



CATERERS' GUIDE

Eating more beans, lentils and pulses is a simple and affordable way to eat more healthily. We understand that convincing some children to enjoy beans can be a significant challenge, often met with resistance due to their texture or unfamiliarity. However, our aim is to leverage Veg Power's engaging and innovative approach, coupled with our comprehensive range of resources, to inspire and educate children, encouraging them to embrace beans as a regular and enjoyable part of their meals. Through fun activities, compelling visuals, and accessible information, we can transform their perception of beans, lentils, and pulses, fostering healthier eating habits from a young age.

96%
OF ADULTS
don't eat enough
FIBRE¹



On average,
we **ONLY** eat
a third of a
PORTION of
BEANS a day²



We **EAT** and **WASTE**
TWICE as much
MEAT as the
GLOBAL AVERAGE³



20% **UK Green**
House Gas
emissions come from
FOOD system⁴



Only **25%**
OF PEOPLE
REGULARLY
eat **BEANS**⁵



Over **40%**
OF PEOPLE
do not eat
any **BEANS**¹



Veg Power has partnered up with The Food Foundation on a three-year mission to get the UK eating more beans. It's a large and dynamic coalition with a wide range of coordinated initiatives including this programme in primary schools and special schools and a massive social media campaign supported by celebrity chefs, nutritionists and a movement of people.

Key Information

Starts: 3rd November 2025

More information: <https://vegpower.org.uk/boosting-beans/>

Teaching resources: <https://vegpower.org.uk/the-big-bean-boost-teaching-resources>

Need help: hello@vegpower.org.uk

Share on social media with #TheBigBeanBoost @VegPowerUK



THE BIG BEAN BOOST

The Big Bean Boost is the schools' programme for beans designed by the same people as Eat Them to Defeat Them.

The programme runs for three years through to the end of term in June/July 2028. We will be working with schools and caterers to increase the frequency of beans on the menu throughout the year. Each year there will be a strong feature period in November, but there will be activities and resources throughout the year.

Physical Resources

Each school will receive the following:

Rolls of **participation stickers** for lunchtime teams to hand out at bean-themed lunch events – we will provide enough for three whole-school lunch events.

A set of A4 **decoration packs** for the lunch area, one set per school. These are intended to be used for the three years, though we will allow for some replacement of lost or damaged decoration sets.

A4 **posters** to go in reception to notify parents & carers. These are intended to be used for the three years, though we will allow for some replacement of lost or damaged posters.

Mission packs with charts and sticker sheets for the school to give to each pupil to take home with new ones sent to schools every November.



Digital Resources

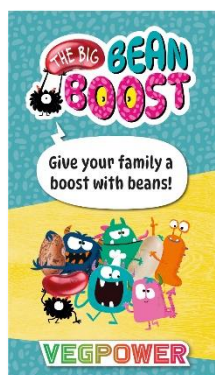
For schools: A fun **school assembly** to introduce

children to the programme + curriculum supporting **lesson plans** and classroom activities for different year groups.

For families: A mobile-friendly **digital flyer for schools to send to parents** to engage and inform them and direct them to the resources we have to support families.

For caterers: **Design assets** and usage guide for making your own themed resources such as menus

Digital resources here: <https://vegpower.org.uk/the-big-bean-boost-teaching-resources>





OUR CREATIVE APPROACH EXPLAINED

Beans, lentils and pulses are small but mighty powerhouses of nutrition... but let's face it, they've always had a bit of a PR problem.

We know from Eat Them to Defeat Them that making food fun is essential to engaging children, and engaging children is essential for making mealtimes easier for parents. That's why, instead of trying to convince children with facts about nutrition, fibre or sustainability, we've always taken a playful approach built on what really connects: fun, silliness and giving kids a sense of control.

But, let's be honest, beans are often seen as bland, a bit boring. How do we find the fun in beans?

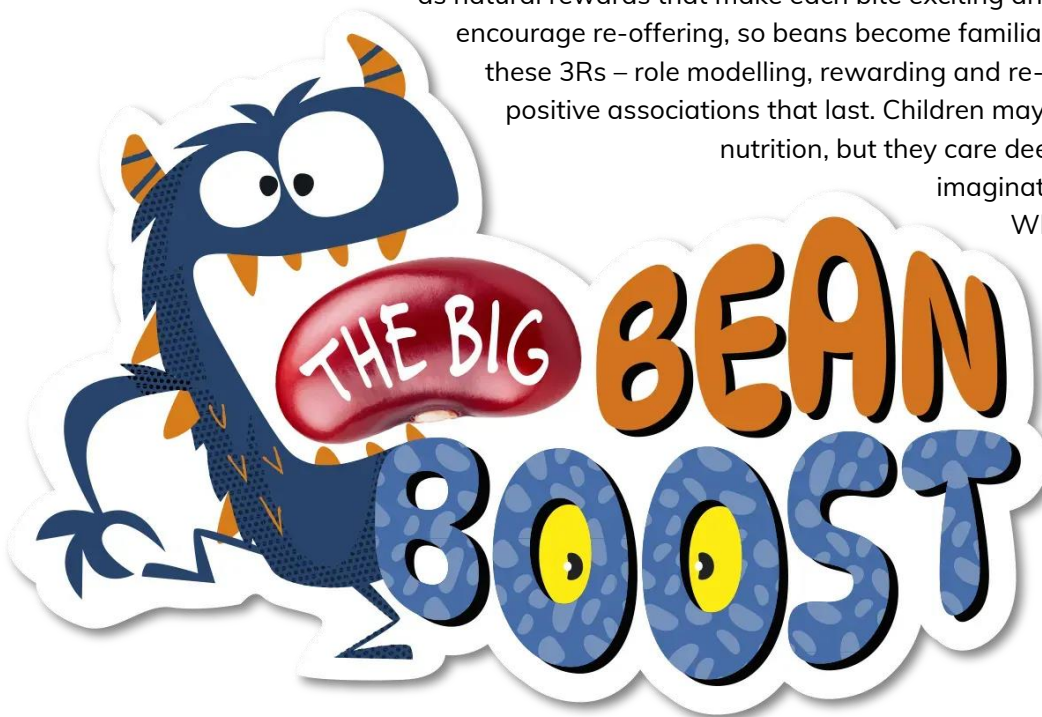
Children can copy their favourite monster's bean boosts, or dream up their own ridiculous powers for them and their family when they try some beans.

With tools like sticker charts and family activities, beans shift from just something healthy we should eat, to something children want to engage with, again and again.

And behind the fun lies real evidence-based behavioural science. Kids are more open to new foods when they're introduced through play, laughter and shared experiences with adults. Parents and carers are more likely to improve nutrition when it doesn't risk disrupting family mealtime harmony, but instead encourages stronger family bonding.

The monster characters help parents role model eating beans, the silly powers act as natural rewards that make each bite exciting and sticker charts encourage re-offering, so beans become familiar over time. Together, these 3Rs – role modelling, rewarding and re-offering – create positive associations that last. Children may not care about nutrition, but they care deeply about fun, imagination and connection.

When beans bring all that to the table, they are really given a boost.





MAXIMISING IMPACT FOR CATERERS

This programme is designed to help you increase the acceptance, enjoyment and consumption of beans throughout the year. Over the three years the programme will move through three phases:

- Year 1 – Try Beans – all about getting kids to try beans
- Year 2 – Explore Beans – introduce more variety
- Year 3 – Love Beans – encourage greater frequency

Our surveys for Eat Them to Defeat Them show a significant impact for school lunches:

90% Children
ATE MORE VEG
with their school
Lunches



45% of schools
report that the
programme encourage
more children to
TRY SCHOOL MEALS



78% children were more
likely to **FINISH**
their veg which
REDUCED WASTE



This beans programme will have a similar impact but only if it is properly executed.

Boosting beans on your menus

Each school will receive enough participation stickers for every pupil to allow for at least three, and potentially more, lunchtime bean-focused events. We would rather the stickers are saved for days when you serve a bean focussed recipe.

You probably already have some bean dishes on your menu. When you have a dish which features beans, that would be a great opportunity to make it a bean day. Beans are a great way to stretch your catering budget as they add fibre, protein and bulk out dishes. Incorporating beans into your existing menu plan can be as easy as adding beans to a shepherd's pie, bolognaise, chilli or curry.

The primary goal of this programme is to increase the take-up of bean dishes among pupils. Stickers should be reserved exclusively for children who choose and consume a bean dish, specifically encouraging bean consumption rather than general vegetable promotion. The campaign duration can be flexible:

- If bean dishes are served frequently (e.g., multiple times a week), the campaign can be concentrated into a shorter period (1-2 weeks) to create a focused buzz.
- If bean dishes are served less often (e.g., once every three weeks), programme resources can be stretched over these occasions, potentially extending into next term.
- To maximize impact and encourage children to try bean dishes, it is recommended to avoid serving them on the same day as highly popular alternatives like pizza or fish & chips, giving the bean dishes a better chance to be chosen and enjoyed.



- We want the kids looking for the beans, pulses and lentils as part of the gamification and fun we create, so we advise mixing in whole beans into the dishes rather than blending in hidden beans.

Getting the most from the stickers

Stickers are always effective, but they actually serve two purposes:

1. **Reward for trying beans at school:** Caterers and the lunchtime team can give children stickers as a reward for trying the featured bean dish. Children love stickers! For children who are hesitant, a sniff or a lick of the bean dish is also acceptable.
2. **Communication with parents and carers:** The stickers communicate to parents and carers that their child tried beans at school. We will advise parents to look out for these stickers coming home and to acknowledge and praise them, ideally by joining in the fun theme of the campaign and using the reward chart at home.

We'll be supporting parents & carers to repeat the bean-eating experience at home, praising the child using a reward and sticker chart. This process aims to move the child from sampling beans at school, to repeating the experience at home, and finally receiving a reward, thereby normalising beans in their diet. A fresh set of the same designs will be sent again each year.

Decorations

Look out for your A4 Decoration pack for the lunch area. They help bring the theme to life, we suggest putting them up on bean days throughout the year/

Please keep hold of these to use again next year as the funding limits us from creating new decorations next year.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Recognising that dietary habits are primarily formed at home, we complement our positive school experiences by empowering parents and carers to improve their children's nutrition.

Feedback from our Eat Them to Defeat Them campaign shows how impactful this can be:

82%
PARENTS
of children who took part said they
ATE MORE VEGETABLES



62% **PARENTS**
of children who took part in schools
said they also
ATE MORE VEG



82%
OF PARENTS
say their family **enjoyed** using their
REWARD CHART



To support families, we provide:

- **Mission packs with charts and sticker sheets** for each pupil to take home each November.
- A mobile-friendly digital **flyer for schools to send to parents** & carers to engage and inform them and direct them to the resources we have to support families.
- **Online resources** from the expert nutritionists, food psychologists and chefs who support Veg Power to help parents and carers to get their families to eat more beans without the risk, cost and friction that concern many parents and carers.
- A wide selection of recipes, serving ideas and tips on how to include more beans in your family's favourite dishes from our network of celebrity and community chefs.

Digital resources for parents are available here:

simplyveg.vegpower.org.uk/your-food/your-food-beans/





YOUR PLANNER

You can run the beans programme at any time, as often and for as long as you wish, but not starting sooner than 3 November. We suggest you liaise with your schools to create a schedule which works with beans on the menu at lunch.

Stage 1 – Planning (now)

- ☐ Liaise with school, when will beans be on the menu
- ☐ Decide on your bean dishes

Stage 2 – Preparation (from 14 October)

- ☐ Expect delivery of a box or two of physical assets
- ☐ Check you have the correct amount of physical resources
- ☐ Give stickers to lunchtime team
- ☐ Give decoration kit to kitchen or lunchtime team

Stage 3 – Launch (from 3 November)

- ☐ The school will distribute the take home packs
- ☐ The school will kick off with an assembly
- ☐ The school will remind families with the digital flyer and put up posters

Stage 4 - Live

- ☐ Put up the decoration on bean days
- ☐ Hand out stickers at bean meal lunches
- ☐ Look out for email updates from us
- ☐ Have fun! Post and share your bean victories on social media

Stage 5 -Feedback

- ☐ Look out for emails asking you to feedback

All digital resources available here:

<https://vegpower.org.uk/the-big-bean-boost-teaching-resources>





PHYSICAL RESOURCES

A3 Reward Chart with Stickers



A3 Reward Chart front folded to A5



A5 Sticker Sheet



50mm stickers for schools (die cut to shape - pack of 3 designs x 100 stickers per roll)



A4 Reception Poster and Decoration Pack (5 x 2 designs A4 die cut on card)





ABOUT VEG POWER

Veg Power is a not-for-profit alliance dedicated to improving children's diets by making healthy, sustainable eating irresistible. Through collaboration, creative communications, and real-world insight Veg Power gets kids excited about fruit, vegetables and beans and empowers parents to make healthy eating easy.

You might know us from Eat Them to Defeat Them and Growing to Love.

VegPower.org.uk

ABOUT THE BEANS PROJECT

Thanks to National Lottery players, The Food Foundation, alongside Veg Power and Kent University Students' Union, will encourage people across the UK to eat sustainable food sources such as beans, lentils and [pulses](#), as a way of helping them take achievable and affordable climate action.

The [beans project](#) has received almost £1.4m from The National Lottery Community Fund, the UK's largest funder of community activity, and aims to reduce the impact of diets on greenhouse gas emissions, whilst creating a long-term shift towards healthier and more sustainable dietary habits. With the support of local and national food businesses, activities will include a digital campaign to engage the public.

This grant comes from the Climate Action Fund, a £100 million commitment over 10 years from The National Lottery Community Fund to support communities across the UK to take action on climate change and involve more people in climate action. This forms part of one of the funder's four key missions in its 2030 strategy, '[It starts with community](#)' – supporting communities to be environmentally sustainable.