

# Bristol Ageing Better Learning Event:

## Food and Loneliness

Welcome

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*Pat Gregory, BAB Volunteer*



- Background
- Main Aims
- Current Overview



Presentation by

**Sophie  
Laggan**

**Research  
Associate**

# Learnings from two BAB food projects

17/09/2019













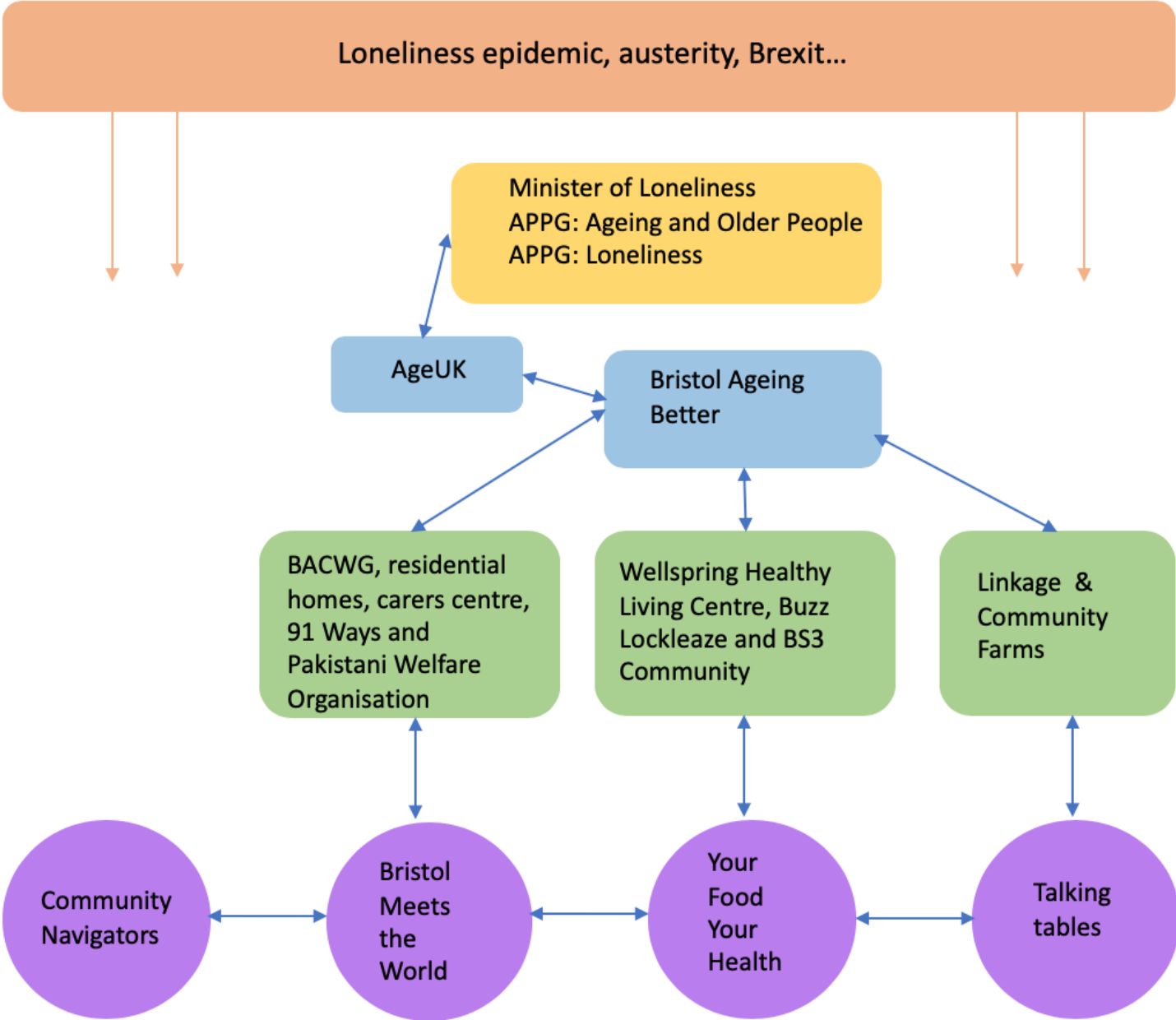




TT St Werburgh's

BMW Colliers Garden

TT Lawrence Weston







8 observations, 12  
formal interviews, 20  
informal

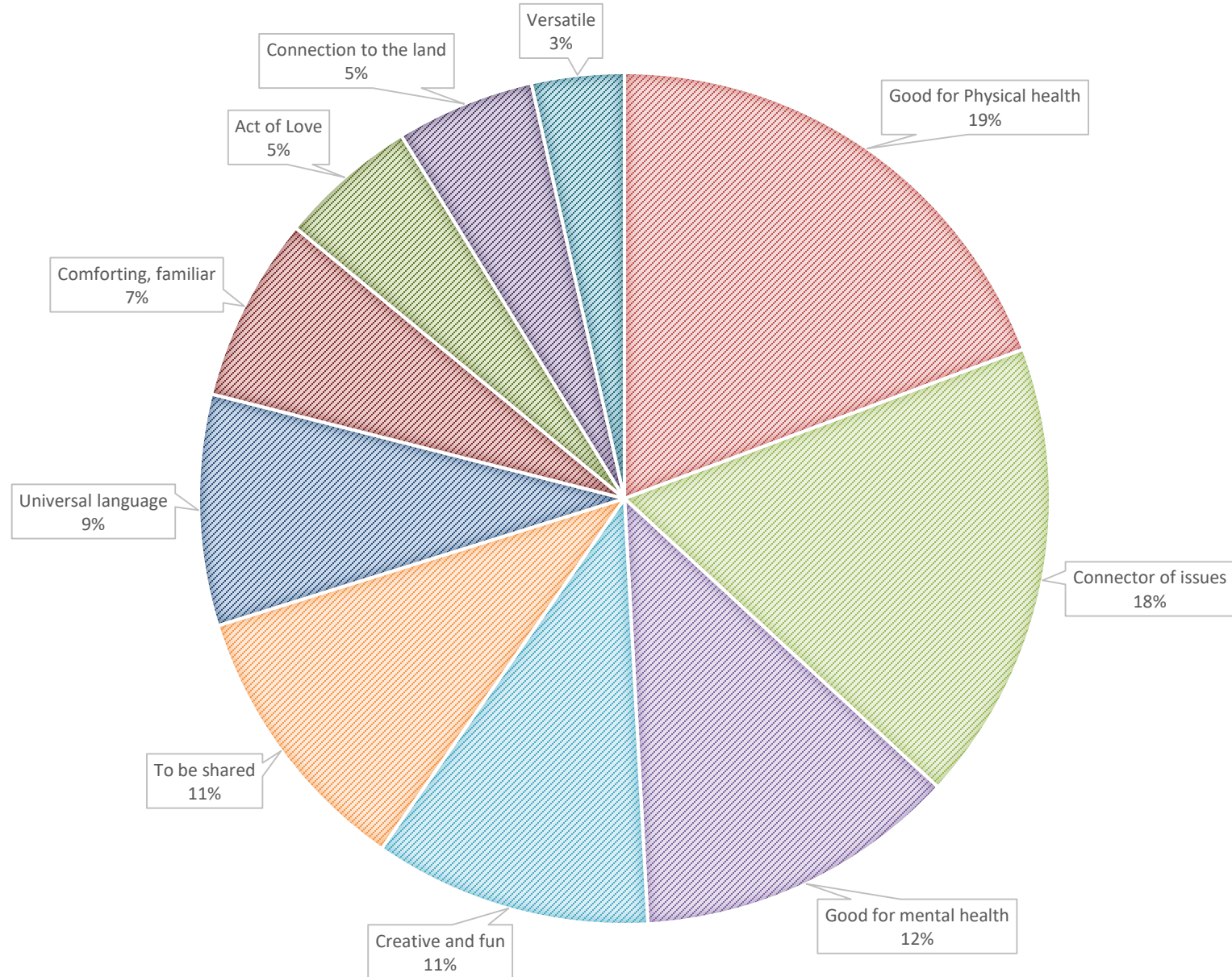


Secondary data sources  
(e.g. websites)



Questionnaires

## ROLE OF FOOD (N = 20)





# Demographics of participants

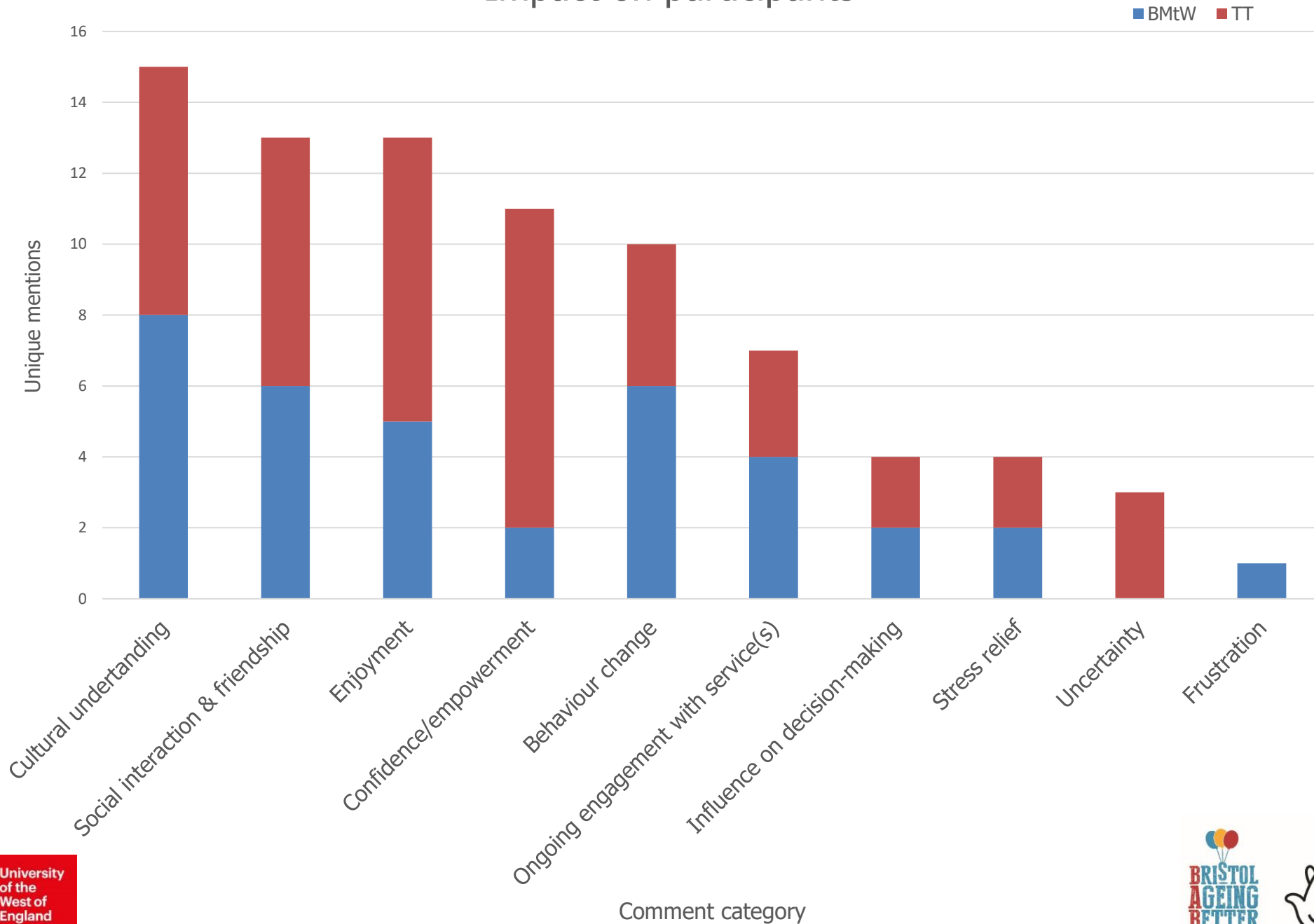
		Bristol Meets the World	Talking Tables	BAB
Average Age		72	67	69
Age Range		41-79	51-93	42-101
Female:Male (no response) %		77:23	76:21 (1)	69:28 (3)
Ethnic/ racial background	White	61	100	72
	Black/Black British	-	-	11
	Asian/Asian British	35	-	10
	Mixed ethnic	1	-	1
	Any other	-	-	1
	Prefer not to say/no response	3	-	5

# Health, wellbeing and loneliness of participants

		Bristol Meets the World	Talking Tables	BAB	Older UK population
Health	"Poor" (0)- "good" (100)	61	64.8	61.7	60-80
Wellbeing	"Low" (7) – "high" (35)	23	20.9	22	25.8
Average level of loneliness	"Most" (6) – "least" (0)	2.48	4.13	3.41	1.6



# Impact on participants



# Enjoyment

*We've had participants say that they wake up and they remember it's Talking Tables day and it's a great day basically and that **they look forward to it** and that's really nice (Linkage 3)*

*I know one [participant who]...basically said **it's kind of changed her life.** (Linkage 1)*

*We've had emails from participants saying how these mornings are their **social highlight of the week.** (91 Ways)*



# Confidence and empowerment

***Food was foreign to me** [before this course].* (TT Participant 2)

*It was lovely to see [them] actually **taking charge** of that session.* (BMtW  
Colliers Garden Manager)

*They are empowered and inspired...they think 'oh, shall I... oh, I can't do this myself' but if they come here **they'll have a go**.* (91 Ways)

# Contributions to the community

*I must say that the star in all of this has been our volunteer... I've been able to work really directly with him. We plan a lot of the sessions together and we've researched recipes ... **I couldn't have done it without him** and he started at the farm as a participant maybe a year or so ago and he's just blossomed really. (TT Cooking Leader)*

*Now I'm a volunteer, helping to **co-run** [Your Food Your Health]. (TT Participant)*



# Impact on staff

*...it's actually been really nice not to be a monetary based project so actually just going out there and trying to find people to do a course with nothing in return and just to enjoy it. (TT Project Coordinator)*

*More confident maybe in speaking. Not so shy and gets me out of the house as well. (BMtW Cooking Tutor)*

# Organisational change

*This is **our first food project that** we've done [and now we plan to continue it in-house]. (Colliers Garden)*

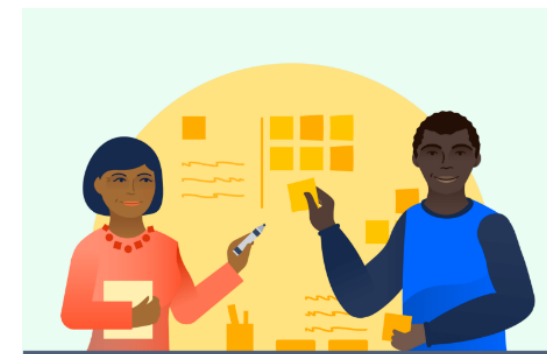
Farms beginning to be seen as places for different generations...*sometimes we struggle with people just thinking the farm is about kids and animals and actually there's so many more things that could be learnt here.* (TT Cooking Facilitator)

*[It was] **the first time that ...we as an organisation have ever held an activity specifically for people who identify as LGBT plus ...it was kind of a nervous moment ...we got advice from BABS ...and actually now from that we've decided to set up an **Equalities Working Group.***** (Linkage)

*More people....*

- 1. having the amount and type of social contact that they want to reduce isolation and loneliness*
- 2. able to influence decisions that affect their local area and how services are designed and delivered*
- 3. able to contribute to their community through such mechanisms as volunteering, belonging to a forum, steering group or other activity.*





What positive  
influencers say...



What positive  
influencers do...

*providing a really safe and friendly and  
warm environment for people to make  
those connections*

BMtW Cooking Tutor



*A real benefit of this session was the translator, who was able to facilitate conversation between the ...group.*

*...Translators [are not] available in other activities at the Home [so] this is their only chance in the month to socialise in the company of others... They rarely frequent other activities at the Home due to the language barriers, and avoid meals at the Home's restaurant – many are former chefs and they cook in their flats.*

# Recipe for success



## Ingredients

- Community setting
- Positive influencers
- Role models (tutors, cooks...)
- Different cultures
- Other health-promoting activities (optional)

## Instructions

1. Combine ingredients
2. Work in partnership
3. Spend time building local connections
4. Eat together regularly
5. Continually learn and adapt as you go
6. Bake for a long time

## Result

Opportunities to grow

New friends and connections...

Don't forget to celebrate achievements!



Left to right: Talking Tables Feast ©Linkage; BMtW Let's Eat Green event ©BMtW





# Talking Tables

Cooking and eating together to form  
connections and reduce loneliness

HARRIET WYLIE, ST WERBURGH'S CITY FARM  
&  
ROIS SOARES, WINDMILL HILL CITY FARM

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# Your Food Your Health

The role of food in developing relationships between older people living in sheltered accommodation

LOUISE SPENCER, COMMUNITY PROJECTS MANAGER

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# Developing relationships between older people living in sheltered accommodation

- Your Food Your Health has used food to break down barriers between residents.
- Food isn't just about cooking; we use food as the hook to encourage people to come together in a social setting.
- We work within community rooms where possible, so that participants can attend in a space they know.
- Relationships can be difficult between sheltered accommodation residents.
- We work within an asset-based approach; working with participants to co-design groups and events.



# Using food to create links with the surrounding community

- Encouraging community groups to meet residents.
- Signposting to other local food and health-based groups and events.
- Many residents prefer someone to accompany them to a group or event for the first time.
- Developing peer-led volunteering, supporting residents to join community cookery groups.

# Bristol Meets the World: Food as a Tool to Reduce Loneliness

ANNE SU, PROJECT COORDINATOR

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# Overview: Bristol Meets The World



Bristol Meets the World is a project led by Bristol and Avon Chinese Women's Group alongside its partners: 91 Ways to Build a Global City, Brunelcare, Anchor Hanover, the Care Forum and the Pakistani Welfare Organisation.

From its findings BMTW has come to the conclusion that food can be used as an effective tool to help break down cultural barriers and help form connections (both verbal and non verbal) between older people from different backgrounds.



the care forum





# Presentation Outline

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1. Food as a Communication Tool
2. Food as a Non-Verbal Means of Communication
3. Food as a Tool to Share Cultural Identity



1 Nov – Mexican session  
at Anchor Hanover



3 Sept 2019 – Indian  
cuisine at Pakistani  
session



# *Communication*

‘The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium’



# 1. Food as a Communication Tool

- Food is a natural and simple form of communication.

“ It has been amazing to see how the sessions have brought people out of their shells; being able to talk to one another and engaging with the volunteer tutors. They have been able to share their own stories and learn about the cultures of other countries using the food that is being prepared as a bridge for that engagement ”

- Anita, BMTW volunteer marketing communication facilitator



Anita at 27 Nov Mexican session at Brunelcare



indonesian potato scotch ceremony  
egg cake beetroot beans  
chinese fry spanish  
vegetarian soup polish  
eritrean mexican curry sour tea shortbread  
bubble colombian poriyal  
japanese sweet coconut spicy kale spring onde  
pork mochi thai pea singapore tex-mex  
stir red chive sushi lentil  
italian nachos scottish  
chicken tiramisu barfi rice  
roll indian





# 1. Food as a Communication Tool

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- Food is a topic that everyone can relate to.
- Food as a universal necessity serves as a way to get everyone communicating regardless of a person's background or experiences.
- It also works well for those who are more reserved or less confident in making conversation – food can be used as a talking point upon which they can later build up a rapport with others



# 1. Food as a Communication Tool

29<sup>th</sup> January Chinese Dumpling session at Brunelcare Colliers Garden

As commented by Brian (an English tenant at Colliers Gardens): 'The session was mixed with our laughter and conversation. Chinese tenants taught me how to make my first Chinese dumpling... By the end of the session, we enjoyed not only eating the food but also the discussion that came from it'.



# 1. Food as a Communication Tool

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- Food is a tool to share personal experiences beyond the food itself – example: whether you have been to that country before etc.
- Using food as a tool of communication changes the meaning of food from being just the routine 'have to do/eat' to an engaging activity which has brought to life a special skill or a form of memory.



# 1. Food as a Communication Tool

So far the project has:

- Engaged with 400 participants
- Delivered 56 sessions
- Organised 10 special events
- Reached 14 different locations across Bristol

Participants often mention that the dishes remind them of memories about their past family gatherings/childhood/travel experience etc.

Some participants feel the value of the programme goes beyond the food itself...





# Case Study: Jean



- Participant from Anchor Hanover who regularly attends sessions
- Has lost her sense of taste and smell but still enjoys going to the sessions as she believes that the sessions are more than just food but also about communicating and connecting with others
- Has been empowered by the project as it has given her the confidence and opportunity to try new activities that she did not believe she would have the chance to do in her circumstances



Jean at 1 Aug Chinese Chive Pocket session at Anchor Hanover



## 2. Food as a Non-Verbal Means of Communication

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- Findings: Food is a non-verbal means of communicating, which plays an important role in shortening the gap between people of diverse backgrounds
- Initial survey: Data found that what the participants wanted to get most out of the sessions was to learn a simple and nutritious recipe taught by tutors which they could replicate
- Using basic 'universal' foods that everybody is familiar with



## 2. Food as a Non-Verbal Means of Communication

- BMTW runs mixed groups where sometimes the participants do not all speak English or have another language in common with each other.
- However, through food, they can still communicate with each other, for example, through body language, drawing, signs etc.



30 Apr Italian Tiramisu session at Colliers Gardens



## 2. Food as a Non-Verbal Means of Communication

- Mixed groups have also encouraged participants to practice their English through practicing with others at their own pace or searching up recipes and ingredients after the sessions
- Potential to apply this model when working with other communities (e.g. people who are deaf, refugees, people with disabilities) and in other settings



6 June Pakistani Well-being Taster Day





# 3. Food as a Tool to Share Cultural Identity

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- BMTW uses a model where participants are encouraged to become volunteer tutors – increases engagement, involvement and confidence
- Food and culture is closely linked:

*“Food is one of the best ways to understand cultures, habits, rituals and traditions”*



Chinese Tea Ceremony at the BMTW  
'Let's Eat Green' event on 6 March  
2019



# 3. Food as a Tool to Share Cultural Identity

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Our tutors:

- Come from many different countries: China, India, Indonesia, Colombia, Pakistan, Poland, Hungary, Sudan etc.
- Come from many different backgrounds: Retired chef, housewife, student, elders etc.
- Through sharing their food with others, they explain who they are, where they are from, why they chose to cook this food and their memories they have of it



# Case Study: Heriaty

- A regular participant before becoming a volunteer tutor
- Was encouraged to take food hygiene training course
- Through teaching recipes has been able to share stories of her culture and her travels (Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, USA)
- Sense of achievement and happiness shared with friends and families



Heriaty leading a session in Feb 2018 at Lawrence Weston Community Farm where she cooked coconut rice



# Questions

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If you would like to know more about the project, please contact us:

- By email: [admin2.bacwg@btconnect.com](mailto:admin2.bacwg@btconnect.com)
- Check out our facebook page: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/BristolMTW/>





# Thank you for coming!

Close

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*Pat Gregory, BAB Volunteer*



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