



South Gloucestershire Secondary School Lunch Time Experience Survey

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Executive Summary

- The main aim of this research was to find out what secondary school young people in South Gloucestershire think and feel about food and eating food during the school day.
- The South Gloucestershire Secondary School Food Questionnaire (SGSSFQ) evolved from focus group discussions with young people from two different secondary schools in the district.
- Following the focus groups debates 16 young people helped to develop items to include in a questionnaire. There were 62 items included on the (SGSSFQ). All secondary schools were invited to participate. 1661 questionnaires were returned from 14 secondary schools in the district.
- In this report comparisons are made to the pre-intervention Food For Life baseline survey which recently gathered data from 2054 secondary school pupils in 22 secondary schools across England.
- Considerable similarities exist between pupils in South Gloucestershire and Food For Life pupils across England in terms of family eating arrangements. Both report: a similar level of ability of being able to cook a meal from basic ingredients; the extent to which they eat their main meal at a table; consume main meals in bedrooms; eat main meals in front of the TV.
- However the reported level of school food/meal consumption in South Gloucestershire secondary schools is considerably lower than across England as a whole.
- The majority of South Gloucestershire secondary school pupils told us that they normally have a packed lunch at dinner time. Across the district less than a third of pupils report using the canteen regularly for a source of lunchtime food. 8% obtained food from a shop or a take away and 4% (n=71) say they ate nothing at all at lunch time.
- 33% (n=535) report buying a snack or intending to buy a snack on their journey to and/or from school on the day they completed the questionnaire. Those who did were more likely to rate the school meal and the school dining area negatively.
- As pupils progress through the years they are less likely to purchase food in a canteen.
- On the whole school food/meals in Food For Life schools across England were rated more positively than those in South Gloucestershire.

- There is no clear single reason why pupils opt out of school food; but most pupils cite queues as the prime reason for not having a school food.
- Pupils in South Gloucestershire like their dining areas less than their meals. Younger pupils rated the dining area more positively than older pupils ($p < 0.000$). Girls were more critical of the dining area than boys ($p < 0.000$). Also those pupils who actually eat school food are significantly more likely to rate their dining area more positively than those who don't ($p < 0.000$).
- Focus group discussions with young people prior to the construction and distribution of the questionnaire revealed considerable discontent with their canteen experiences.
- On all items measuring dining room ambience there is generally a negative rating by pupils. In particular there is a strong sense that the dining rooms in South Gloucestershire secondary schools are overcrowded and small.
- Many pupils feel that their lunch times are too short. Pupils eating something from a canteen 46% ($n=495$) feel they do not have enough time for lunch. In fact there was a significant ($p < 0.000$) inverse relationship between perception of time sufficiency for lunch and rating of school meals.
- Very few South Gloucestershire school pupils feel that school food and services are promoted. The survey revealed that only 14% ($n=217$) believe that local school food and services are promoted or advertised. Those who did were mainly concentrated in four secondary schools.
- Measuring daily intake of fruit and vegetables is very difficult. Nevertheless the SGSSFQ replicated two items from the Health Survey for England. The average daily intake of fruit and vegetables is higher than the English average.
- South Gloucestershire pupils are very aware of the importance of healthy food. A majority also recognise that their schools also promote healthy eating. 41% ($n=632$) say their school promotes healthy eating. Although 32% ($n=493$) say that they weren't sure. The range between schools saying yes was 21% ($n=22$) in school 6 compared 57% ($n=56$) in school 8. This suggests that there are significant differences in the extent to which pupils report that their schools promote healthy food ($p < 0.000$).
- Pupils who report having nothing for lunch or buying food from a shop were twice as likely to report that they did not like healthy food than those having other lunch options ($p < 0.000$)

Recommendations

Given that there are limited resources to alter the lunchtime experience of pupils the recommendations suggested here are limited to practical suggestions which may be easily implemented with minimal cost implications.

- 1 Schools should consider whether their pupils have sufficient time to consume their lunch and enjoy their break.
- 2 Schools should consider whether sufficient time is given to promoting school food.
- 3 Schools might like to consider adopting a more proactive approach to enhancing the meal experience. The Food For Life model adopted the School Food Trust approach which, was promoted by OFSTED, and set up a *School Nutrition Action Group* involving: their cook, a teacher champion, parents and pupils to develop activities around school food/meals and deliver practical changes to the canteen experience in every flagship school.
- 4 Caterers and the school office should routinely report on school meal take up/trading figures to help track the effectiveness of any reforms introduced. This could draw upon the School Food Trust's Million Meals resources.
- 5 UWE has approached one school and is looking for another volunteer to make a joint application to UWE's Heat start-up fund to undertake a pilot project to get young people involved in re-designing canteen areas with GIS specialists and interior designers from the Faculty of the Built Environment.

Background

As part of their commitment towards improving the health and well-being of children and young people, the South Gloucestershire Healthy Schools multi agency steering group (Appendix 1) commissioned the University of the West of England, Bristol to undertake a snapshot research project entitled: *Getting a local picture of influences on food choices for young people across the school day*. The main aim of this research was to find out what young people really think and feel about eating and food during the school day. It was anticipated that the findings would inform and challenge local thinking around young people's food experiences and help to assist policy makers to understand the key influences on decisions that young people make about food and eating behaviour. It is therefore crucial to have up to date local information in order to develop approaches to bring about healthier behaviour changes that can support national strategies and local plans, as set out within the Health Improvement Strategy (South Gloucestershire Partnership, 2010). For example:

5.3 Healthy eating: Our vision is to progressively increase the proportion of the population who eat a nutritious and safe diet.

As the Healthy Schools agenda moves towards a school led programme it is even more important that schools have access to and use up to date local data that is relevant and meaningful to inform their decision making. Healthy Schools South Gloucestershire always adopted this approach in their endeavour to develop progressive approaches to young peoples' well-being and anticipate that this report will inform future direction.

A key issue prompted the commissioning of this research. There was a local perception that there was a low level of school meal /food take-up within the district. In this report by school meal we mean the traditional hot school meal involving a cooked main course and possibly a dessert. By school food we mean any other food bought from the school canteen. Measuring school food consumption in secondary school is difficult. Nevertheless Table 1 compares our survey's measure of school meal/food take-up with data collected by the School Food Trust and the Local Authority Caterers' Association (2010) and information gathered from our work on the national evaluation of the Food For Life Partnership intervention (Orme, Jones, Kimberlee et al 2011). The School Food Trust and the Local Authority Caterers' Association conduct regular annual national surveys of school meal take-up.

In Table 1 South Gloucestershire's school meal take-up is compared to national data. Note the Food for Life Partnership baseline project data collected between 2008-10 measures the

number of people who eat school food five days a week. The actual level of school food/meal consumption is considerably higher than the level reported here.

Table 1: School Meal/Food take-up in South Gloucestershire compared with England

Area	% take up
South Gloucestershire	29.8%
Food for Life Baseline*	30.5%
England SFT/LACA®	35.8%

*based on the number of pupils saying they buy something from the canteen everyday. Data collected between 2008-10

® based on the number of pupils saying they buy something from the canteen everyday. Data collected in 2010

It is clear that school food/meal consumption in South Gloucestershire is considerably lower than across England as a whole.

Method

The South Gloucestershire Secondary School Food Questionnaire (SGSSFQ) evolved from focus group discussions with young people from two different secondary schools in the district. Following the focus groups debates 16 young people helped to develop items to include in a questionnaire. There were 62 items included on the (SGSSFQ). The questions are outlined in Appendix 2. Some of the questions are validated items used in national food questionnaires like the General Household Survey. Some questions were taken from our work in evaluating the Food For Life Partnership project (Orme, Jones and Kimberlee et al, 2010). Others were developed following our focus group work with young people from the two secondary schools.

The SGSSFQ questions covered the following areas:

- Demographic
- Meal experience
- Dining room experience
- Out of school eating experience
- Participation and advertising
- Food at home
- Favourite foods

It is difficult getting comparative data to explore the results obtained from secondary schools in South Gloucestershire. However given that our baseline (pre-intervention) Food For Life survey recently gathered data from 2054 secondary school pupils in 22 secondary schools across England some interesting comparisons can be made. Pupils in our Food For Life survey were slightly younger (only from years 7-11), there were slightly more females (55%) and they tended to come from more deprived communities than the pupils from South Gloucestershire (31% of Food For Life secondary school pupils were in the top quintile for Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility).

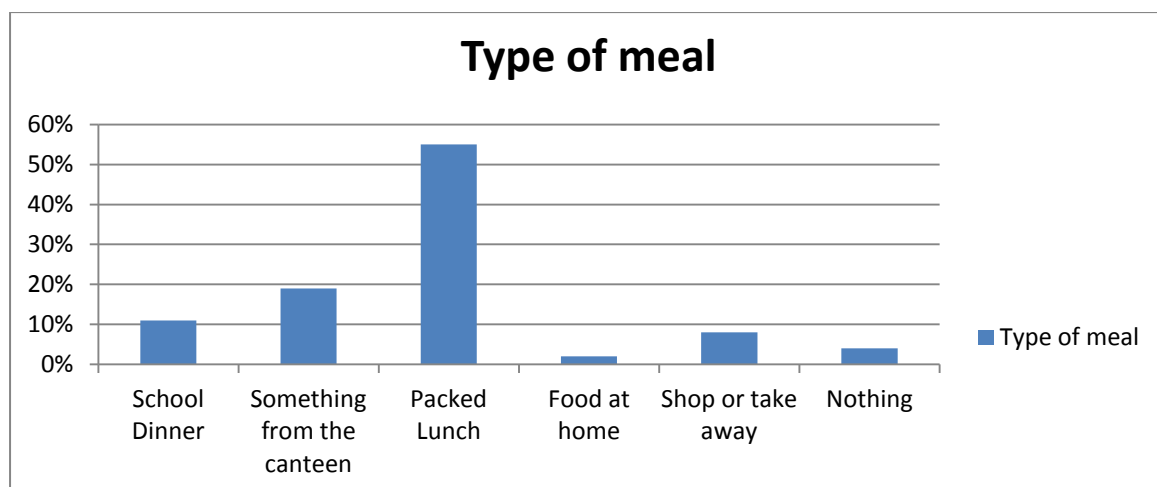
Overview of the data

1661 questionnaires were returned from 14 secondary schools in the district. One school only returned 29 surveys from their years 12-14 and are excluded in some of the analyses presented here. Thus the number of responses reported in each chart and table may vary depending on the analysis undertaken and missing responses. There was an average of 126 responses per school (range 81-146 responses). 51% were female, 5.8% claimed FSM and 4.9% self defined themselves as vegan or vegetarian. Nationally, the proportions of primary and secondary pupils known to be eligible for FSM are 17.3% and 14.2% respectively (DfE, 2010, accessed May 2011).

The majority of South Gloucestershire secondary school pupils told us that they normally have a packed lunch at dinner time. Across the district less than a third of pupils report using the canteen regularly for a source of lunchtime food. 8% obtained food from a shop or a take away and 4% (n=71) say they ate nothing at all at lunch time. Of those saying they bought food from a shop, the majority buy food from a shop between 3 and 5 days a week. 30% (n=494) report they are allowed out of school at lunch time. These are predominantly pupils in year 11, 12 and 13. However 1 in 10 Year 7 pupils reported being allowed out at lunchtime. Of those saying they were allowed out of school at lunch time half (50% n= 87) said that they preferred buying their lunchtime food from a shop.

Buying food on the journey to and from school is a common experience for a third of the pupils. 33% (n=535) report buying a snack or intending to buy a snack on their journey to and/or from school on the day they completed the questionnaire. Those who bought a snack were also more likely to rate the school meal and the school dining area more negatively than those who did not buy a snack on their journey to and from school. Additionally most pupils report that do not have their teachers eat with them. Only 17% (n=282) report that teachers ate their lunch at tables with them.

Chart 1: Meal type consumed by South Gloucestershire Secondary School pupils.

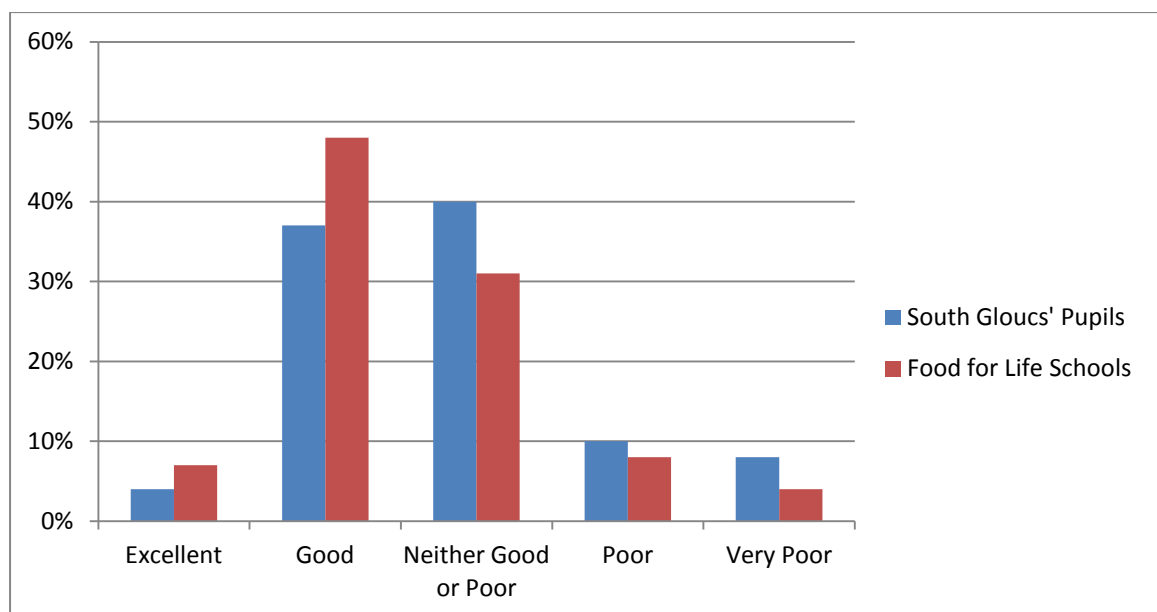


Schools vary in canteen usage. 43% of pupils at School 7 purchase food in the canteen compared to only 18% at School 12. There is a strong relationship ($p < 0.000$, $n = 1631$) between Year and Type of Meal consumed at lunchtime. 44% of Year 7's eat something from the school canteen compared to only 11% of Year 12-14. As pupils progress through the years they are less likely to purchase food in a canteen. Pupils entitled to FSM are more likely to buy food from the canteen at lunchtime but just under a quarter of those entitled to FSM do not consume them. There are no gender differences and preference for vegan or vegetarian food made no difference to meal type choice.

All students were invited to rate their school meals. In Chart 2 it is clear that almost 1 in 5 young people rate their school meals as either *poor* or *very poor*. Most rate the food as *neither good or bad*. The range across South Gloucestershire secondary schools was between 1 in 10 to almost 4 in 10. Younger pupils rated the school meals higher than older pupils. Only 3% ($n = 8$) of year 12, 13 and 14 rated school meals as excellent. Ratings were significantly associated with year group ($p < 0.000$). Younger year groups rate school meals higher than older year groups. Also those pupils who actually eat school food are significantly more likely to rate school meals higher than those who don't ($p < 0.000$).

Chart 2 also compares school meal ratings with secondary school pupils on the Food for Life programme. On the whole school food/meals in Food For Life schools were rated more positively than those in South Gloucestershire. Fewer than 1 in 8 young people rated their school meal as either *poor* or *very poor*. As in South Gloucestershire, younger Food for Life pupils were more likely to rate school meals higher than older pupils ($p < 0.000$).

Chart 2: Ratings of school meals



Those pupils who did not have a school meal were invited to explain why. Chart 3 below summarise the explanations given. It is clear that there is no clear single reason why pupils opt out; but most pupils cited queues as the prime reason for not having a school food.

Other reasons included:

I am a fussy eater

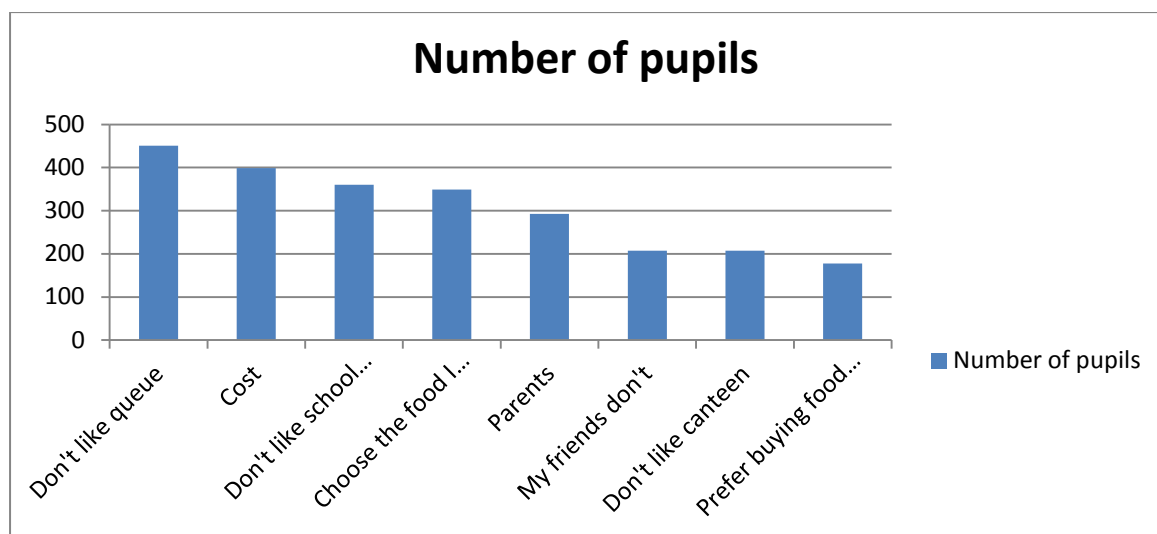
Watching my carb's

Not enough food for the money

Takes too much time

Portions to small

Chart 3: Reasons for opting out of school food



Pupils were also invited to rate their dining area. What is clear from these responses is that pupils in South Gloucestershire like their dining areas less than their meals. In fact the difference between South Gloucestershire pupils and pupils in Food for Life schools was far greater than the differences around the rating of school meals.

Chart 4: Pupils ratings of the school dining area

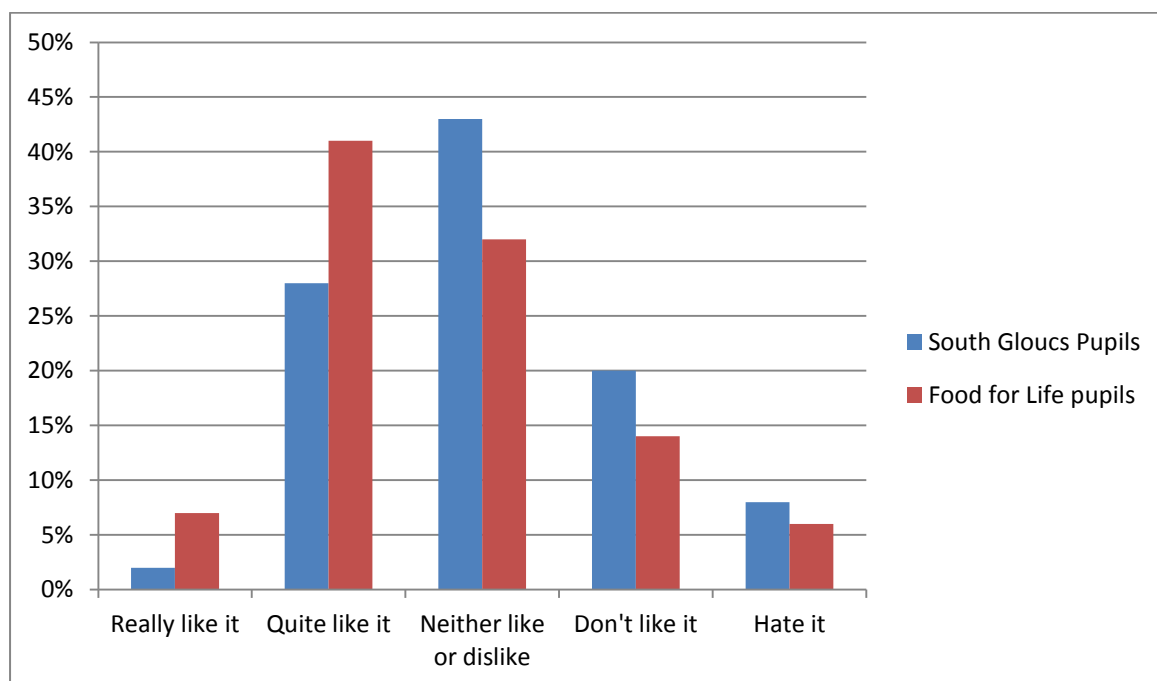


Chart 4 shows that only 2% (n=39) really like their dining area and 28% (n=438) said they *don't like it or hate it*. This compares to 7% (n=210) and 32% (n=974) for Food For Life schools. Most pupils in South Gloucestershire feel they *neither like or dislike it*. The range across the schools positively rating their dining area is 1 in 7 to almost 1 in 2. Younger pupils rated the dining area more positively than older pupils ($p < 0.000$). Only 24% (n=59) of year 11 said they *quite or really like* their dining room area. Girls were more critical of the dining area than boys ($p < 0.000$). Also those pupils who actually eat school food are significantly more likely to rate their dining area positively than those who don't ($p < 0.000$).

Focus group discussions with young people prior to the distribution of questionnaire revealed considerable discontent with their canteen experiences. This provided us with an ideal opportunity to develop items to capture the dining experience. Dining ambience experience questions are very rare in school food questionnaires. The School Food Trust in their annual survey of school food include only a couple of items. The focus groups discussions enabled the SGSSFQ to develop and include 18 questions on the canteen experience. Pupils were specifically asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with a series of statements.

Pupil responses were measured using a Likert scale. Pupils rated the statements on a five point scale ranging from *Strongly agree* through to *Strongly disagree*. The table below summarises the results. A lower score indicates agreement.

Table 2: School canteen ambient questions

Statement	Average score	Number
Too small	2.03	1605
Overcrowded	2.13	1609
Easy to pay for school meals	2.56	1585
Boring	2.59	1578
Helpful staff	2.89	1608
Tables laid out well	2.95	1608
Light and airy	2.99	1591
Clean waste areas	3.05	1592
Up to date menus	3.05	1580
Enough choice	3.08	1605
Clearly displayed menus	3.24	1605
Nice plates and cutlery	3.42	1591
Nicely decorated	3.43	1593
Clearly displayed prices	3.44	1600

Cold in Summer	3.47	1596
Warm in Winter	3.52	1598
Working TV screens	3.55	1589
Small queues	4.12	1595

Table 2 suggests that on all items measuring dining room ambience there is generally a negative rating by pupils. In particular there is a strong sense that the dining rooms in South Gloucestershire secondary schools are overcrowded and small. Thus pupils tend to disagree that the queues are small. And an overwhelming majority feel that the canteen is too small and overcrowded. There are strong links again with age. The older the pupil the more likely they think the canteen is overcrowded ($p < 0.000$, $n = 1659$). Girls are more likely to feel it is overcrowded than boys ($p = 0.000$, $n = 1659$). Also the experience of ambience varies across schools ($p < 0.000$, $n = 1659$). Table 3 reveals the general mean School Canteen Ambience Score for each school.

Table 3: Mean School Canteen Ambience Score.

School	Mean School Canteen Ambience score	Standard deviation
School 1	63.31	108.20
School 2	68.01	151.07
School 3	68.48	154.36
School 4	75.68	164.57
School 5	78.99	180.63
School 6	79.72	220.09
School 7	82.84	151.97
School 8	92.47	236.98
School 9	107.89	251.19
School 10	121.65	311.58
School 11	132.10	316.37
School 12	179.96	431.69
School 13	206.86	461.98

There is a real difference between School 1 and School 13 on the School Canteen Ambient Scores (SCAS). The lower the score on the scale the greater ratings of ambience awarded by the pupils the higher the score on the scale the lower ambience ratings. Individual scores on the SCAS items will be given to schools in individual data reports. The remarkable point about the table is that there is over a threefold difference in the ratings given to the worse rated school than the best rated school.

In addition to closed questions there were a few open items on the questionnaire where pupils were invited to comment or add anything. Very few added any positive comments but those schools that had poor Ambience ratings usually had more pupils willing to give comments on the problems that they face. Some of the comments from a school with an average total SCAS score school are given below:

Bigger place to eat with more stations please.

The dining area needs to be a lot bigger.

I think it is too small. I think it should be improved. I don't like teachers pushing in line it is not fair.

It's not very big or clean.

The queues get very long and people push in so you have to wait longer.

The dinner room is way too small and it is not fair that teachers push in and walk through the office and tell us off for following bad influences.

The school that had the poorest total SCAS scores had quite a few pupils (32%, n=81) offering commentary. These pupils were more severe in their commentary:

There are rats

The queues get really long and we are sometimes late for 5th period. And the older kids push you about and spit and stuff like that.

The prices are very high. They have taken out the good food. The dinner ladies are unhelpful and scabby. The dining hall is dirty.

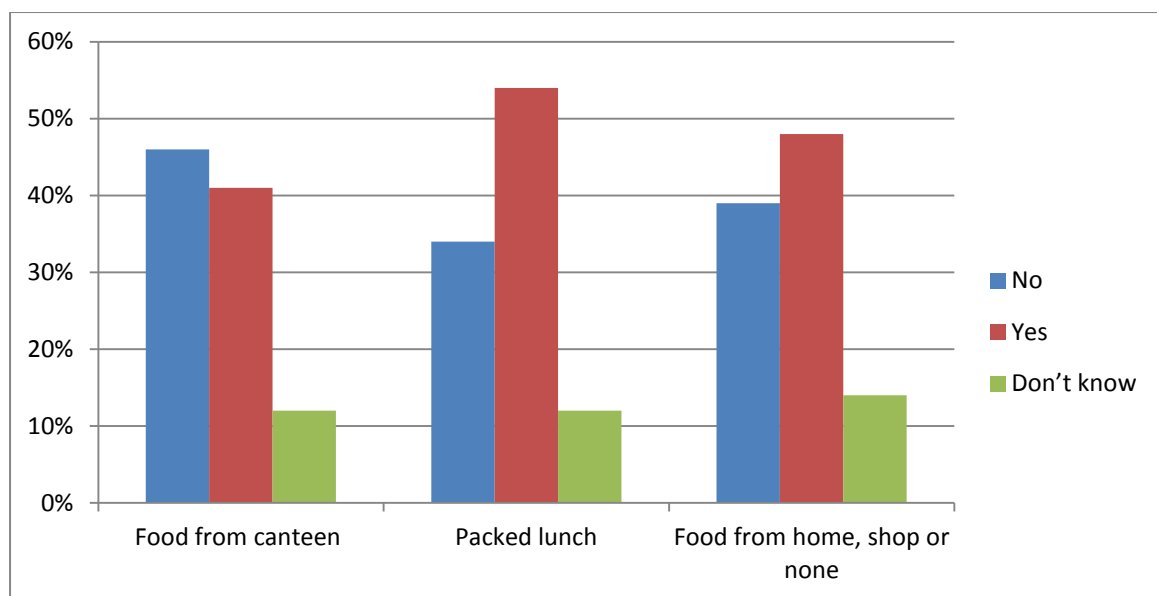
It is always very cramped and I have to queue for about 30 minutes.

Too long lines. You miss the whole of your lunch in the line and then you don't have time to eat it.

In addition to quite broad commentary on the size of the dining room there was considerable criticism over the length of dinner times. Many pupils feel that their lunch

times are too short. Coupled this with a sense that dining rooms are cramped and the dining ambience experienced is poor; many pupils are underwhelmed by the school lunch experience offered. This therefore additionally undermines the quality of the dining experience of South Gloucestershire pupils. The table below highlights pupil’s perception of length of school lunch times.

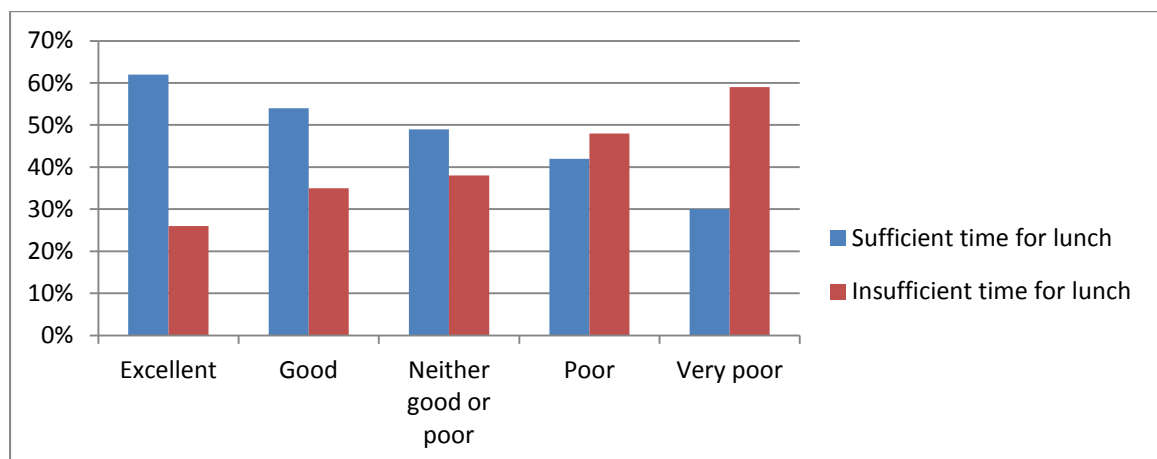
Chart 5: Sufficient time to eat at lunch time by meal type



The majority of pupils eating a packed lunch or food at home or food from a shop believe that they have sufficient time for lunch. Only 35% (n=321) of pupils who had a packed lunch said they didn't have enough time and 37% (n=66) who had food at home or from a shop. However there was a significant minority of pupils having food from a canteen saying they did not. For pupils eating something from a canteen 46% (n=495) feel they do not have enough time for lunch.

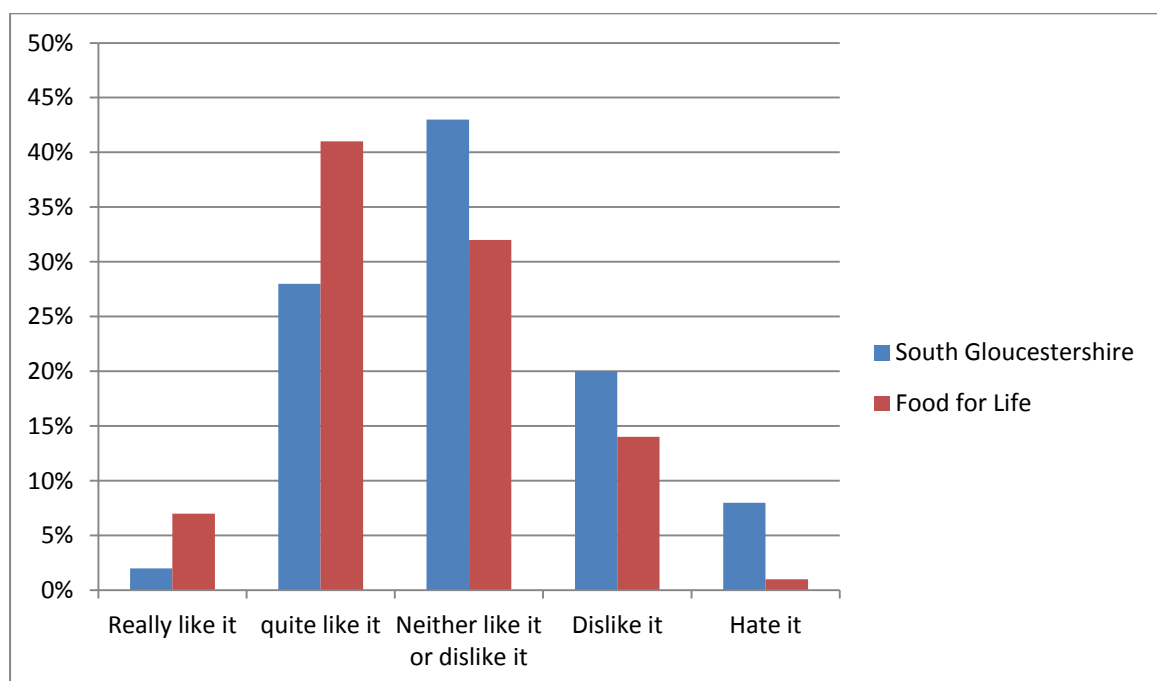
School lunch times across South Gloucestershire secondary schools range between 30 minutes and 1 hour. The average was 41 minutes. Interestingly, those pupils who believed that they had sufficient time for lunch were more likely to rate a school meal as excellent. In fact there was a significant ($p < 0.000$) inverse relationship between perception of time sufficiency for lunch and rating of school meals.

Chart 6: Sufficient time to eat at lunch time and rating of school meals



Given the low School Canteen Ambient Scores and the limitations placed on lunch time experiences it is unsurprising that the South Gloucestershire pupils rate their dining rooms lower than their meals and these scores again were lower than the dining ratings given by pupils in the Food For Life secondary school survey.

Chart 7: Pupil ratings of dining room area



Increasingly pupils across England are being informed and consulted about service provision in their schools (Schools Councils UK, 2010). It is clear in South Gloucestershire schools that very few pupils believe the school food and services are promoted. The survey revealed that only 14% (n=217) believe that school food and services are promoted or advertised. Those that did were mainly

concentrated in four schools. And ironically, pupils eating packed lunches were twice as likely to report that the school promoted school food and services.

Tables 4, 5 and 6 look at the extent to which South Gloucestershire pupils feel consulted about school meals and the dining area compared to pupils responding to the Food For Life questionnaire. Table 4 suggests that pupils in Food For Life Schools were twice as likely to report that they had been consulted on school meals. However rates of consultation were still very low. Table 5 suggests that there is very little difference between South Gloucestershire and Food for Life Secondary Schools on the issues of consultation on the dining area. However the Food For Life intervention widened the difference to double. Table 6 reports that more Food For Life secondary school pupils feel they were listened too but again the rates are low.

Table 4: Consultation on school meals

School	Yes	No	Don't know
South Gloucestershire	13%	57%	30%
Food for Life (Baseline)	26%	38%	35%
Food for Life (Follow-up)	26%	39%	35%

Table 5: Consultation on dining area

School	Yes	No	Don't know
South Gloucestershire	8%	65%	27%
Food for Life (Baseline)	10%	56%	34%
Food for Life (Follow-up)	16%	48%	36%

Table 6: The extent to which pupils feel listened too?

School	Yes	No	Don't know
South Gloucestershire	11%	48%	41%
Food for Life (Baseline)	15%	33%	52%
Food for Life (Follow-up)	18%	34%	48%

The tables above have shown the extent to which South Gloucestershire pupils feel they are consulted and listened too regarding their school meals and dining area. It is clear that school pupils feel they are rarely consulted on school meals and even less the dining area.

Pupils were invited to list their favourite three school meals. Almost two-thirds (66.5%, n=1105) gave at least one choice. Table 7 reports on the top ten foods chosen. This selection is consistent with the choices made by secondary school pupils on the Food For Life project. Pizza and pasta were their top two choices too. Note 1 in 10 young people report biscuits and cake as their top choice school food. Absent from this list are vegetables, salad and fruit of any kind.

Table 7: Most popular school food in South Gloucestershire

School food	Number	% of those expressing a choice
Pizza	371	34%
Pasta	357	32%
Baguette	244	22%
Fish and Chips	189	17%
Biscuits	156	14%
Jacket Potato	149	13%
Curry	118	11%
Chips	115	10%
Roast Meal	98	9%
Cake	97	9%

Measuring daily intake of fruit and vegetables is very difficult. Nevertheless the SGSSFQ replicated two items from the Health Survey for England. The average daily intake of fruit and vegetables is reported below in the table. The data suggests that South Gloucestershire young people have a higher reported level of self reported daily fruit and vegetable portions.

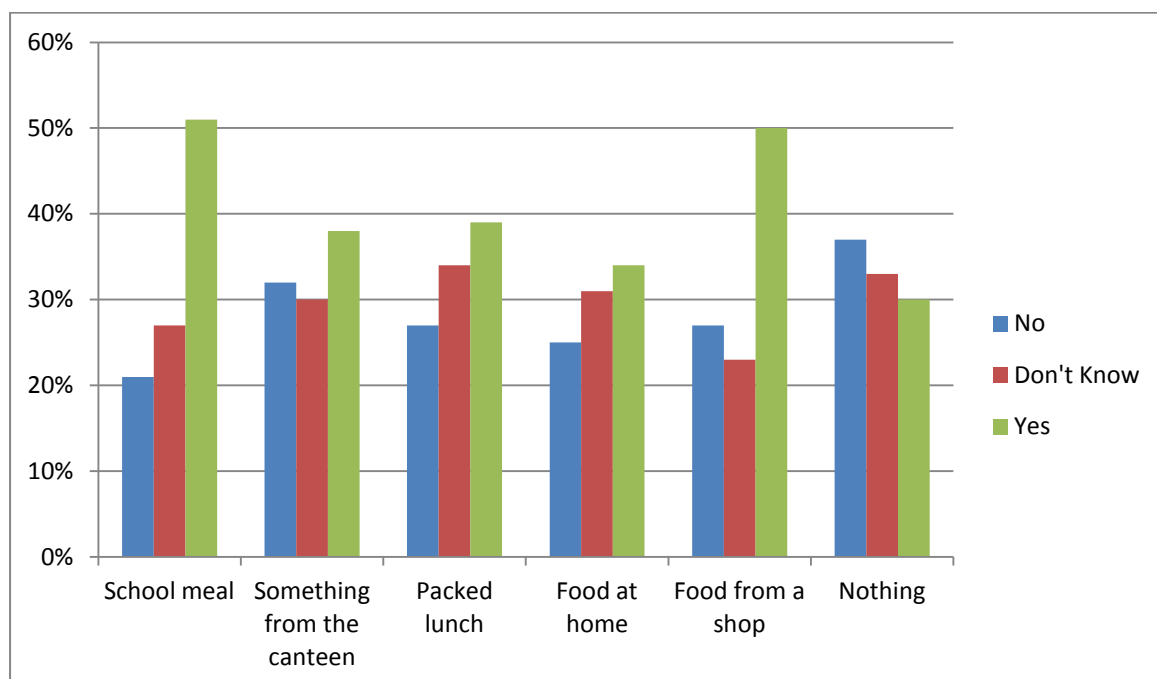
Table 8: Average portion of vegetable and fruit intake

	Daily portion of fruit and vegetables
South Gloucestershire	5.3
Health Survey for England*	3.6

*self reported fruit and veg' portions of children Aged 14 in 2009.

South Gloucestershire pupils are very aware of the importance of healthy food. A majority also recognise that their schools also promote healthy eating. 41% (n=632) say their school promotes healthy eating. Although 32% (n=493) say that they weren't sure. The range between schools saying yes was 21% (n=22) in school 6 compared 57% (n=56) in school 8. This suggests that there are significant differences in the extent to which pupils report that their schools promote healthy food ($p < 0.000$). Pupils in year 8 and years 12 and 13 were more likely to report that their school promoted healthy food. There were no gender differences. Interestingly pupils who have food from the canteen and food from a shop were also significantly more likely to report that their school promotes healthy food ($p < 0.007$).

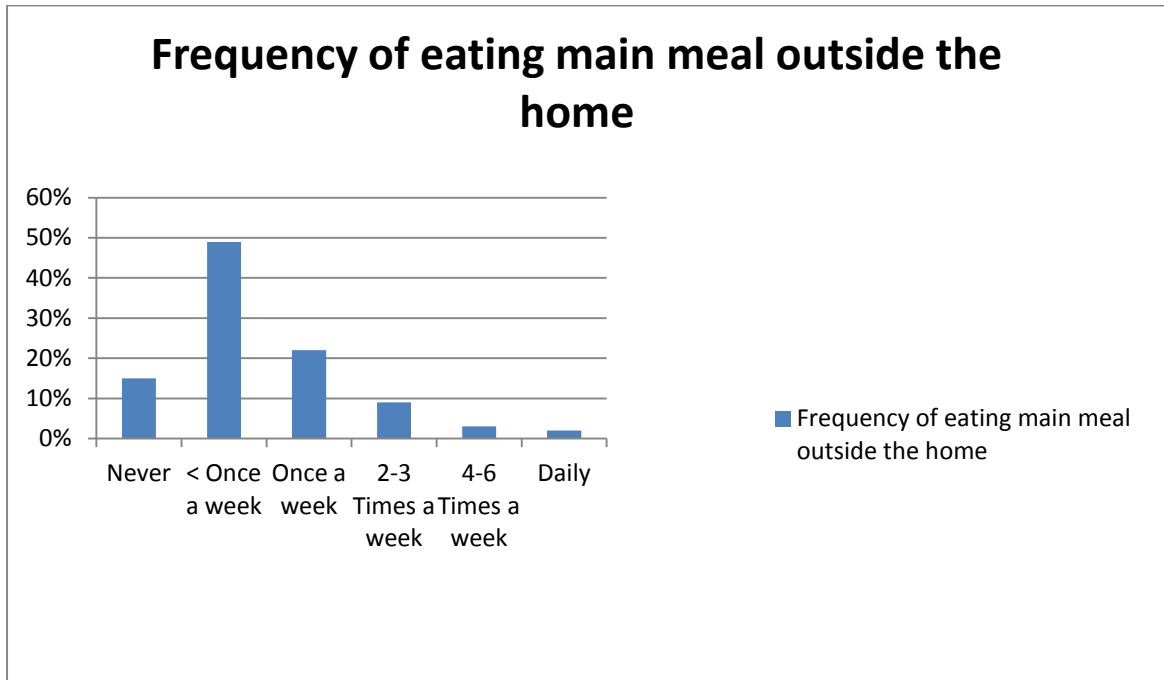
Chart 8: The extent to which food is promoted and type of food consumed at lunchtime



41% (n=646) of pupils say they like healthy foods with only a small number saying they did not (5%, n=80). There was a small majority saying they enjoyed healthy eating *sometimes* (52%, n=802). There were no significant differences between year and gender. However pupils who report having nothing for lunch or buying food from a shop were twice as likely to report that they did not like healthy food than those having other lunch options ($p < 0.000$).

The SGSSFQ explored pupil's food experience at home. There were considerable similarities between pupils in South Gloucestershire and Food For Life pupils. Both report a similar level of ability of being able to cook a meal from basic ingredients. Over a third (South Gloucestershire 33%, Food For Life 35%) report being able to cook a meal from basic ingredients with 1 in 20 (South Gloucestershire 6%, Food For Life 4%) saying they would not be able to cook a meal at all. Both sets of pupils say they eat their main meal at a table (South Gloucestershire 68%, Food For Life 65%). And there were similarities in self report on consuming main meals in bedrooms: daily (South Gloucestershire 8%, Food For Life 7%); never (South Gloucestershire 55%, Food For Life 54%). And eating meals in front of the TV: daily (South Gloucestershire 26%, Food For Life 24%); never (South Gloucestershire 14%, Food For Life 15%). On the SGSSFQ we additionally asked how often they ate their main meal outside the home. The table below shows that almost 4 in 10 pupils report that they ate their main meal outside the house at least once a week and 1 in 20 eat outside the house more than four times a week.

Chart 9: Frequency of eating the main meal outside the home.



Conclusion

The main aim of this research was to find out what secondary school young people in South Gloucestershire think and feel about food and eating food during the school day. The South Gloucestershire Secondary School Food Questionnaire (SGSSFQ) evolved from focus group discussions with young people from two different secondary schools from the district. Following our lively and sometimes passionate debates in the focus groups a 62 item questionnaire was distributed to and returned from fourteen secondary schools in the district.

In this report comparisons have been made to the pre-intervention Food For Life survey which recently gathered data from 2054 secondary school pupils in 22 secondary schools across England. These two surveys reveal considerable similarities in terms of family eating arrangements. Both report: a similar level of ability of being able to cook a meal from basic ingredients; the extent to which they eat their main meal at a table; consume main meals in bedrooms; eat main meals in front of the TV.

However there were clear differences in terms of dining experiences at school. In particular the reported level of school food/meal consumption in South Gloucestershire secondary schools is considerably lower than across England as a whole. The majority of South Gloucestershire secondary school pupils told us that they normally have a packed lunch at dinner time. Across the district less than a third of pupils report using the canteen regularly for a source of lunchtime food. 8% obtained food from a shop or a take away and 4% (n=71) say they ate nothing at all at lunch time. Additionally a third of South Gloucestershire pupils report buying a snack on their journey to and/or from school on the day they completed the questionnaire. Those who did were also more likely to rate the school meal and the school dining area negatively.

On the whole school food/meals in Food For Life schools across England were rated more positively than those in South Gloucestershire. Pupils in South Gloucestershire like their dining areas less than their meals. Younger pupils rated the dining area more positively than older pupils ($p < 0.000$). Girls were more critical of the dining area than boys ($p = 0.000$). Also those pupils who actually eat school food are significantly more likely to rate their dining area more positively than those who don't ($p < 0.000$).

On all School Canteen Ambience Scores (SCAS) measuring dining room ambience there were generally negative ratings by pupils. In particular there is a strong sense that the dining rooms in South Gloucestershire secondary schools are overcrowded and small. Secondary school ratings on the SCAS differed threefold between the school with the lowest ambient score and the one with the highest. Thus dining room experience is an important determinant of dining and meal ratings. Many pupils in the district feel that their lunch times are far too short. And lunch times vary across the district between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Nearly half the pupils who eat something from a canteen 46% (n=495) feel they do not

have enough time for lunch. In fact there was a significant ($p < 0.000$) inverse relationship between perception of time sufficiency for lunch and rating of school meals.

Very few South Gloucestershire school pupils feel that school food and services are promoted by their schools. The survey revealed that only 14% ($n=217$) believe that local school food and services are promoted or advertised. Those who did were mainly concentrated in four secondary schools. Also very few pupils are consulted on school meal choice and the dining experience.

South Gloucestershire pupils also report being fairly aware of the importance of healthy food. A majority also recognise that their schools also promote healthy eating. 41% ($n=632$) say their school promote healthy eating. Although 32% ($n=493$) say that they weren't sure. The range between schools saying yes was 21% ($n=22$) in school 6 compared 57% ($n=56$) in school 8. This suggests that there are significant differences in the extent to which pupils report that their schools promote healthy food ($p < 0.000$). But some pupils do not like healthy food. Pupils who report having nothing for lunch or buying food from a shop were twice as likely to report that they did not like healthy food than those having other lunch options ($p < 0.000$).

Overall there is considerable variability in pupils' lunchtime experience in South Gloucestershire schools. There is also variation in the perception to which healthy food is promoted and the extent to which they feel consulted on school food and the dining experience and ambience. Dining ambience and time sufficiency are particularly strongly associated with positive ratings for school food provision and service. Younger pupils are also more tolerant of school food provision than older pupils. And the latter are more likely to opt out of school food experiences for private provision provided by shops or packed lunches.

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Appendix 1 **Healthy School Steering Group - membership**

Role	Organisation
Headteacher (Chair),	Hanham High School
Healthy Schools Programme Manager, PSHE, RSE & Drug Education Co-ordinator (Primary Schools),	South Gloucestershire Council
South Gloucestershire Council Crime Reduction Officer – responsibility for schools,	Avon and Somerset Police
School Nurse Team Leader	North Bristol Trust
Teaching & Learning Adviser (PE & Sport),	South Gloucestershire Council
Schools Sports Co-ordinator Programme Manager,	South Gloucestershire Council
Healthy Schools Support Teachers,	South Gloucestershire Council
Healthy School Plus and SEAL coordinator,	South Gloucestershire Council
PSHME&C Adviser & School Improvement Partner,	South Gloucestershire Council
Drug Education Adviser (Secondary Schools),	South Gloucestershire Council
Youth Service,	South Gloucestershire Council
School Travel Plans Co-ordinator,	South Gloucestershire Council
Headteacher, Elm Park Primary School	
Teaching & Learning Adviser (Citizenship, secondary PSHE & RSE),	South Gloucestershire Council
Partnership Officer (Teenage Pregnancy & Young Carers)	South Gloucestershire Council
Extended Schools Development Officer,	South Gloucestershire Council
Traded & Support Services,	South Gloucestershire Council
Pyramid Scheme Manager,	South Gloucestershire Council
Assistant Director of Public Health – Health Improvement,	NHS South Gloucestershire
Health Promotion Officer,	South Gloucestershire Council
Healthy Schools Admin Support,	South Gloucestershire Council

Appendix 2: South Gloucestershire Secondary School Food Questionnaire Items

Please answer all of these questions even if you don't eat school food.

1. What is your school?

Abbeywood Community School
Bradley Stoke Community School
Brimsham Green School
Castle Secondary School
Chipping Sodbury Secondary School
Downend Secondary School
Hanham High School
John Cabot Technology College
Kingsfield Secondary School
Mangotsfield Secondary School
Marlwood Secondary School
Patchway Community College
Sir Bernard Lovell Secondary School
The Grange School and Sports College
Winterbourne International Academy
Yate International Acedemy

2. What year group are you in?

YEAR: -----

3. Are you a...?

Male

Female

4. Do you have free school meals?

Yes

No

5. Are you a vegetarian?

Yes

No

6. What do you normally eat at dinner time?

School dinner

Something from the school canteen

Packed lunch

Food at home

Food bought from a shop/take away outside school

Other

7. Are you allowed to go outside school at lunch time?

Yes

No

8. How long is lunch time in your school?

_____ minutes

9. Do you feel you have enough time to eat at school?

Yes

No

Don't know

10. Why don't you eat food from the school canteen/dining room?

> *Please tick your MAIN reason*

I always eat school meals

I don't like school meals

I have to queue for school meals

I prefer buying food from a local shop

School meals cost too much

I can choose the food I eat

My parent/ carer likes make to bring packed lunch

Because my friends don't eat school meal

I don't like the school canteen

Another reason...

11. Do teachers eat with you in the school?

Yes

No

Don't know

12. Do you buy any food e.g. chocolate, crisps, pies on your journey to school or home?

Yes

No

Don't know

13. At lunch break, how often do you go outside school to buy your food from shops or other places like takeaways?

Never

Less than once a week

1 to 2 days a week

3 to 5 days a week

14. In general, do you think school food is...?

Excellent

Good

Neither good nor poor

Poor

Very poor

15. What do you think about the main school dining area?

Really like it

Quite like it

Neither like it nor don't like it

Don't like it

Hate it

22. At home, how often do you cook or prepare food – either by yourself or helping someone else?

Every day

Most days

Every week

Every month

Less often than every month

Never

23. Would you be able to prepare a meal using basic ingredients? e.g. shepherds pie cooked from raw mince and potatoes or curry cooked from raw vegetables with boiled rice.

Yes... with no help at all

Yes... with a little help

Yes... with a lot of help

No... not at all

24. At home, where do you usually eat your meals?

At the table

On my lap

Standing up/on the go

I do not eat meals at home these days

25. How often do you eat meals – like lunch, dinner or supper – in your bedroom?

Never

Less than once a week

Once a week

2-3 times a week

4-6 times a week

Daily

26. How often do you eat your main meal outside of your home e.g. someone else's house or at a take-away?

Never

Less than once a week

Once a week

2-3 times a week

4-6 times a week

Daily

27. How often do you eat meals – like lunch, supper or dinner – in front of the TV?

Never

Less than once a week

Once a week

2-3 times a week

4-6 times a week

Daily

28. Do you or your family grow fruit or vegetables at all, either in a garden – or on an allotment?

No

Yes... and I often help

Yes... and I sometimes help

Yes... but I don't help

29. Do you like eating healthy food?

Yes

No

Don't know

30. Do you feel tries to promote healthier food?

Yes

No

Don't know

31. What are your three favourite foods?

1

2

3

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