

Inspiring a Food Revolution for People and Planet: pioneering a Planetary Health Meal Plan for students in Dundee and Edinburgh

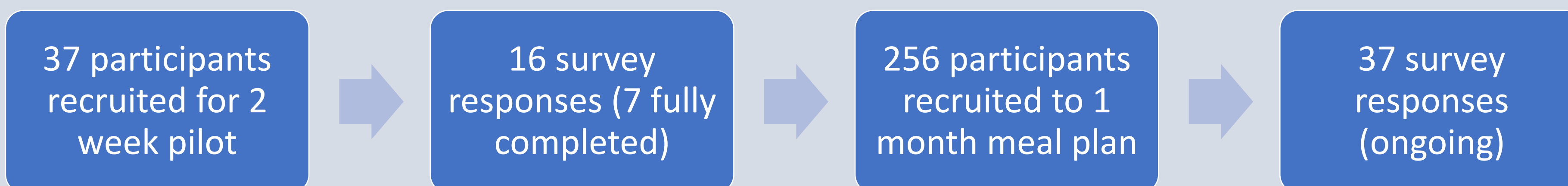
Our systems of food consumption and production are harmful to the health of our planet and people; in the UK alone food systems account for 20% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission. Whilst there is enthusiasm amongst students for healthy, “planet responsible” eating, dietary support and information is limited. ‘Inspiring a Food Revolution for People and Planet’ is a university campaign based on the 2018 EAT-Lancet commission report on implementing a Planetary Health Meal Plan. The EAT-Lancet Commission reported that food is the single strongest lever to “optimize human health and environmental sustainability on Earth”

Nutrition Revolution developed, trialled and rolled-out a seasonal and locally embedded Planetary Health Meal Plan for students in Dundee and Edinburgh in September 2021. In total, 256 people signed up to the September Planetary Health Meal Plan.

We had two primary objectives:

1. To develop and implement a Planetary Health Meal Plan for students in Dundee and Edinburgh
2. To co-develop a series of informative resources to facilitate dietary behaviour change for students

METHODS AND TIMELINE



Stakeholders including local businesses, third sector representatives, students, teachers, nutritionists, and academics were brought together in a focus group to discuss opportunities and challenges in developing a Planetary Health Meal Plan.

An initial 2-week meal plan, aligning with EAT-Lancet guidelines was developed, including shopping lists; dietary alternatives, and carbon footprint data. A follow up survey was rolled out to participants to inform the design of the month-long meal plan

Our [website](#), Twitter and Instagram were launched to showcase the meal plan, provide information on different dimensions of food security, and to recruit university participants.

Using feedback from surveys, focus groups and knowledge exchange events, the pilot meal plan was refined and adapted into a 1-month plan which was launched across participating Scottish universities in September 2021. An adapted follow-up survey was rolled out to all participants.

KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION AND EXCHANGE

Knowledge co-production and exchange was critical to the development, dissemination and improvement of the Planetary Health Meal Plan.

Our knowledge exchange workshops informed the core principles underpinning the meal plan and its campaign. Conversations with practitioners indicated the following were critical to consider:

- The need for a food system where both healthy ingredients are affordable and where the costs of production are understood by consumers
- Importance of reducing food waste through fostering consumer connections to systems of food production and consumption e.g., through videos, written blogs

Building on survey feedback, to increase reach, accessibility, ease and affordability the following changes were integrated:

Integrate alternatives

- Vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free alternatives added to recipes

Limit food waste and reduce costs

- Shopping lists and meal planning coordinated to limit waste and costs

Integrate healthy, tasty and diverse recipes

- Recruitment of chef, nutritionist, carbon accountant and designer to compile recipes

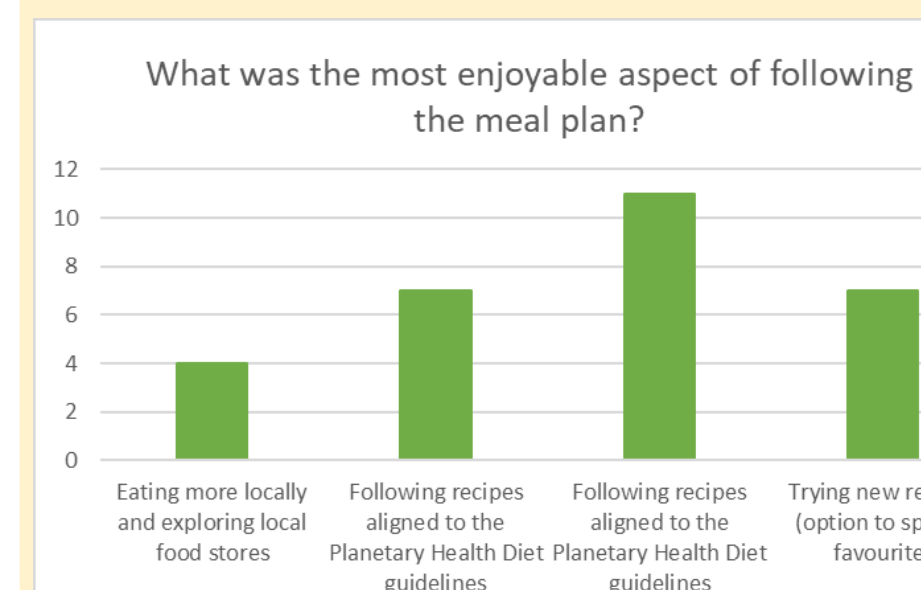
Promote Planetary Health Meal Plan

- Recruitment of social media manager for promotion and event engagement

SURVEY RESULTS

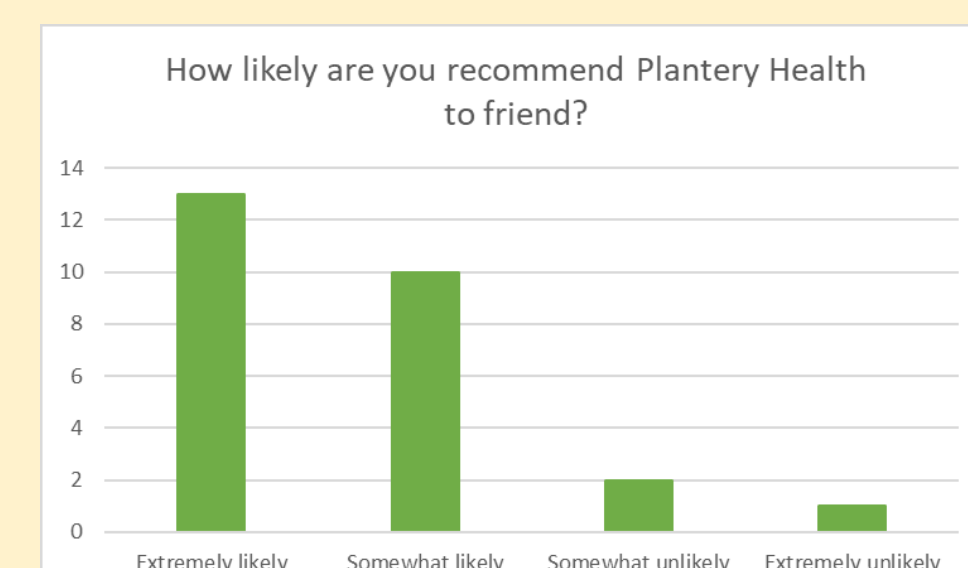
256 participants signed up to the September Planetary Health Meal Plan. Follow up survey results indicate:

Following on from the September Planetary Health Meal Plan, participants indicated they are planning to try new recipes and shop locally



Following recipes aligned to the Planetary Health Diet guidelines was the most enjoyable aspect of the meal plan for many participants

Results indicate most participants were likely to recommend the meal plan to friends and family



NEXT STEPS

Based on feedback from participants in surveys, and conversations with university catering facilities, community groups and other local stakeholders, we will carry out the following:

- Development of an annual Planetary Health Meal Plan for incoming students at participating universities
- Development of a seasonal cookbook for year-round alignment to planetary health guidelines based on recipes submitted by students, chefs, local businesses and other stakeholders
- A final knowledge exchange workshop will be carried out to disseminate findings with other universities in Scotland
- Resources produced by students from Blairgowrie high school (including recipes and top tips for sustainable food consumption) will be developed into an accessible comic strip for dissemination across Dundee and Edinburgh schools.

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