

# ‘A day in the life of the young person’ *the whole school food environment*

Understanding the challenges and facilitators to school food provision  
and the young person’s food choice





The current **dietary patterns of teenagers** in the UK are of grave concern



**Whole school approach** – Food education, HFSS rewards and across the day food provision



**Young people's priorities** – Social time, autonomy, choice, cost



**Low food familiarity** – adult perceptions of this



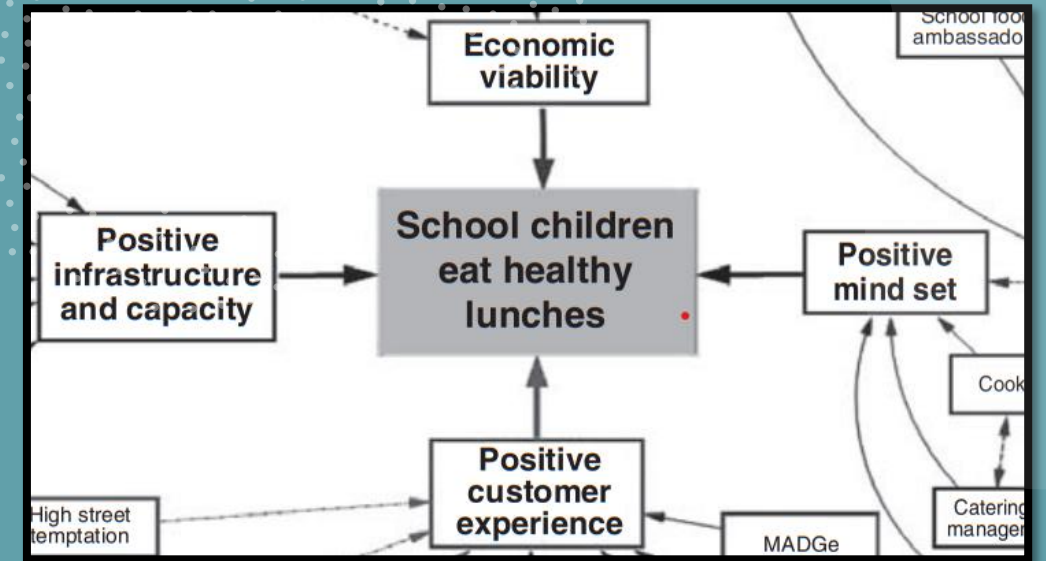
**Habits of young people** – skipping lunch and fringe feeding

# The school food environment - Young people's priorities



- Around 30% children's energy intake from school lunch
- Secondary pupils - social norms/habits
- Skipping lunch - social time
- Grab and go preference – 'in a pot'
- Energy dense morning/breaktime snack
- 'Fringe feeding' after school
- YP - Social time, autonomy, choice. Cost/perceived value for money, having healthy options

# Ignore the four elements of school food influence at your peril....



- **Positive customer experience** – engaging with CYP
- **Positive mindset** – Parents, Governors, pupils and teachers understand healthy eating desirable
- **Positive infrastructure and capacity** – procurement, catering training etc.
- **Economic viability** – catering services



# A Day in the Life of a Secondary School Pupil in Relation to School Food

- **Collaborative Study**– year 9 pupils, catering and school staff, Catering and school leadership, DCC school food and public health staff, VCS, and academic colleagues
- **Aim:** to explore how we, as a group, can improve school meal uptake and individual dietary intake during the secondary school day to support pupil's health, wellbeing, attendance, and educational attainment.

Breakfast

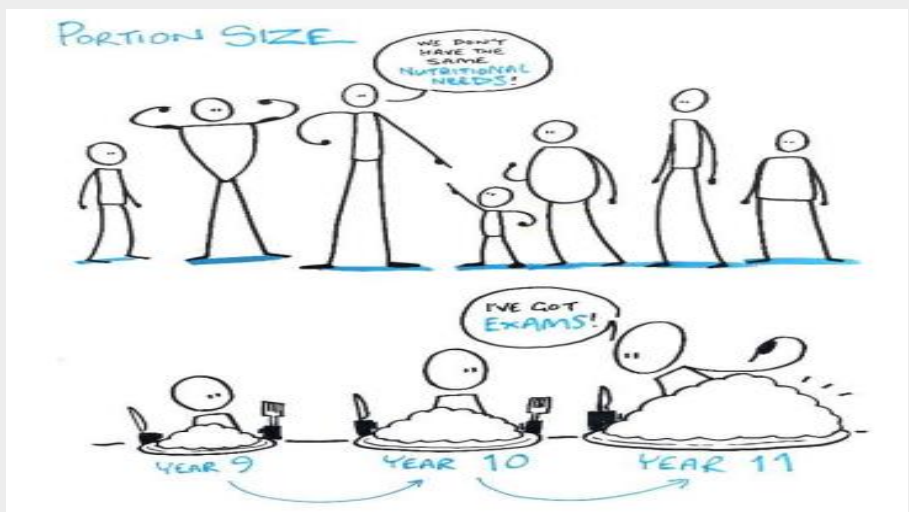


# The Young person's school food experience in pictures

Packed lunch



Break time

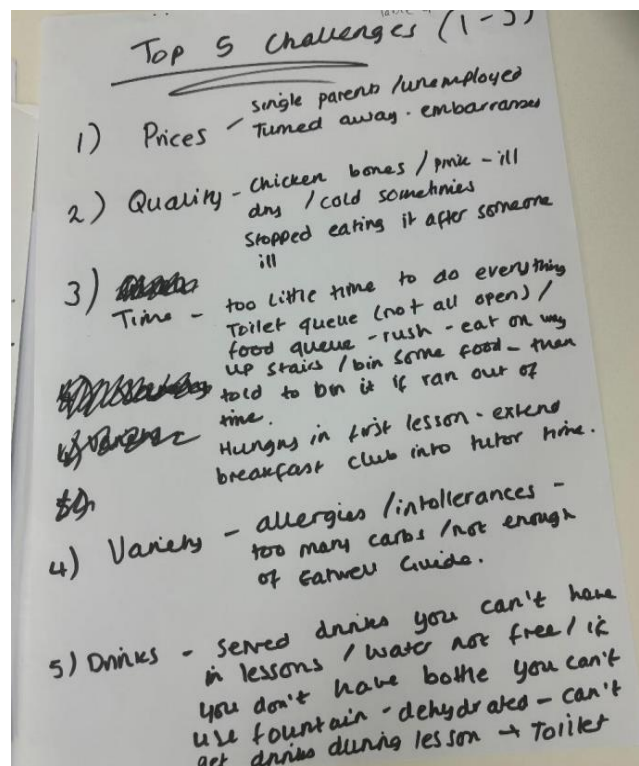


Lunch



# Developing young people to be part of the solution

- YP mapping out of school day and 5 chosen challenges
- In tables YP chose top issues and created a design brief
- The input and discussions supported the YP understanding of challenges to identify solutions
- Challenges: Time, Cost, Portion size etc.



**Design Brief**

**GOAL**  
What would you like to achieve? What are the needs you are trying to address?

Improve variety of the food and the portion size. (Cultures prices) Quality, nutrition.

**WHO**  
Who are you designing for? Who needs things to be different or better?

for year 9 to try different types of foods., tastier  
easy for the teachers to teach us.

**REASON**  
Why is this change important? Why will meeting this goal make a difference to the person you are designing for?

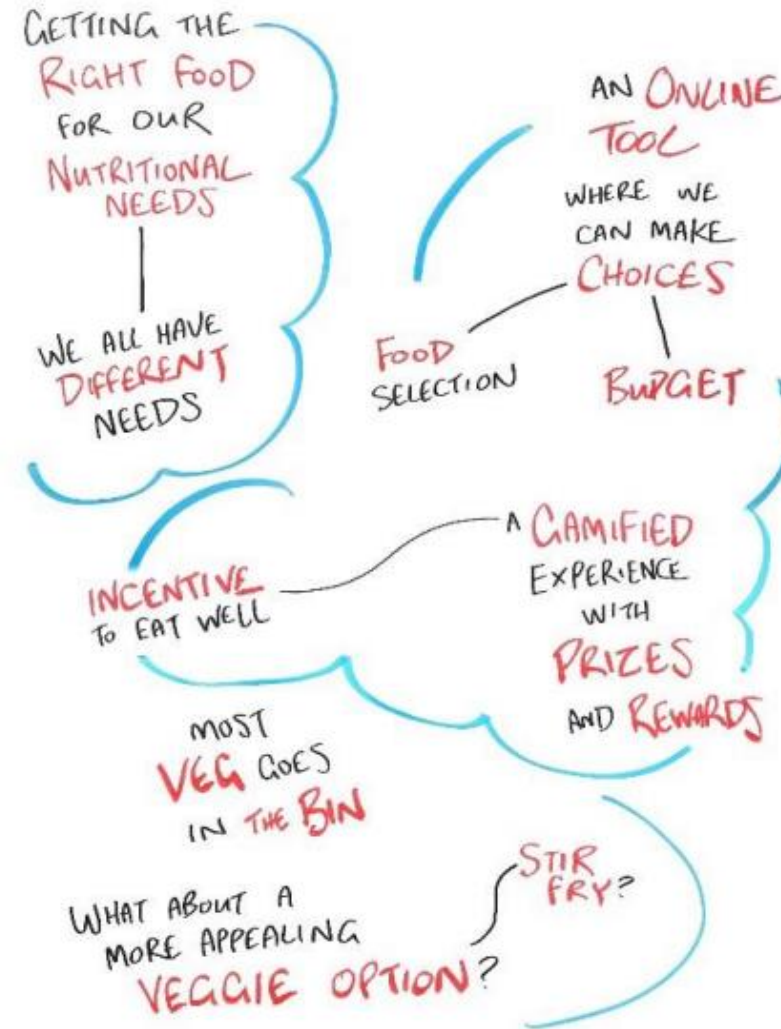
gives you more energy.  
Less tired  
more engaged.

**CHALLENGE**  
What currently makes this difficult to achieve? Will this change make things more difficult for someone else?

not enough staff  
food standards.  
Too many students not enough staff.  
more work for the dinner staff.

# Ideas presented by young people

- Incentivising healthier options
- Supporting specific food requirements
- Reduce waste
- Cost bulk buying of produce
- **Preordering** – different ways to order and access food throughout school day
- **Finally all participants made at least one pledge** - to turn these insights into an actionable point



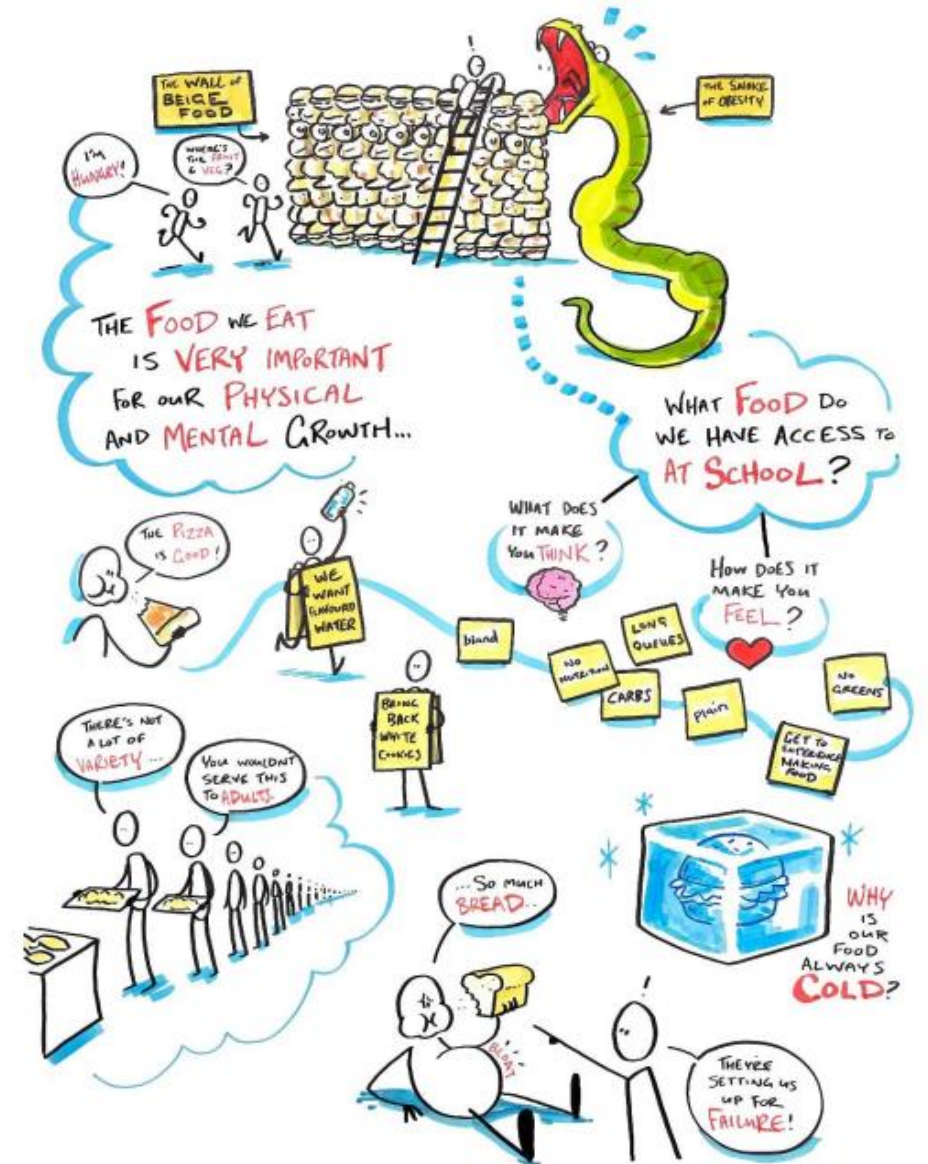


# Study Takeaways

This creative **method is feasible** - easy and inexpensive to deliver in/by schools — local and in school context

Young people showed ‘nourish’ is important to them

This framework enables systems thinking (shared understanding and vision) to allow **meaningful collaborative change** to happen





The school is  
an ideal  
setting to  
promote  
healthy  
behaviours in  
young people

**More emphasis at all levels on the importance of the 'whole school food experience'**

- **Social dining space**
- **Catering staff training** – a valuable role!
- **Coherent Food education** – producing healthier, affordable food options in the classroom – working with the catering staff
- **Whole school aims** - YP becoming healthy and sustainable 'GOOD' Food Citizens
- **Important to creatively inform and engage Children and young people on the importance of 'nourish' vs weight focus/'just eat something'**