

Project Overview

Home-Start in Suffolk successfully delivered a six-week Cooking on a Budget programme at Trinity Methodist Church, Felixstowe. The programme was designed to support families in developing practical cooking skills, improving food budgeting, and fostering positive mealtime experiences for young children. Eleven families participated in this free course, benefitting from interactive sessions that engaged both adults and children in preparing nutritious meals together.

The venue provided an ideal setting for hands-on learning, allowing parents and carers to explore ways of making mealtimes enjoyable and less stressful—particularly for children who may be considered ‘fussy’ eaters. By engaging both caregivers and under-fives, the programme reinforced the role of parents as early educators and instilled healthy eating habits at a critical stage of child development.

Grant Contribution and Use of Funds

The £405 grant from Felixstowe Town Council enabled us to secure the Trinity Methodist Church hall as our venue. The grant directly covered increased winter rate venue costs: £67.50 per session x 6 sessions = £405. The kitchen and hall facilities at this location significantly enhanced the quality of the sessions, removing previous logistical challenges associated with less suitable venues.

Programme Delivery and Outcomes

Throughout the six weeks, parents and carers gained confidence in planning, budgeting, and preparing healthy, low-cost meals. The programme was tailored to meet the specific needs of each group, incorporating elements such as:

- Cooking with food bank parcels for families reliant on these resources.
- Adapting meals for shared or temporary accommodation settings.
- Cultural variations in meal preparation and dietary habits.

Many attendees had little prior experience of cooking from scratch, and the programme provided them with the skills and confidence to do so. At the end of each session, participants

received a basic ingredient pack to replicate the meal at home, with the option to share photos of their results via a dedicated online space or at the following session. Food for the sessions was sourced locally.



Additionally, Cadent partnered with the programme, donating a slow cooker and carbon monoxide monitor for each participant, further supporting their ability to prepare meals safely and efficiently at home.

Wider Impact

Beyond the core objectives, the programme also delivered additional benefits, including:

- **Reducing isolation** by fostering social connections among participants.
- **Encouraging peer support**, with attendees building relationships beyond the programme.
- **Improving overall wellbeing**, with increased confidence in meal planning and budgeting.
- **Signposting** participants to further support services, including other Home-Start programmes and relevant external organisations

