

## Case Study: Development and Dissemination of Portion Sizes for Caterers

### **Project Manager:**

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### **1. Introduction**

This project focused on the development and dissemination of information on portion sizes for caterers. The aim of the project was to contribute to the improvement of Ealing's:

- Food Nutrition and Health

### **2. Context**

In 2003, a multi-agency team in Ealing developed a Food Matters Strategy and Action Plan, with the following objectives:

1. To optimise opportunities for education and employment, increase income, and improve living conditions so that each part of the community is empowered to make their own living choices;
2. To improve physical and economic access to food which will contribute to health and quality of life;
3. To achieve long term improvements in diet and nutrition;
4. To reduce the risk of Coronary Heart Disease (CHD), diabetes, cancers, stroke and obesity and dental caries in the community;
5. To ensure safety, composition, and information about food produced, imported, sold and consumed;
6. To reduce the incidence of food poisoning;
7. To encourage and promote both a sustainable food supply, and food industry; and,
8. To encourage and promote local sourcing and fair trade that minimises adverse environmental impact and addresses consumer concerns.

Details of Ealing's Food Strategy and Action Plan can be found on Ealing Council's website (see:

[http://www.ealing.gov.uk/services/council/strategies\\_and\\_policies/food\\_matters\\_strategy/index.html](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/services/council/strategies_and_policies/food_matters_strategy/index.html))

### **3. Scope and Rationale**

This project was given priority as it realised objective 3.

#### **Stakeholder Analysis and engagement**

This project focused on producing a comprehensive portion size information resource and its dissemination for caterers. As such the project's envisaged impacts were dependent on and affected the following key stakeholders:

- Ealing Council:
  - Environmental Health Project Officer (Project Manager):
  - Health Inequalities Strategy Coordinator (consultation and resource development);
- Ealing PCT (Project Partner):
  - The Stern Library
  - Community Dieticians

Direct Impacts:



- o Caterers and other food businesses in Ealing
- Indirect Impacts:
- o Residents and visitors to Ealing (those being catered for)

### Resources

- PC + MS Word software package + Internet access + print capabilities
- Portion Size books

Research, collation and compilation of data and information, consultation, and publishing the information resource took approximately five days for the project manager.

### Activities

Project team members took time to undertake the following tasks:

- Attend meetings
- Perform research
- Collate and compile data/information into an information resource
- Network and consult

## 4. General Report

Gathering appropriate portion size data via the internet proved to be problematic. Certain information was available, including portion sizes of fruit and vegetables, and recommended portion sizes of various foods for school meals. In lieu of this, the project manager registered with The Stern Library, an Ealing PCT public health library in Southall, in December 2005 in order to acquire portion size books for research purposes, including: *Food Portion Sizes* (2002; TSO: London).

Relevant data from websites and books was compiled into a spreadsheet and then imbedded in an MS Word document. The document presents portions size data in sections with the following titles: vegetables; fruit; milk and milk products; bread, cereals and potatoes; meat, fish, poultry, and associated products; cakes; sugars, preserves and sauces; biscuits; breakfast Cereals; sandwich fillings; condiments; nuts and seeds; cheese; prepared foods; sweet; miscellaneous/other; and beverages. It also contains: a background and compelling reasons as to why caterers should consider providing appropriate portion sizes; standard weights and measures information; and a reference section.

The 'Food Portion Size Guidelines for Caterers' document was sent to colleagues, dieticians and health promotion staff for comment. Comments from this consultation were actioned<sup>1</sup> and appropriate amendments made to produce a final draft. The document was imbedded in Ealing Council's 'Food Matters' webpages under the 'Food Businesses' section on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2006 to make it accessible for businesses.

## 5. Conclusion

Comprehensive portion size guidelines are now available for the first time for caterers in Ealing. It is hoped that all caterers can access this information and act upon it. Further work is needed to address the document's usefulness for catering businesses. How caterers can be made aware of the resource and/or different means of disseminating the information should be explored.



<sup>1</sup> Although research was conducted into providing portion size information in terms of handfuls etc. no appropriate information could be found.