

Feeding Fifers Covid 19 social media engagement

Feeding Fifers was developed in April 2020 as a joint initiative between Fife Council, Fife Community Food Team and Fife Health and Social Care Partnership Food and Health Team to engage with communities across Fife throughout the covid-19 crisis. In the midst of challenging times where access to food was limited and many faced greater financial and physical constraints feeding fifers aimed to bring people together through sharing of healthy tips, meal ideas and recipes on social media, via Facebook encouraging people to be creative with items they have available.

As was the case for many covid-19 required the group to embrace a different way of working and engage with communities virtually, initiating a very steep learning curve for the team. The group worked closely with Fife Council communications team who uploaded content to Facebook twice a week across the 7 'Our area' locality pages. The posts were initially submitted to communications team and posted as and when possible. However as the weeks progressed and Feeding Fifers team became more confident and familiar with the process a member of the team took on the role as moderator for the pages, allowing them to schedule when posts would be submitted and to respond to any feedback or engagement from members of the public. The pandemic affected everyone in different ways but once again food and the need for food was the one aspect that connected everyone. Through the posts Feeding Fifers wanted to address the challenges that were being experienced as the lockdown period progressed, the posts were based on meals they had prepared in their kitchens at home focussing on key store cupboard ingredients and recipes when there was limited access to shops, making meals from leftovers in an effort to reduce food waste and lunch ideas for returning to work or school.

Key outcomes:

- Highest number of people reached in South and West Fife (SWF) on two occasions with over 2036 accessing post relating to spinach and 1953 in the same area, accessing Fake away takeaway focus on Chow Mein.
- In many cases posts promoting many uses with one key ingredient obtained greatest engagement (chickpea, cucumbers and mushrooms)
- Fake away options received high volume of interest and possible focus on healthier alternative meal ideas could prove popular
- Three posts which received highest engagement were store cupboard essentials chickpeas, cucumber seasonal veg and Fake away Takeaway Chow Mein
- All areas showed an increase in level of posts shared as months progressed, increasing opportunity for posts to engage with wider audience
- SWF, Glenrothes and Dunfermline pages continue to have highest levels of activity with 55 weekly engagements on average for SWF, 44 for Glenrothes and 15 for Dunfermline

Feeding Fifers posts were shared and supported by other community groups including EATS Rosyth, Fife Council Fife Families Information Services, Homestart, NHS Fife Nutrition and Clinical Dietetic Department and Fife Health and Social care Health Promotion service who shared posts on Facebook and twitter on weekly basis. It also became apparent that as the posts continued regular interest and engagement was obtained on pages by some members of the public. To find a format that appealed to a vast audience the group adapted the way in which information was displayed on

several occasions incorporating images, slideshow videos and step by step video guides but found little impact on level of engagement.



Feeding Fifers also launched a 5 a day Fifers competition in the early stages of lockdown promoting the importance of obtaining five portions of fruit and vegetables and encouraging people to be creative with sharing images of ways in which this could be obtained. 17 entries were received, and five winning entries were awarded food vouchers with varying values.



Although engagement through social media was recognised as a valuable resource during this time period, Feeding Fifers were also aware that it was not accessible for all. To ensure support and information provided was available to as many as possible cook well for less recipe cards supporting similar topics were distributed across Fife via community assistance hubs and this resource promoted across community food leads, local food initiatives and Fife community food champion network.

Planning ahead

The impact of covid-19 pandemic has meant that the need to support communities to make healthy and informed food choices has never been greater. Social media will continue to play an important role in ensuring information is provided to a large audience and Feeding Fifers are keen to embrace this method of engagement through development of their own page. Working in partnership with Fife Council locality pages and communications team has provided the team with a great platform and support in getting established, but there have also been limitations in access to Facebook applications and sharing of information which the team believe would be of value going forward. Discussions are currently in place to look at development of Feeding Fifers page which can be used to promote and support community food work across Fife as well as continuation of meal ideas and health messages.