TastEd

ANNUAL REPORT
6TH APRIL 2022 -
5TH APRIL 2023

TastEd

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CHAIR'S STATEMENT

> **The greatest joy for all of us at TastEd is to receive feedback from teachers on the ways the sessions have actually changed children's relationship with food.**

This was a year of astonishing expansion for TastEd and a year when our work received national recognition and an Innovation Award from the BBC Food Programme. But it was also a year when teachers and nursery practitioners reported to us that they were more concerned than ever about the lack of fresh food in many children's diets, a problem exacerbated by the cost of living crisis. Nursery teachers described children arriving in their care with very little direct knowledge of vegetables and fruits and a pronounced taste for ultra-processed foods.

In this context, the greatest joy for all of us at TastEd is to receive feedback from teachers on the ways the sessions have actually changed children's relationship with food. Teachers have reported to us case after case of the life-changing impact of TastEd on children's diets and lives, as children find themselves able to discover a liking for vegetables which neither they nor their parents could have imagined. When we heard from a teacher that a child in York on the autistic spectrum who generally lives on 'very basic plain foods' now asks for a side of lettuce at every school meal, or that children in Dunbar who never ate apples now ask for them, we feel all the more determined to work to get TastEd to as many children as possible.

Our awareness of just how hard it currently is for many families to access a healthy diet gave us a renewed sense of urgency in continuing our work giving schools and other organisations a new model of food education as a tool for helping children with their physical, mental and social wellbeing. It renewed our ambition to give as many children as possible access to a 'taste education' which can enable them to develop a taste for vegetables and fruits and to build a joyful relationship with healthy eating. We know that in Britain where child malnutrition is rising, TastEd alone isn't enough. Healthy food also urgently needs to be more affordable and accessible. But we believe that TastEd can plant the seed of a healthy relationship with food not just at school but for life.

Something new for TastEd this year was piloting Holiday and Activity Food Programmes (HAF) in Lincolnshire and Islington. These holiday programmes are aimed at supporting families on very low incomes during the school holidays. The feedback was extremely encouraging, with

Bee Wilson
Chair

those delivering the programme reporting that children loved the sessions and started asking to try more vegetables and fruits. We hope that this will be the start of more children, especially those from disadvantaged households, benefiting from TastEd beyond the classroom.

Having said this, our biggest achievement this year was the sheer number of schools and nurseries accessing our resources. We had aimed to have TastEd in 300 schools and nurseries by April 2023 but our actual numbers were more than twice as good as this, with more than 800 schools and nurseries signed up. This expansion was driven by a number of other positive developments, including DFE policy guidance to help early years practitioners bring TastEd to their settings; partnerships with Islington Council, Camden Council and Eat Sheffield; and winning the Innovation Award at the BBC Food and Farming Awards in November 2022.

We have many people to thank for their support this year. The generosity of the Jane Goodman Trust has been instrumental in enabling us to expand TastEd into so many schools and nurseries. Our resources continue to benefit from input from some great creative talents including artist Annabel Lee (who illustrates our lesson plans) and filmmaker Tom Perry. We are also grateful to all our funders including The Runciman Family Trust.

On behalf of all the TastEd trustees, I would once again most of all like to thank our project manager, Fran Box, for her superb and meticulous work in overseeing and managing all manner of projects and being the face of TastEd in the world and for schools and nurseries. Fran has also been instrumental in gathering data (to set alongside our formal collaborations with research teams in Exeter and Roehampton), including the crucial information that '74% of children liked a vegetable or fruit they tried during a TastEd activity'.

We are looking forward to next year and to ever more children discovering the joy of vegetables and fruits through TastEd.

Bee Wilson
Chairs of TastEd

Children are trying more food and the fruit and veg the children bring in each morning are more diverse. We have more variety in the snack bar now as a result of TastEd.

ABOUT TastEd

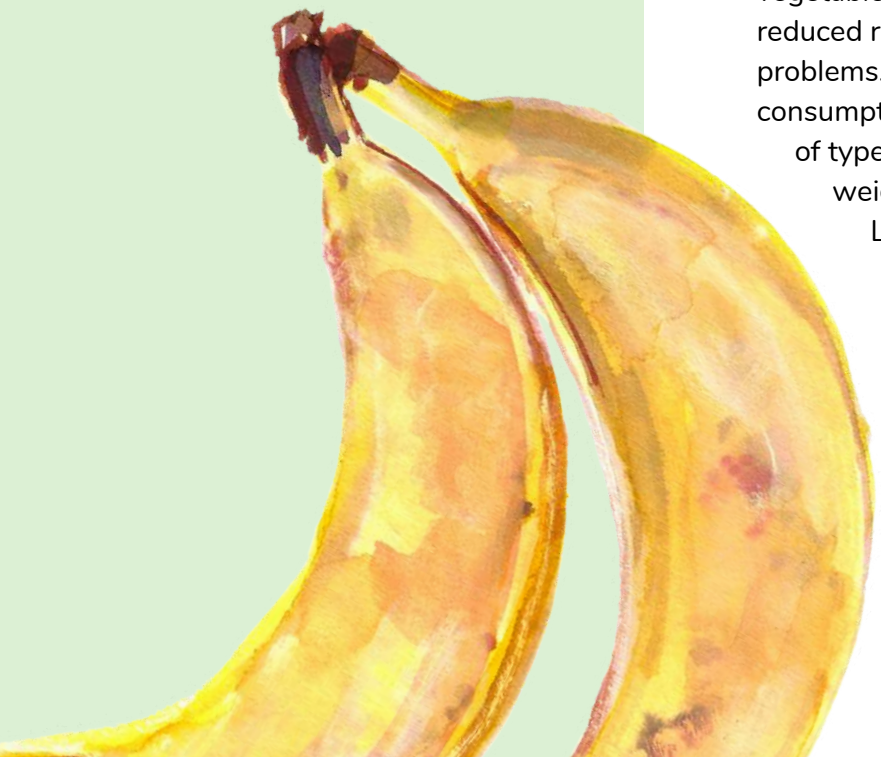
TastEd was established in 2019, by food writer, Bee Wilson, headteacher Jason O'Rourke and ex-teacher Abby Scott to revolutionise the way food education is taught in the UK Our programme introduces children to the joy of vegetables and fruit and supports them in building lifelong, healthy and sustainable eating habits.

Why is it needed?

Children in the UK do not eat anything like the recommended amount of vegetables and fruits, despite the well known and long-running 5-a-day campaign. 5-10 year olds in the UK only manage to eat on average 1.6 portions of vegetables a day, and 33% of children in this age group eat fewer than one portion of vegetables a day (Food Foundation, 2020).

The health impact of this is significant for children's physical and mental health. Vegetables and fruits contain many essential micronutrients as well as fibre. When children don't get enough vegetables and fruits, their health suffers. A systematic review by Guzek et al (2020) found that higher consumption of fruits and vegetables in school age children was associated with reduced rates of depression and mental health problems. There is also clear evidence that higher consumption of vegetables correlates with a lower risk of type 2 diabetes and is associated with reduced weight gain (see, for example, Willett et al The Lancet 2019).

Traditional nutrition education has focused largely on an information based approach, reinforced by messages about 5-a-day and the Eatwell plate. This achieved little to no impact on children's vegetable and fruit consumption. TastEd's method enables children to use all their senses to explore vegetables and fruits, helping them to



widen their preferences and establish a liking for a broad variety of foods. Our aim is to help children to build a joyous and positive relationship with food and give them opportunities to discover new preferences for vegetables and fruits which should ultimately stay with them beyond the school gates and help to improve their long-term health.

The TastEd Method and How it Works

TastEd is the official UK representative of Sapere International and is proud to bring their method, which has been used in schools in Sweden, Finland and elsewhere for many years, to the UK. Improving children's willingness to try and to like fruits and vegetables is our core aim but there are other important benefits to the method, including increased engagement with literacy, especially writing. During TastEd activities ALL children are able to participate in the lessons. This results in improved communication and relationship building, with teachers reporting excellent engagement levels in TastEd lessons.

"I work with extremely vulnerable children and seeing the spark in their eyes as they use their different senses is wonderful. The lesson plans are great and offer so many options. TastEd is truly wonderful and I am glad it is part of my professional life."

Teacher, Meadowbrook College

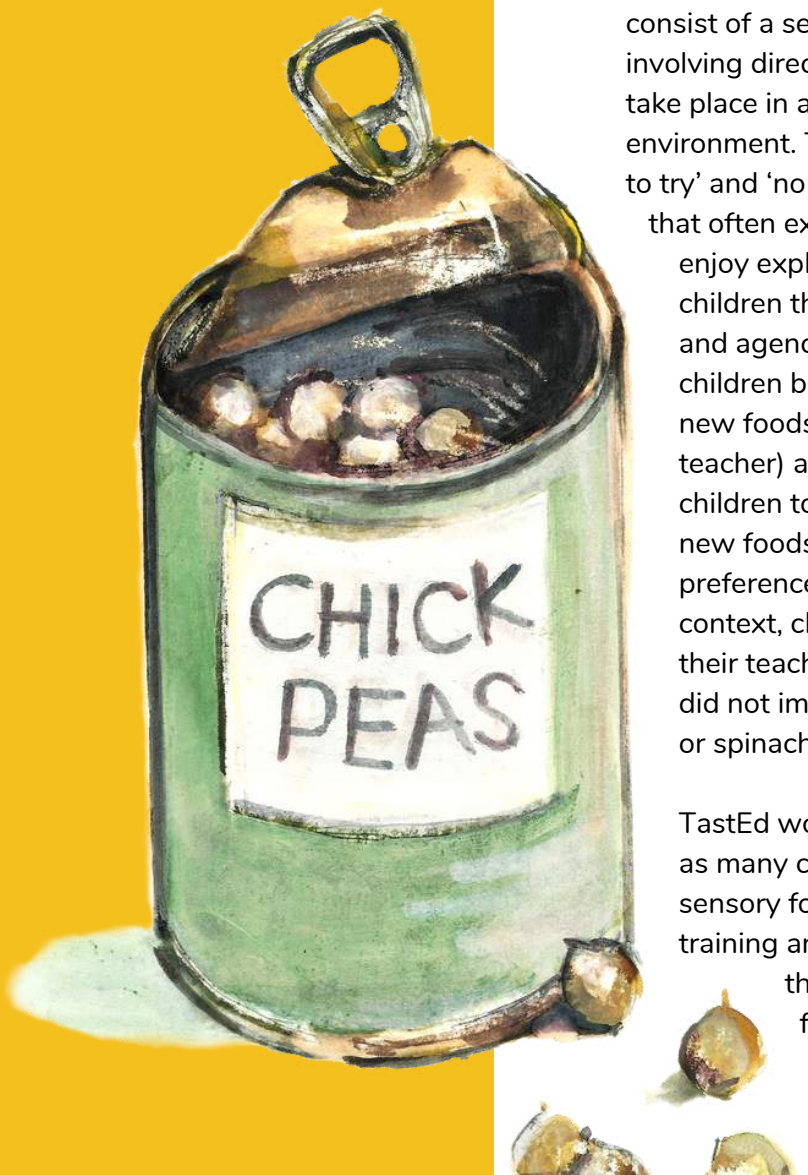
Children are encouraged to articulate why they like or don't like a vegetable or fruit, by exploring taste, sight, smell, sound, texture and taste. There are no right or wrong answers and children and teachers learn alongside one another, exploring the foods together.

In contrast to most other nutrition education resources to date in the UK, the TastEd method is hands-on and child-centred. Our free learning resources (over 100 items including lesson plans, PowerPoints and early years activities). They were developed in consultation with teachers and piloted and used in the classrooms of a variety of schools and with different groups of children and have now been used in schools all over the UK. The activities are designed for early years through to the end of Key Stage 2 (age 11).

Our resources are designed to help teachers and other practitioners deliver the existing national curriculum in England on Cooking and Nutrition and on Healthy Eating, while also delivering many non-food elements of the curriculum, from Literacy to Science and History and many aspects of the EYFS curriculum. To take one example, there is a lesson plan and PowerPoint aimed at teaching the history of ancient Rome through some of the fossilised food remains of Pompeii, with the chance to taste pomegranates, olives and chickpeas. In another lesson ('Ringo's Broccoli'), the food and society of 1960s Britain is explored through the life of Ringo Starr who grew up not enjoying very many foods but who now enjoys vegetables and fruits, especially broccoli and blueberries. At the end of the lesson, the children can try broccoli and blueberries, to see whether they enjoy them as much as Ringo does.

Our aims

Our aim is to give children the opportunity to try a wide variety of foods which they may not get the chance to try at home. TastEd activities - which consist of a series of fun, sensory games and activities involving direct handling of vegetables and fruits - take place in a classroom, nursery or school environment. The golden rules of TastEd, 'no one has to try' and 'no one has to like', remove the pressure that often exists at mealtimes and allow children to enjoy exploring food without worry. By giving children the space to explore vegetables and fruits and agency around developing food preferences, children become far more open to trying and liking new foods. The presence of a trusted adult (their teacher) and their peers often makes it easier for children to get past their natural reluctance to try new foods (there is extensive evidence that preferences are socially influenced)*. In this context, children often surprise themselves and their teachers by trying and enjoying foods they did not imagine liking, such as radishes, cabbage or spinach leaves.



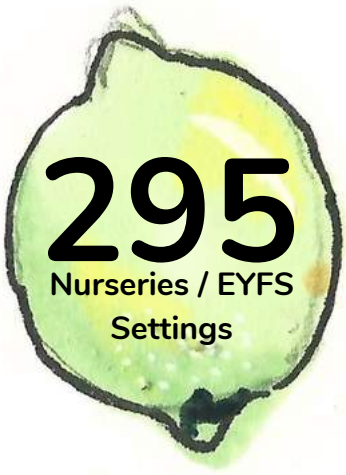
TastEd works with schools and nurseries to enable as many children as possible to experience sensory food education. We provide resources, training and support to ensure practitioners have the confidence to use and embed sensory food education in their setting.

THIS YEAR

It's been another fantastic year at TastEd, with more schools and nurseries than even getting on board, incredible feedback from teachers and nursery practitioners and even an award or two to recognise the work being done.

School and Nurseries

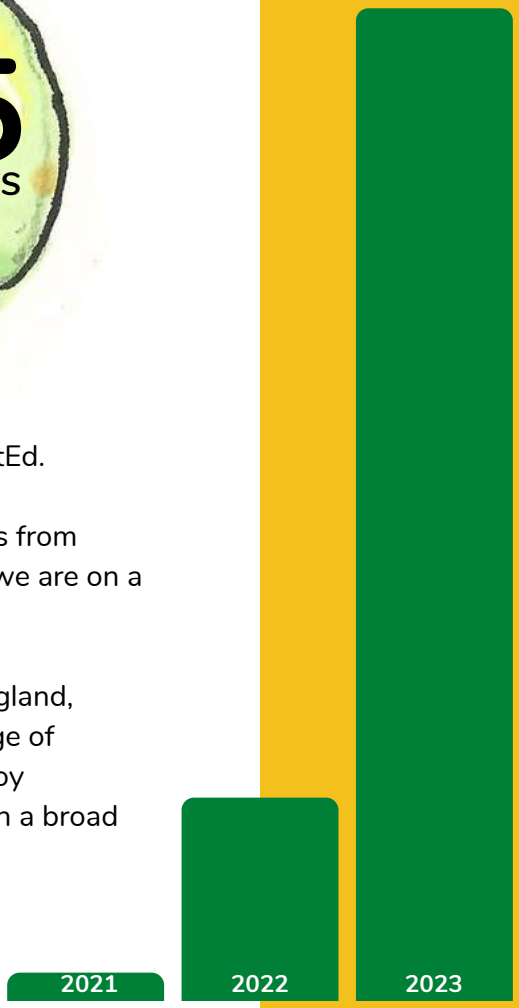
With TastEd resources now free to access we had aimed to work with more schools and nurseries than ever. We had a target of 300 schools and nurseries accessing our resources by April 2023. To date, we have:



This year we have had **659** new schools and nurseries joining TastEd.

We aim to change food education across the UK, and with settings from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all now on board, we are on a journey to do this.

TastEd schools and nurseries sit across **151** local authorities in England, in rural and urban environments, serving children from a wide range of backgrounds. Every child should have the right to experience the joy of vegetables and fruit and we are excited to continue to work with a broad range of settings across the UK to do this, seeing the varied ways in which TastEd is becoming part of the school day.



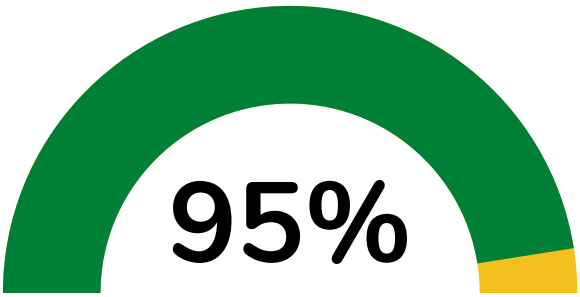
Training

Core to TastEd's methodology is empowering teachers and practitioners to deliver sensory food education themselves. We aim to provide as much support as possible to enable practitioners to confidently run TastEd activities.

Online Training

One way we do this is by providing a training video which continues to get very positive feedback.

This year **95%** of practitioners reported feeling confident or very confident about delivering TastEd lessons after watching the training video:



462 Views since first launched in 2021.

"I thought the video was fantastic - clear, comprehensive and really inspiring."

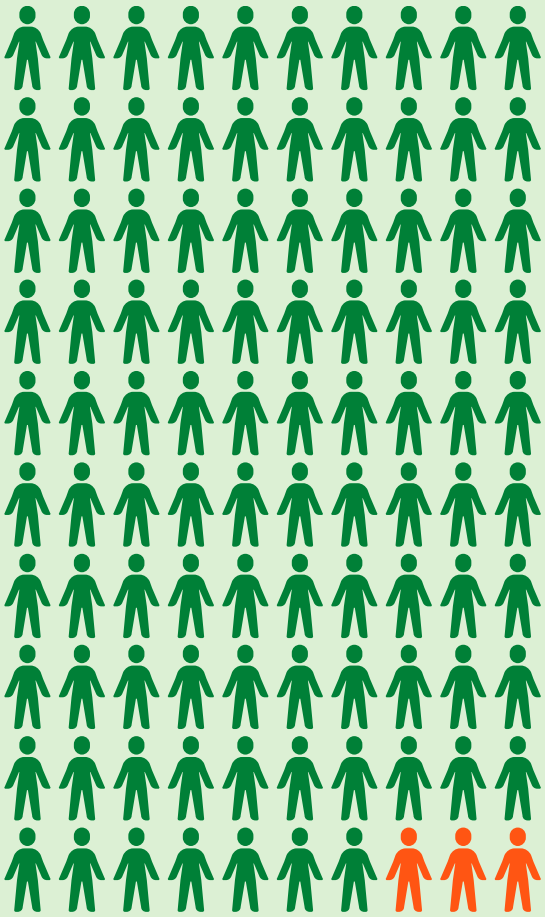
Dunbar Primary School

"This looks fantastic. I can't wait to do this with the children, with them getting to explore all the lovely fruits and vegetables."

Longparish Little School

In-person Training

TastEd activities are all about experiential learning, and in-person training is no different, with participants able to not only learn all about TastEd, but also experiencing the activities as pupil and teacher. This year we've delivered in-person training sessions to **126** people.



61% of participants felt **very confident** about delivering TastEd activities after attending an in-person training session, with **36%** feeling **confident**.

"Loved it! Very engaging and definitely going to use in our setting."

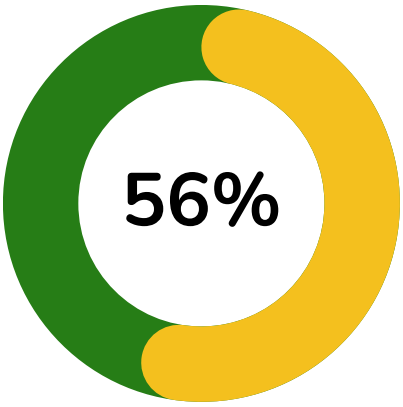
Brightstars Nursery

"Thank you for the opportunity. It was amazing to have resources and examples available to ground the training and to experience the value of this approach."

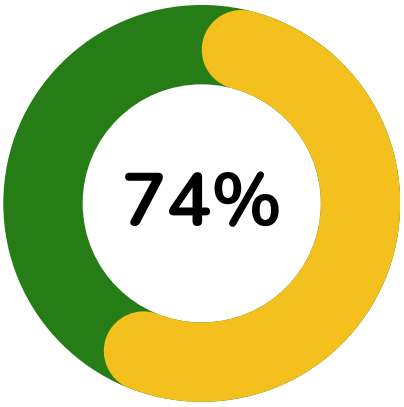
University of Cambridge Primary School

Delivery and Feedback

Feedback from teachers and practitioners helps us to understand the impact of the programme.



of children who took part tried a fruit or vegetable for the first time.*



of children who took part liked a fruit or vegetable they tried.*

Teacher's Voice:

"This was our first lesson and it couldn't have gone better! The children, without exception, loved it. They engaged really well with the idea of closely looking at our fruits and vegetables, and couldn't wait to try them."

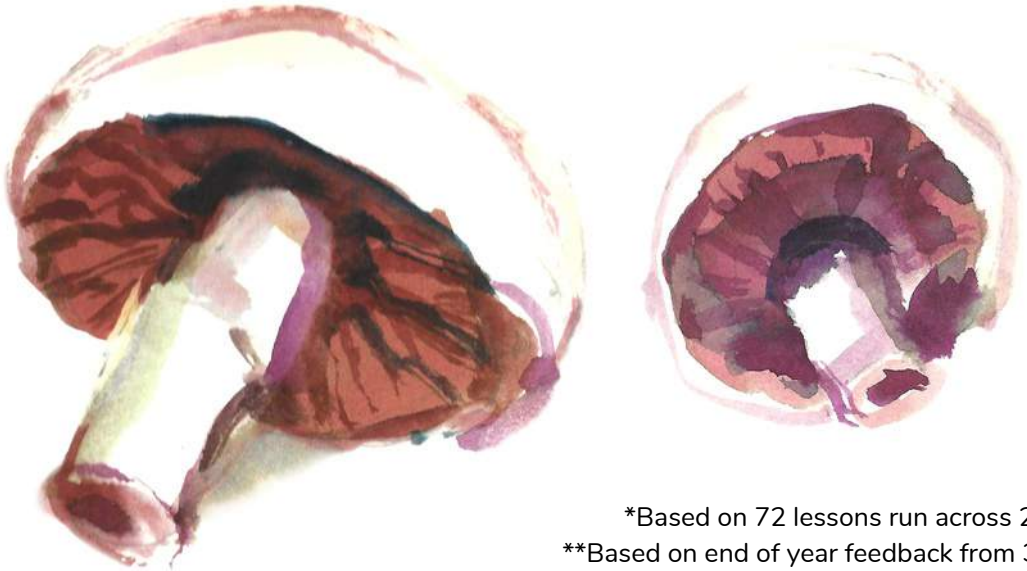
Dunbar Primary School

"The children really enjoyed the activity and using the magnifying glasses... Two children who don't eat apple at snack time enjoyed the apple they ate."

St Leonards Pre-School

87%

of teachers reported that children's confidence in trying new food increased as a result of running TastEd activities in their schools or nurseries.



*Based on 72 lessons run across 20 Schools
**Based on end of year feedback from 39 schools

Teacher's Voice

A teacher from a school in York shared this story with us:

"When I first appeared with tomatoes, lettuce and mange tout, at least half of the class told me that they didn't like most if not all of them. There were lots of turned-up noses. I reminded the children of 'the golden rules' which seemed to calm nerves... by the end of the lesson they were all devouring mange tout, pulling them apart, intrigued by the little peas inside. Most of them tried lettuce and tomatoes too - and enjoyed them.

We also had great success with a boy with autism and sensory needs. He was so tentative at first and stood at the edge of the class but came to the table with friends after being reminded of the rule. He now has a side dish of lettuce with every school meal - this is huge. He lives on very basic plain foods. In fact the dinner staff are now going to serve the Year 1's a side of lettuce at least once a week with their dinners. The kids were 'let loose' on the leftovers and devoured the lot. Many had pockets stuffed with mange tout for a snack on the way home!! What a great success story.

I must also tell you that the girl who so proudly tried and now enjoys clementines in the last lesson eats one every snack time. She always catches my eye and gives me a proud smile. She was so proud to show her mum what she had achieved that lesson and proudly told me that her mum was very shocked and excited to see her eating them in the photos that I sent home. She often has one in her packed lunch too.

This teacher loves teaching TastEd. It's transformative!"

HAF Programme

A TastEd Pilot

The HAF programme was first launched as a pilot by the Department for Education in 2018. It was designed to support disadvantaged families during the school holidays by providing healthy meals and enriching activities to young people.** In 2019 there was an added requirement that nutritional education was provided with the desired outcome of healthier eating and greater nutritional knowledge for beneficiaries.

With a new set of TastEd activity plans adapted specifically for HAF providers, we worked with Lincolnshire County Council and Islington Council to pilot the resources. Providers had training and access to the resources. Based on positive feedback from providers these resources are now available to all HAF providers in England.

TastEd at Acorn Childcare Centre's HAF Programme Case Study

July 2022

Katie, the senior play lead, delivered four TastEd sessions with over 30 children taking part. Katie reported that the children loved the sessions. Due to attendance being voluntary, it was a different group of children each time, however some children attended every session.

During the course of the sessions, she saw behaviour change in a number of the children and felt TastEd was a particularly useful process for reluctant eaters. She described a child who normally throws his lunch away attending every session and asking to try more of the fruits and vegetables available at the end of each session.

For another child the effect on their behaviour was noticeable, Katie describes a child who normally finds it hard to stay still and focus on activities. He was engaged with the activities and during one session when asked to describe eating raspberries, he said "it makes me feel really calm".

Katie also noted the effect of positive peer pressure on the children doing the TastEd activities. One child, who was

Partnerships

Working in partnership is key to TastEd's success to date. This year we've continued to work closely with Islington Council, whilst also working in collaboration with Camden Council and Learn Sheffield to expand TastEd in different areas of the UK.

Department for Education - Early Years Health and Wellbeing

On the back of the National Food Strategy recommendation for sensory food education to be included in early years, TastEd has been collaborating with the Department for Education Health and Wellbeing policymaker on developing guidance for practitioners to help them implement sensory food education in their settings. After seeing TastEd in action at Washingborough Academy, TastEd and DFE developed a simple guide including the principles, impact and tips for nursery workers and childminders, signposting them directly to TastEd's Early Years resources. Help for Early Years Practitioners

very unsure about trying carrots, with the knowledge there was no pressure to try, watched everyone else and then decided she would give it a go and tasted the carrot (she didn't like it but she gave it a go).

Finally, the children came from a diverse range of social, cultural, and religious backgrounds and the TastEd activities provided a great opportunity for children to talk about where food comes from, how it's grown and their personal preferences and different experiences of food. As children left the HAF programme for the day Katie could hear some of them telling their parents about the activities they had done.

"I tried Cucumber, I have never tasted it before. I can't really describe what it tasted like. It was very watery. I enjoyed trying the new food and learning about different ones."

Scarlet, Age 6

CASE STUDY

TastEd at Ambler Primary School in Islington

Monic Marcou, the Year 3 teacher and PSHE and Healthy Eating Lead, at Ambler Primary school attended a TastEd training session that was commissioned by Islington Local Authority in February 2022.

She found the training to be “Very exciting, interactive and enjoyable” and was “Looking forward to launch.” Monica saw it as another healthy eating tool that was very much needed within the school.

In the summer term she ran TastEd lessons with her Year 3 class and a pupil voice activity was completed to understand the children’s thoughts on the lessons.

They said: “It helps you to learn what foods you will like in the future. I really enjoyed the lesson because you get to taste different foods that you’ve never tried before.” “I feel proud of myself and I think my mum will as well. Once she gave me a blueberry, but I didn’t like it so I spat it out. Now, I’m eight, I think I like some of the new fruits that I tried.” “We could do this again so that instead of junk food, we know some other foods to have.” “I think we should do this lesson again; I didn’t think I liked any of those fruits. Since I tried them in this lesson, I really like them!”

It was decided to expand TastEd to all classes across the school and lessons now take place approximately once every half-term. An email was sent out to inform parents about the upcoming exciting food education their children would be experiencing and there were workshops that introduced parents to the techniques and activities used in TastEd lessons so they could replicate these at home.

The children are enjoying new foods and the impact of TastEd has been seen at lunchtime. One child said “I tried it in TastEd so I’m going to try it now” when referring to vegetables available at the salad bar. It was even noted on a school trip that the children from Ambler were particularly good at eating vegetables.

Thank you to all the organisations we have worked in partnership with this year, with particular thanks to Food for Life and Veg Power.

Research

TastEd is working with Roehampton University and Richmond and Wandsworth Councils on a multisite, multi-component intervention aimed at improving children's health and reducing childhood obesity.

TastEd worked with St Richard's CE Primary School, Brandlehow Primary School and Smallwood Primary School, training staff and providing resources, support and equipment to enable them to deliver sensory food education lessons. We look forward to sharing the results of the intervention next year.

TastEd

"The judges felt that one of the finalists really did stand out because they were making such a big impact on the future of food because they were educating a future generation about food'.

Dan Saladino - BBC Food and Farming Award Judge

Awards

TastEd joined the Peas Please initiative in 2021, pledging to work with 100 schools to help children eat more vegetables. In May 2022 we were thrilled to be awarded the Rising Star Award which recognises new Peas Please pledgers who have made effective and ambitious pledges to help everyone eat more veg.

TastEd was then nominated for a BBC Food and Farming award. The awards, which have been running for over 20 years, celebrate the incredible work being done to promote good food across the UK food system. On Wednesday 9 November at the National Museum in Cardiff, TastEd was announced as the winner of the 2022 Innovation Award, a hugely exciting moment for the charity and one for which we are very grateful. Presenting the award, Dan Saladino said that The judges also described TastEd as a project that is highly 'scalable'.

Resources and Support

With a wide range of exciting lessons freely available to schools and nurseries, our focus this year was on improving our support for practitioners, enabling them to easily understand the principles of TastEd and how to embed it in their settings. Following the success of our training video for primary school teachers, in collaboration with EYFS practitioners, we are producing a series of practical videos for those working with Early Years pupils.

NEXT YEAR

In 2023 - 2024 want to build on the success we have already achieved, do this we will:

- **Reach even more schools and nurseries:** through partnership working and organic growth we will continue to increase the number of education settings accessing TastEd across the UK, ensuring we have the capacity to provide support to enable those settings to deliver sensory food education. We aim to have 1400 schools and nurseries in total signed up to TastEd by the end of next year.

- **Be evidence based:** through continuing to work directly with teachers, taking part in research projects and implementing new data solutions, we will be better informed about how schools and nurseries are using TastEd and what we can do to further support them to embed TastEd into their education practices.

- **Training teachers:** alongside the launch of our new EYFS training videos, we will provide free in-person experiential training to 150 practitioners. This will continue to be evaluated and refined to ensure practitioners feel confident delivering TastEd and it leads to sensory food education being embedded in education settings.

FINANCE

Jane Lockie
Treasurer

Finanical Position

We remain in a secure financial position this year.

Income
£49,935

Expenditure
£43,289

Income

We received a total of £4,100 through running TastEd training for a range of providers. We currently provide all other school support, access to our toolkits and training videos free of charge in order to reach the greatest number of children.

We received over £2000 as private donations, largely from the family and friends of the late Lesley Mackay who had been a TastEd supporter. We thank them for their generosity. We received a further donation of £40,000 from the Jane Goodman Trust (JGT) in January 2023. We presented to the trustees of The JGT our progress with their previous donations. (£12,500 for filming and £100,000 for a rollout of TastED lessons, providing schools with support, equipment and training, and further curriculum development).

We were seeking £20,000 in order to change the way that teachers and other education practitioners are able to access our resources. We wanted to facilitate even greater use of our free resources and therefore allow more children, our beneficiaries, to experience TastEd activities. We looked at several learning platforms to provide this access and costed the change as £20,000 over 3 years. The Jane Goodman Trustees again astounded us with their generosity and agreed to donate all the costs for the new learning platform and a further £20,000 for running costs. Their donations have been transformational for TastEd and have helped us to expand at the rate we have into many more schools, nurseries and HAF clubs. We hope to have a new learning platform in place in the next financial year.

Expenditure

Almost a third of our expenditure was on direct project delivery in schools and curriculum development. These costs include providing veg and fruit and

equipment for training sessions and TastEd lessons in schools, nurseries and HAF provision. Curriculum development is largely done by our chair and founder Bee Wilson without payment. The artwork, which is a vital contribution to the joy of our lessons, and training videos forms an additional cost.

Our main expenditure last year was paying a freelance project manager, without whom we would achieve nothing.

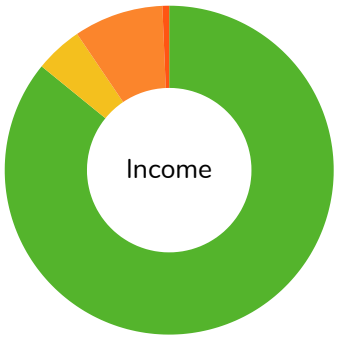
Our trustee expenses are generally small but this year we had a number of time-sensitive opportunities to work with other organisations in the food sector. Our trustee, and at the time co-chair, Kim Smith had developed many of these links and trustees agreed that in order to make the most of these connections Kim would be paid for a limited period of 6 months. Kim was available and able to deliver lessons and to promote TastEd alongside Veg Power. She also worked in conjunction with trustees and team members to develop links in early years and HAF programmes. In total, in the 6 months, she received £4,224.00. We had received a donation from the Runciman Trust in the previous year towards our ongoing costs and therefore we allocated this.

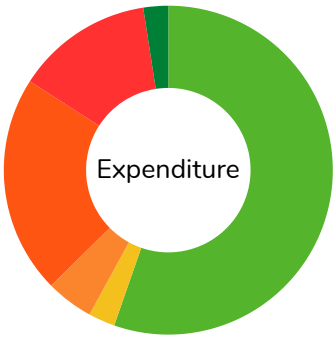
We again alternated our trustee meetings between online and in-person and therefore kept our travel and subsistence costs down. Some trustees undertook training for their roles with NCVO.

Reserves

Our current reserves policy requires that we hold £10,000 in reserve.

In the next financial year, we aim to recruit a new treasurer who will support with further development of financal procedures and fundraising strategy.





Income

- Charitable Trusts
- Individual Donations
- Payment for Services
- Investment

Expenditure

- Freelance Costs
- Trustee Expenses
- Running Costs
- Resource Development
- School Training and Support
- Marketing
- Other

STRUCTURE

TastEd is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Governing document: constitution adopted on 1st January 2019.

Charitable objectives:

- To advance the education of children in sensory food education.
- To preserve and protect the health of such beneficiaries by the promotion of sensory food education and helping children to build a healthy relationship with food.

Trustee selection method: Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.

TastEd is governed and managed by our trustees who share the decision making and take responsibility for all aspects of the charity's activities. Minimal expenses can be claimed by the trustees in accordance with our trustee expenses policy. During this financial year, Kim Smith was paid a set fee for support with programme management between October 2022 and March 2023. Apart from this no other trustees received payment for their work on the board.

This year the board has decided to increase its number of trustee meetings from three to four. Due to the size of the organisation, board members also take on operational tasks and consider risk management.

The current board of trustees consists of:

Bee Wilson
Chair

Jane Lockie
Treasurer

Jason O'Rourke

Kim Smith

Francesca Re Manning

Bee Wilson resumed the role of sole chair of the board on the 9th March 2023.
Gurpinder Lalli stood down from being a TastEd trustee as of 9th March 2023.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful to the individuals and organisations who have provided support to TastEd during this period.

Funders
The Jane Goodman Trust
The Runciman Charitable Trust

We would also like to extend a huge thank you to all the individuals who have donated to TastEd over the past year.

Partners:
Sapere International
Food For Life
Islington Council
Eat Smart Sheffield (Learn Sheffield)
Veg Power

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*See, for example, Birch, Leann (1999), 'Development of Food Preferences', Annual Review of Nutrition, 19, 41-62; Cruwys, Bevelander and Hermans (2015), 'Social modeling of eating; A Review of when and why social influence affects food intake and choice', Appetite; Duncker, Karl (1938), 'Experimental Modification of Children's Food Preferences Through Social Suggestion', Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 33, 489-507; Herman and Polivy (2005), 'Normative Influences on Food Intake', Physiology and Behaviour; Higgs, Suzanne (2015), 'Social norms and their influence on eating behaviours', Appetite; Wilson, Bee First Bite: How We Learn to Eat (2015)

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