GOOD FOOD GOOD MOVES

The Journey to Good Food Good Moves: Early Learning & Specialist Input

Good Food Good Moves did not begin with a finished model. Before delivery commenced, Sport for Confidence undertook an important period of listening, learning and engagement to understand the existing evidence, identify relevant good practice and connect with people already working in the areas of healthy weight, nutrition and learning disability.

This early work reflected our recognition that supporting healthier eating and weight management for adults with learning disabilities is complex and requires consideration of much more than nutritional knowledge alone. We wanted to develop an offer that brought together different perspectives and built upon existing expertise, rather than duplicating work already taking place elsewhere.

One of our important early connections was with Carly Atkinson, Specialist Learning Disabilities Dietitian and Dietetic Clinical Lead for Learning Disabilities. Carly generously shared learning, resources and experience from her work in learning disability dietetics, including previous work relating to workforce and carer education.

Carly also helped us connect with wider learning and developments in this area. This included signposting the work of Dr Karen Coulman, including work focused on encouraging healthy weight for adults with learning disabilities and supporting the important role of carers. We subsequently engaged with Karen and became aware of the national e-learning resource developed by Karen Coulman and Amanda Owen-Smith at the University of Bristol on behalf of the South West Healthy Weight of People with a Learning Disability Working Group, chaired by Justine Womack, and developed with contributions from people with learning disabilities, carers and a range of professional partners.

This existing work provided valuable learning and an evidence-informed foundation from which we could consider what was needed locally in Essex and how this could complement the occupational therapy and prevention-focused approach being developed through Good Food Good Moves.

As the programme moved towards delivery, we also wanted specialist dietetic input to contribute to the development of the offer. Carly's availability to support the project directly was limited and she recommended Rachael Colley, Registered Dietitian, as an experienced dietitian with relevant learning disability expertise. This introduction led to Rachael joining Good Food Good Moves as the specialist dietetic contributor, working alongside the occupational therapy-led team and wider programme partners.

The development of Good Food Good Moves was a collective journey: informed by existing evidence and national developments, early advice and professional generosity, specialist expertise, occupational therapy, co-production, lived experience and, importantly, continued learning through delivery itself. We are grateful to everyone who contributed their knowledge and experience at different points in that journey.

The following reflection from Rachael Colley provides her perspective as the dietitian involved in the pilot. It describes the specialist knowledge and experience she brought to her role, how she contributed to aspects of programme development and delivery, and the learning and questions that emerged for her through working as part of the wider multidisciplinary team.