

## **Executive summary**

This public consultation was conducted by the Royal Society for Public Health on the Let's Get Cooking programme. It aimed to ascertain the level of demand and support for a national cooking club programme. It also sought views of on the design and delivery of the proposed programme.

Quantitative and qualitative research was undertaken with young people, parents, school staff, health professionals and organisations through an on-line survey and discussion forums, focus groups, one to one surveys, telephone interviews and meetings. The process resulted in 762 responses widely dispersed across England consisting of 22% (169) young people aged 8-16 years, 16% (120) parents, 32% (243) school staff and 30% (230) health professionals.

The overwhelming majority of respondents strongly welcomed the proposed programme. There was tremendous demand and support for the Let's Get Cooking programme from young people, parents, school staff and health professionals.

**Young people have a strong desire to learn cookery skills**, discussions with young people highlighted; this is coupled with a burgeoning demand for cooking clubs indicated by oversubscribed but under resourced cooking clubs across England.

*"The kids and parents/carers love them and demand outstrips our resources and capacity to supply!"* (Health Professional)

**Cooking clubs are needed** was stated by 99% of all respondents.

**A lack of cooking skills and knowledge** about food preparation and what constitutes "healthy" on both the part of young people and parents was the most frequently stated barrier to healthy eating by parents and health professionals (24%); many young people highlighted their own inability to cook and identified this as a barrier to healthy eating.

*"We are the second generation of 'non-cooks' with no time to teach their children and no skills learnt from their parents."* (Parent)

**Willingness to get involved** was voiced by 88% of respondents with offers of time and skills to support this programme; 100% of parents would encourage their children to use new cookery skills at home; Health professionals identified nearly 50 different areas of support they could provide including promoting the programme and training club leaders.

**Approval of the programme design** was generally stated; a fun, hands-on approach targeting young people and their parents is endorsed by the majority of young people and parents as an effective approach; 97% of school staff respondents thought the programme would supply the required resources that are needed to run a successful cooking club; healthy schools programmes, the school curriculum and community groups were identified as the main links to the Let's Get Cooking clubs by school staff and health professionals.

**Regulation challenges** including health and safety were felt by school staff and health professionals to be the key area of concern. Sufficient training for adult leads was identified as being required to meet these regulations and provide expertise in nutrition.

**Access to all** was emphasised by parents as an essential part of the programme design; repeated suggestions were made to include how to manage a food budget in the programme.

*"Cooking should be seen as a right for every child who wants it, (and in my experience, most do) and not for a lucky few."* (Teacher)