



Creating Healthier Food Environments in North Yorkshire's Schools

What's the problem?

- ❖ Schools concerned about **poor quality packed lunches** (worsened during Covid e.g. sweets, fizzy drinks).
- ❖ During Covid, many schools had to revise their catering provision, often resulting in **less healthy food on offer**. During 2021, some schools started to look at improving their food provision, and asked NYCC for support.
- ❖ Ongoing **high levels of childhood obesity** in North Yorkshire.



What have we done?

- ✓ Developed **healthy packed lunch guidance** – a leaflet for parents/carers.
- ✓ Looked at **examples of other leaflets, school food standards, consulted** school staff and partners e.g. NYCC Catering.
- ✓ Leaflet was developed with **low-income families** in mind, to support them back towards providing healthier lunches for their children.
- ✓ Currently **piloting it with school staff and families** (online staff survey, in-person with families). Feedback has been very positive e.g. informative, colourful, clear. School staff wanted it shorter and simpler. Families requested information about food banks, budgeting, shopping lists, and photos of packed lunch ideas. Also presented it to CYPs management board.



- ✓ We also sent a **letter to all NY schools (from the Directors of Public Health and CYPs)**, with links and resources (e.g. national food standards) to help improve their catering offer and create healthier food environments.
- ✓ We are also offering **additional support for target schools** (e.g. high deprivation areas). This includes the NYCC Catering team who have done school dinners tasting sessions for low income families in a primary school in Scarborough in November 2021.
- ✓ We did a **'Food in Schools' online survey with school staff**:
 - 26% of staff felt that healthiness of school food has reduced since Covid.
 - 80% wanted to improve the healthiness of food in school.
 - The main reason children don't eat healthily at school is bringing unhealthy food from home (unhealthy packed lunches, snacks etc.).
 - Unhealthy packed lunches were the main thing school staff wanted to improve.
 - Main reason children don't have school meals is that they don't like the food/picky eaters.

What's next?

- Finalise, disseminate and evaluate the **healthy packed lunch leaflet**. Adapt it for Early Years settings.
- "Healthy food in schools" webinars, training etc.
- Increase **uptake of (free) school meals**.
- Support **target schools**.



Webinar