



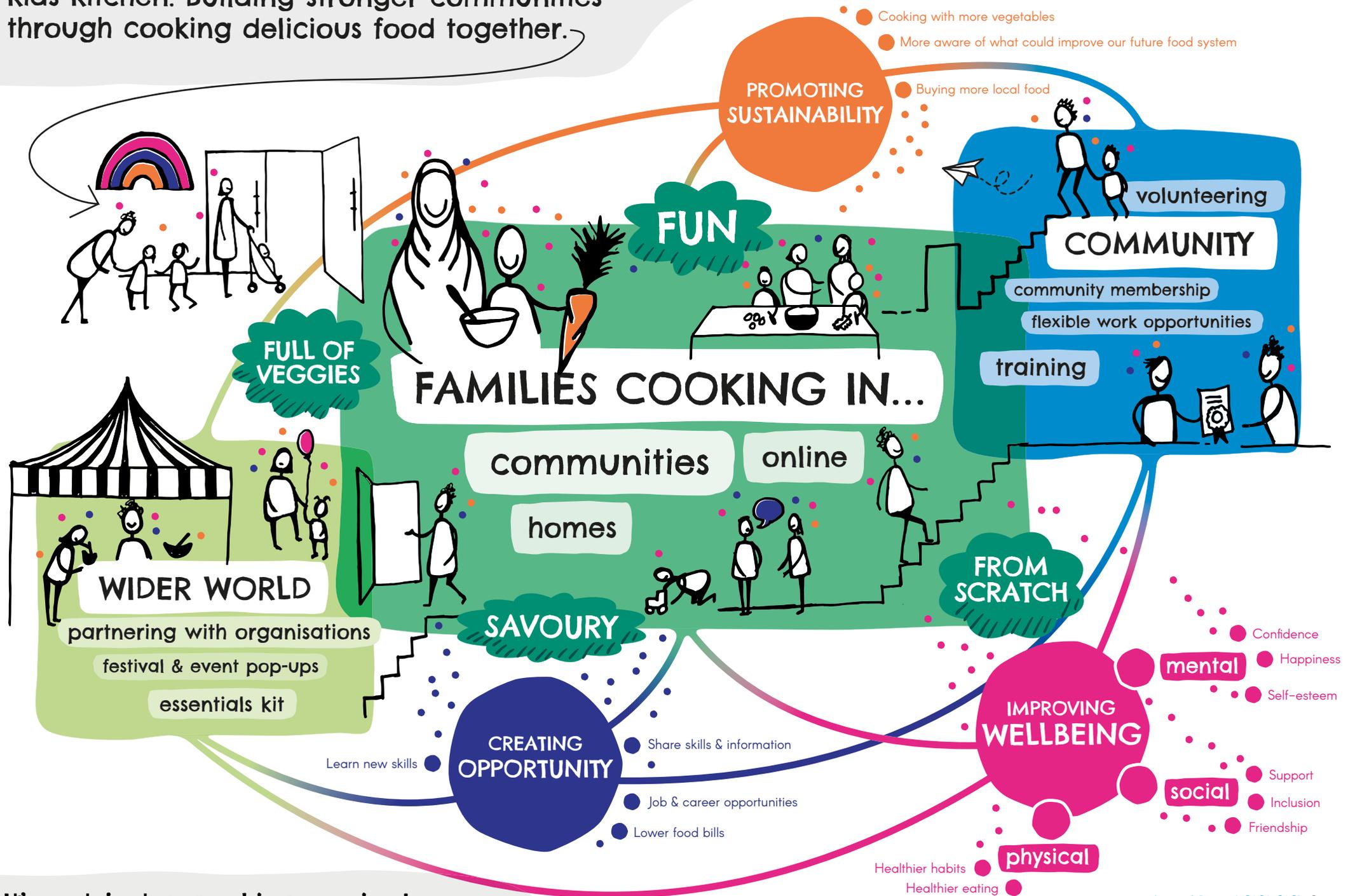
# Kids Kitchen Collective

Annual Report 2020-2021

[kidskitchen.org.uk](http://kidskitchen.org.uk)



# Kids Kitchen: Building stronger communities through cooking delicious food together.



It's not just a cooking session!

## 2020: The Year we are Still Processing.

I'm not sure any review of 2020 can start with anything other than a huge disbelieving sigh and this – WHAT an unprecedented year.

The pandemic had just hit by April and we were worried about the families we work with, many already facing significant challenges. Our organisation has face to face, human connection at its heart and is built on hands-on activities – at first I couldn't see how we'd survive. Added to that, our income disappeared as grant pots were repurposed overnight, partners that would buy our services closed their doors and we qualified for no government support. At home we were juggling home schooling and childcare, and I was dealing with a personal bereavement. I knew that as main co-ordinator, I didn't have the energy to drive a normal year, let alone engineer a complete organisational shift.

I didn't need to! I wasn't alone. After the first suggestion of going online, the offers and ideas just kept coming. Area hubs created remote family cooking together – and then as a team nurtured two more new ways of reaching families – recipe/activity bags of simple ingredients, and videos to make this easier.

We bonded and strengthened at a time that we could have collapsed. During the year we all faced personal challenges, but no-one quit – no-one needed to. We talked, we supported each other – when one colleague took a step back, another stepped forward. We tried things we never would have before, always with a cheerleader waiting in Whatsapp.

We've learned new skills and we've discovered new ways of sharing cooking from scratch. We've also formed even stronger collaborations and reached families we would never have reached without our partners.

Through living this experience together we are now confident of the positive compassionate employment that Kids Kitchen creates. We started the year needing a Crowdfunder – we ended it with a place on the Lottery Leaders with Lived Experience Programme.

Thank you for believing in us and we look forward to building our parent-led, grassroots team into the future together!

**Rebecca Tully, Core Co-ordinator,  
Joint Director and Founder**

## Thank You to the Team

- **Aneta** (South East London), **Alice** and **Carmen** (East London) and **Kate** (Herefordshire): all co-ordinating local hub activity and our collective online work.
- **Naseem and Kelda**: supporting online sessions with Naseem jumping through so many hoops to learn the tech to do online sessions and a remote video with her grandkids, through a really long period of shielding.
- **Annie**, managing two young kids while jumping WAY out of her comfort zone into video presenting.
- **Sam, Molly B , Kay** and **Kemi**: all training with us during lockdown and jumping into various aspects of our work before coming anywhere near a live session!
- **Molly C**: joining us remotely and pulling our chaos into something that could be marketed.

## Our Volunteers

- **Eva**: Joint Director and Founder, a listening ear and strategic thoughts when it was most needed.
- **Louise** and **Joanna**: solid steering team members continuing to ask much-needed insightful questions and see we got paid!
- **Sarah**: Merchandise support and keeping our festivals dreams alive.

- **Claire, Karen** and **Catriona**: Making sure the world knew what we were doing while we were busy doing it.
- **Richard (and daughter Robyn) and Suwani (and daughter Sunara)**: got stuck in to our Future Food project with Exeter University bringing energy and thoughtful perspectives.

## Our Associates

This year we saw the benefit of our model of involving experts longer-term that 'get' what we do:

- **Asim** at A&M Accountants: A calm voice helping us get financial clarity so we could make the most of what we had.
- **Karen Cann**: video editor extraordinaire with patience that matches her editing skills!
- **Lynne Eve** (Design Jam): marrying her experience of our sessions and design skills to create wonderful graphics.

**We generated £32k of work for individuals in our 2020/2021 financial year – that's over 1,700 flexible, parent-friendly hours of working that also have a social impact!**

# We are Kids Kitchen – inspiring adults and young children to enjoy cooking great food together.



## Who we are

We tackle social isolation of parents with young children, childhood obesity, and the environmental and financial impact of food systems. Started in 2011 by two parents wanting to cook healthy food with their own young kids, we are now based in three geographical hubs – East London, South East London and Herefordshire – and support activities in other areas and online.

We cook delicious meals from scratch with groups of young children and their grownups, then we sit and eat together. This shared endeavour fosters conversation, builds connection and breaks down social barriers. We talk about ingredients, local information, our lives and our kids. Food is usually plant based as this is a) low cost; b) healthy; c) inclusive and d) sustainable. We hold regular sessions in community locations, pop-up activities at festivals/events or as outreach to families with particular



needs, sharing healthy food ideas with a bigger audience and have a number of activities on line through our online network and social media channels.

We support parents to volunteer in regular sessions as well as provide training and support to run their own Kids Kitchen style activities in their homes, friends' houses, at cafes etc. This develops confidence, skills and experience, and many go to join our accredited training on cooking from scratch with adults and kids.

## What we want to see:

**Adults caring for young children are less isolated, and feel an essential and useful part of their community.**

This starts with the micro-community created within each session and builds over repeat visits as friendships are formed and information and support is shared.

**Children and adults are eating more healthy food.**

We showcase local sustainable food projects directly to parents, and demonstrate that cooking from scratch is low cost, healthy and fun to do with kids.

**Adults are confident supporting each other.**

We engage parents in co-creating sessions, with time in session structure to adapt and act quickly on suggestions, building ownership and confidence of attendees.

**Adults and carers of young children have increased skills and confidence.**

Our volunteers and trainees take what they learn and deliver sessions of their own, wherever they see a need. Many have used our model as a springboard to self-employment, permanent work or career change. We also broaden our impact with professional training in settings such as children's centres and preschools.

**A Community of adults increasing their wellbeing and skills.** The benefits of volunteering can be out of reach for adults of small children, but here anyone can get involved by supporting another parent on a bad day, contributing ideas or practical help, or even joining our family friendly online steering team.

## How we do this:

We work as a collective, pooling our skills and supporting each other. Projects are often initiated by parents or carers living and experiencing life in the areas they want to see something happen. Our flexible response is also supported by our legal structure: We are registered as a Community Interest Company (CIC) so we can generate unrestricted income to further our mission– there is no personal profit. We are steered by a team of people with experience of the issues we are tackling. We aim to create sustainable jobs for ourselves and others and we support each other in this.

Our two directors, who continued in this year are our two founders, Eva Freeman and Rebecca Tully. We are registered as a Community Interest Company 11129617

# Highlights 2020-21

## Cooking activities with over 1,000 adults and children

Changed our delivery model overnight to respond to the national shutdown

Planned and hosted **49** online sessions

Delivered over **400** ingredients activity bags.

## Maintaining and developing our ability to have impact

Raised **£2,500** through an emergency Crowdfunder at the beginning of the year, securing our very short-term future in the most uncertain part of the pandemic

Secured **£32,000** in grants by the end of the year to increase outreach, deliver regular sessions and provide targeted training to unemployed people

Generated over **£2,000** income from delivered services online and across the UK

**Retained our full team** through pandemic, building skills and providing support. Included regular paid work for eleven freelancers, and support from and to five volunteers.

Delivered **two** sets of accredited training, training **nine** new session leaders in working with families and leading cooking activities.

“Kids kitchen sessions helped my five year old (and me) so much during lockdown, thank you. It gave us something to look forward to each week when everything felt pretty desperate.”

– Regular Online Cookalong Session Attendee

## Mutual support with partners

**Playbus** in East London helped us refine our outreach techniques while we supported their first steps into online meetings

**Walthamstow Toy Library** piloted a series of virtual coffee mornings with us, benefitting many East London families

**Exeter University** and our team co-produced new resources on the future of food for families

**Leominster Food Bank** worked with us on our first ingredients/recipe bags, we tailored a number of bags to their most prevalent ingredients

**The Village, Downham Mutual Aid** and **Lewisham FoodBank** sharing families' needs and distributing our ingredients' bag response

## Challenges

**Income generation dropped** from 25% to 6% of our overall income due to the lockdown

**Outreach time increased** with shop fronts, community centres, childcare establishments closed the team spent double outreach time – researching mutual aid / community groups online, connecting with existing families by email and phone and home visits where safe

The teams' **childcare commitments increased** by up to 32 hours every week and working hours needed to be fitted in around these

We **lacked previous data** around any new services and were unable to forecast – initial outdoor meet-ups were met with some uncertainty reflecting the uncertainty of our restrictions, and energy for online sessions waxed and waned throughout the year.

# Our Activities in Detail

## Online

- Cooking and community activities that reflected changing family needs in a changing year.
- Weekly Online Sessions for all ages,
- Weekend cookalongs with siblings in mind,
- Virtual Playgroups aimed at supporting 'lockdown babies' and their carers.
- Over 250 people engaged including those referred through partners working with families in disadvantaged situations.
- Eight videos produced of Kids Kitchen recipe activities, presented by our session leaders and their children. Full videos uploaded and viewed by over 100 people, with clips and 'top tips' on social media reaching far more.

## South East London: Lewisham and Bromley

- Completed our Trust for London funded project, which engaged over 350 people over two years.
- Although the pandemic stopped our face-to-face sessions, we reached over 270 individuals through a new ingredients/recipe bag project. This maintained personal connections with many families we already knew, and reached new families through established frontline organisations and newer Covid response groups.

## Herefordshire

- Targeted outreach to existing contacts, and through new relationships – signposting these to the weekly online family sessions. At least 70 Herefordshire residents attended, including children between the ages of one and 15. Families had up to four children of different ages engaging with the session.
- Piloted the ingredients bags idea that was then rolled out to all three geographic hubs – Joint sessions in partnership with the Leominster Food Bank – providing them with recipes

- and ingredients lists in advance, and tailoring recipes to surplus supplies.
- Families attended sessions through Food Bank referrals and accompanying ingredients bags were distributed to Food Bank recipients, community larder and a women's refuge.

## East London: Waltham Forest, Hackney, Redbridge

- Over a hundred Waltham Forest residents attended sessions – both online and face to face.
- Worked with trusted partners to plan and deliver covid-safe face to face sessions when guidelines allowed.
- Worked with three local frontline organisations to provide ingredients/activity bags to low income families in both North and South of Waltham Forest.
- Established a training outreach model enabling five East London residents to build employment skills and experience, and two to move into work.

## Learning and Skills

- Delivered our course "Cooking from Scratch with Young Children" live online twice.
- We also developed a flexible pre-recorded video version of our course, broadening accessibility to our learning offer.
- Eight people trained, developing new session leaders in all our hubs and potential session leaders in new areas.
- A joint project with Exeter University increased students' understanding of the steps we can take to ensure sustainable access to food for the future. Nine Kids Kitchen team members, including four volunteers took part, and together we produced a set of resources for families including a kids book and key facts.
- Invested time training and supporting our team in building their confidence and skills using online platforms.

**Hub Partnerships with:** The Big Skill / Walthamstow Garden Party / P184U Al Suffa / Highams Park Food Aid / Phoenix Community Housing Association / The Village / Wildcat Wilderness St Hughs Community Centre / Beckenham Place Park / Downham Mutual Aid / The Living Room / Leominster Food Bank / Leominster Childrens Centre / Priors Court Residents Groups / Leyton Children and Family Centre / The Hornbeam

# IMPACT

## PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

More local plant-based food is being consumed

"I have learnt how to research and present my findings in a clear and understandable way, that is useful to people outside of academia"

– Student Participant, Exeter University Future Food Collaboration

Over 90% of parents try new cooking ideas



"We so enjoyed this session, and to be honest I just couldn't picture how the magic of Kids Kitchen could happen over zoom, without us all being in the same room, but the magic was there. It really was a joy to be cooking together in different places, loved hearing and seeing people's different ideas."

– Session Attendee, Online Cookalong in partnership with the Walthamstow Garden Party Online

## improving wellbeing

Food bills are reduced

"The book that the students produced was an instant hit with my daughter (4). She wanted to make the Shepherdess Pie instantly. A couple of her friends who saw it also really enjoyed watching, the activities and the actual cooking. I have new tools and confidence to think about small changes... to better our diet responsibly. Thank you!"

– Suwani, participant in the Exeter University Future Food Collaboration

Over 50% of families feel more connected to others locally

Young children are healthier

Adults who care for young children are less isolated

97% of us had FUN in lockdown sessions!

Over 90% of kids try new foods

Adults who care for young children are healthier, have built skills and confidence

## CREATING OPPORTUNITY



"Every week I watched myself and the boys be more confident on camera - and able to chat and share their thoughts and ideas. The space for conversation and team work made me feel so much better, happy and proud."

– Aneta, Hub Coordinator

"I feel it has really strengthened us as a team and made us work together in ways we never would have had the opportunity to do otherwise. Working with other session leaders and getting so many tips, techniques and recipe ideas has been amazing for me. I feel like I know everyone so much better now and love how I now feel so much more part of a team than I did before."

– Kate, Hub Coordinator

"I just wanted to say Thank you so much for allowing us to take part in your kids kitchen. We have loved making the Shepherdess pie and festive tarts. My 3 year old grandson has discovered a love for helping nanny in the kitchen. He loves chopping and mixing and of course the tasting lol. I have found a way to encourage a morning of thinking and good behaviour by offering more kitchen time. The recipes are delicious and healthy and fun to do."

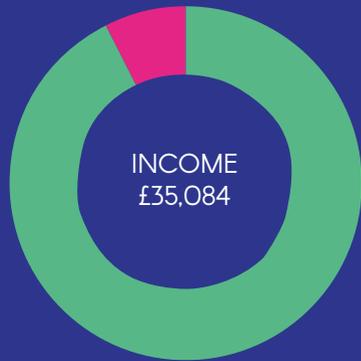
– Jane, Leominster Resident about Video Recipe Activity and Ingredients Bags.

"My child is really learning through these classes. He listens and has developed skills that now I don't need to prompt him to do. He particularly likes flour work. Thank you"

– Online session attendee



## Income and Expenditure 2020/21



Grants £32,470  
Products and services £2,614

INCOME 2019/20  
(For comparison) £39,364  
– Grants £29,304  
– Enterprise £9,190  
– Other £870

### GRANTS

- Crowdfunder Donations
- ESFA Community Training Grants
- Exeter University – Education Incubator
- Herefordshire Community Fund
- Isla Foundation
- Leominster Town Council
- London Borough of Waltham Forest
- London Catalyst
- National Lottery Community Fund
- The Woodward Charitable Trust
- Trust for London
- Trusthouse



People £31,318  
Project resources £2,826  
Core costs £1,596

## Maintaining Supportive, Flexible Employment

A large and proud part of our expenditure is on people – so much of what we do is relationships, involvement and ‘doing’. This year we were able to provide regular work for eleven colleagues – including a shielding grandparent and home-schooling parents, and also our other associates. The team were able to continue earning despite their new pandemic life of 24hr childcare, AND diversified their skills. As a parent/carer led organisation this ability to support each other’s work through ‘less than ideal’ circumstances has always informed what we do – this year it came into its own! We are delighted that the same team has come through the other side.

## Case Study – Kay

Kay got involved with Kids Kitchen in the middle of 2020 when we were in total lockdown.

A parent to two under-5s, she found out about a potential session leader role in Leominster, Herefordshire and signed up for the training. We all had to take a leap of faith at that point that our face to face sessions would return – but Kay got straight into online training and cut her teeth at the virtual playgroup very ably helped by her young ones!

Kay has a passion for cooking and always wanted to share this with her kids – “they’re really interested and enjoy helping, even if it’s just putting their hands in the flour!” She describes herself as a ‘people person’, but has also felt that despite working in nurseries, nursing homes and as a healthcare assistant, she’d lost some confidence since having children.

She has also experienced anxiety in the past and was interested in how Kids Kitchen could support people who were having difficulties to socialise, learn new skills and gain a sense of achievement. From the training and coming to online sessions she’s



Kay Paget, Kids Kitchen Trainee and Childcare Practitioner

broadened her own activities with her kids; “I’m definitely doing more savoury things now, like chopping vegetables – I think before I wouldn’t have thought they would be able to do that.” Kay has completed the training, learning new skills in the set up of food activities with young children, adapting activities to suit a range of families and – the key of keeping it simple! She’s now planning and delivering sessions in her local area, and has taken on a steering team role which is something she had never done before.



## Kids♥Kitchen

Let's cook great food together!

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