



BEGINNER'S ONLINE COOKING SKILLS PROGRAMME

OUTCOME REPORT JUNE 2023



**Nutrition
Scotland**

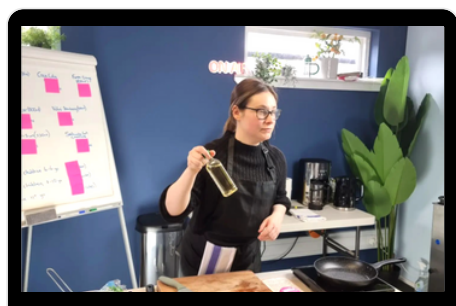
THE PROGRAMME

Nutrition Scotland developed a 6-week beginner's online cooking skills programme for people living in Glasgow City. This was funded by HSCP and NHSGGC. The programme was offered to targeted groups across Glasgow, identified by HSCP and NHSGGC, as well as to the general public. Following the Covid-19 pandemic where people became more comfortable with online and digital learning, the project hoped to assess the demand, feasibility and impact of an online-only cooking skills programme, relative to face-to-face delivery.



What the Programme Involved

The programme consisted of a weekly live Zoom cook-along, demonstrating how to make a simple, healthy and affordable meal from scratch. Six different recipes were demonstrated over the six week programme. Participants received digital vouchers via email to put towards the cost of ingredients, and were further supported with educational resources around nutrition, meal planning, cooking on a budget and reducing food waste as well as a recorded video of the recipe from the cook-along to consolidate learning. Participants also received vouchers to put towards the cost of cooking equipment if they required this to take part. Participants had the option to join a Whatsapp group to help create a sense of community, and to share pictures and recipe tips throughout the course.



Programme Cohort

167 people

Took part in the programme

46% from Glasgow South

29% from Glasgow North East

25% from Glasgow North West

15 courses

Were delivered over 12 months (May 2022 - May 2023)



PROGRAMME AIMS

The programme aimed to develop participants' cooking skills, increase confidence to cook meals from scratch and make healthier choices. We aimed to provide learning opportunities around healthy, sustainable food and nutrition, and offer participants food provision during the cost-of-living crisis.

We did this by:

- Providing vouchers to put towards food and equipment costs
- Providing simple, affordable healthy recipes and demonstrations via Zoom on how to cook them
- Giving participants the opportunity to talk to a member of our team about cooking and nutrition at the weekly live Zoom cook-alongs
- Creating educational resources, such as the recorded videos and factsheets
- Creating a supportive learning environment and online community through the live sessions, Zoom chat function and Whatsapp groups

WHY THE PROGRAMME IS IMPORTANT

Glasgow is the most deprived city and local authority within Scotland, with the number of families living in poverty predicted to have increased due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis. This is particularly alarming as poverty is a strong determinant of health. For example, in the most deprived areas of Glasgow, male and female life expectancy from birth is 13.5 and 10.7 years lower respectively than the least deprived areas.

The Scottish Dietary Goals were developed to promote healthier eating and improve health outcomes within Scotland. However, high levels of deprivation remain a significant barrier to achieving these goals. Addressing these health inequalities within Glasgow is essential for improving the health and wellbeing across all generations.

Eating well, having a healthy weight and being physically active are components of a global strategy to promote healthier lifestyles and are part of the Scottish Government's Public Health Priorities. Community cooking programmes have been shown to improve participants' eating behaviour and are therefore considered a valid tool to promote dietary behaviour change. Providing the same support, learning, and sense of community digitally could offer a less resource-intensive way to achieve these outcomes as well as help to reach more people than traditional face-to-face cooking programmes.

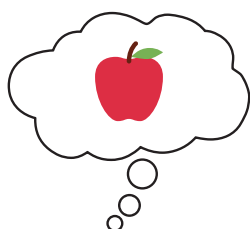
The Beginner's Online Cooking Skills Programme plays an important role in teaching vital cooking skills and promoting healthy food choices, particularly to those in some of Glasgow's most disadvantaged communities.

BARRIERS TO HEALTHY EATING

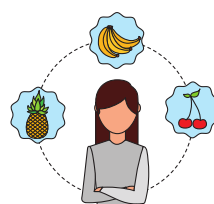
At the beginning of the programme, we asked participants what the main barriers to healthy eating and cooking in their household were. The responses from the survey are expressed below.



56%
Cost



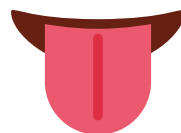
41%
**Nutrition
Knowledge**



40%
Motivation



39%
Time



31%
Taste



30%
**Equipment/
Facilities**



30%
Fussy Eating



28%
Kitchen Skills



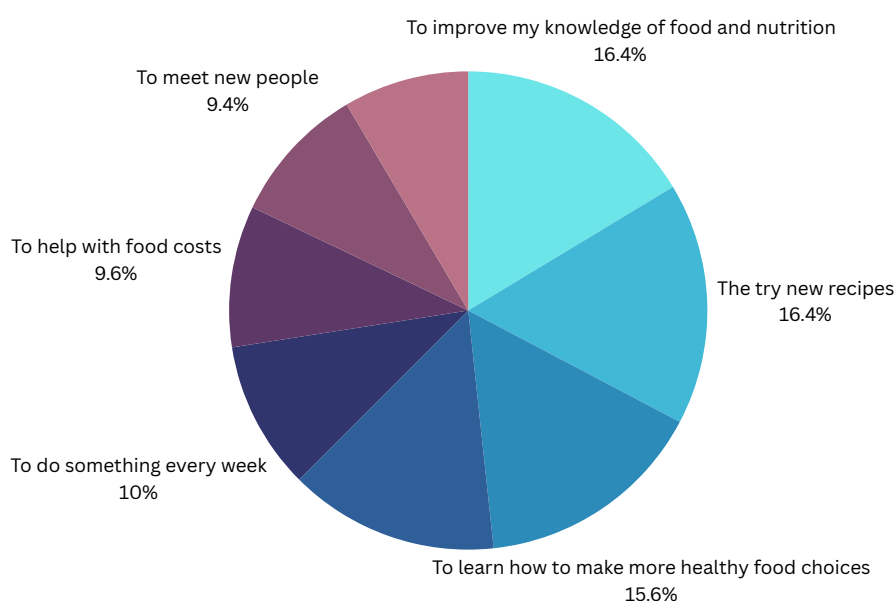
25%
Availability

COHORT STATISTICS

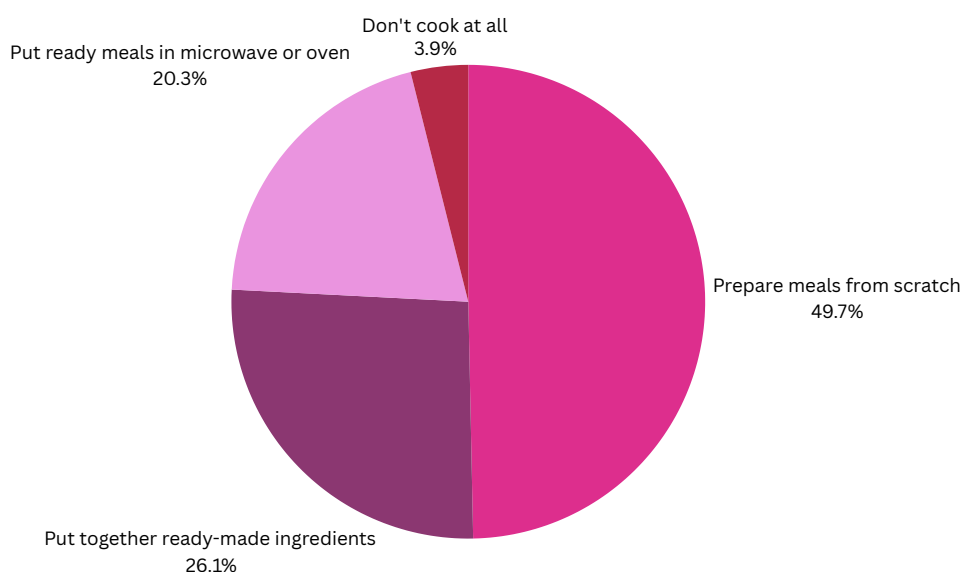
At the beginning of the programme we asked participants why they joined the course and how they currently prepare most of their main meals.

The majority of participants were already cooking from scratch, and joined the course to improve their knowledge of food and nutrition, to learn about making healthier choices and to try new recipes.

Why did you join the course?



How do you currently prepare most of your meals?



PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

Cooking from Scratch

Cooking meals from basic ingredients can be healthier and more cost-effective in comparison to frequently relying on ready meals. Although prior to the programme the majority of participants reported already cooking from scratch, this number increased following the programme.

Prior to the programme

64%

of participants reported
they mainly cook from
scratch



Following the programme

81%

of participants reported
they mainly cook from
scratch

Nutrition Knowledge

Nutrition knowledge was identified by participants as the second biggest barrier to healthy eating after cost and one of the biggest reasons for joining the course. We asked participants to rate their knowledge of nutrition from 1-5 before and after the programme. Following the course:



58% of participants felt they had an **increased knowledge of nutrition**

The reported average rating increased from **3** to **4**

Confidence

One of our aims was to increase participants' confidence to cook from scratch and make healthier choices. Following the programme:

77% of participants felt confident about **cooking from scratch**

73% of participants felt confident about **cooking healthier meals**

RECIPE FEEDBACK

We asked participants to rate the recipes used during the programme out of 5.



Lentil Soup



4.5/5

Minestrone Soup



4.2/5



Omelette and Potato Wedges



4.6/5



Tomato Pasta



4.4/5



RECIPE FEEDBACK

We asked participants to rate the recipes used during the programme.



Veggie Chilli



4.1/5

Chickpea Curry



4.3/5



"I have been making more of for example soup and putting what I don't use in the freezer which helps when I'm looking for a healthy lunch as I can just microwave it fast"

"Trying to shop for whole meals to make sure I'm considering a balanced diet, whereas before I wasn't educated enough about this"

"I've been cooking more from scratch"

"Yes eating healthy is the key in my house now!"

"Adding more vegetables to our daily meals. Result was good and everybody likes it"

Have you made any changes at home as a result of the course?

"Yes, I use salt less than usually"

"I can now plan before cooking I can experiment with different options of vegetables and herbs"

"Yes, I've substituted my food to healthy alternatives such as using olive oils. Although, this was a different cuisine from my home country, I've thoroughly enjoyed it making these food and would be making them again."

"Making things I have never made before or even knowing could be made together."

"To try new recipes which I never cook."

"I didn't realise how cheap and easy it was to cook things from scratch will defo be making the pasta and the curry again without using jars!"

"This course has helped me build my confidence in cooking and helped me broaden my nutritional knowledge"

"It let me how to use the vegetable properly. Really nice and enjoy it"

"I tried these recipes and i wasn't sure- my kids they loved and they did so i will keep trying"

"My expenses have reduced as I can manage and buy healthy food"

Is there anything about that course that has been helpful for you and your family?

"Meals on a budget have helped massively"

"Saving"

"Yes, I now put my veg in freezer and saves a lot of money when making soups"

"I have learnt alot esp sweet potato wedges which are now a favourite every week, I can now make soups from leftovers I can spend wisely on my budget I can experiment with vegetables in a meal"

"It has helped me to cut costs and cook with a little money"

"Thank you for delivering this course, I greatly enjoyed it and I am happy knowing I now feel more confident in cooking and to trying new things. I have enjoyed the social interaction whilst also learning to cook new dishes."

"Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity, I learned recipes that I didn't try before"

"I got a boost from cooking again. It was lovely enjoyable healthy food which was fast to make"

"Meeting other people through Zoom was really nice. Great learning different ways of cooking new foods."

"It was nice sharing my meals and also seeing others meals in the chat. I enjoyed this course. Would like to do more"

Is there anything you'd like to share about the programme?

"Every week it was exciting to try new dish. Started to eat healthy"

"The course was very inspiring"

"I liked the format of the course, the atmosphere. In my opinion, information was provided on the main key issues in nutrition."

Having the wee talk in between cooking was very interesting and educational to learn about sugar levels and balanced diets. Its now made it less daunting as I didn't realise how easy it is to make healthy meals that all my family enjoy.

"It was like we are become a family when we share pictures of food and appreciate each other also share some tips."

PARTICIPANT CASE STUDIES

Participant: V

V, a mother of one from Glasgow, was struggling with her cooking skills, usually relying on her partner to do the cooking at home. However, she wanted to learn how to make healthy meals for her family, particularly for her son, and decided to join the beginner's online cooking course. At first, she found the classes challenging, as she was unfamiliar with many of the ingredients and techniques. But with each passing week, her confidence and skills continued to grow, and she was delighted with the food she was making.

One of her favourite recipes was the lentil soup, which she has been making “non-stop” since the course ended. She is even putting her own spin on the recipe now and loves sharing her creations with her family and friends. She had taken a big pot of her soup to a family gathering and said everyone absolutely loved it! “I was so chuffed with myself!” V loved experimenting with different spices and herbs on the course to add flavour to her dishes and feels that this had made a big difference in her cooking.

V was the recipient of an equipment grant that allowed her to purchase some new cooking equipment. Having the right tools made all the difference, and she said she finds cooking much more enjoyable and easier now with proper equipment.

Following the course V got in touch to say the course had “changed her life”. She’s feeling confident enough to try out new recipes, feels she’s eating better and is so proud of herself for learning new skills that are benefitting her whole family.

PARTICIPANT CASE STUDIES

Participant: D

D is an individual living alone who relied on pre-prepared foods like pasties, pies, and chips from Iceland. Cooking for a single person seemed daunting and D struggled with using up leftovers due to the large packet sizes typically sold in supermarkets. Due to his shift-work schedule, D found himself eating only one meal very late at night or sometimes skipping meals altogether. Recognising the need for a change, he decided to join the online cooking skills programme.

The programme motivated him to start cooking and instilled a newfound joy for learning about herbs and spices to enhance the flavours of his meals. Although he continued to eat one meal per day, D now felt confident that he was incorporating nutritional quality into his diet. D found the programme's tips on portioning meals and freezing leftovers particularly helpful. These strategies enabled him to save money by batch cooking and storing leftovers in the freezer. The programme also provided D with an equipment grant, allowing him to efficiently batch cook and store his meals.

The structure of the cooking class, being weekly with a set time, has had a significant impact on D's routine. He has since decided to continue dedicating the same timeslot each week for batch cooking. Additionally, the availability of video resources has allowed him to revisit and recreate the meals at his convenience.

Following the course, when asked if he's still cooking more D said "Yes absolutely! I haven't been back to Iceland since the start of the course!"

PARTICIPANT CASE STUDIES

Participant: S

S is a mother of three and the primary cook in her household. Having moved from India to Glasgow in July 2022, S was excited to join an online cooking programme as she loves to cook. S was also hoping to get some tips on incorporating more vegetables into her family's meals.

S found the course to be really helpful, especially in exploring ingredients that she was less familiar with, such as leeks. Learning about ingredient substitutions, inspired S to experiment with different flavours and ingredients in her cooking. The programme also provided her with tips on creatively incorporating vegetables into her children's meals, such as blending/grating them into pasta sauces.

The online nature of the course offered convenience and flexibility, fitting into S's routine with ease, allowing her to complete the day's cooking tasks early. The availability of live online classes with a chat function proved to be an asset, as S could catch up on any missed information and stay on track with the lesson content.

The provision of vouchers as part of the programme significantly helped with food costs, making it easier for S to experiment with new recipes and ingredients.

The programme's focus on ingredient versatility, creativity, and cost-saving strategies allowed S to explore diverse recipes while incorporating more vegetables, which she says has positively impacted her family's health and well-being.

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