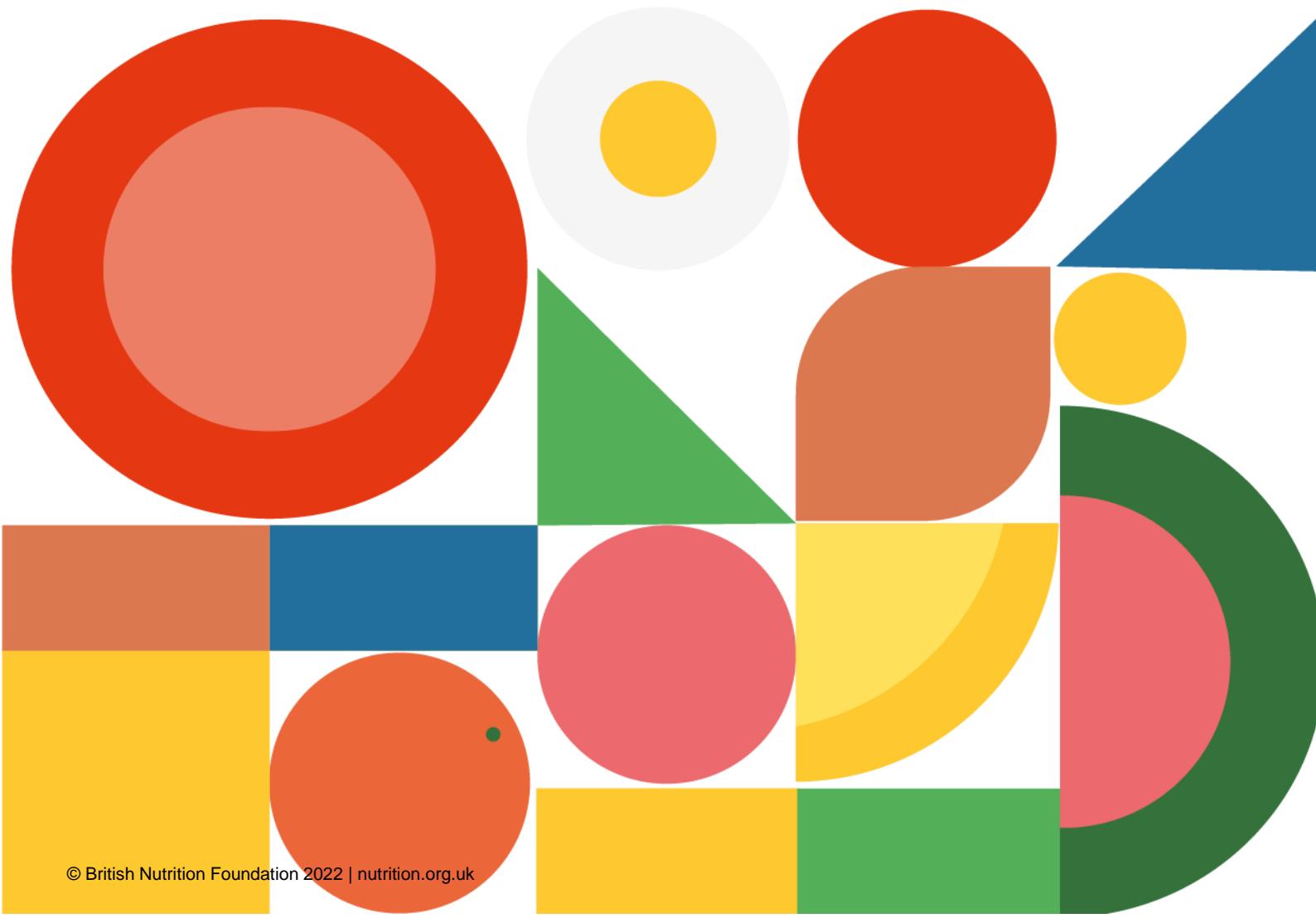


# A modern paradigm for food education

What does modern food education look  
like?

Consensus event, held on 2 October 2021



# A modern paradigm for food education

## What does modern food education look like?

### Consensus event, held on 2 October 2021

The event was devised and run by the British Nutrition Foundation and was supported by the All Saints Educational Trust.

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## **What does future, modern food education look like?**

With support from the All Saints Educational Trust (ASET), the British Nutrition Foundation explored what a future, modern food education, that is relevant to young people and society, might look like and contain. The concept was to develop a modern food teaching and learning paradigm, moving the profession forward from current practice, which is 'fit for the future', and, in particular, reflects and meets the needs of our culturally diverse society.

The recommendations for a National Food Strategy has elevated the debate around food and nutrition education and has made recommendations that aim to raise the status of food education in schools, support the provision of ingredients to ensure inclusivity and encourage new teachers into the profession.

The aim of this work is to focus on what will make a modern food education in schools across the UK, including pedagogy, content and pupil experience. To bring about this vision the following interlocking areas of work were undertaken:

**a) What do pupils want?** – Understanding and responding to pupil voice.

A survey with pupils, aged 13-18 years, to find out about their food and cooking experiences, as well as better understand what they would have liked to have been taught. The outcome for this work is to ascertain possible future content, as well as a baseline for pupils' food skills after compulsory food education at 14 years of age. A teacher survey was also conducted

**b) What's modern food teaching?** – Understanding the profession and society.

A consensus building event with experts in the field of food and nutrition education to debate the concepts of future, modern food education. The context of our society, especially cultural and inclusivity aspects, set the scene for this half-day event. The outcome is a report about the event, with the aim to have outline principles of what constitutes modern food teaching.

**c) What's cooking?** – Ensuring recipe diversity.

Using the outcomes from (a) and (b) above, we will develop a range of recipes which reflect modern food teaching and cultural inclusion, ensuring that these can be used to support the curriculum, food skill development and progression. While teachers can access recipes from multiple sources online, this work seeks to highlight and provide recipes which are suitable and practical for schools and their budgets, promote healthier eating, reflect more global cuisine, and encourage dialogue around culture and inclusivity. The suite of recipes would be used in teacher training events (see d below), as well as published online for use by all teachers.

**d) What future paradigm?** – Bringing teachers on the journey.

Taking the learnings from the pupil voice and consensus building event, a number of teacher training sessions, all set in the context of cultural diversity and inclusivity, will be held. The emphasis will be on using modern food experiences and culture to inform the training, thereby creating a natural link to educating and motivating young people.

## Executive summary

- The British Nutrition Foundation explored what a future, modern food education, that is relevant to young people and society, might look like and contain. A consensus event, which attracted 208 registrations, was hosted on 2 October 2021, with support from the All Saints Educational Trust. The event comprised a series of nine inter-related presentations designed to provoke debate, provide insight into different aspects of teaching and learning, and look at potential solutions and ways forward in the future. In addition, interactive polls and open questions were posed to delegates.
- Roy Ballam gave an overview of the changes and trends that impact food education. Ewen Trafford gave an overview about teenagers, with a focus on their nutritional status, lifestyle choices and nutrition knowledge. Professor Piscopo gave an overview of the current international activity, focusing on giving our youth a voice.
- David Mulcahy gave an overview of the role of food provision in schools, highlighting the link to sustainable eating and the importance of careers. Kate Morris explored the importance of allowing young children to experience different ingredients, auditing food teaching across the curriculum and supporting the health of young people. Jenny Ridgwell reflected on her experience over the past 50 years in food education, noting concern for some issues in the 1970's which remain the same now.
- Frances Meek gave an overview of the recent survey of teachers and pupils (aged 13-18 years). Pupils, mainly Key Stage 3/S2, rated their overall experience in food as mostly 'good' or 'very good' and enjoyed practical work. When asked to sum-up their learning experiences pupils described it as: enjoyable, fun, and interesting. However, some described it as stressful, crowded and loud. Andrew Hartshorn discussed the rationale for food education, emphasising the need for a modern, inspiring and diverse Scheme of Work/Learning, supporting inclusivity. Lastly, Charlotte Caruana gave a perspective from an early careers teacher, highlighting issues with the status of the subject and the need to focus on inclusivity, healthy diets and sustainability, cross curricular aspects of learning and career opportunities.
- Half of the attendees suggested that compulsory food education should end at age 16 years, and a third suggested at age of 18 years. There was clear agreement that food and nutrition teachers should be involved in curriculum co-ordination for food subject content, and whole school food approaches across the school. Just under half of the attendees suggested that food and nutrition education should be 'on its own', with 38% suggesting that it should be aligned with 'health education/health and wellbeing'. A majority of attendees (55%) suggested it should be known as 'food and nutrition' or 'food, cooking and nutrition'.

Based on the presentations and delegate feedback, the following recommendations were made:

- **Food and nutrition education for all:** Food and nutrition education should be made universally available for all children and young people from at least 5 to 16 years.
- **Progress for life:** Ensure that there are routes of learning post-16, which include the reintroduction of A-level food and nutrition in England and Wales.
- **Teacher recruitment and training:** Ensure that there are enough specialist teachers at secondary school level to provide high-quality, rigorous teaching.
- **Empower primary school teachers:** At primary level, ensure that food and nutrition teaching is part of initial teacher training courses and that ongoing CPD training is available, ensuring high quality experiences by all pupils.
- **Unlock the subject:** Tackle the life-long persistent problems that have held-back the subject, namely ingredient provision, resource allocation, curriculum time (frequency/length) and technician support.
- **Respect, importance and impact:** Address the value and respect for the subject, starting from the top down, i.e. policy makers, school governors and senior leadership teams. Show the importance and impact of food and nutrition education, including careers in 'food', to parents/carers, which can include getting families involved in learning (in and out of the classroom).

- **Inclusive, diverse and modern:** Ensure that teaching reflects 'the now' (and continues to evolve with change), taking into account cultural aspects, family life, socio-economics, health and sustainability. Food and nutrition education is for all pupils, diverse and inclusive.
- **Characteristics of good education:** State what a modern food and nutrition education looks like, enabling teacher trainers, schools and CPD providers to have a consistent approach for the subject.
- **Expand learning experience, don't limit:** Schemes of Work/Learning should include dishes that pupils want to make, and that reflect their families/lifestyles, in the context of healthy and sustainable diets. Pupils should be given opportunities to use ingredients that they are initially familiar with, but then extended over time to broaden their learning experiences, handling, cooking and tasting a variety of ingredients.
- **It's about context:** Healthy and sustainable diets needs to be the basis for food and nutrition education going forward, with learning about food from around the world, reflecting personal cultures and values, demonstrating diversity and inclusivity.

## The consensus event overview

A consensus event was hosted on 2 October 2021, attracting 208 registrations. Louise Davies, Founder of the Food Teachers Centre and Trustee of the All Saints Educational Trust (ASET), Chaired the conference.

The event comprised nine inter-related presentations designed to provoke debate, provide insight into different aspects of teaching and learning, and look at potential solutions and ways forward in the future. The presentations included:

- **Setting the scene and context: Why change might be needed?** Roy Ballam, Managing Director and Head of Education, British Nutrition
- **Teenagers: health status and nutrition knowledge** Ewen Trafford, Nutrition Scientist, British Nutrition Foundation
- **Young people as global citizens through food and nutrition** Professor Suzanne Piscopo, Associate Professor, University of Malta
- **Future fare – making recipes and dishes that reflect the needs and experiences of society** David Mulcahy, Culinary Director, Sodexo UK and Ireland
- **Food education in the 21st century - diversity and experiences** Kate Morris, Former teacher, children's cookery author and TV consultant
- **50 years - what's changed?** Jenny Ridgwell, author
- **What change is needed? Launch of new research findings from pupils and teachers throughout the UK** Frances Meek, Senior Education Officer, British Nutrition Foundation
- **Teacher case study 1** Andrew Hartshorn, Finham Park Multi-Academy Trust
- **Teacher case study 2** Charlotte Caruana, The Coopers' Company and Coborn School

All the presentations were recorded, allowing those who were unable to attend to view at their own convenience. The recordings, and the presentations, are available on the *Food – a fact of life* website: <https://bit.ly/3uqVcrz>

In addition, four interactive polls and four open questions were posed to attendees in between the presentations. These were developed to gather further insight into key issues for food and nutrition teaching, as well as ascertain whether there was consensus in moving forward in the community.

At the end of the conference, Louise Davies and Roy Ballam summarised the areas of consensus.

This report provides a summary of the nine presentations, and results of the four interactive polls and four open questions from the participating teachers.

Key areas of consensus and actions are highlighted, based on the presentations and feedback, providing evidence for change to ensure that future food and nutrition education is inclusive, respects diversity and meets the needs of young people throughout the UK.

## The consensus event

The following is a summary of the event, which comprised nine presentations, four interactive polls and four open questions.

### **Presentation 1: Setting the scene and context: Why might change be needed? Roy Ballam, Managing Director, British Nutrition Foundation**

Roy Ballam gave an overview of the changes and trends that impact food education, which include:

- Research from the [Food Education Learning Landscape](#) (2017), highlighting low levels of curriculum time, as well as issues with funding, resources and teacher training.
- The impact of the removal of a 'food' A-level on Key Stage 3 and 4, as well as lack of progression and value for the subject.
- The [National Food Strategy](#) recommendations were emphasised as the way forward; the importance of getting these recommendations implemented as policy was noted.
- Long term investment is paramount to facilitate the need for staffing and funding ingredients to create a modern, relevant, and appropriate curriculum.

He then set the scene for the work by the British Nutrition Foundation in looking at the future of food education, noting:

- The work included four key steps – what do pupils want (pupil voice, via an online survey), key issues for modern food teaching (determined via the conference), the development of new recipes to ensure better inclusivity and diversity, and teacher training based on the outcomes of the previous three parts.
- Collecting and providing evidence about food and nutrition education is paramount - this can then be used to make a case for change and keep the subject moving forward into the future.

#### Why change might be needed?

- Societal change, e.g. family structures, working world, time to cook
- Diversity in our population
- Education opportunity
- Health and health inequality
- Financial and financial inequality
- How we shop, cook and eat
- Trends in, and availability of, ingredients, foods, dishes and cuisines
- Technological change (cooking and information)
- Cooking skills in general adult population

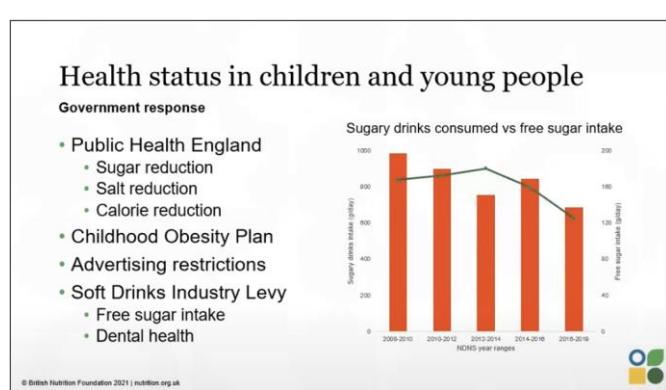


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## **Presentation 2: Teenagers: health status and nutrition knowledge, Ewen Trafford, Nutrition Scientist, British Nutrition Foundation**

Ewen Trafford gave an overview about teenagers, with a focus on their nutritional status, lifestyle choices and nutrition knowledge. The presentation highlighted the need for:

- The provision of secure, evidence based, and-up-to date knowledge of nutrition for teachers.
- A compulsory food and nutrition curriculum for all children and young people up to the age of 16 that provides accessible, relevant nutrition knowledge to enable them to make informed, appropriate choices to optimise their health and wellbeing.



## **Presentation 3: Young people as global citizens through food and nutrition, Professor Suzanne Piscopo, Associate Professor, University of Malta**

Professor Piscopo gave an overview of the current international activity; these include [Global Food Systems Summit](#), [Future Food Systems](#) (Sept 2020), [Enabling Sustainable Food Systems](#) and [Food is the Future](#) (parallel to summit) providing a voice of youth.

The presenter highlighted the following key points:

- The global importance of trying to achieve a better world based on a healthy sustainable diet.
- Children and young people need to be empowered to eat healthy, sustainably diets with reduced impact on climate and natural resources. There needs to be a move away from focusing on 'our needs' to a wider more global perspective considering who and what is being impacted.
- Teaching should embrace the principles of young people as global citizens and include affordability, food from other countries (including food supply and security), sustainability, reducing the impact on climate change, dietary patterns (including over and under consumption) and related moral issues.
- The top three concerns from the youth summit (*Which future food issue is most important to you?*) were (i) Sustainable food production and biodiversity, (ii) healthy nutrition and diet, sustainability, and (iii) climate change.
- [Our Food our System](#) (2021) report – (Gen Z 18-24 year olds) - the top four things required from the food system: (i) better labelling/education, (ii) clearer advice and information on healthy eating, (iii) advice on the link between diet and mental health and (iv) to be involved in the solution.
- [School based food and nutrition education](#) (FAO) 2020 report observed that food education should be competency based with a more holistic vision. This should include Food systems, Social justice – challenging social disparities, Food appreciation, Pedagogies – active learning, Innovation and creativity



- How to enthuse young people: give them facts, peer-to-peer education, start them young – involve children, activities that raise awareness e.g. food insecurity, employability, and the importance of nurturing young people to be global citizens via food and nutrition with a focus on values.

**Presentation 4: Future fare – making recipes and dishes that reflect the needs and experiences of society, David Mulcahy, Culinary Director, Sodexo UK and Ireland**

David Mulcahy gave an overview of the role of food provision in schools. He highlighted the following key points:

- Sustainability should be linked to sustainable eating.
- The importance of collaboration with chefs and other professionals for pupils – helping to promote career opportunities as well as core skills (linking curriculum and food provision).
- How the FutureChef competition supports a modern food curriculum.
- The importance of ‘influencers’ and how they can be used in a positive way with young people.

**Presentation 5: Food education in the 21st century - diversity and experiences, Kate Morris, Former teacher, children's cookery author and TV consultant**

Kate Morris outlined her background in developing the Purple Kitchen, My World Kitchen and I Can Cook. She highlighted the following key points:

- The importance of involving young children with a focus on handling and experiencing the use of different ingredients.
- Children and young people all have a different experiences of food – these diverse and different experiences/traditions should be valued.
- Food teaching can influence the messaging/language about food in schools.
- The importance of auditing where food is being taught across the curriculum.
- The need to exemplify the use of ingredients/recipes that support making good food choices and provide education about preventable dietary disease.

**Focus for 2021 and beyond**

1. Preventing Food Waste
2. Promoting Plant-based Meals
3. Sourcing Responsibly
4. Providing innovative energy management solutions

- 100% of our employees trained on sustainability practices
- 100% of our customers offered healthy lifestyle options everyday
- £200m of our business value to benefit SMEs
- 34% reduction of carbon emissions
- 50% food waste reduction by 2030

*Social Value Strategy Launched*



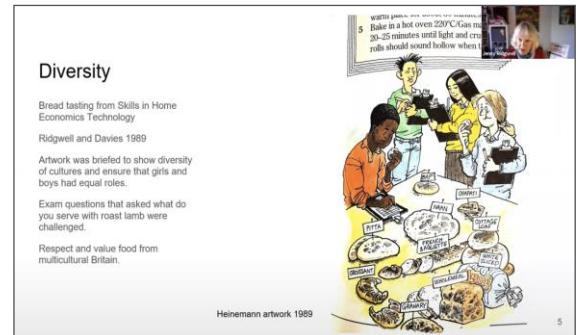
Food Education does not happen in a vacuum, messages about food are all around children day in and day out. At school there are opportunities for positive messaging, and as food teachers we have the expertise to influence by the experiences we offer and the language we use.

**Presentation 6: 50 years - what's changed? Jenny Ridgwell, author**

Jenny Ridgwell reflected with a personal perspective from her experience over the past 50 years in food education. She noted that it was of concern that some key issues in the 1970's remain the same or are similar now.

The presentation outlined the need for the following key points:

- Clarity around the name or title of the subject - this also has an influence on how the subject is perceived and valued by the wider school community and parents/carers.
- An end to the financial lottery that in some cases can determine if a pupil can take part in practical sessions or not. Equality of access to ingredients for all is vitally important.
- Urgently challenge and reconsider the types of dishes that are expected of pupils to achieve 'high level' food skills. She suggested that many of the dishes perceived as 'high level' for GCSE do not reflect the current dietary guidelines and modern culinary practice, and do not have a place in the current or future food curriculum.



Note: After the event, the Awarding Organisation AQA published changes to the recipes and skills, which can be accessed here: <https://bit.ly/36ESOVW>

## **Presentation 7: What change is needed? Launch of new research findings from pupils and teachers throughout the UK, Frances Meek, Senior Education Officer, British Nutrition Foundation**

Frances Meek gave an overview of the recent survey of teachers and pupils (aged 13-18 years). It was noted that some of the responses may have been influenced by the coronavirus restrictions and disruption to education. She highlighted the following key points:

- Pupils, mainly Key Stage 3/S2, rated their overall experience in food as mostly ‘good’ or ‘very good’. However, pupils rated their experience of ‘Where food comes from’ as less positive.
- The majority of pupils enjoyed practical activities/lessons and wanted more. They rated their teaching as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ and they enjoyed independent learning.
- When asked to sum-up their learning experiences pupils described it as: enjoyable, fun, and interesting. However, on a less positive note, some described it as stressful, crowded and loud.
- Pupils identified the importance of practical lessons and suggested that they would like longer lessons to enable them to make a wider variety of dishes. Pupils wanted to cook pizza, cakes, pasta dishes and Indian, Chinese/Japanese/Thai and Mexican cuisines. Many pupils reported making cakes, pasta dishes, desserts, morning goods (e.g. muffins), bread and fruit salad.
- Many teachers did not have or know if their schools had a Whole school food policy, and there was little liaison with other subjects.
- The survey showed limited current and future emphasis on food science in the curriculum. Healthy and sustainable diets should feature more in the future, as well as knowing how to ‘feed myself well’.



- Teachers and pupils agreed that recipes should be healthy and be within the context of family/everyday, tasty (pupils) and low cost (teachers). The importance of culture and diversity was important for both teachers and pupils. Pupils indicated that recipes were more traditional, less modern and uninspiring than teachers did.
- Teachers reflected the pupils' current food learning experience as fun and enjoyable, but also stressful. Future expectations of the experience included being calm and valued.
- With respect to the future, teachers suggested that food skills, knowledge and experiences of the following should be included: foods from around the world, environment and sustainability, cooking skills and food preparation, plant-based eating and budgeting.
- Staff training and development needs included practical food skills, healthy eating/nutrition, and healthy and sustainable diets.

The survey results can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3qMTksh>

**Presentation 8: Teacher case study 1,  
Andrew Hartshorn, Finham Park Multi-Academy Trust**

Andrew Hartshorn discussed the rationale for food education and other work that he undertakes at school. He highlighted the following key points:

- The opportunity for food teaching to 'level the playing field' for pupils and to utilise and apply skills learned in other subjects.
- All his Key Stage 3 pupils (aged 11-13 years) have 1 hour per week all year. The school has a three-year Key Stage 4. All pupils cook with funding of £20 per year (school based in a low-income setting).
- Respect is expected and achieved – including SLT; aspirational, promotes self-esteem.
- Pupils must have access to an appropriate curriculum.
- Ensuring that Schemes of Work/Learning are modern, inspiring and represent diversity - thereby being inclusive.
- Teaching should all be about the stakeholder, modern, engaging, exciting, to build responsible consumers, using fully funded ingredients, respect for the subject, knowledge and skills focused.
- Obstacles can be addressed – the importance of making sure the pupils are 'onside' is key.



## **Presentation 9: Teacher case study 2, Charlotte Caruana, The Coopers' Company and Coborn School**

Charlotte Caruana gave a presentation from the perspective of an early careers teacher.

She highlighted the following key points:

- SEN experience helped pupils focus on practical skills and their achievements, promoting self-esteem.
- The subject (food and nutrition) has many attributes but can be undervalued and challenging.
- Her pupils expressed that they would like to see more of the following in lessons: interactive learning, developing independence, food skill development, links between mental health and food, and student voice in planning/developing curriculum.
- Food education in the future needs to focus on inclusivity, healthy and sustainability, cross curricular aspects of learning and career opportunities.
- She expressed concern over the lack of food and nutrition specialist trainee teachers and questioned whether the lack of bursary was having a detrimental effect.

### **Interactive Poll 1: When should compulsory food and nutrition teaching (for all pupils) end? (Single choice)**

Option	Number of respondents	Percentage
At 16 years	21	50%
At 18 years	14	33%
At 14 years	4	10%
At 11 years	3	7%
Should not be compulsory	0	0%

- Half of the attendees suggested that compulsory food education should end at age 16 years.
- A third of attendees suggested that compulsory food education should end at age of 18 years.
- The results show that there is a consensus in that all pupils should study food and nutrition until at least 16 years of age. This is different from the current status-quo, where pupils opt to study food and nutrition as a qualification. It should be noted that some schools may still provide some food and nutrition teaching until 16 years, albeit through health education.

### **Student Voice**



#### What would some CCCS students like to see more of within Food education?

- Interactive Learning: Games, taste testing, off site visits, guest speakers/chefs
- Developing Independence: Meal planning, shopping, costing recipes, feeding my family
- Advanced skills progression opportunities
- Experimental cooking
- Links between physical & mental health and food
- Student input in planning the practical curriculum
- Learning about other cultures and traditional dishes
- Speciality lessons/ food trends: Afternoon Tea



**Interactive Poll 2: As a food and nutrition teacher, what other aspects of school life do you believe should be included in the role? (Tick all that apply)**

Option	Number of respondents	Percentage
Curriculum coordination (food) e.g. science, PE, health education	38	86%
Whole school food approach	37	84%
Parental engagement/support for the subject	34	77%
Integration – food across the school – whole school, curriculum and catering	33	75%
Catering and curriculum links	26	59%
Whole school food policy – writing, reviewing, implementing	26	59%
Nothing additional	0	0%

- There was clear agreement that food and nutrition teachers should be involved in curriculum co-ordination for food subject content, and whole school food approaches across the school. This would help to support consistency of approach and unified pupil experience.
- Over two-thirds of attendees suggested that they should also provide parental engagement/support the subject. This may be useful post-14 years when pupils are making qualification decisions.
- There was support for integration of food across the school, including links to catering.

**Interactive Poll 3: In the future, where should food and nutrition education be placed in your school? (Single choice)**

Option	Number of respondents	Percentage
On its own	18	46%
Health education / health and wellbeing	15	38%
Design and technology / technologies	3	8%
Science	2	5%
Across the curriculum	1	3%
Humanities	0	0%
Physical education	0	0%

- Just under half of the attendees suggested that food and nutrition education should be 'on its own', with 38% suggesting that it should be aligned with 'health education/health and wellbeing'.
- There was little support for it being taught 'across the curriculum', i.e. its content taught in discrete parts through different curriculum subjects.

**Interactive Poll 4: Thinking about the subject name, which from the following would you have on your 'door'? (Single choice)**

Option	Number of respondents	Percentage
Food and nutrition	15	33%
Food, cooking and nutrition	10	22%
Food studies	7	15%
Food preparation and nutrition	5	11%
Home economics	5	11%
Catering	1	2%
Cooking	1	2%
Domestic science	1	2%
Food science	1	2%
Great British Bake Off	0	0%

- A majority of attendees (55%) suggested it should be 'food and nutrition' or 'food, cooking and nutrition'.
- 11% suggested 'Home economics' and another 11% suggested 'Food preparation and nutrition'.

## **Open question 1: Is the current curriculum and/or set of qualifications fit for purpose?**

### **Key points:**

- Food and nutrition education should start at an early age and progress throughout the pupils' school life.
- Reinstating A-level food courses were seen as a very important way forward for the subject, providing progression post 16 and re-establishing the importance of the subject in the school community and for career opportunities.
- Lack of teaching time in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 can hinder progress and curriculum opportunities.
- Concern over inappropriate 'high level skill' dishes for the GCSE qualification that do not reflect current healthy eating guidelines.

## **Open question 2: If ingredient provision and time were not issues, what would you do differently (compared to now)?**

### **Key points:**

- External visits/trips, guest speakers/chefs were a popular option.
- Opportunity to widen the curriculum to include healthier and more sustainable diets, food systems, climate change, food justice and/or food policy.
- Embracing growing food in school and using produce in practical lessons.
- Widening the experiences for pupils.

## **Open question 3: What are the main barriers for the subject at this time? What are the solutions to these barriers?**

### **Key points:**

- Lack of curriculum time for lessons (including number of lessons and length).
- Concern over the supply of specialist teachers (including recruitment and training) and the willingness to 'draft in' non-specialist teachers.

## **Open question 4: What is the top priority for the subject going forward?**

### **Key points:**

- The importance of implementing fully the Eat and Learn strand of the National Food Strategy recommendations, particularly the funding of ingredients for all.
- Reinstating the A-level examination in food and nutrition.

## Discussion

A short discussion was held at the end of the event with the speakers and attendees.

The discussion included the following points:

- There is a need to raise the profile of the subject for parents/carers, as often when food goes home, it has an immediate impact. There is a need to demonstrate that pupils are cooking for the right reason, e.g. to develop skills for life.
- Schemes of Work/Learning – changing? Depends on setting. Up-skilling asap. How do you take the stress out of it? Engagement with students and SLT – if they are with you...it all slots into place.
- If some pupils are not enjoying the lessons, there is a need to explore why this is the case. Attendees stated that it may be linked to lesson time, a 'stressful' environment, and the perception that the subject is not relevant or suitable.
- Where does the role of cooking sit? Will there be a greater emphasis in the future? Pupils need to know how to make basic dishes with inexpensive ingredients and not rely exclusively on pre-made foods.
- The way forward in the future? Enjoyment is paramount. Showing and promoting skills, self-esteem, choices to help others, food traditions, and sensory and emotional elements of working with food.

## Concluding comments

Louise Davies and Roy Ballam thanked all the presenters and attendees for joining the important consensus event. They gave the following concluding remarks, based on the event, feedback and interaction with attendees:

- Food and nutrition education should be a universal right, an entitlement for all children and young people and be respected as a subject.
- Food and nutrition education entitlement must reflect the current needs of the pupils and wider society and not be bound by its perceived value/status and lack of investment. There needs to be a clear understanding of the importance of the subject by all.
- The subject should engender a sense of enjoyment, as well as enabling pupils to make informed choices to support their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Subject content needs to set the basis of what modern food education looks like, taking into account issues around diversity, inclusivity, health and wellbeing, sustainability, life skills and potential career development.
- It is time for the community to move forward and address issues which have been barriers for many years:
  - Funding for ingredients should be allocated, including strategies for management, ensuring all pupils can participate and have experience of handling and tasting a wider range of foods that promote health, no matter their backgrounds.
  - There needs to be sufficient time allocated for lessons to ensure quality of learning experience and outcome.
  - It is critical that funding for more specialist food and nutrition teachers is provided, and that routes into food and nutrition teaching are made attractive and accessible. In addition, high quality ongoing continuing professional development should be made available to ensure teaching is up-to-date, high quality, rigorous and robust.

## Recommendations for the future

Based on this consensus event, taking into account the inter-linking presentations, attendee feedback and discussion, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Food and nutrition education for all:** Food and nutrition education should be made universally available for all children and young people from at least 5 to 16 years.
2. **Progress for life:** Ensure that there are routes of learning post-16, which include the reintroduction of A-level food and nutrition in England and Wales.
3. **Teacher recruitment and training:** Ensure that there are enough specialist teachers at secondary school level to provide high-quality, rigorous teaching.
4. **Empower primary school teachers:** At primary level, ensure that food and nutrition teaching is part of initial teacher training courses and that ongoing CPD training is available, ensuring high quality experiences by all pupils.
5. **Unlock the subject:** Tackle the life-long persistent problems that have held-back the subject, namely ingredient provision, resource allocation, curriculum time (frequency/length) and technician support.
6. **Respect, importance and impact:** Address the value and respect for the subject, starting from the top down, i.e. policy makers, school governors and senior leadership teams. Show the importance and impact of food and nutrition education, including careers in 'food', to parents/carers, which can include getting families involved in learning (in and out of the classroom).
7. **Inclusive, diverse and modern:** Ensure that teaching reflects 'the now' (and continues to evolve with change), taking into account cultural aspects, family life, socio-economics, health and sustainability. Food and nutrition education is for all pupils, diverse and inclusive.
8. **Characteristics of good education:** State what a modern food and nutrition education looks like, enabling teacher trainers, schools and CPD providers to have a consistent approach for the subject.
9. **Expand learning experience, don't limit:** Schemes of Work/Learning should include dishes that pupils want to make, and that reflect their families/lifestyles, in the context of healthy and sustainable diets. Pupils should be given opportunities to use ingredients that they are initially familiar with, but then extended over time to broaden their learning experiences, handling, cooking and tasting a variety of ingredients.
10. **It's about context:** Healthy and sustainable diets needs to be the basis for food and nutrition education going forward, with learning about food from around the world, reflecting personal cultures and values, demonstrating diversity and inclusivity.

## Levelling up the United Kingdom: How do our recommendations fit in?

Since the consensus building event in October 2021, the Government has published the *Levelling up the United Kingdom White Paper* (February 2022), which sets out the next steps in the Government's programme to reduce inequalities across the UK.

The British Nutrition Foundation was happy to see that the White Paper reflects many of our recommendations for a future modern, diverse food and nutrition education. We were pleased to see that the Government has adopted Henry Dimbleby's recommendations about eating and learning, with a greater focus on education for children and young people about food. Bursaries for teacher training and leadership are welcomed and will help support the recruitment drive that is required for new food and nutrition teachers in our secondary schools. The British Nutrition Foundation also recommends that those training to become primary school teachers receive food and nutrition training and support in their early career years.

We have always championed a whole school food approach and we are pleased to see that governors will receive training and support to further strengthen this strategic approach and reinforce the importance of good food and nutrition across the school day, including school meals, education and parental/carer engagement. This also reflects our recommendation to address the respect, importance and impact of food and nutrition education.

We were pleased that curriculum development around food and nutrition was included in the White Paper and we will continue to be vocal about the reinstatement of food and nutrition at A-Level, essential to ensuring a progressive pathway from GCSE to university degree courses and degree level apprenticeships and enabling young people to access the extensive career opportunities from 'farm to fork'.

Through the interventions outlined in the White paper, the UK Government will aim for every child leaving secondary school to know at least six basic recipes that will support healthy living into adulthood. We strongly agree that young people should leave school knowing how to cook healthy, nutritious meals. However, food education is more than 'cooking' and must encompass learning around healthy eating and where food comes from, to enable young people to make healthier and more sustainable choices now and into the future. In addition, the recipes they cook must be diverse and inclusive, and reflect the needs, lifestyles and personal values of pupils and their parents/carers.

## Appendix 1: Open question detail

The following is the text recorded during the event.

### Question 1. Is the current curriculum and/or set of qualifications fit for purpose?

*“Current curriculum is suitable for students but needs an A-Level for the GCSE to run into.”*

*“Northern Ireland - Home Economics is compulsory in secondary school for year 8-10 challenges in school is having long enough blocks of time to provide more complex recipes, so baking bread is not possible.”*

*“No, it is not. "Food" is the biggest global and national employer. The abolition of the A level has had a devastating impact upon further food study and nutrition related degree applications. The number of schools offering Level 3 FS&N at KS5 are declining.”*

*“It is suitable but a huge amount of content at GCSE and needs an A level. I do get asked for the A level.”*

*“I work in an alternative provision, it is difficult to ensure all the learners have the teaching they need to undertake the GCSE, as they can join us at any point during year 10-11.”*

*“Lack of teaching time means lack of continuity which affects pupil progress (at KS3) which has a knock-on effect at KS4 especially for the lower ability. Needs to go onto A Level.”*

*“GCSE is fit for purpose however really need A-level reinstated for progression.”*

*“Fit for purpose is not nationwide and is not fair and equal. I have taught in city environment and heard many stories from such environments where there is not the support, the subject does not get the credit or is given the importance required. However, in my last two schools food is put centre stage, is given a huge amount of backing and financial assistance in funding and staffing. It is certainly not a level playing field.”*

*“I believe the vast array of Home Economics qualifications in Scotland from National 1 to Advanced Higher Health and Food Technology is fit for purpose although there needs to be a few tweaks around practical skills demonstrated in exams and what we are teaching about current healthy eating guidelines.”*

*“The curriculum should begin with early years and be a strong focus in primary education so that children are already able to cook when starting secondary. Diversity, food security and health should be a core part of this curriculum and it needs to be fun and appealing, featuring role models, not data and dull.”*

*“Too much content at GCSE - often difficult to finish the course - all schools are different and have different class sizes, length of lesson etc.”*

*“I'm going to be controversial and say at GCSE I think the content is just fine to teach. I really enjoy the theory and in particular the Food Science (a joy to teach) Nutrition, and Food Choice (Food Provenance is a little more common sense stuff).”*

*“Often difficult to decide which qualification to use, hospitality and catering vs food and nutrition, which gives the better skills for moving on from GCSE and into the industry?”*

*“Very fortunate to have a large department, good curriculum time, supportive SLT and healthy numbers at KS4. We have spent a considerable time developing a sequenced KS3 curriculum. KS5 is where we need to develop, unfortunately the status of Level 3 qualification is low and we have relatively low numbers. We need a rigorous A Level subject for progression – every other subject has A Level progression from GCSE.”*

*“My big one is to BRING BACK A-LEVEL! While I'm enjoying WJEC Level 3 it would be great to see this reinstated.”*

*“The food tech vs food nutrition debate I think very much depends on your setting. We have just gone back to having a product development, problem solving project-based curriculum in Y9 (following a very nutrition heavy/food science practical skills based curriculum in y7 and y8) as we found that students were progressively disengaged with food education later in lower school especially when not many of them are likely to pursue food careers. I work in the independent sector and in my setting there are less issues with food security and nutrient deficiency. It is the first year since the GCSE reform that we have introduced some design thinking/cooking for others in the food curriculum. Not sure how it will go but there was consensus that we needed to make studying food relevant to our school.”*

*“Cross curricular links with science works well to embed food science.”*

*“Our local GDST school teaches food as a practical/healthy eating subject. They do not consider a food related career to be in keeping with their required destinations. A national curriculum is important, leading to a GCSE then A level so that it's in the school's interest to deliver the national course.”*

*“Food education should be part of the curriculum from 2!! But embedded into the whole curriculum. It is too late to leave it until 11, the stats around obesity and vitamin deficiency show this!”*

*“I'm currently a visiting lecturer on food science/tech degrees. I originally chose to do a Food Science degree myself because of a Nuffield Food Science module on my A level chemistry course (this was unfortunately discontinued). I went on to do a PhD in food science and on to do a PhD in Food & Sensory science and on to a career in food industry. I didn't find the A level Chemistry interesting but found the Food Science module to be exciting and applied. Interestingly, if an A level in Food related subjects had been available, I wouldn't have taken it. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do in my career aged 16/17 and wanted to keep my options open, so I went for fundamental science A levels – biology, chemistry etc. I think there is a case for putting food based modular options into other courses e.g. modules covering specific aspects of food such as: food physics, food chemistry, food and biology (nutrition, human senses and microbiology), geography and food systems, psychology and mood and wellbeing.”*

*“Should the NEA2's (part of the GCSE examination in England and Wales) have more emphasis on nutrition rather than high calorie occasions?”*

*“It is something we need to have a conversation about, the list that constitutes high level dishes by the exam boards and are they always the most nutritious for the number of skills taught in food preparation.”*

*“About the curriculum I’d say the resources contain still too many recipes with sugars or fats. And I think we should try to be more modern and adapt the recipes to healthier options.”*

**Open question 2. If ingredient provision and time were not issues, what would you do differently (compared to now)?**

*“Don’t see enough on the curriculum around sustainable food, food systems, climate change, food justice or food policy. Pupils will need to navigate this and would like to see more detail and depth in this in the Scottish curriculum.”*

*“We also need to lobby for a year round teaching model and stop the ridiculous carousel which means if a pupil studies food at the start of year 7 and the end of Y8, they have no food education for 18 months.”*

*“There is a definite need for more time on the curriculum. When did maths and English become more important than HEALTH, especially following the pandemic?”*

*“If ingredients were not issues or time, I would have students learning whilst cooking their own breakfasts, lunches and take-home dinners. I would get the students running the school canteen.”*

*“Out of class visits and having speakers in.”*

*“Get students out into companies, businesses, onto farms, etc to inspire them”*

*“If time (and space) I would introduce students to horticulture and growing a variety of foods and then cooking them in food lessons.”*

*“Growing food at school. Farm visit.”*

*“Get students to food industry, farms, etc to motivate and inspire them”*

*“Providing ingredients for everyone for cooking lessons”*

*“With no restrictions and no boundaries... I’d like to produce all the ingredients required to teach food preparation at school. Growing our own wheat and milling it. Having our chickens for eggs. Growing all the fruit and vegetables. Then take the excess to the dining hall to be cooked with for lunches!”*

*“School garden, growing own produce and using in own school cafe for the community, farm visits”*

*“If ingredients were not an issue, be able to give the learners the actual experiences of filleting fish, portioning a chicken instead of just watching a demonstration or a video. Allow them to cook recipes which may be slightly more expensive. Cook a meal they can take home and share with their family, rather than cooking for one. Take them to fine dining restaurants to broaden food experiences.”*

### **Open question 3. What are the main barriers for the subject at this time? What are the solutions to these barriers?**

*“Lack of time given on timetable for developing skills at GCSE. Lessons of 1 hour are not enough.”*

*“Without BSc nutrition students, fewer ITT trainees are applying to teach food technology. If this trend continues then our wonderful subject risks further lowering of status in the curriculum. Well taught Food Technology was a brilliant, 21st century subject. It encompassed the technology of processed foods (which are making the population obese) and healthy eating - and these areas go hand in hand. Reducing our subject simply to healthy eating and cooking a range of savoury dishes (various celebrity chefs) is to belittle the subject”*

*“Students complain about lack of food lessons but it is ignored.”*

*“ “Anyone can teach food” is depressingly familiar when I do my school visits and a non-subject specialist has been drafted in.”*

*“The excuse for non-specialist teachers is one of the most frustrating elements. Teaching modern food is so specialist. Food science. The science of cooking, the science of functions of ingredients as well as the science of nutrition. Why are we not up there with Science?!”*

*“Over the summer Scotland announced that families would no longer need to provide/pay for ingredients for home economics lessons. I am totally in favour of this and do supply everything for my students but at the grassroots level I need the money, technical support and time. Our unions are on this, but this needed sorting first.”*

*“Just not enough hours in the day to do everything... I sometimes wonder what it’s like to be one of those less engaging subjects where the teacher simply gets up from their desk at the end of a lesson and just walks out of the classroom with the students... 😊”*

### **4. What is the top priority for the subject going forward?**

*“If the recommendation of the National Food Strategy to launch the “Eat and Learn” initiative took place in schools we would see a real change to our subject, in terms of funding, the reinstating of the A level and early years teaching of food education. The current qualifications need a new vision that show a clear route into science and catering. Without this we will continue to have a shortage in hospitality and for me in university, a route into teaching.”*

*“These are the sustainable food issues I would like to see more of, or at least have more time devoted to them. Active food system change makers! A good example of citizenship.”*

*“Definitely ingredients for all students to cook in class without bearing the cost.”*



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