. The presentation was available to view on YouTube for one week after the event and was viewed 89 times.

The 'Eventbrite' platform was used for registration which the organisers found very useful as it compiled all details and correlated reports such as number of registered participants versus number who actually attended. The platform also facilitated scheduled reminders.

The dietitian spoke on the following topics;

- The importance of vitamins and minerals and how they connect to mood
- Antioxidants and the gut brain axis
- The importance of a rich and full breakfast, lunch, and dinner
- Mood boosting snacks
- Child friendly recipes
- The importance of fluids and exercise in providing a holistic approach to wellbeing for the whole family
- Stress, exercise, and its relation to diet

Participants were encouraged to write questions in the chat box during the presentation which provided discussion topics between attendees and the presenter. Many questions focused on 'fussy eaters'. The dietitian gave practical suggestions to the parents on how to deal with issues as they arose. For example, she encouraged parents to give only a teaspoon amount when introducing new food to children until they were familiar with the taste. Immediate feedback on the day and later feedback through Survey Monkey was very positive.



Organisation of the webinar included consultation with Steering Group members on the topic and speaker, arranging the date and time, creating the event on Zoom and Eventbrite, administration, queries from attendees and all components of the evaluation (writing the questions, inputting to Survey Monkey, emailing the link to participants and gathering and collating feedback).

Attendees received an information pack by post which included information about each Steering Group member's organisation and the resources they provide on healthy eating, such as 'Healthy food Made Easy' leaflet and a recipe leaflet, the Tusla contact page and wellbeing resource, Wicklow Child & Family leaflet, SICAP leaflet and Wicklow Sports Partnership Activities Leaflet. They also received **safefood** resources on healthy lunches, facts about drinks, breakfast cereal, the Food Pyramid poster and a healthy food planner. In addition, they received an information sheet from the speaker and the Eat Smart, Move More booklet. Attendees were invited to email the CFI Co-ordinator to receive a pdf copy of the 101 Square Meals recipe book.

## Small project

This online small project took place during the first week of the school holidays in July 2021, at a time when children were still in tune with routine. The project promoted healthy eating among young children aged 2-7 years and their parents and provided an exciting opportunity to explore new food and cooking as a family. Five families including five parents and thirteen children took part. A decision was made by the facilitator and the CFI Co-ordinator to restrict the number of adults to five, due to the number of children involved and the enthusiasm, chat and questions that would come from children of this age.

Participants were identified with the help of some schools in south Wicklow who passed the information to potential participants. During the planning stage of the project, parents discussed at length with the CFI Co-ordinator how their children were fussy eaters and that mealtimes could be a battlefield. This helped set the theme for the course.

A pack containing ingredients and information was delivered to all participating families on the Monday and this face-to-face interaction helped to soothe any nervousness the families might have had. The pack contained all the ingredients for the recipes that would be taught during the week and was a definite incentive for families who would be deterred for financial reasons from taking part in the course. It also took the pressure off parents to purchase the ingredients before the course. This also proved to be more economical for the CFI as recipes

were organised to suit the ingredients and avoid food waste as some ingredients were used in multiple recipes.

The online sessions were delivered via Zoom and all the participants were encouraged to interact with each other and the facilitator. The sessions began at ten each morning and were scheduled for one hour, but each session ran over due to the interest shown by the participants. The families had gotten used to Zoom during lockdown and were able to log in without issue. However, support was available to participants prior to the session to deal with any connection issues.

A trained Health Service Executive (HSE) Healthy Food Made Easy and Cool Dudes facilitator was identified that would suit the needs of this group and the facilitator contacted all participants through individual emails and phone calls. The information pack that was delivered to the participants included a Food Pyramid poster, an Eat Smart, Move More Booklet, **safe food** leaflets including Fuel Your Body, Healthy Lunches and facts about drinks, Sports Partnership activity leaflets, a Cool Dudes HSE Booklet, a **safe food** junior portion plate and a copy of the 101 Square Meals recipe book.

The content of the four sessions was delivered to the group using the Cool Dudes handbook and through group discussion and activities:



Session One:	Topic for discussion: hygiene, quiz, food pyramid and food diary
	Cook: easy vegetable soup
Session Two:	Topic for discussion: nutrition including fluids, stacking a fridge
	Cook: wedges and chicken fingers.
Session Three:	Topic for discussion: portion sizes, importance of fruit, treats
	Cook: fruit on stick and banana buns
Session Four:	Topic for discussion: recap and evaluation
	Cook: quick pizza and cookies

There was a great atmosphere throughout each session with the families engaging well and all were very willing to learn. The children were involved in all aspects of the course and participated well with the peer leader. An energetic round of happy birthday could be heard at the start of each call as the children washed their hands. While the recipes were all child friendly, the fruit on the stick was by far their favourite. The families were engrossed in this activity and could be seen enjoying them as the class progressed. The homemade pizzas also went down a treat.

Some feedback included:

'I liked the soup and learning about where the fridge stuff goes in the fridge. I didn't like the pizza. The leader was really good she was a very good teacher. It would be great if we made chocolate cake next time'. – **6 year old**

'It was good. I really liked making the cookies because they were yummy. I learned that vegetables are good for your body. I loved the week so much I want to do it again' – **4 year old**

'The course was great because I don't cook too often with the girls so it was nice to be able to do it and have other kids on zoom as well. It was so handy having all the ingredients provided so I didn't even have to worry about that' – **parent**

Direct communication over Zoom was at times challenging but all participants enjoyed the course and the parents expressed that it was a lot less stressful than they imagined it would have been. Parents agreed that having as much as possible prepared in advance before the session started was essential as it provided a smooth transition for the children. It also promoted more family time before the course started. The measuring plate was great as a prop while talking about portion size. During future courses, visual cue cards will be used to overcome some loss of sound while cooking.

## Dublin North West Partnership (DNWP)

### Community event

The Ballymun Book Exchange is a monthly event that takes place in Ballymun Civic Centre where over 1,000 free books are available for the residents of the community to take home and where they can swap their own pre-loved books. The event takes place on the first Thursday of every month and usually over 250 people arrive to browse and swap books. One of the most popular aspects of the event are the story-reading sessions aimed at young children aged from 0 to 4 years.

Dublin North West Partnership attended the August 2019 Exchange event where they set up an information stand and provided cookery demonstrations and healthy eating talks. 378 people attended that day.

All the Steering Group members were involved in the organisation, promotion and delivery of the event. The Ballymun Civic Centre allowed them to use the venue



free of charge and volunteers from the Ballymun Book Exchange assisted with the delivery of the healthy eating event. The HSE dietitian provided talks on healthy eating and answered questions from the audience.

One of the Healthy Food Made Easy tutors from the DNWP tutor panel provided live demonstrations and provided samples of healthy food for the audience members which were prepared using recipes from the 101 Square Meals



recipe book. There was an information stand providing **safefood** information leaflets and copies of the 101 Square Meals recipe books which were provided by the HSE and **safefood**. Participants could also get information about the CFI and sign up with DNWP for their 6-week Healthy Food Made Easy course. After the success of this event, DNWP provided an information stand at each subsequent Book Exchange event.

## Small project

Dublin North West Partnership worked closely with members of their CFI Steering Group to organise and deliver this four week programme which incorporated nutrition, the value of physical exercise, mental health and options for cooking healthy meals including breakfast, snacks, lunches and dinners. A blended approach was used in the delivery of the programme which took place during July and August 2020.

It was the first time that DNWP had organised and delivered a course after the first Covid-19 lockdown and they wanted to try to deliver as much of the programme with the participants present while following government guidelines and protocols. The main reason why they wanted to have the participants present was that in preparing for the project, they discovered that all the participants had been very isolated during the lockdown and were eager to participate in an activity with people from outside of their immediate family.

DNWP had planned to use the kitchen in the Family Resource Centre (FRC) for the cookery demonstrations but learned just before the start of the project that this would not meet with Covid regulations. They then decided to deliver the cookery element live via Zoom. They looked at other ways to bring the group together and decided to hold an exercise class in the FRC on the morning of the cookery class. This fulfilled a couple of objectives in that it allowed them to bring the group together in a safe, socially distant environment while they took part in the class. During the class the participants were also introduced to mindfulness and the importance of looking after their mental health. While the parents were at the exercise class, the children were in the creche where they took part in games and other activities. After the class, the families collected their ingredient packs which they would need for the cookery session that afternoon.



The Steering Group members who were involved in this small project included St Helena's FRC who helped with recruitment and provided the use of their premises and access to their creche free of charge. Project Workers from Tusla provided the mindfulness sessions free of charge and were on hand to provide support in the creche. St Helena's FRC CE Scheme provided extra workers to assist with the children who enjoyed arts and crafts, painting plant boxes and planting vegetables. The **safefood** funding was used to pay for the ingredient packs and the cookery and exercise tutors.

The cookery sessions were delivered via Zoom by a HSE, Healthy Food Made Easy trained tutor. The tutor met with the group during the morning session to discuss the recipe that they were going to be working on later that afternoon and to gain feedback on how the participants were progressing. At the end of the morning session, the participants collected their ingredient pack from the tutor. During the first morning session, assistance was provided to anyone who was not familiar with Zoom and the WhatsApp group was set up. Participants used the WhatsApp group to send photos of what they had cooked and to chat with one another and discuss their progress each week with the tutor. All the recipes came from the 101 Square Meals recipe book and each participant received a copy of the recipe book along with **safefood** information leaflets and the adult and child sized portion plates.

The group was restricted to five families so that they could meet within Covid regulations when they brought the group together and to be able to support both the parents and children during the online classes. The feedback from the families was very positive and everybody was thrilled but nervous to be participating. They felt that they had learned the value and importance of ensuring a healthy eating lifestyle for their families. The feedback from the Steering Group members was also positive and they were able to apply the learning from this course in the delivery of further courses throughout the year.



## Galway City Partnership (GCP)

### Community event

Galway City Partnership organised their first Community event in Ballybane Community Garden in July 2019 in conjunction with Ballybane Taskforce. The family friendly event, which attracted over 250 people was held as part of the Ballybane Community Garden Annual Harvest Day and aimed to promote awareness and knowledge of healthy eating in an interactive and fun way.

The stands provided people with the opportunity to engage with agencies involved with healthy shopping, meal planning and budgeting. There was lots of information available at the event from the Senior Community Nutritionist from the HSE Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service, MABS Galway and Galway City Partnership. Croí Health Team provided free blood pressure checks and lifestyle advice and Galway Sports Partnership organised a variety of fun activities for children. Galway Childcare Committee hosted a stand and provided a mud kitchen for children to use on the day. The Community Garden also had a lot to offer including tours of the garden, healthy pizzas from the cob oven, home baking, face painting and music.

City East Family Services (Tusla Child & Family Agency) prepared and hosted a healthy food station, using recipes from the 101 Square Meals recipe book which included the 5-day lunchbox planner, a graze box, fruit salad and red rooster smoothie. Its purpose was to give parents ideas for healthy lunchboxes and snacks and offered children the opportunity to try new healthy food.

Members of the Steering Group provided resources free of charge including Galway Sports Partnership who provided tutors and Ballybane Community Resource Centre who provided access to their kitchen for food preparation. Ballybane Taskforce secured funding from another source to cover the costs of music and face painting which was central to attracting families. There was a draw for a

healthy hamper and in order to enter, people had to visit all the information stands to find the answers. Steering Group members helped with promotion and distributing flyers. In addition, press releases were sent to local media, an interview was given to Galway Bay FM News and social media channels were also utilised.

The feedback after the event was very positive and parents were appreciative of the opportunity to speak to a nutritionist in an informal setting. Parents and children enjoyed trying new foods together at the healthy food station and the intergenerational nature of the event was noted by some participants. The activities for children, the music and face painting created a fun atmosphere.

### Small project

The Winter Family Cooking Programme was delivered over four weeks in November and December 2020 to families living in Ballybane, Doughiska, Ballinfoyle and Carrowbrowne. In total, twenty-eight families participated, and each family had at least one child under 12 years of age.

Galway City Partnership coordinated and supported organisations in their delivery of the project and GCP community development staff played a key role in creating links and supporting the work with local agencies and families on the ground. A collaborative approach was taken to planning the programme delivery, with trained Healthy Food Made Easy (HFME) Leaders working together to decide on weekly recipes and the key messages to be shared. HFME Leaders with Foróige, Galway Roscommon Education & Training Board (GRETb) and Tusla Family Services coordinated the programme in each area and recruited the families who took part. In addition, they selected the recipes, distributed information, liaised with local shops, supported the families each week and reported on the project. The HSE Community Nutrition & Dietetic Service provided support to HFME Leaders delivering the remote projects if needed and the local shops prepared the ingredient packs each week for participating families.

To overcome literacy and language issues, Tusla Family Services, created a visual ingredient list and method



for each recipe, which they shared with the other HFME Leaders. All recipes were taken from the **safefood** YouTube channel and the 101 Square Meals recipe book. The ingredient lists and method were printed and laminated and included in the ingredient pack each week. Tusla Family Services also prepared a 'What you'll need from the kitchen' document to accompany each recipe, highlighting key pieces of equipment and kitchen safety points. Each family participating in the project received a Healthy Galway City bag containing a copy of the 101 Square Meals recipe book, a Healthy Galway City pen and an adult and child portion plate from **safefood**.

Before the programme started, each family received four tickets to collect the ingredient pack each week from their local shop. Each ticket had a code, which allowed those coordinating the programme in each area to identify families who had not collected their ingredient pack. Those families who had not collected their packs could then be contacted and reminded and this also provided an opportunity to discuss any issues. Where families were unable to collect the packs (single parents/ families without transport), the ingredients were delivered to their home. The ticket system was an important learning from the pilot project.

In some of the areas, families had to collect the ingredient packs at set times each week, while in the other areas, families were notified by text when the ingredient packs were ready to be collected from the shop. Each family was supported by Foróige, GRETB and Tusla Family Services staff by phone or video call each week, depending on their needs. The portion plates gave HFME Leaders with Foróige, GRETB and Tusla Family Services the opportunity to speak to the families about the difference between an adult and a child sized portion, and the amount of each food group recommended on a dinner plate. Families used photos to record the cooking process and the finished product each week and sent them to a staff member each week. This ensured participation, allowed HFME Leaders to support and encourage the families, and share key messages in relation to healthy eating.

Foróige, GRETB and Tusla Family Services staff engaged with families before and during the programme. In some instances, face-to-face contact was made with participants while maintaining a social distance and wearing face masks. As literacy/ language barrier was a problem for some families, it was important to meet with them to explain how the programme would work



and to ensure that they did not feel overwhelmed with all the information. With permission from participants, a WhatsApp group was set up in one of the areas, where families could chat with each other about the recipes and share photos of their finished dishes.

This remote cooking project was first piloted in May 2020, in response to COVID-19. The project evolved from a multi-agency network meeting, involving local agencies working together to ensure the needs of the community were being met. During the initial stages of the COVID-19 restrictions, there were concerns from families and young people presenting with low motivation, altered sleeping routines and increased tension in the home. Cooking was identified as a positive way to engage and support families during the outbreak, to promote a healthy lifestyle and to help alleviate some of the difficulties being experienced.

The project was a great success and the families really enjoyed it as during the lockdown, the project gave the families an outlet and an extra interest when movement was restricted. In some families, it was the young teenagers who did the cooking, and, in most households, the younger children also got involved in the preparation and cooking. The agencies involved in the delivery reported that there was greatly improved communication between the support agencies and the families during a particularly challenging time with Covid-19.

Most of the mothers were able to cook, however, they were delighted to learn new dishes and having the ingredients supplied, allowed them to experiment with new foods, particularly with herbs and spices, which they really enjoyed. Families appreciated the regular contact from the support staff and the face-to-face contact was very important as the participants enjoyed discussing the meals in person, rather than just online. The WhatsApp group was very effective, and the families want to connect more with other families in the area, would like to meet up when possible, to share ideas, recipes, meals, via zoom or face-to-face once safe to do so.

## Inishowen Development Partnership (IDP)

### Community event

Inishowen Development Partnership (IDP) decided to link their second Community event in October 2020 with the Wainfest Children's Festival which is organised by Donegal County Council Library Services each year. IDP had linked in with Wainfest during the preceding three years and this had allowed them to reach a wider and diverse audience of families.

The morning event was organised in the Exchange in Buncrana and focused on healthy eating options for families and aimed to encourage people to live healthily and avoid waste. It centred around a vegetarian food demonstration provided by two local cooks who invited the attendees to try the samples and chat about the food. Members of the Syrian community who had relocated to the Buncrana area had taken part in the small projects earlier in the year and they prepared and supplied a range of food for the guests at the event to sample. Outside there was a stall for local vegetable growers who spoke to people about the value of eating fruit and vegetables when they are in season.

IDP gave a brief talk about their involvement with the CFI over the preceding three and a half years and explained how people could join the small projects. In addition, they provided a display of **safe food** resources with various information leaflets and copies of the recipes for the attendees to take home. As well as raising awareness on healthy eating and vegetarian options, the event showcased healthy lunchboxes as part of the learning taken from feedback across the small projects.



The Wainfest organisers felt that the event was a positive addition to the festival and were pleased to work with IDP over the years to promote the CFI event. The Wainfest brochure and website played a big part in promoting this event. IDP used their own social media channels and website to promote the event and linked with local schools and press to raise awareness.

Over seventy people attended the event which emphasised the social aspect of families coming together around food and how it is a positive way to introduce the values and benefits of healthy eating.

### Small project

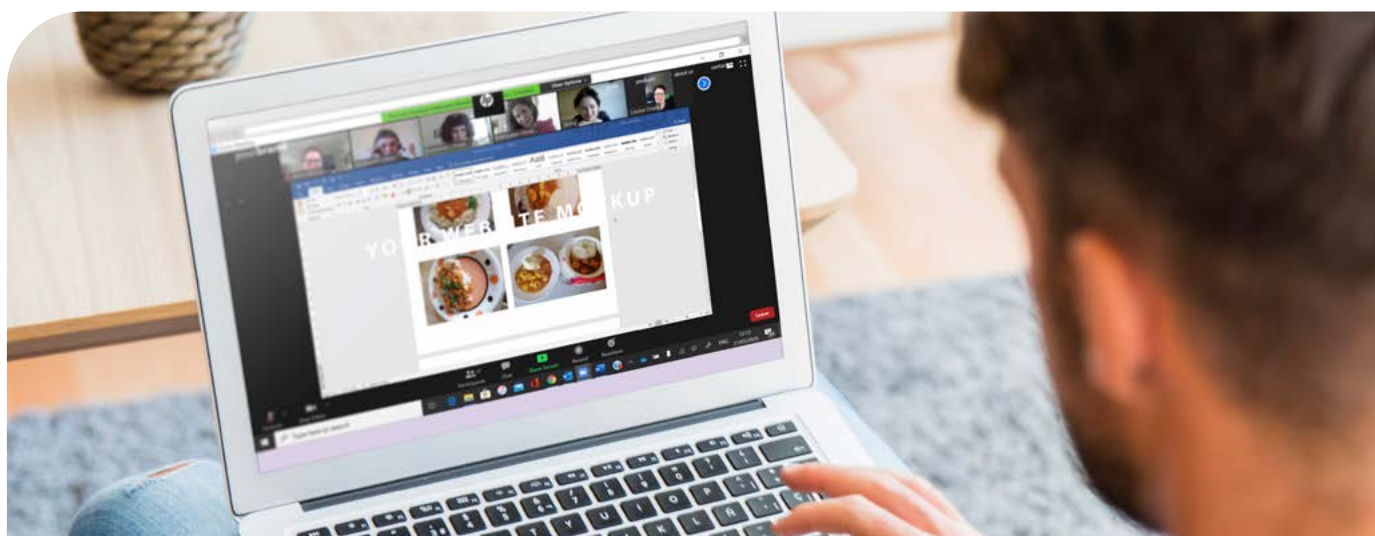
After the first Lockdown, Inishowen Development Partnership decided to roll out a 4-week online cookery challenge during May and June 2020 that would be available to families living on the Inishowen Peninsula. The online nature of the programme made it accessible to all families living on Inishowen and twenty-two families participated in this small project.

IDP is a member of the Inishowen Family Action Network (IFAN), a collaborative interagency network with thirty member organisations working across all sectors. IDP linked in with IFAN members to promote the sessions and ensure it reached as wide an audience as possible. In particular, IDP collaborated with the North and South Inishowen Home School Community Liaison Officers (HSCL), the School Completion Programme (SCP) Coordinator, Family Support workers, Spraoi & Sport, and the Exchange to plan and recruit families to take part in the programme.

The cookery challenge involved four online cookery sessions. Three sessions were pre-planned, and the participants were invited to choose the recipes for the last session. Families connected into the 2-hour sessions via zoom and then had access to a YouTube video which was recorded by the tutor to make the meal in their own time. After cooking the meal, the families sent in photos following each session.

Each week, the session started with a check in to see how people had managed during the previous week.





Then the cookery video was played and afterwards the tutor spoke about the recipe and answered any cooking questions. When discussing the recipe, the tutor spoke about healthy shopping options and encouraged the participants to be more adventurous in the use of ingredients. Quick, pop-up surveys were used throughout the sessions to gain feedback from the participants about the recipes, the videos, suggestions for alternative ingredients, etc. It helped to maintain engagement and the children present especially enjoyed answering the questions. The sessions were designed to be interactive and participants were encouraged to share photos, tips and suggestions.

The aims were to reduce isolation while providing a sociable and fun experience where people could connect and learn new skills in the process. Some of the new skills that people gained included engaging with an on-line platform, linking to YouTube, taking and sharing photos and of course cooking. IDP also used it as an opportunity to raise awareness about the food bank and other supports for families.

IDP uploaded the recipe videos to their YouTube channel which meant that they were also available to people who did not take part in the cooking programme. The recipes included Chicken Curry (over 720 views), Italian Meatloaf (over 190 views) Red Lentil Dahl (over 60 views) and the most popular, Wholemeal Scones (over 780 views).

Whilst presenting as an actual challenge initially, the external evaluation carried out by IDP found that the online nature of programme delivery opened the

programme up to parents from a wider geographic area, removing in many cases the barrier of access to transport and childcare to participate in the programme. Despite initial fears around broadband connectivity due to the rural topography of the area, throughout the programme, only two participants indicated that they had any issues with connectivity, and these were isolated instances. In the main, participants and stakeholders felt that the online nature of the programme delivery was excellent and was actually a benefit and enabled the programme to discretely tackle issues such as transport, childcare and food poverty.

Stakeholders indicated that learning from this programme will be helpful in future work with their family caseload. For example, family support workers indicated that they found that high proportions of families were experiencing food poverty in the Inishowen area. While historically, some services such as food banks have been set up to address this, families are reluctant to be seen to access these services. The CFI programme dealt effectively with the issues of assisting with food poverty, social isolation and family interactions throughout the period of the pandemic. It enabled stakeholders to discretely deliver ingredients to those families who needed support to be able to participate in the programme.

Family support workers indicated that they will use the lessons from their engagement to help design and deliver services as they move forward in the future. While caseloads of family support workers are relatively small given the intense nature of the work completed with families, it is evident that there are significant levels of need to extend this programme across the area.



## IRD Duhallow CLG

### Community event

The three-hour Healthy Eating & Mindfulness seminar took place on 7th November 2019 in the James O'Keeffe Institute in Newmarket, Co Cork. The focus of the seminar was on providing easy tips for transforming eating habits and choosing healthy and nutritious food.

A registered paediatric dietitian and mum of four gave the opening talk at the event which focused on baby's first bite and the challenges of feeding toddlers. She gave a fascinating run down on "the what and the how" of feeding and setting up positive healthy eating habits for children which will last a lifetime. In addition, the dietitian offered up to date, factual, information for the parents with the aim of improving parent's confidence and providing useful information and feeding strategies needed to raise happy, healthy eaters.

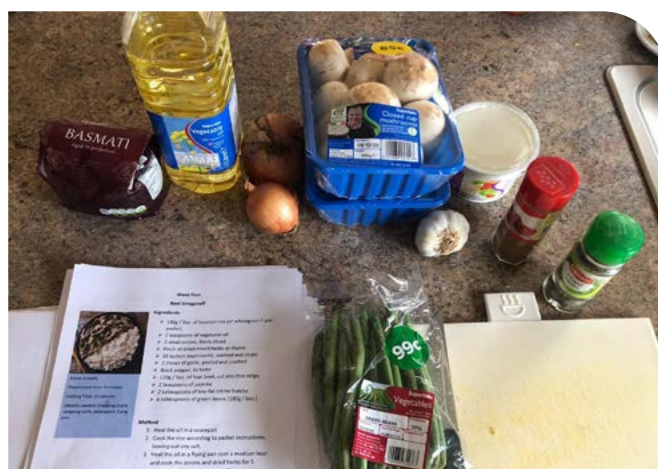
The next speaker was a Gestalt Psychotherapist and Meditation & Mindfulness Facilitator who spoke about the benefits of meditation and mindfulness practice. After the break, the next registered dietitian provided expert advice and evidence-based facts on childhood nutrition. She was followed by the HSE Community dietitian who spoke about the role of a Community dietitian and provided valuable advice on creating quick, healthy and affordable meals.

During the break and after the event, people attending had the opportunity to visit the stands providing nutritional information handouts and healthy recipes. Duhallow Community Food Services provided guidance on meal planning and quick and tasty recipes for those on a budget. They also provided free tasters from the recipes they were providing which proved very popular. Recipes used during the small projects in 2019 were available and provided an opportunity to showcase the CFI and to start the recruitment for the 2020 small projects. The Irish Heart Foundation was present and provided free blood pressure and pulse checks.

It was an interactive morning with practical information on healthy eating, mindfulness and creating healthy eating habits for families. The feedback showed that people enjoyed the mix of speakers and the opportunity

to visit the stands and talk to the experts during the break and after the event. They found the handouts very useful and felt the event provided them with the confidence to make healthy home cooked meals for their families.

### Small project



IRD Duhallow's 4-week Winter Warmer Remote Cookery Programme ran from 25th November to 16th December in 2020 with nine families taking part. This programme had a particular focus on preparing and cooking for Christmas.

The successful project involved a collaboration of local organisations and supported and enabled families, with at least one child between the ages of 2 and 12, to gain healthy cooking skills using a variety of recipes from the **safefood** 101 Square Meals recipe book and the **safefood** website. The CFI Leader compiled the recipes and instructions for participants to follow along at home which included tips on getting the children involved and serving suggestions. The CFI Leader bought the ingredients at a local supermarket and butcher each week which Tús participants packed into boxes. The Manager of Duhallow Community Food Services was filmed cooking the recipes each week and the recording was available for participants to follow along at home at a time that suited them. A participant on the Rural Social Scheme (RSS) recorded and edited the demonstrations.

Building on the learning that they had gained from the first remote cookery programme earlier in the year, they again prepared instructions with step-by-step pictures. The local Afterschool project recruited and encouraged the families to take part and participants collected the pack containing the ingredients and recipes from the Afterschool project each Wednesday. The children participating were very excited on Wednesdays as they wanted to see what would be in the box for the week ahead and would come in on the following days discussing what they had made, how they helped, and what was their favourite and least favourite element of the recipe, etc.

Participants learned a variety of healthy recipes suitable for all the family which they could add to their recipe collection and continue to make for their families into the future:

Week 1:	Potato and Leek Soup, Beef Stew and Veggie Bagel with Poached Egg
Week 2:	Lentil Soup, Chicken and Vegetable Risotto and Chunky Oatmeal
Week 3:	Cream of Mushroom Soup, Neven Maguire's Turkey, Rocket and Pine Nut Pasta and Chocolate Chip Muffins
Week 4:	Beef Stroganoff, Neven Maguire's Turkey, Ham and Potato Pie and Christmas Crumble

The step-by-step videos were a great success and families were able to download these to use in the future after the programme finished. During the preparation phase of the project, families expressed their preference for pre-recorded videos rather than live as it offered them the flexibility to cook the recipes when it suited them, and they could pause the videos and watch each section multiple times as needed. This was a hugely important element of the programme as people who may not have been able to attend an in person or live cookery course due to lack of transport, childcare etc. were able to access the Remote Cookery Programme.

The feedback was so rewarding for the organisers as the parents reported that children tried foods/meals they would not have tried before. Families cooked new recipes



which they said they will repeat and children learned new skills that will benefit them over a lifetime. It brought families together as everyone helped to prepare the meal, clean up and then sit together to eat and discuss the meal.

## New Lodge Duncairn Community Health Partnership (NLDCHP)

### Community event

New Lodge Duncairn Community Health Partnership (NLDCHP) hosted a Halloween themed Family Food and Fun Day at the end of October 2019. 104 people signed in at the registration desk where NLDCHP staff greeted everyone and explained what people could see and do during the event. The event was timed to coincide with the Halloween half-term break which enabled families to attend the free event. There were lots of activities to keep the children entertained while the adults visited the information stands. Several stands had interactive activities with games for children and provided free items to take away including fridge magnets, water bottles, and information leaflets.

The event was held in the North Queen Street Community Centre who provided the venue free of charge and assisted with the set up and tidy up. There were several competitions during the morning event including “Guess the Produce” which was hosted by NLDCHP. Twenty-three seasonal fruit and vegetables were displayed, and attendees were asked to fill out the competition form with their answers. There was great engagement at this activity, but facilitators were very surprised at how some people struggled with naming some common place fruit and vegetables. Eighty+ competition forms were completed by the end of the event when three forms were drawn from the completed entries. Three families each received a prize of a food goody bag containing soup ingredients, additional vegetables, and fruit.

A highlight of the morning was the “North Belfast Pumpkin Carve Off” where attendees were invited to bring along and display their pre-prepared Halloween pumpkins. Loveworks Co-op judged the competition where the first prize was a family ticket for Moviehouse. Ingredient bags were provided for the runners-up and aprons were given to the other participants.

Information stands were provided by Steering Group members including Smile SureStart who provide a befriending, social support and parenting information service. The Food Standards Agency provided a resource pack containing leaflets, the Eatwell guide, a water



bottle, etc. They also gave cotton aprons to NLDCHP staff for distribution. The Belfast Health & Social Care Trust (BHSCT) Dietetic Service stand featured a sugar display and they used their Food Values resources to explain about food shopping, better budgeting and cooking low-cost nutritional meals.

Belfast City Council (BCC) hosted a stand on food waste and recycling and all food waste from the lunch served was managed by BCC. At the NLDCHP stand there were interactive demonstrations on dental hygiene by puppets with large toothbrushes and dentist mirrors. Children received a toothbrush to practice their tooth cleaning skills at home.

Groundworks NI helps people to come together to change the places where they live for the better and to develop their skills, build their confidence and make new friendships. Their community services team hosted an information stand and used a griddle to make fresh soda farls and homemade plum jam. Jars of jam were available to take home. Loveworks Co-op is a worker-owned enterprise in North Belfast with operations that include an artisan bakery/café/catering service, gardening & landscaping service, and a bike repair workshop. They provided a cookery demonstration on how to make lentil and chilli soup, minestrone soup and freshly baked bread. They provided lunch for all attendees using biodegradable plates. TESCO provided one hundred bottles of water for participants free of charge.



Crafts, face painting and physical activity were timetabled for the children to enable parents to browse and chat with the stall holders and get involved in the cookery demonstration. NLDCHP felt that this was key as there was something for the whole family and most importantly the parents were relaxed and had the time to take part fully. Fitness Freddie provided a physical activity session for the children and Party Animals NI brought along several small animals for therapeutic purposes. NLDCHP had a practical demonstration on food safety and hygiene which included how to manage your fridge, safe storage of food, etc. and a 'germ kit' for kids. A germ kit is a "bag of germs" (flour or similar substance) which the children are encouraged to handle. Then an infrared torch is used to show them the germs that they cannot see with the naked eye. They are then shown how to wash their hands until they wash all the germs away.

There was lots of positive feedback from the people at the event: "Gorgeous food, great atmosphere, animals were cool", "Amazing day with a lovely group of people", "Great day, great food, great ideas. Thank you", "Learned about portion control (plates) and healthy meals".

## Small project

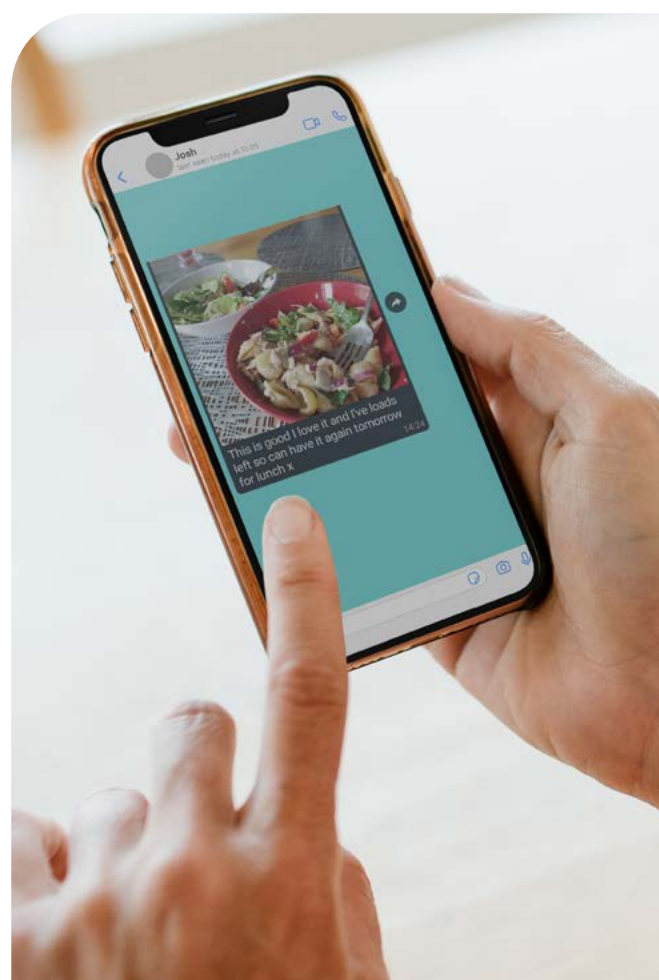
Covid provided huge challenges particularly for small community organisations. With Lockdown restrictions, how could they recruit participants for their support activities? How should they go online and how would they fully engage participants as a lot of the work carried out by community organisations is built on trust? How would they engage new families to avail of their services? These were some of the questions that NLDCHP and all support organisations had to resolve throughout Covid.

The NLDCHP Risk Assessment was a large document that they had to work through to determine how they were going to work safely with staff and participants and added extra complexity to the work. For example, during the first lockdown there were long queues at supermarkets and very little access to delivery slots when shopping for the ingredient packs. There was difficulty acquiring wipes and PPE at the start of Covid to safely handle all the ingredients that they were providing for the participants. Garden visits with masks became the norm for dropping off deliveries of the ingredient packs and keeping up contact while adhering to all Covid

regulations and guidelines.

GDPR had to be adhered to, so privacy notices, etc. were sent to participants beforehand to gain relevant permissions. For example, each programme had a WhatsApp group where everyone could see each other's number, so they had to ensure that all the participants were happy to share their number, and that the group was deleted from WhatsApp when the programme was over. This was in addition to what NLDCHP would normally do so a lot of time was spent reassuring and supporting people all the way through the programmes.

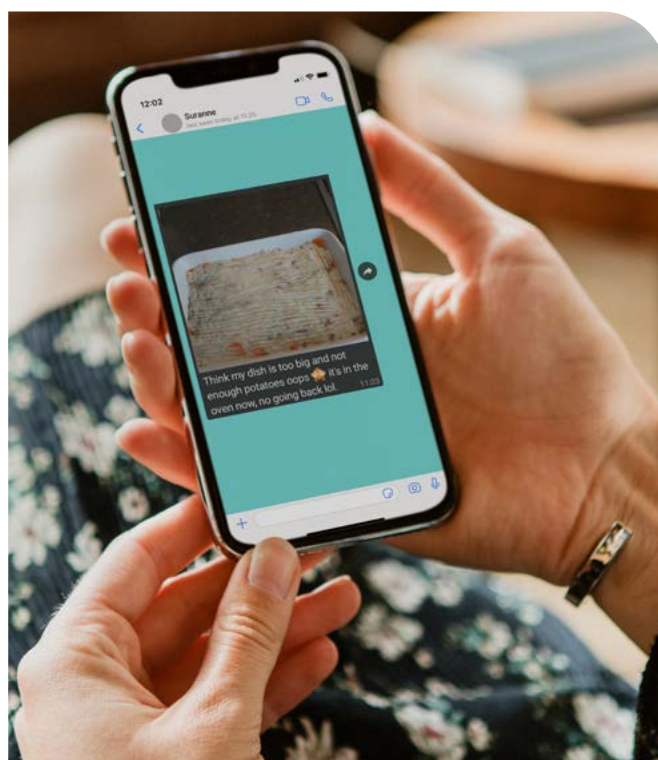
In May and June 2021, a 4-week Food Values programme was delivered to nine families online via WhatsApp. This was a remote programme so deliveries of Food Values resources and ingredient packs were made via garden visits. The 2-hour WhatsApp session was held in the afternoon to share the recipe video clip, pictures, tips, ideas and to encourage peer to peer conversation.



Steering Group members helped with programme recruitment and the BHSCT Dietetic Service provided guidance and assistance with the online training sessions and provided useful information sources to share with participants.

A NLDCHP staff member organised, shopped and delivered packs with evaluations, equality questionnaires, GDPR approval, **safe food** resources including the 101 Square Meals recipe book, portion plates, the Start campaign “What’s in your Cereal” leaflet. In addition, the Food Standards Eatwell Guide, Green Light Recipes and Traffic Light Labels Explained leaflets were provided. One sessional worker uploaded the video clip and additional nutrition information. The BHSCT Dietetic Service held an online session on ‘Eating on a Budget’ via zoom for participants and staff.

Nutritional information was sent through on the second day of each week which covered the four Food Values programmes topics:



	Recipe Demonstrated	Food for Health Topic
Session 1	Vegetable & Lentil Stew	Shopping Savvy – what is healthy eating, food safety & cooking, refresh your kitchen skills, 7-day meal plan
Session 2	Chicken Curry	Preparing to Shop – how to shop for a healthy diet, facts behind the headlines, how to eat well on a budget, tips for cooking meat safely
Session 3	Warm Tuna Salad	The Cost of Convenience – healthy eating at home, how to avoid wasting food, balanced vegetarian diet, tips for cooking vegetables safely
Session 4	Cottage Pie	Look Before You Buy – portion size video, what’s the difference between best before/use by dates, how to read nutrition labels, storing food safely, NHS 20 tips on eating well for less, online <b>safe food</b> recipes

As this was a remote cook from home programme, the participants did lose out on the facilitated cooking experience however, to compensate for this, they encouraged the participants to support one another through the WhatsApp group and time was spent with the participants during the garden visits to chat and to receive feedback on their participation in the programme and how they were coping in general. This support was appreciated by the participants.

In year 2 of the CFI and with all the restrictions, New Lodge Duncairn Community Health Partnership delivered to 42 families (a total of 152 people) ingredients for 608 nutritious family meals and participants were left with plenty of resources and store cupboard ingredients each week. As a community organisation NLDCHP believes that this programme has provided a new way of working. Despite the challenges, it has been a very effective and impactful way of addressing healthy eating at a time of food insecurity in North Belfast.

## Northern Area Community Network (NACN)

### Community event

The Glens of Antrim Festival is a popular annual event which takes place in and around the village of Cushendall. Northern Area Community Network (NACN) decided to host their first community event during the festival in August 2019 as a means of promoting the CFI to a large group of people. The main Festival organisers estimated that over five hundred people were present.

There were two sections in the NACN stand; one was used to demonstrate the cooking and the other contained health and wellbeing information. The main attraction were the free samples of Curried Lentil and Vegetable Stew and fruit skewers which were prepared by NHSCT dieticians and the Cook It! facilitator. Once people were at the NACN stand, they could pick up healthy eating leaflets and recipes and chat with the NHSCT dieticians. Some of the NHSCT dieticians specialised in paediatric nutrition which provided the opportunity for the families present to receive information, advice and support on healthy nutrition for their children. A smoothie bike was organised by the NHSCT dieticians for young people to make their own fruit smoothies which provided a fun way to demonstrate the correct amount that people should be drinking in their own smoothies.

FareShare provided ingredients for the event and the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council provided

free portion control resources and chatted to people about the prevention of food waste. In addition, local businesses provided free chafing dishes to keep food warm. The exhibition space and electricity were provided free of charge by the Heart of the Glens Festival.

Over 100 resource packs were distributed to the people who visited the stand for a chat and to sample the food. The resource packs included: 101 Square Meal recipe books, healthy nutritional information provided by NHSCT Dieticians, H<sub>2</sub>O information about the importance of hydration, prevention of food waste information, wellbeing resources provided by NACN e.g. pedometer, stress ball etc., and free bottles of water provided by local businesses.

The feedback from people was very positive as they saw it as a great opportunity to try healthy, inexpensive food that they would not normally make for themselves at home and also to chat to dietitians in an informal setting about their children's nutritional needs.

The learning that NACN took from the successful event was that the majority of people are very interested in good nutrition for themselves and their families. They are keen to sample new food and to try to cook new recipes. NACN has continued to use this concept in other programmes they have organised.





## Small project

NACN organised and delivered a Cook It programme for parents and children during September and October in 2019. Parents of children attending Primary 6 & 7 participated in this 6-week cookery programme. Seventeen people in total participated and this involved parents and their children preparing the ingredients and cooking and eating the meals together and also participating in a range of activities and games around nutrition and healthy eating messages.

The Steering Group members were instrumental in organising and promoting the programme which included the Primary School who distributed flyers within the school to help to promote the programme and Cushendall Parish Centre who provided the venue.

A Northern Health & Social Care Trust (NHSCT) Cook It! facilitator delivered the 6-week Cook It! programme which is designed to offer hands-on, practical experience of cooking and preparing food, as well as improving knowledge of healthy eating and food safety. Each weekly session is based on a theme:

Session 1	Health on a Plate
Session 2	Finding out about Fibre
Session 3	Fabulous Fruit & Vegetables
Session 4	Counting on Calcium
Session 5	Protein Providers
Session 6	A little bit of what you fancy!

The sessions are designed to be practical and fun with a range of activities and games around healthy food and nutrition information. Participants, especially the school pupils, learned about healthy eating, preparing and cooking food and food safety in a safe and welcoming environment. They also learned about the social importance of people getting together to eat and cook the food they had prepared themselves.

This was a face-to-face project and over the six weeks, the families and the tutor interacted well together, and



all participants were able to ask the tutor questions and receive information about cooking and healthy eating.

Each Family received a bag of resources containing a Kilner jar and a stainless-steel water bottle. They also received a copy of the 101 Square Meals recipe book, recipes from the Cook It! Programme, a range of health and wellbeing information and resources on the prevention of food waste. The ingredients which were provided for each family to cook during the classes were funded through the **safefood** CFI funding and purchased weekly by the Cook It! Tutor. NHSCT dieticians provided advice, support and information over the six sessions and the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council provided resources and information on recycling and prevention of food waste.

The feedback from this small project was very positive. Everyone attending loved it with the result that NACN had double the numbers enrolling for the next 6-week programme in February 2020.

## Offaly Local Development Company (Offaly LDC)

### Community event

This was Offaly Local Development Company's first ever event as part of the CFI. The event was held on Thursday, 1st August in Birr Rugby Club and provided a holistic overview of health and wellness with a focus on healthy eating and reducing food waste. Local support service providers came together to host stalls and interact with attendees at the event.

The event was targeted at the whole family and Offaly Sports Partnership organised sports activities and games that can be played at home and encouraged all the children in attendance to get involved. Zumba sessions for all ages were held and the children who were actively involved, enjoyed watching their parents while they also took part in the sessions.

A healthy food treasure hunt was organised for the children to provide a fun way to learn about healthy eating and the parents were encouraged to help them to find the answers. There was also an Art Corner where the children drew and coloured in pictures about healthy eating and in addition there was a potting corner using recyclable pots where they could learn about where our food comes from. The Birr Catering Skills LTI prepared Healthy Hedgehogs from various pieces of fruit which were provided as tasters to encourage everyone to taste foods that they might not have tried before.

Each organisation who hosted a stall had an extensive range of information for participants to take home and there was ample opportunity to speak to each stall representative. The organisations included: Offaly LDC, Step Up Ability Project, Offaly Sports Partnership, HSE Suicide Prevention, Money and Budgeting Services (MABS), Birr Community First Responders, Stop.Food.Waste, Dental Health and Birr Catering Skills LTI.

Stop.Food.Waste provided a talk on how to reduce food wastage in our homes, e.g. making a shopping list before going shopping and sticking to it, using measurement equipment to measure out appropriate portions etc. There was an interesting discussion between the speaker and people present where everyone shared suggestions and tips on how to reduce waste. The Stop.Food.Waste speaker

invited everyone to visit the stand afterwards to pick up useful resources such as measurement scoops for rice, etc.

An extensive leaflet drop to promote the event was conducted in Birr and surrounding areas and included local shops and organisations/agencies. Promotion was also carried out via Offaly LDC's website and Facebook page and Steering Group members also helped to advertise the event.

The learning outcomes from this event for Offaly LDC were very positive which they utilised when planning their next activities later in the year. The younger audience engaged enthusiastically in the activities provided for them. These were informal but educational and allowed them to learn about healthy eating and to try new foods. For example, parents and young people were able to learn about the amount of sugar in their 'favourite' fizzy drinks and to compare them with healthier options.

The feedback from the adults was positive and they liked being able to talk to support agency staff in an informal setting. They listened intently to the speakers and interacted very well with those hosting stalls and were able to take away literature for further learning. They tried all the food on offer and talked to the chefs about how to make meals go further to prevent food wastage. Those hosting stalls felt the event ran very smoothly and were happy to be able to engage with a lot of people passing through throughout the day.







## Small project

Offaly LDC ran their first small project in Clara Family Resource Centre in September and October 2019. The project was run in conjunction with Clara Family Resource Centre Parent and Toddler Group who assisted with recruitment and provided the venue. Thirteen families with one or two children in each family took part.

The 4-week programme was designed to help families create healthy meals on a budget through interactive cookery workshops where the participants could chat with the tutor, ask questions and then taste the end product. The chef spoke about the ingredients she was using and alternatives that could also be used. She spoke about the methods she was using to prepare the meal and encouraged the participants to get involved. Food safety and hygiene was incorporated into the session and referred to during the different stages of meal preparation. She also spoke about budgeting and meal planning, how to freeze meals and how to use leftovers to avoid food wastage. The informal setting encouraged people to chat to one another and share tips and stories about preparing food.

Participants received a resource pack containing copies of the recipes and **safefood** literature on various aspects of healthy eating. The recipes included: Chickpea, Lentils & Butternut Squash Curry, Lentil Chilli Con Carne, Lettuce & Mince Wraps, and Homemade Banana Ice Cream. Leaflets were also given to the FRC to distribute to people who were unable to join the course.

The sessions ran for approximately two hours on the same day and time that the parent and toddler sessions normally take place. There was full attendance at all four sessions with participants expressing how much they had enjoyed the experience and how much they had learned. They spoke about how 'simple and quick' the meals were. These meals had been requested during the planning stages before commencement of the project. They were so enthusiastic every week, wanting to learn more and at the end they asked for another programme to be organised for them.



## Resurgam Trust

### Community event

The Resurgam Trust were aware that due to Covid restrictions affecting employment, Dads were at home more than usual so they decided to host a series of events during the third week in June 2021 which were directed towards men living in the community. While men have supported the CFI over the six years of the Resurgam Trust's involvement, women and their families have mainly attended the community events and taken part in the small projects. The CFI activities took place during Men's Health Week in Laganview Enterprise Centre where Covid regulations and guidelines were adhered to.

The first session took place on Monday morning in Laganview Enterprise Centre where a group of fifteen men including Dads and Granddads took part in a cook along. Each participant was given his own set of ingredients for a recipe taken from the 101 Square Meals recipe book. The tutor from the Resurgam Trust talked through the recipe with the participants whilst they were preparing and cooking the meal. She was on hand to answer any questions and the participants were encouraged to help one another and come up with solutions. The participants were informed that a dietitian from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) would be attending the Friday session and they were encouraged to note down any questions they might have. After the meal was cooked, the participants tasted all the dishes and then brought the remainder home to their families. Everyone received a certificate for taking part.

The Thursday evening event was held in the carpark of the centre which involved a BBQ promoting healthier options along with fruit, water, tea and coffee. Everyone received a healthy snack pack while they took part in fun games and activities including exercise, football, etc. Health checks were provided along with an information stand where participants could read **safefood** flyers. At each session during the week, the Resurgam Trust tutor spoke about the small projects and encouraged the men to come along and get involved.

The Friday morning session had a Ready Steady Cook theme. Five men from the Monday session were randomly chosen to take part in the "competition". The five men were given a bag with ingredients and they had to decide on the spot the meal that they would cook with the ingredients. The ingredients included curry paste and four out of five of the men decided to cook a curry. One opted not to use the curry paste and cooked a noodle dish instead. The dietitian was present and with the tutor walked around the cooking stations offering assistance and answering questions. The participants each had a copy of the 101 Square Meals recipe book to refer to.

A table was set up with healthy snacks, bottles of water and healthy information leaflets. After the participants had finished cooking, the dietitian announced the winner who received a voucher. The other participants received a certificate for taking part. The Resurgam Trust provided a booklet for all the participants containing some of the **safefood** Start campaign fitness activities and the link to the **safefood** website.



## Small project

The Resurgam Trust At HOME project involved twelve sessions in total which were divided into three and rolled out over four weeks at a time: (1) May – June (2) July – August and (3) October – November 2020. Fifty-three families took part in the online programme.

Members of the Steering Group were involved in the recruitment of families and offered support and encouragement throughout the project. The Trust promoted the programme among families who had contacted them for emergency support during Covid. Promotion was also carried out through members of community associations, using social media and the Trust's partner groups.

The families could opt for a home delivery of the ingredient packs which was provided by community volunteers from Lisburn Safe or could opt to collect from the Healthy Living Centre. Ingredients were bought in a local butcher and Farmer's Market. The Trust developed a partnership with the local Centra supermarket who helped to source the cupboard ingredients for the twelve sessions. The Centra supermarket provided the ingredients for free to run four of the weekly sessions which allowed the funding to go further.

The project aimed to encourage cooking and eating as a family through providing the families with new recipes to try. The Trust knew that families were finding it difficult being at home due to Covid and this provided a healthy family activity and also encouraged families to introduce healthy options into their food choices. They also provided advice on what could be made with store cupboard ingredients and leftovers to support ongoing cooking. Participants received a resource pack containing the 101 Square Meals recipe book, a pencil and notepad, **safefood** flyers on healthy snacks and healthier options, a Safety Rules in the Kitchen guide and a leaflet on food hygiene. Some healthy eating activities for children to do at home, e.g. colouring etc. were also included.

Each week, the families received packs containing all the ingredients they would need to cook the meal for that week. They had to cook the meal within two days of receiving the pack and then send in videos or photos of the family cooking together. The families were encouraged to provide feedback on how they got on and what they thought of the dish they had made. This led to discussions about what equipment they had at home, the children's



ability to use the equipment and any guidance on for example, the safe use of knives. The tutor checked in by WhatsApp, phone calls and on the doorstep to see how families were progressing and to get any feedback or to offer assistance. The SEHSCT dietitians supported the tutor through providing answers to queries from the participants that could be fed back to the families.

The group preferred to not have live sessions because as children were at home for home schooling, parents said they would find it too stressful if they had to be present at a set time and this would be a barrier to them taking part. The flexibility to cook at a time that suited them was a strong motivator for families to engage in the project. Videos were recorded of the tutor preparing the meal and a link was sent out to all the participants. The link along with the recipe was also shared during the following week on the Trust's Facebook page and this allowed anyone not involved in the project to try the recipe at home. The Facebook page allowed everyone to interact if they wanted to share their experiences.

Reaching new families who have not been able to engage has been one of the best outcomes along with how as an organisation the Trust was able to quickly adapt their standard delivery methods. Another positive outcome was that children who have shared parenting and split their time between both parent's homes were able to bring the cooking programme to the house they were staying at on the day that the link was sent out.

This was the first time that the Trust had delivered a project in this way as they had always provided face to face delivery. They found that it worked really well and gave a lot more families the opportunity to get involved which meant they were reaching families that would not have engaged in the traditional centre-based form of delivery. They will be incorporating this method of delivery alongside face to face in future to be more inclusive.

## South Tipperary Development Company

### Community event

Community Hall in October 2019. The aim of the event was to encourage health and wellbeing within the family and to create awareness of the support services available to people living in this small rural town. There was a variety of information available to participants via leaflets and booklets and additionally through the representative in attendance.

The Halloween theme was essential to attract people to the event which proved successful as 30 adults and their children signed in. Face-painting and a bouncing castle provided entertainment for the children while the parents visited the stands. A yoga & fitness instructor showcased simple exercises and encouraged everyone to join in.

The first talk at the event was given by a dietitian who spoke about the importance of establishing positive healthy eating habits for children from the beginning. She also provided tips for dealing with “fussy eaters” and snacking. The parents were delighted to have the opportunity to ask questions and the dietitian was available to speak to the parents after the talk.

This was followed by a cookery demonstration with a Halloween theme from a Cook-It tutor. The demonstration was targeted at both children and parents as she showed everyone how easy it is to make healthy Halloween treats which everyone was delighted to sample at the end.

South Tipperary Money Advice & Budgeting Service was present to provide information and resources to people around the importance of planning and budgeting. Representatives from Tipperary Public Participation Network (PPN) had a stand which provided information on the variety of community services available locally. Diabetes Ireland and the Irish Heart Foundation offered free health checks.

Youth Work Ireland Tipperary, Fethard & Killenaule Youth Project, Millennium FRC and Fethard Community Committee helped with the promotion before the event and were in attendance to set up and help out during the afternoon. The feedback in the community in the days after the event was very enthusiastic and everyone was delighted that such a positive event had been organised in their community.





## Small project

South Tipperary Development Company built on the experience and learning from earlier CFI Programmes to design this remote small project. Feedback from previous small projects had shown that low confidence, access to budget, and little experience of cooking were significant barriers to taking part in a cookery programme. The STDC SICAP team and Tús team worked closely with Tipperary Childcare Committee and a Community Preschool to develop this small project. The staff in each of these organisations had a role in maintaining weekly contact with each family throughout the project, the objective being to build a good rapport and to keep the momentum of the project moving. The staff members were also the point of contact for the families in their service.

An 8-week 'Cooking through COVID' project was designed where the cooking would be carried out by the families taking part in their own home, at a time that suited them. Six households with approximately thirty-five people took part. The families who signed up to the programme were provided with ingredients and store cupboard staples to cook one-pot meals, from an agreed set of recipes from the **safefood** website. The intention was to support those with little or no pattern of family cooking so it was decided that easy to prepare, one-pot main meals would suit participants without any prior cooking experience.

In addition to the ingredient packs, each family received a resource pack which included a cookbook containing: the **safefood** Food Pyramid, **safefood** guidelines on portion sizes, and the cooking methods for each recipe. They also received adult and child sized portion plates. During the consultation carried out with the families prior to the start of the programme, it was found that the families had limited access to cooking equipment. Through their SICAP funding, STDC supplied to each family a slow cooker, chopping board, pasta measuring utensil, chef's spoon, measuring cups, antibacterial multipurpose spray, cleaning cloths and tea towels.

This project focused on promoting healthy eating habits by informing, encouraging, and showing participants how to use correct portion sizes. The measuring cups, pasta measure, and chefs' spoons were provided to help the participants to follow the **safefood** guidelines on portion sizes. These instruments and guidelines were used during each cooking demonstration, highlighted

in the methods section of each recipe in the cookbook, and at the beginning of the cookbook where additional educational material was provided. The guidelines and tools were also shown on STDC's social media platforms along with guidance on food safety and hygiene.

The CFI tutor recorded video demonstrations on how to cook each recipe. She also recorded videos on cooking skills such as chopping, and on the methods used in slow cooking. Participants were encouraged to experiment with the recipes through using the herbs and spices which were supplied. By week 2, participants were posting photos of their meals, which were outside of the recipe book given, but following the guidelines found in the cookbook as the families were cooking additional dinners, separate to the programme. Participants began cooking more and using the slow cookers outside of the scheduled meals. Participants also began interacting with each other's posts on social media platforms, discussing meals and encouraging each other.

Through the feedback received, it was discovered that children were helping their parents to cook the meals throughout the programme. Consequently, one week of the project was dedicated to supporting older school age children to enable them to continue helping with the cooking and to make nutritious bites for themselves. The focus was on developing self-sufficiency in terms of making healthy bites for future school days and holidays, and generally widening each child's exposure to good quality food and how to prepare it themselves. The households involved in this initiative also have children who are engaged in Early Years Preschool in the community.

This initiative was successful in that these households felt more supported. They are now more open to conversations and further initiatives about healthy food choices within the Preschool and Afterschool Programme. This introduction to cookery has provided greater confidence and STDC plans to engage the participants in other cookery/food initiatives.



## Triax Neighbourhood Management Team (TNMT)

### Community event

Before becoming involved with the CFI, the Triax Neighbourhood Management Team (TNMT) had used their allotment project to promote healthy eating in the community. The emphasis had been on growing your own and using homegrown ingredients either through the allotment project or using planters or garden allotments. The TNMT launched the CFI during their first community event in 2019 and used it as an opportunity to introduce the concept to the local community and to register people for the small projects.

This was the first time that the TNMT had arranged an event of this nature and members of their CFI Steering Group worked collaboratively to host the event and to recruit the various organisations to host information stations. These stands covered topics ranging from healthy eating, budgeting, growing your own food and provided an opportunity for participants to gain an insight into some of the services these organisations provide. The organisations also provided literature or items that participants could take away with them. People attending the event were able to meet the representatives in an informal manner and to find out about the services that they could avail of at a later stage.

The organisations included representatives from the Social Supermarket, and Dove House who provided budgeting and debt management advice. Ballymagowan Allotments provided information on their allotment project and spoke about the benefits of fresh fruit and vegetables. The Sure Start programme which works with parents and children under 4 years of age to support children's learning and well-being was also in attendance. The Old Library Trust 'SWEET Project' works with families who are worried about their child's weight, eating patterns or exercise levels within the family and provided exercise sessions for the children.

The event was held between the Holy Child Primary School and the Bishop's Field Sports Hall in the Creggan and the venues were provided free of charge. The highlight was the cooking demos delivered by the TNMT nutritionist who demonstrated how the whole family



could get involved in preparing a meal. They decided to show how to make healthy pizzas in order to attract the children to the demos.

TNMT used their own social media and the school displayed posters and used their own channels of communication to inform the parents about the event. Everyone attending seemed to be genuinely interested in the programme and excited about taking part in the small projects. One person commented 'Finally I might be able to cook!'.

### Small project

The initial plan was to run a 6-week programme which would be delivered online via a closed Facebook page. The programme began in August 2020 with a group from the Creggan. However, given the ongoing challenges that Covid presented, the duration of the project was extended, and a second group was added that would run concurrently. Some of the participants had been involved in the 2019 activities and other participants were recruited through the Steering Group and encouraged to get involved. There were eleven in the group from the Fountain / Bishop Street area and fourteen in the group from the Creggan.





Each week videos along with written instructions were posted and ingredient packs were delivered to the participants. The project eventually ran for thirteen weeks culminating with a “Ready Steady Cook” theme during the final week where the participants had to decide themselves what to cook. The purpose of the Ready, Steady, Cook challenge was to give the participants an opportunity to demonstrate some of the skills and learning they had gained on how to create healthier dishes of their own. Each participant received a voucher to buy ingredients to make a meal of their choice which allowed them to think for themselves and come up with their own ideas.

The registered nutritionist from the Bogside & Brandywell Health Forum (BBHF) was the main facilitator of the project and was responsible for delivering the cooking programme. Staff from the TNMT delivered the ingredient packs. The nutritionist designed the recipes and recorded the videos for Facebook. She was available to answer any queries people might have through the posts and a group chat was also set up where people could also post their questions.

At the start of 2020, the planned events and projects were designed as face-to-face programmes. Covid






presented various challenges with the lock down and ongoing restrictions. TNMT had examined the possibility of running zoom sessions but the feedback from the participants was that they were uncomfortable using the app. Participants were used to using Facebook and this is the reason why it was decided to use a closed Facebook page for each group.

The project looked at promoting healthier eating options for popular family dishes and substituting processed food. It gave participants the opportunity to learn new recipes and cooking skills through the online videos. Participants were also encouraged to share their thoughts or any queries they had which the Nutritionist monitored and answered as they arose. They also posted photographs of the meals that they prepared. Themes covered during the project included supporting community awareness / knowledge around healthy eating, food safety and hygiene, cooking skills and healthy shopping.









Overall participants really enjoyed the project and felt that despite working alone during lockdown they still felt part of the group when posting and sharing stories through the group chat.







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