

BANG IN SOME BEANS



VEGPOWER

Feel the fibre programme guide

Summary

Timings: Launching 28th September and available any time after

Summary: This programme supports children to eat more fibre by consuming more beans & pulses, as well as fresh fruit and veg at school and at home. This will bring together a large primary and special school programme with collaboration between schools and caterers and supported by a significant social media campaign and media partnerships which will reach well beyond schools.

Objectives:

1. To **increase the uptake and consumption of blended dishes** containing beans & pulses at school, moving beans & pulses from hidden to “discovered”, accepted and consumed.
2. In addition, this campaign will educate and **support your families** to blend more beans, pulses and veg into their dishes at home increasing fibre, five-a-day and helping families navigate rising food costs.
3. Educate and support parents & carers to ensure that at least one of their child's daily **snacks are a fresh source of fibre** and one of their five-a-day such as an apple, pear or carrot sticks.

What are we asking schools to do? This is a caterer led programme in schools, but your support will greatly increase the impact. It has been designed to be flexible to suit individual schools. At the lightest end, you simply need a little coordination with your caterers and to send information out to your parents & carers. As you wish, you can engage more with an assembly, lesson plans and other activities which will be fun and rewarding for children and teachers, as well as supporting essential curriculum objectives around health, diet, food provenance and sustainability.

Funding: This programme is 100% funded by The National Lottery.

Why Beans & Pulses?

The National Diet and Nutrition Survey shows that 86% of primary school aged children are not getting enough **fibre**. This is important for their digestive health but also materially impacts their school day. Children without enough fibre will be hungry an hour or two after lunch, their sugar levels will drop, their concentration will decline and their behaviour might become disruptive.

Fibre (#Fibremaxxing) is trending this year and offers strong immediate, valued benefits to a child. Fibre improves digestion, prevents constipation, helps children feel fuller for longer and aids weight management. Parents & carers will be more aware of fibre because of all the media attention around this issue and will be keen to find out more and be supported on it.

Many of your families will also be under increasing **cost of living pressures** due to increased food and fuel prices. Beans & pulses are a smart way to increase protein and fibre and reduce meal costs or pad meals out to go further. Exactly the tips and support parents are going to need.

What's more, beans and pulses are an amazing crop, kinder to the environment and excellent at regenerating soil.

Beans offer benefits on multiple fronts: improved dietary health, enhanced classroom concentration, reduced living expenses, and greater environmental sustainability.

The School Challenge

The feedback we have from interviews and workshops with caterers is that beans which are discreet on the written menu and hidden on the plate (i.e. blended in) are eaten as they are not noticed. But when visible, either in prominence on a written menu or on the plate the beans are rejected, waste increases and meal uptake declines.

Under proposed **new regulations for school food standards** in England recently published by DfE and due to come in to force from September 2027, there will be a significant increase in beans and pulses in school meals. This campaign will help your school and families prepare for that change and avoid uptake decline, complaints and increased waste that a sudden change might cause.

Our research and the feedback from caterers is that **the key challenge is often the parents** and carers who perceive beans as the caterers being cheapskates and cheating their children out of a "proper" meal. Many parents see beans and pulses as a "cheap" choice rather than hugely beneficial to their child. Parents spread this negativity to the children, many of whom are unfamiliar with beans and pulses causing the uptake to drop and increased waste.

With over 2 million children having participated in our programmes in schools, Veg Power is a well-known, independent, not-for-profit supported by unquestionable expert leaders in nutrition, home cooking and raising children to be healthy. Our school resources are all created by our School Manager, a former primary head, to be both curriculum compliant and easy to use. In an independent survey of 3,000 parents of primary school aged children 85% of those parents who participated in our programmes say their child has eaten more veg; it has made it easier for them to serve veg at home and that they wish to take part again. Parents trust us on this issue and they welcome advice from us, more than they might from a caterer or directly from their school.

Resources

These are the resources we will have available from mid-September for use any time after 28th September.

- Assembly with PowerPoint and video.

- KS1 /P1-3 and KS2/P4-7 lesson plans on beans with support activities. Pupils to be explore the many types of beans available, where to find them and the tasty meals they appear in.
- KS1 /P1-3 and KS2/P4-7 lesson plans on fibre with support activities & video. Pupils to be explore what is fibre, why fibre matters, and simple ways to add more fibre to your daily diet.
- The Discover Beans Chart and activity to encourage children to “discover” the beans already on their school menu. “Who knew that our pizza has beans in the sauce” This helps children to accept and enjoy beans.
- A range of arts and craft and handy rainy-day activities.
- Digital flyer to send to parents & carers to share news of the programme and direct them to online expert resources on increasing beans and other fresh fibre at home.
- Participation stickers. Big bold 50mm stickers. *

The goal is to change perceptions i.e. “the things I like contain beans”. It is also about normalising the acceptance of beans within meal-choice. “I eat beans” “I like beans” + creating talkability. The child will take home excitement around beans at schools, about discovering all the things which contain beans and so create the opportunity for the parents to add beans to their recipes at home.

How are we supporting families at home?

There is generally a trending media and social media presence on fibre and beans which will create a strong background for this programme. This is further backed by all these actions.

1. We have partnered with Good Food, Netmums and First News who will be talking more about fibre and beans and supporting this programme taking the message to millions.
2. We have partnered with networks of thousands of community projects through Felix, Feeding Britain, Bread & Butter Thing, the Community Fridge Network to send out resources to help over 1 million families facing cost of living pressures.
3. A wide range of businesses will be supporting the drive for fibre including Sainsburys, Waitrose, Coop, Bold Beans and Merchant Gourmet with promotions and offers.
4. We are asking schools to push out our **fibre digital flyer** and **promotional video** featuring a diverse mix of high-profile expert voices on the importance of fibre and beans as a source of fibre.
5. These fliers will direct parents to our **digital channels** which will include:
 - a. A deeper dive short form video on the nutrition of fibre and beans featuring Celebrity nutritionist Rhianon Lambert.
 - b. A deeper dive on the science of fibre, digestion and gut health featuring BBC presenter Professor Giles Yeo.
 - c. A series of short-form video guides on how to add more beans and veg to family favourite dishes without waste and battles such as Spaghetti Bolognese, Curry, Fajitas, Lasagne and Mac & Cheese. These will have expert tips from home cook and presenter Lauren Leyva.
 - d. A series of short-form video guide to different beans featuring ITV’s chef Shivi Ramoutar, chef and food writer Melissa Hemsley, celebrity nutritionist Charlotte Stirling-Reed and chef Tom Hunt.
 - e. A large collection of celebrity bean recipes.
 - f. Downloads, jokes, and other fun stuff for the kids.
6. All the **influencers** listed above will also be supporting on social media with ideas, recipes and inspiration as well as chefs Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, Jeff Boadi, Bettina Campolluci Bordi, Niki Webster / Rebel Recipes, Claire Thomson / 5 O’clock Apron and

Tom Aikens. Our social media supporters have a combined reach of over 3 million, and we have more joining as this project gathers momentum.

Next Steps

Please register your interest and to receive updates here:

<https://mailchi.mp/6b2b51c11235/bang-in-some-beans-2026>

or to request stickers here:

<https://partners.vegpower.org.uk/>

If you have any questions or suggestions, please email our team at hello@vegpower.org.uk