

Our Right to Food

Affording to eat well in Scotland



Our Right to Food: Vision

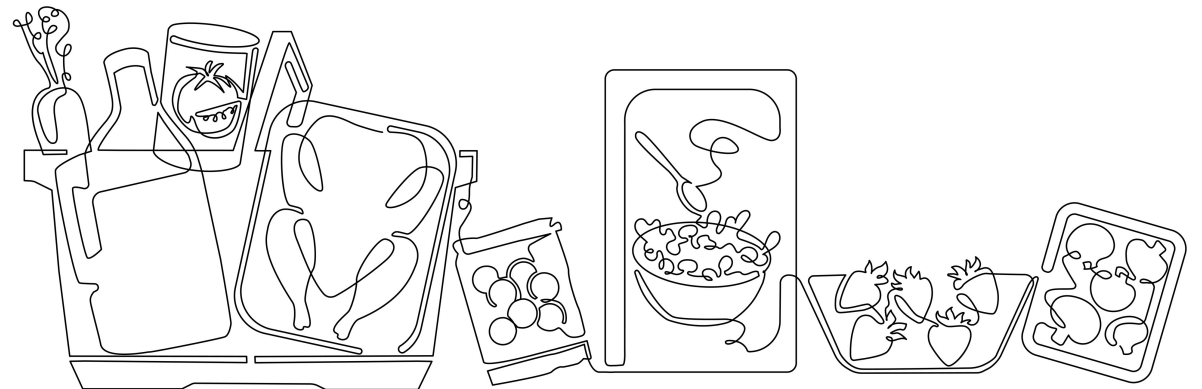
A Scotland where everyone is able to afford food that keeps them healthy and well.



Right to Food

Culturally valued, enjoyable food that meets our needs

What are people's priorities around eating the food that keeps us healthy and well?

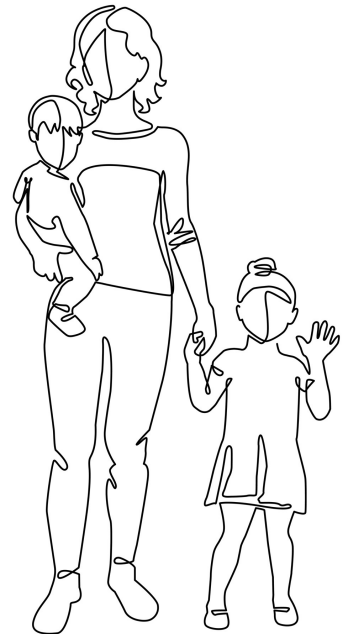
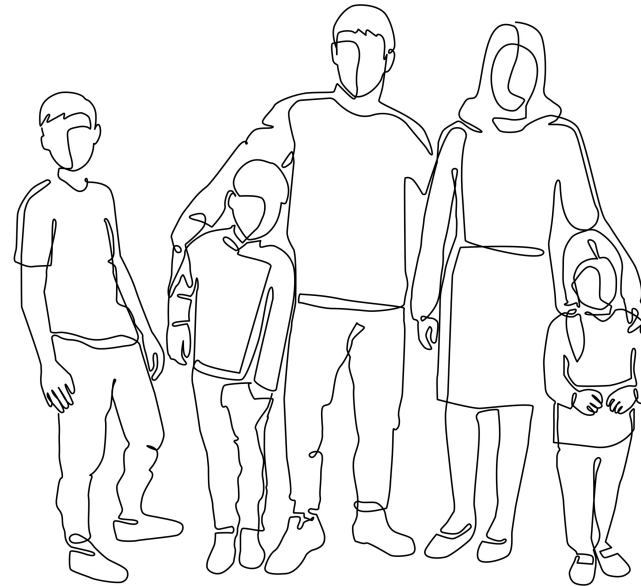


Co-creating shopping lists

Who was involved?

- 4 groups of Community Advisors
- 26 women from across Scotland

People who know what it is like to shop for, prepare and eat food with families in Scotland today.



Explored with Community Advisors

When, where and how does the family eat?



What does the family eat in a typical week?



What healthier options would still be a good fit for this family?



What needs to be included in a weekly shopping list?

Finding a balance



Most people
would enjoy

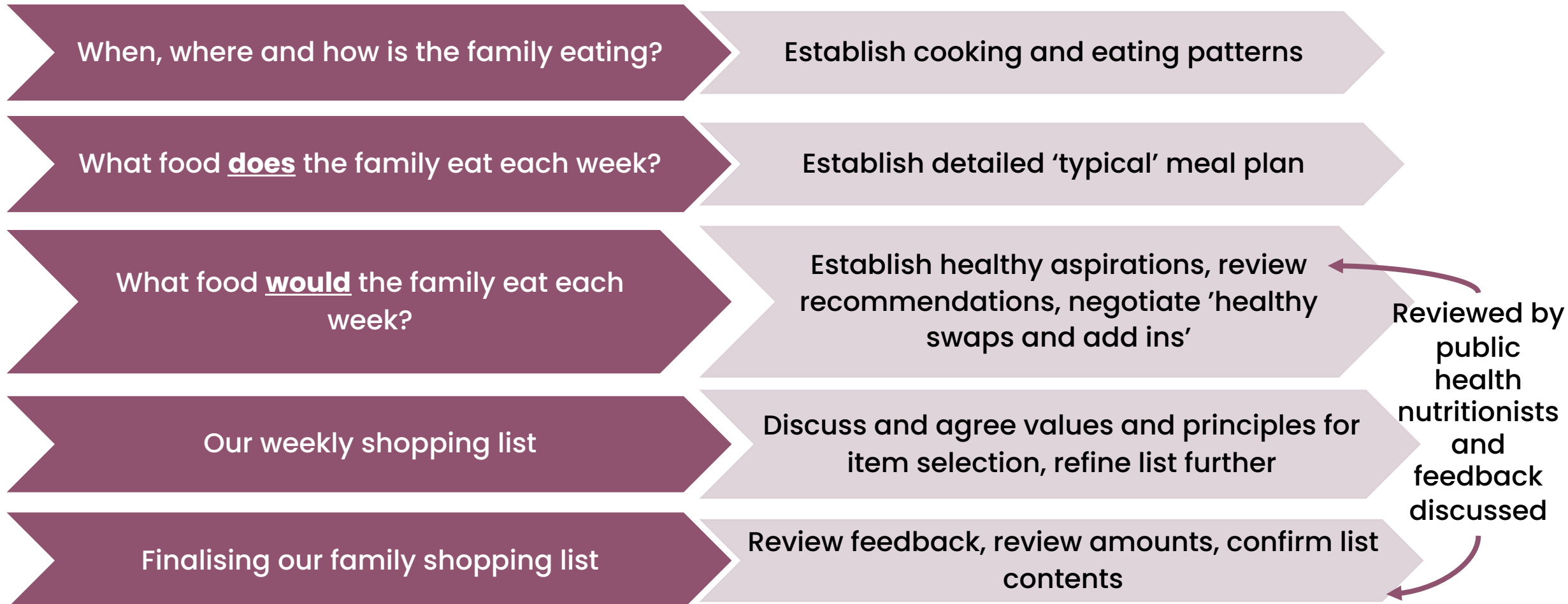
Reasonable
price

Shopping
list

Healthy
'enough'

Good fit for
people's
lives

Co-creating shopping lists



Shopping lists...

Include

The **healthiest balance of foods** that people with experience shopping for, preparing and eating in families agree is a **good fit for people's lives** and would be **enjoyed by most people in today's Scotland**.

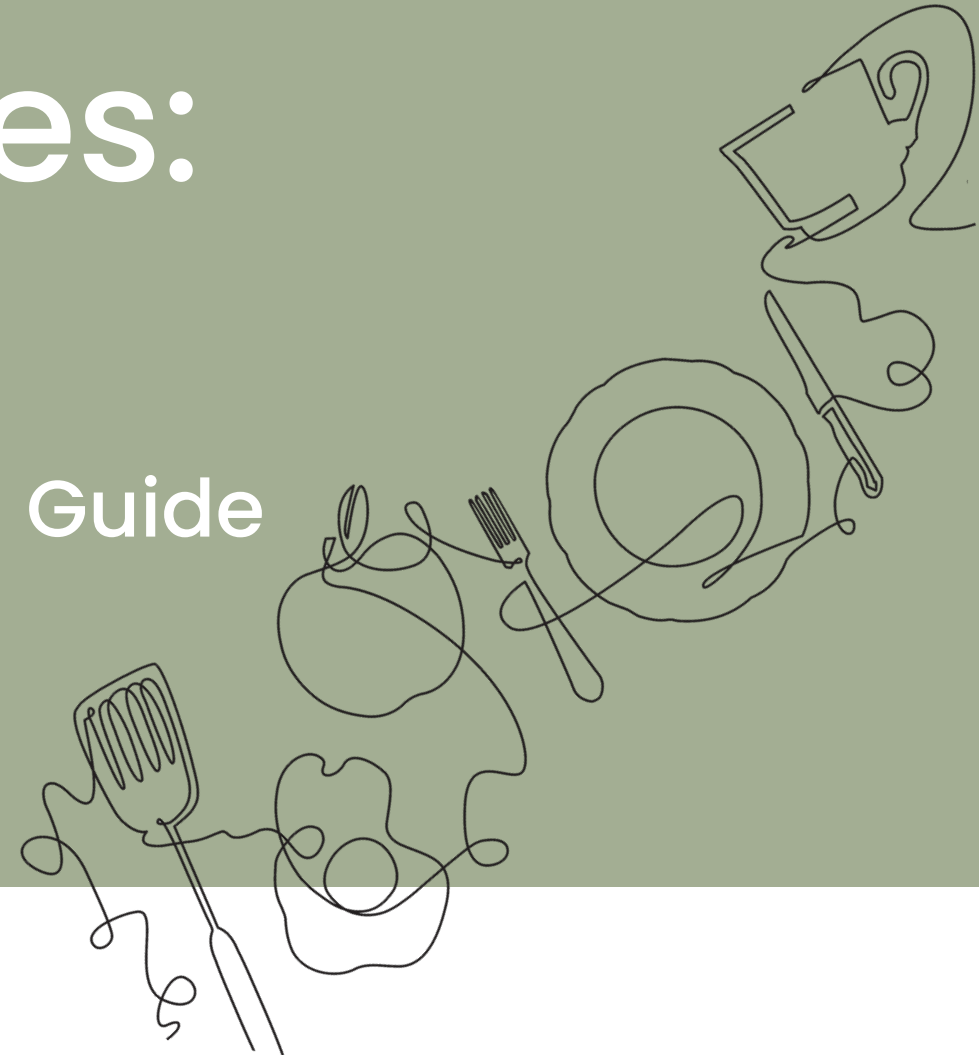
Only 'healthy' foods
Only 'cheap' foods

Instructions about how to save money or change your diet

Do not include

Views and priorities: 'healthy'

Healthy aspirations and the Eatwell Guide

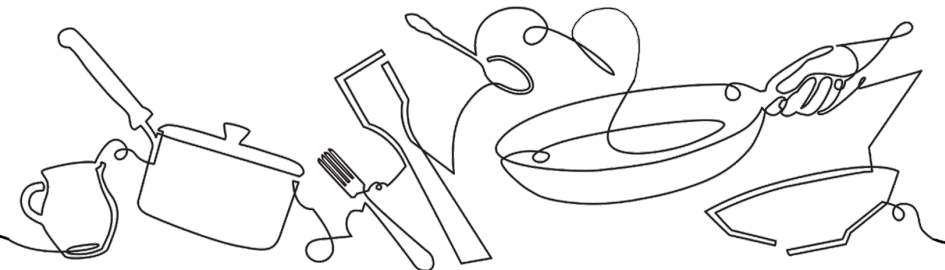


Healthy aspirations

Community advisors thought the families' aspirations around healthy eating would mean having a 'balanced diet'.

They defined this as:

- More fruit and veg
- Less meat
- Less sugar
- Fewer 'snacks' and 'processed foods' (e.g. crisps, biscuits and chocolate)



All about balance

"It's a good mixture between fruit and veg. Some meats. Maybe a meat free [day]. It's not always... doesn't always work, but that's ideally what you'd want. You'd want your plate to look quite healthy when you put it down to children." (Group 3)

What does 'healthy' mean?

Families' priorities and patterns

- **Buying fewer sweets and highly processed snacks**
 - so that they are not a temptation in the house
- **Planning meals in advance**
 - to help with making more meals from scratch
- **Paying attention to portions**

Making meals from scratch was a clear aspiration for some advisors in their own lives, but it is worth noting that when it came to making decisions about any changes to the family's meals, they did not generally opt for more meals made from scratch because they did not see this as reasonable for the case study family's life.

What does 'healthy' mean?

Equating healthy with...

- 'not eating rubbish'
- not being seen to be buying or eating too many processed foods and sweets
- dieting and losing weight

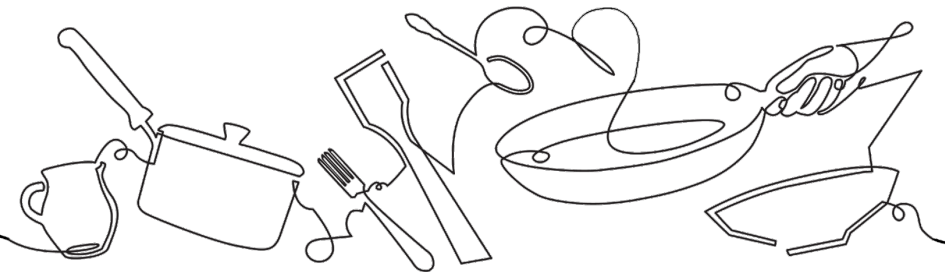
Dieting and 'eating better'

"A lot of the 'eating better' isn't really about eating better or being healthy, it's about maybe losing weight. I know a lot of people that do Slimming World and all that kind of thing... people go, 'I'm on this diet again.' And it's not about having nice food that you enjoy, it's about – you could do with losing a couple of pounds here or there. And I think that's a big pressure for everyone now..." (Group 1)

Reflections on the Eatwell Guide

Community Advisors reviewed the Eatwell Guide in the session about making healthy changes to the 'typical' meal plan

- All were aware of the Eatwell Guide (had seen or heard of it)
- Some felt the idea of 'something to aspire to' was good
- No one thought it was reasonable or achievable



Reflections on the Eatwell Guide

"I don't actually know anyone who looks at this and goes, 'oh yeah, it's great. I reckon I'm pretty much on that'. A lot of the time it's convenience when you've got kids and you will make something quick, and it doesn't take long to put a piece of salmon in the oven and have a salad and some potatoes. But I also think – same amount of time to put some pasta in a pan, go and do half the ironing, come back, take the pasta out of the pan, you know?" (Group 2)

Reflections on the Eatwell Guide

“It actually makes me feel quite guilty because we are nowhere near that one, unfortunately, but it's nice to see it as a guide to see that that's what we really should be working towards. But I think it's difficult to look at that and think we are not really doing that. **So there's the mum guilt.**” (Group 2)

Healthy Swaps and Add ins

Moving from 'typical' to 'healthiest' version



Healthy Swaps and Add ins

Overall themes

- Easiest to **add in** fruit as snacks and veg to homemade recipes
- Easier to make changes in the morning than the afternoon (when people are tired)
- Difficult to **swap** to lower fat, lower sugar and higher fibre options
 - Exception: swap to low or no sugar drinks easy for most groups
- School and nursery meals play an important role in fruit and veg portions (but only if appealing enough for children to take them)

Healthy Swaps and Add ins

Fruit

- **Breakfast** – easy to add on cereal, as an addition, as one serving of fruit juice
- **Mid-morning and lunch** – fairly easy to add or swap for existing snack
- Afternoon snack and supper – not usually suggested, as people are more tired
- Dinner – very rare, but sometimes as replacement for dessert

Fruit as a snack

“For me, I think fruit would be really easy for her to get more of. She could bring a banana for breakfast, an apple for a snack, like apple, cheese and crackers instead of a biscuit. You know, none of that takes any more time.”

“And barely much more resolve, let's be honest, compared to eating vegetables.” (Group 2)

Healthy Swaps and Add ins

Vegetables

- Breakfast – rarely, as portion of baked beans
- Mid-morning and afternoon snack – fairly easy to add or swap carrot and cucumber sticks, or cherry tomatoes, for existing
- Lunch– alongside as above, rather than the meal itself
- **Dinner** – easy to add more veg to existing recipes when making from scratch; batch cooking to get more use from the time and effort spent cooking; side salad (adults only)
- Supper – no suggestions

Healthy Swaps and Add ins

Fibre



Cereal

Too difficult to switch to wholegrain cereal completely

Likely to have mixed bowls – groups agreed that one can be higher in fibre (but trade off because might add sugar)

Shreddies or similar acceptable for supper



Bread, rice and pasta

50/50 bread selected as compromise

No groups believed wholewheat pasta or rice would be acceptable for a family with children

Healthy Swaps and Add ins

Dairy

- Cheese
 - Swap to low-fat seen as undesirable or too difficult by all groups
- Milk
 - General preference for semi-skimmed milk already included in the typical meal plans in most cases

Healthy Swaps and Add ins

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs and meat

- Already included in 'typical' plan
 - Lentils or chickpeas in soup or curry recipes
 - 'Meat free nights': Rice and Bean Fajitas / Chickpea Curry
- Added in
 - One group repurposed half of a Spaghetti Bolognese meal to Chilli Con Carne by adding beans the following night
 - Adding baked beans was considered an acceptable way to increase the fibre and energy intake for the single mum character who was too low in both families

Healthy Swaps and Add ins

Beans, pulses, fish, eggs and meat

- Fish
 - Tuna or fish fingers considered most acceptable
 - One group included salmon, rice and veg for the single mum on a night when her children ate another meal
- Red meat
 - Very difficult to remove red and processed meat for groups that had added this already
 - Exceptions: swapping eggs for bacon in a breakfast roll or swapping chicken for Peperami in pasta – more acceptable as it did not change the eating pattern

Healthy Swaps and Add ins

Oils and spreads

- Spreads
 - Two of the four groups selected a low-fat spread

One of the groups that chose a full fat butter spread decided that although it was not reasonable to swap for a lower-fat version, they would likely use less (and enjoy it more) because of the richer taste.

Challenges and Opportunities

Arriving at the healthiest version



Healthy swaps and add ins

What makes a difference?

- Time of day, week and year
- Practical effort involved
- Emotional effort involved
- Social acceptability
- Cost

Healthy swaps and add ins

Time of day

- Easier in the morning or lunch – more resolve, being at school or work limits options for impulse decisions
- Difficult to make changes in the evening after a long day

Healthy swaps and add ins

Practical effort involved

- Swapping like for like, e.g.
 - pre-packaged items can only be swapped for other pre-packaged items – the intention is to have something easy and ready to go
 - crisps swapped for nuts – both 'grazing' snack in the evening
 - 'Easy dinner' for 'easy dinner'
- Out of the house – convenience is key
 - Lack of healthy, convenient items during the day makes a significant difference

Healthy swaps and add ins

Emotional effort involved

- 'Constant' negotiation
- Choosing your battles with children
- Avoiding arguments, especially when everyone is tired

Healthy swaps and add ins

Social acceptability

- Peer pressure for teenagers
 - Wanting to spend time with friends, which can include going out of school for meal deals
- Not wanting to bring something unusual as packed lunch to work (e.g. tuna sandwich instead of ham)

Healthy swaps and add ins

Cost

Aimed to set cost aside for the purposes of this stage of developing the contents of the list, but it was still a factor.

Examples:

- Baked crisps and crackers more expensive or less available than others
- Hummus, pre-sliced carrots and cucumbers are convenient but not affordable

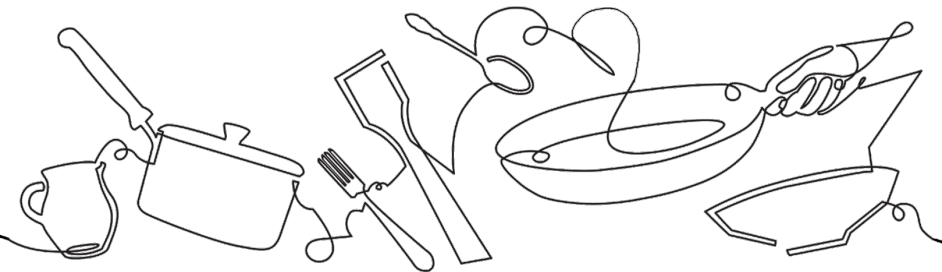
Group reflections

Arriving at the healthiest version



Summary

Each of the groups agreed with the starting point of the project – that many people ***want*** to eat more healthily but feel they cannot afford it – and choices about reasonable swaps were made with this in mind.



"I would just like everybody to be able to afford to eat healthier if they want to, do you know what I mean? And that's my aim in all of this because I find fruit and veg so much more expensive than if I buy chocolate. And I think it's absolutely terrible, you know what I mean? [Son's name] went to the shop the other day and bought a pack of apples and he come back with £3 for six apples, do you know what I mean? That's like—"

"It's ridiculous."

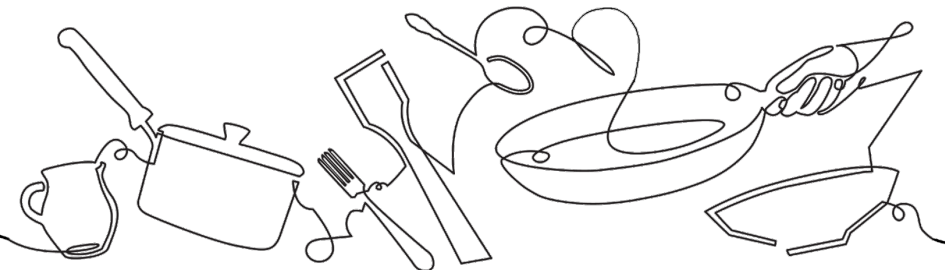
"And I'd just like, with everybody, have the opportunity to eat healthy and not at a great expense." (Group 1)

Summary

Community Advisors were comfortable enough with each other by this point in the project that they were able to challenge and be honest with each other about what they thought was reasonable.

We did not want groups to make changes based on what they thought the project team 'wanted to hear'.

Although all groups made changes towards a healthier meal plan than they had suggested for a 'typical week', it is worth mentioning that some members felt strongly that dietary recommendations were unhelpful and out of touch with people's lived experiences.



... keeping everything in balance

"I don't think we should change anything for Nora [lone parent, two young children] because I think what we've actually created is reality based on all of us saying, 'Well, at night I would sit down and go, "Do you know what? I'm taking that tub of ice cream out of the freezer."' And I think it's just reality. I don't think we should be saying, 'Well, how could we get Nora to incorporate more veggies?' when in reality we're probably just going to sit down and eat a bar of chocolate and have more coffee or a glass of wine..."
(Group 2)