



23 November 2017

A taste of success for Barnsley fruit and veg voucher project

Picture caption:

Jonathan Pauling, Chief Executive, Alexandra Rose Charity and members of Barnsley Council's Early Start and Families Team celebrate their win with Awards host Anna Williamson

Alexandra Rose Charity and Barnsley Council are celebrating today as their Rose Vouchers for Fruit and Veg Project won the Early Intervention Award at the Children and Young People Now Awards 2017, hosted in London last night (22 November 2017).

The award recognises the project as the initiative that has intervened early and most effectively with children and young people at risk from problems such as poor health, dropping out of education, homelessness, crime or substance misuse, and prevented the transmission of poor outcomes from one generation to the next.

The Rose Vouchers for Fruit and Veg Project helps families on low incomes to buy fresh fruit and vegetables, while developing the skills and confidence to give their children the healthiest start in life.

Over 100 Barnsley families are currently registered and supported through partnerships with local Family Centres, ensuring engagement with existing activities and wrap-around support focused on health and wellbeing, such as support groups, health services, social activities, advice services and Healthy Start vouchers and vitamins. The scheme has also recently been expanded to the Dearne and South areas of the borough.

Rose Vouchers are worth £3 per child every week (double if the child is under one year old) and can only be redeemed at markets that sell fresh fruit and vegetables. Rose Vouchers not only help young families but also support Barnsley's local markets, maintaining their position as sources of healthy low-cost food in areas that often suffer from poor food access.

Jonathan Pauling, Chief Executive, Alexandra Rose Chairman, said: "It's all about early intervention - preventing diet related health problems and supporting children from the youngest age to enjoy a healthy life. Family Centres benefit by making contact with families who are hard to reach. Markets get trade from people who might not otherwise use them, thus boosting local economies. Above all, children get access to healthy food which parents might otherwise not be able to afford. It's a win-win-win!"

Cllr Tim Cheetham, Cabinet Spokesperson for People (Achieving Potential) added: "It's great to be working in partnership with Alexandra Rose to bring this fantastic scheme to the people of Barnsley. We're so proud of the hard work and dedication of our Family Centre teams who worked tirelessly to make this scheme a success in partnership with Barnsley markets. Helping families give their children a healthy start is a huge priority for the council and this award recognises that Barnsley is leading the way in bringing innovative approaches to this agenda."

The Barnsley Rose Voucher Project is the first outside of London. Thanks to the support of the local council, the town's market traders and the dedication of the Kendray Worsborough Family Centre Team, the project has engaged over 100 families since launching in January 2017 – well exceeding the original target of 40 families. Barnsley families are now accessing more fresh fruit and vegetables and improving their financial resilience.

Children and Young People Now judges heard how Rose vouchers have really helped to change the lives of Barnsley residents.

One family said that they are now buying more fruit and vegetables, as well as trying fruit and vegetables that they haven't tried before and that they could not do this without the scheme. Their food shop is £15 to £20 per week, £9 of which is from the vouchers. They have learned to freeze leftovers to save on food waste and make meals from the recipes given out when they picked up the vouchers, including homemade bread, apple crumble and banana cake.

Another family with two children under three years old, where the mother is currently on maternity leave and the father is in full time education studying medicine, said they felt grateful to afford their children fresh fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis. They added that it had eased their minds each week, as before they joined the scheme, money had been exceptionally tight, and bills had been left unpaid in the past, just so that they could feed their children and themselves.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. The Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg is an Alexandra Rose Charity project designed and delivered in partnership with Food Matters. Alexandra Rose Charity works in partnership with local children's centres to identify families who could benefit most from the scheme as well as providing support such as cooking classes to build their skills and confidence.
2. An evaluation undertaken by independent researchers shows the Rose Vouchers project is effective in increasing the consumption and variety of fruit and vegetables in both children and their parents. A full copy of the evaluation can be found at: <http://www.alexandrarose.org.uk/evaluation>
3. More information about the Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg project can be found on the Alexandra Rose Charity website: <http://www.alexandrarose.org.uk/>

4. Alexandra Rose Charity was founded in 1912 by Queen Alexandra to mark her 50th year in the UK and has been supporting vulnerable members of society for over 100 years. In 2012, the charity changed its focus to concentrate its efforts on the issues of food poverty and healthy eating.
4. Food Matters is a not-for-profit national food policy and advocacy organisation working to create sustainable and fair food systems. Food Matters believes changing the food system requires action both from the bottom up and top down, from both communities and national government.
5. The Rose Voucher Fruit and Veg scheme has been running in Barnsley since December 2016 and over 100 families now access vouchers. The scheme complements the economic regeneration underway in Barnsley town centre and markets redevelopment. It links into existing services provided by Family Centres such as cooking on a budget, healthy lunchbox, weaning and cook and eat sessions. It also supports the early help offer in Barnsley and meets Public Health outcomes in relation to reducing the impact of poverty on children, promoting healthy lifestyles and food and nutrition.
6. The Children & Young People Now Awards have become the gold standard for everyone working with children, young people and families. Now in their twelfth year, these awards provide a great source of pride and recognition for all those who strive day in, day out, to improve the lives of others. They offer an opportunity to raise the profile of projects and initiatives to funders and the general public. More information about the Children & Young People Now Awards can be found on the awards website: <http://www.cypnawards.com/>