

# Healthy Lifestyles

## Report Card

December 2020

Health and Wellbeing Service



## Mid Ulster District Council

### Slow Cooker Initiative – Healthier Eating on a Budget



As a result of learning from the Shielding Service and to further support the needs of vulnerable households during the Covid-19 pandemic Mid Ulster District Council's Healthy Eating Sub Group of the Health and Wellbeing Thematic Group and the Northern Healthy Lifestyles Partnership developed a proposal for those households accessing the 11 local Foodbank services. This was kindly supported by Mid Ulster Tesco's Community Champions with the aim of providing a more sustainable, longer term option for those availing of Foodbank services, to make nutritious meals on a budget.

In total fifty five slow cooker starter kits were offered to households availing of Foodbank services and included; a slow cooker, recipe book, store cupboard food items, Tesco £10 voucher (cannot be used on alcohol and cigarettes) and a Northern Healthy Lifestyle reusable shopping bag.

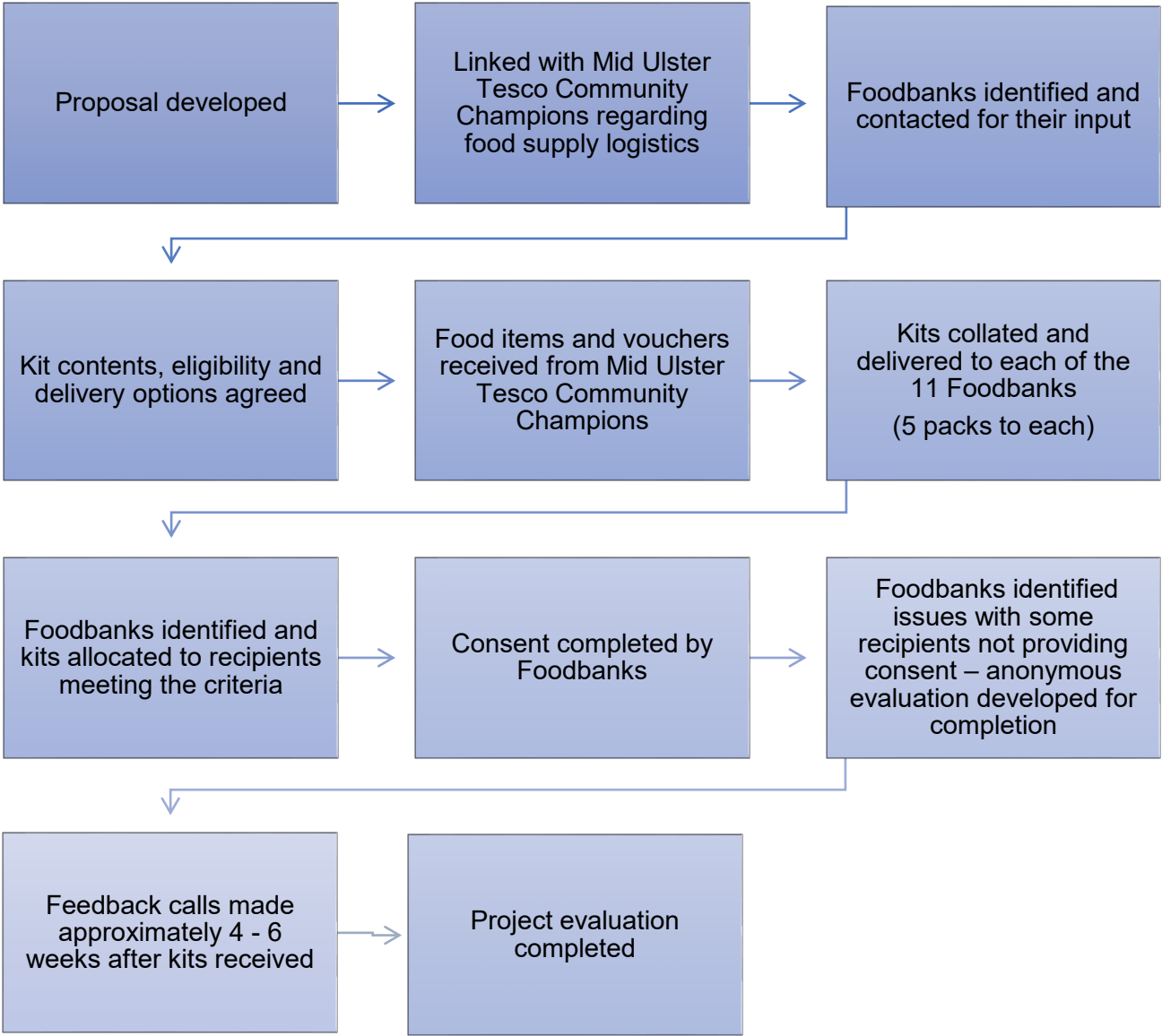
Foodbanks identified households based on the following criteria;

- Did not currently have a slow cooker
- Were struggling to make nutritious, hot meals on a low budget
- Were interested in learning to cook healthy, affordable food

Once a household was confirmed as eligible, Foodbanks issued the kits and completed consent for the recipient to be contacted by Mid Ulster District Council in 4 - 6 weeks for the purposes of providing feedback. Some recipients were not comfortable with being contacted in this way so an anonymous evaluation was developed which the Foodbank asked the recipient to complete.

All fifty five starter kits were issued between 8 July and 4 December 2020. Initially Foodbanks were asked to issue the starter kits to households within 2 weeks, however, this period was extended as those accessing a Foodbank do not tend to require assistance every week.

# How much did we do?

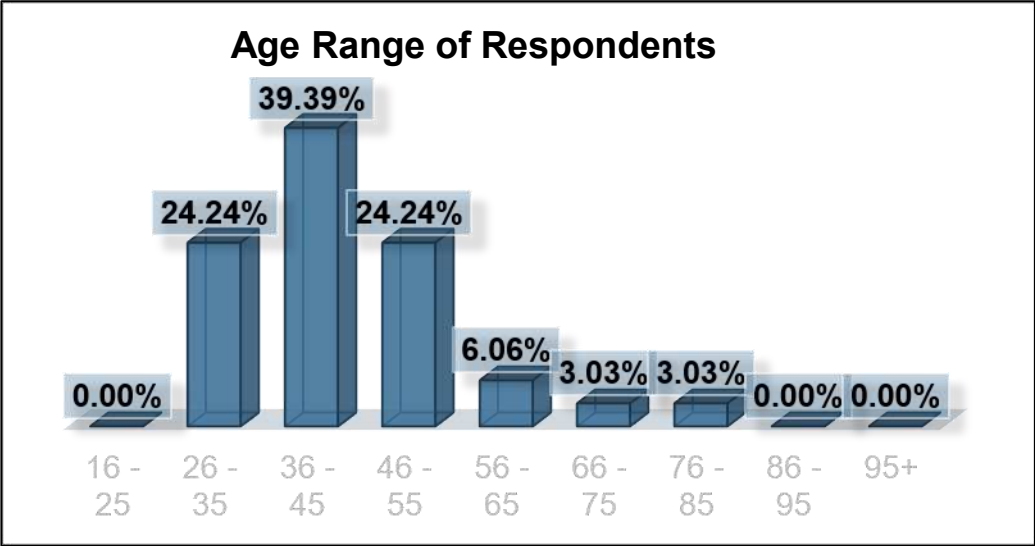


**55**  
slow cooker kits  
were distributed  
through 11  
Foodbanks

Feedback  
received from  
**34** recipients

Closest large town to recipients:  
20 households - Dungannon  
15 households - Cookstown  
20 households - Magherafelt

80% were allocated to families with children under 18  
24% to single parent families  
24% families with children over 18



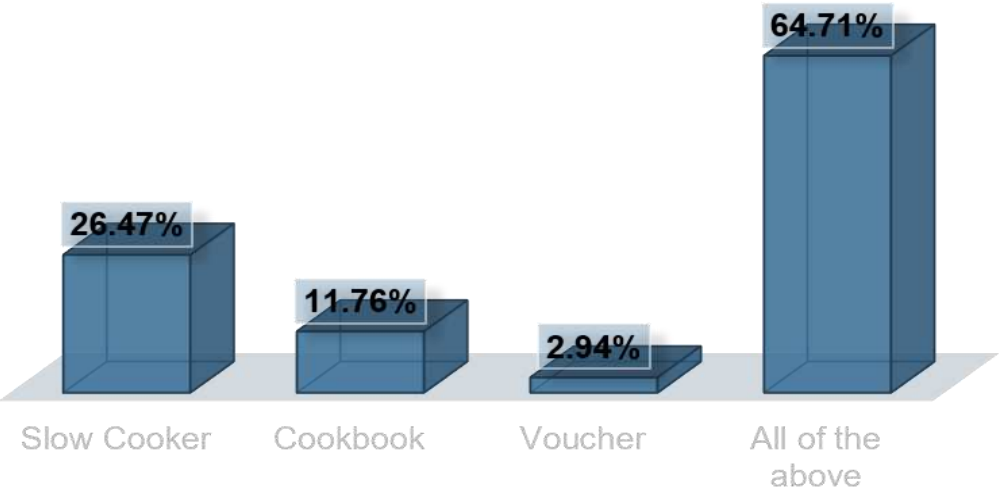
# How well did we do?

## Interest in additional support

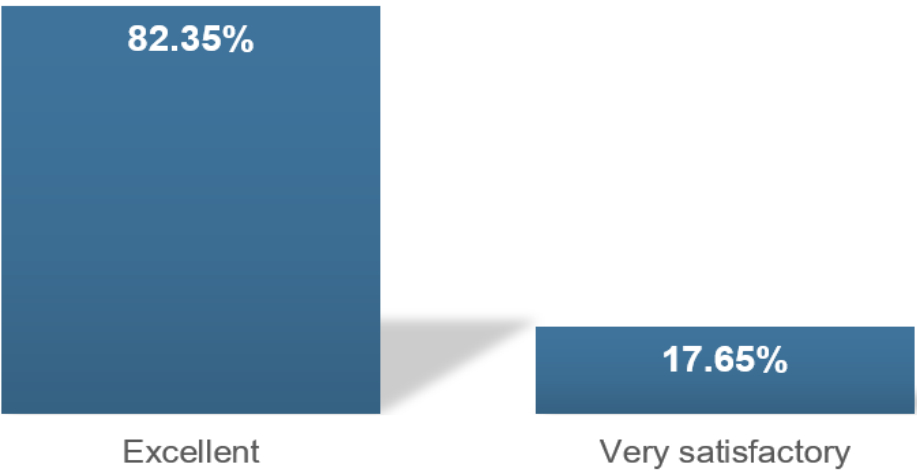


All items within the slow cooker starter kit were highlighted as being useful including; the slow cooker, recipe book and voucher

## Most liked slow cooker kit item

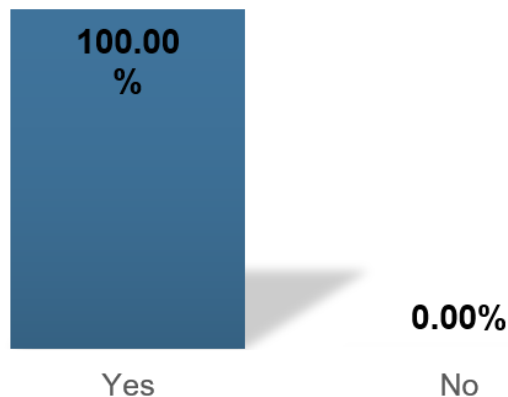


## Flavour of meals made from recipe book

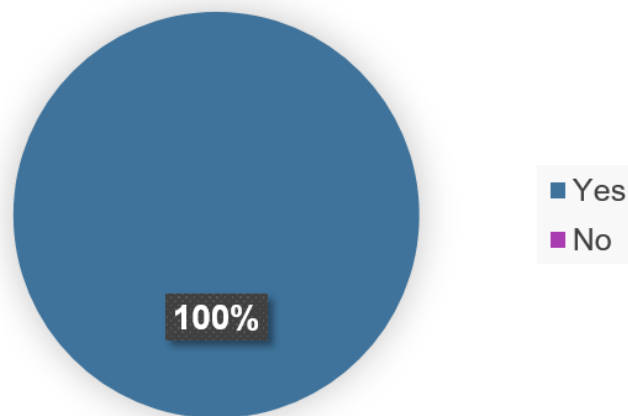


# Is anyone better off?

Have you used the slow cooker?



Would you recommend to other families?



100% reported that they used the cooker, found it easy to use, will continue to use it and would recommend this programme to other families.

94% of the respondents reported using the recipe book, with 97% stating they found it easy to use. Some even reported using the book with their children and involving them in meal preparation.

*'Kids loved helping with recipes'*  
*'Kids have never eaten as well, normally chicken nuggets'*

Within the comments there were multiple references to confidence building as a result of receiving the packs:

*'This is a very kind gesture and will give people more confidence when cooking meals'*  
*'I have very low self-esteem would like any help I can so I can get confident cooking for kids. I love the slow cooker so easy to use and clean.'*

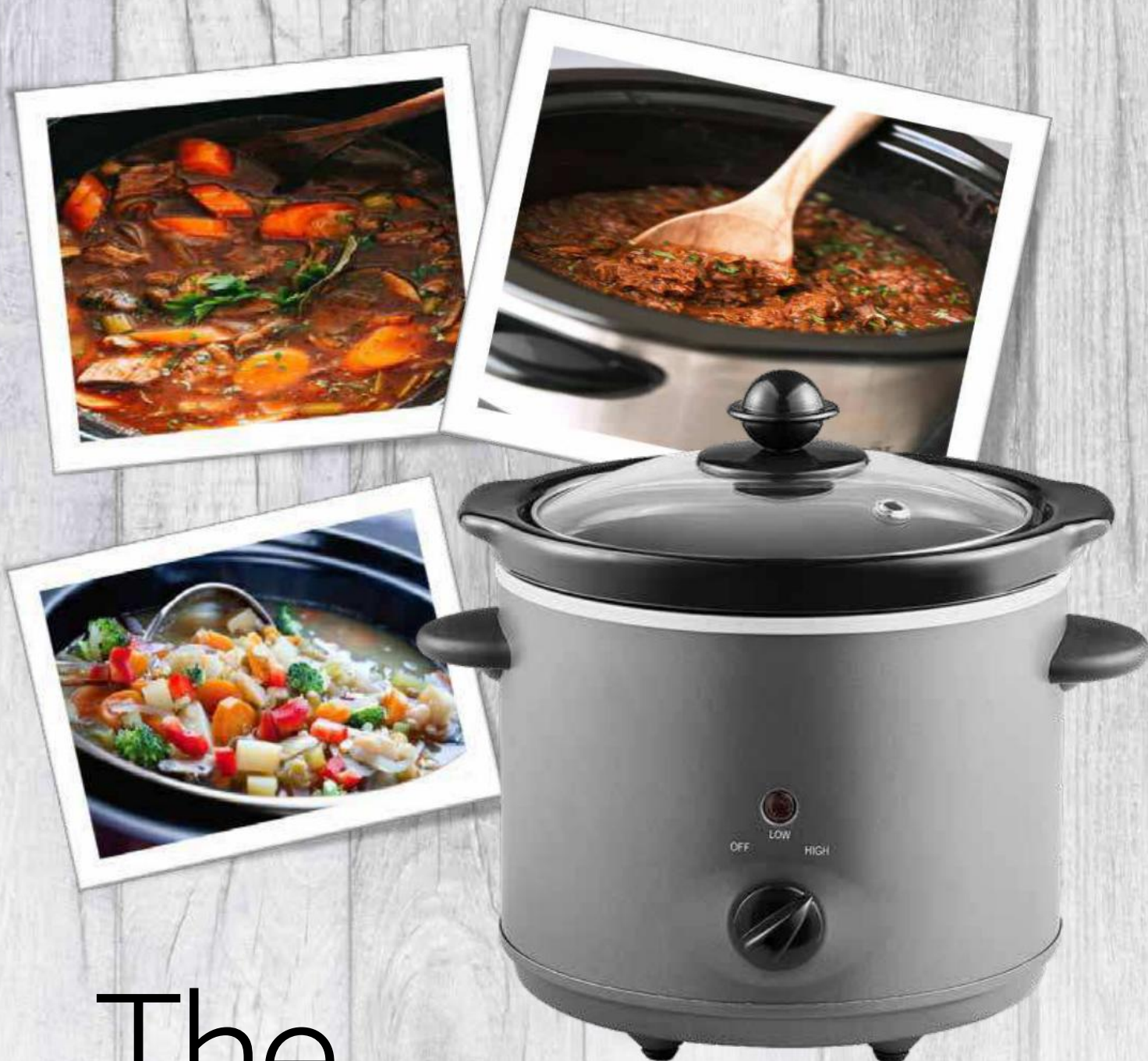
*'Without the recipe book I would have struggled to use the cooker'*

*'People want a hand up not a hand out',*

*'I was scared at first it would be expensive to run but it's so cheap!'*

*'I was under so much pressure the week I got it the voucher was of most interest as it took pressure off, but long term the slow cooker is the best part'.*





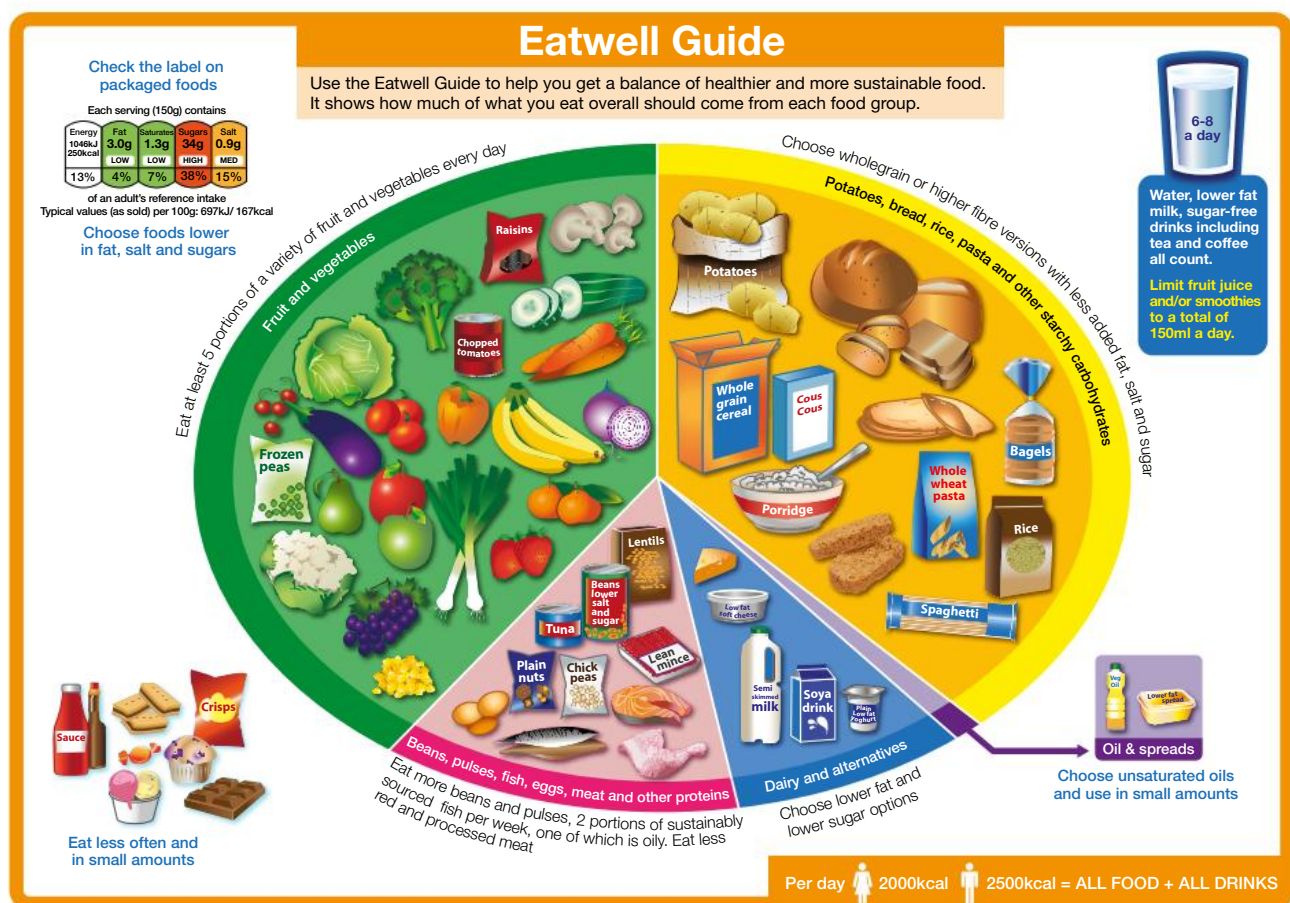
# The Slow Cooker Cook Book

# Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	Why use a slow cooker	4
1.2	Five Top Tips	5
1.3	Personal Hygiene	6
1.4	Keeping safe when cooking	7
1.5	Equipment List	8-10
	<b>Recipes</b>	<b>11-25</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Soups</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1	Seasonal Vegetable Soup	12-13
2.2	Potato & Leek Soup	14-15
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Mains</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1	Irish stew	17-18
3.2	Veggie curry	19-20
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Desserts</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1	Rice Pudding	22-23
4.2	Stewed Apple	24-25
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>26</b>

# 1.0 Foreword

This slow cooker recipe book is a step-by-step guide to support you and your family to make healthier meals based on the Eatwell Guide.



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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# 1.1 Why use a slow cooker

## **Easy to use**

Making a tasty slow cooked meal is easy as you can put all the ingredients in the one pot and let it cook throughout the day.

## **Time**

It doesn't take long to prepare a meal in a slow cooker, it is good to plan ahead and either prepare in the morning or in the evening.

## **Healthy**

By cooking your own meals you know exactly what you are eating and can have healthy meals without a lot of work.

## **Clean**

You can cook a complete meal in a slow cooker and it is easy to clean.

# 1.2 Five Top Tips

## 1. Portions and Planning

Using a slow cooker allows you to make things in bigger amounts, which means any leftovers can be cooled down and put into small containers. These can then be put into the fridge or freezer and taken out and reheated as you need them.

## 2. Temperature Control

It is important that you follow the temperature instructions on the recipes when cooking. Some slow cookers have different settings, it is advisable to refer to the manufacturer's instructions to ensure the correct cooking time.

## 3. Adding Flavour

You can add flavours like herbs, spices, garlic and lemon juice at the end. Tomato puree, reduced salt soy sauce and stock cubes are all good ways of adding flavour.

## 4. Cooking

Try to cut vegetables a similar size for even cooking.

**IMPORTANT - Do not remove lid from your slow cooker during cooking and avoid the temptation to 'stir' the contents.**

## 5. Preheating

It takes some time for the slow cooker to heat up so switch on your slow cooker 5mins before adding your ingredients.

# 1.3 Personal Hygiene



Don't wear jewellery



Tie back your hair



Don't sneeze or cough over food



Never lick a spoon and put it back in the food



Cover cuts with Plaster



Do not handle food when ill

# 1.4 Keeping safe when cooking



Always wash hands before preparing food and especially after handling raw food



Always wash fruit and vegetables



Be careful with knives



Wash knives, chopping boards and worktops as soon as you have used them. Use hot soapy water followed by a sanitiser/disinfectant



Once the food is cooled you need to cover it and place in the fridge



Keep raw food in the bottom of the fridge. Leftover food should be thrown away after 2 days/48hours.

# 1.5 Equipment list



Sharp knife



Chopping boards



Saucepan



Slow cooker



Wooden Spoon



Sieve



Cutlery



Cup



Bowl



# 1.5 Equipment list



Kettle



Scales



Tin opener



Whisk



Potato masher



Measuring Jug



Apple corer



Peeler



Colander

# 1.5 Equipment list



Garlic press



Bread knife



Oven gloves



Tablespoon



Microwave



Hand Blender

# 2.0 Soups





# 2.1 Seasonal Vegetable Soup

This vegetable soup is great for every season of the year and is packed full of nutrients.

**Serves:** 8

**Equipment:**

- 1 slow cooker
- 1 sharp knife
- 1 chopping board
- 1 peeler
- 1 spoon
- 1 measuring jug

**Ingredients:**



3 large carrots



2 celery sticks



1 onion



1 Leek



2 vegetable stock cubes  
(reduced salt)



900ml Boiling water

# 2.1 Seasonal Vegetable Soup

**Preparation Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Time in slow cooker:** 6 hours on LOW / 4 hours on HIGH

## **Method:**

1. Preheat slow cooker on HIGH
2. Wash, peel and chop your vegetables into small pieces
3. Add everything to the slow cooker
4. Dissolve stock cubes in boiling water and pour over ingredients
5. Place lid on slow cooker and leave to cook, when finished check for seasoning and add any flavourings that you like.



**Why not try:** Adding 2 handfuls of barley, lentils, pasta or rice to make it more bulky. You could serve with wholemeal wheaten bread or a baked potato



## 2.2 Potato and Leek Soup

This soup is easy to make, creamy and delicious.

**Serves:** 8

### **Equipment:**

- 1 slow cooker
- 1 sharp knife
- 1 chopping board
- 1 peeler
- 1 spoon
- 1 measuring jug
- 1 hand blender

### **Ingredients:**



1 large onion



2 medium leeks



4 medium potatoes



2 reduced salt chicken or vegetable stock cubes



180ml semi-skimmed milk



Boiling water

## 2.2 Potato and Leek Soup

**Preparation Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Time in slow cooker:** 6 hours on LOW / 4 hours on HIGH

### Method:

1. Preheat your slow cooker on HIGH.
2. Wash, peel and chop your vegetables into small pieces, add to the slow cooker along with the stock cubes dissolved in boiling water until the vegetables are just covered.
3. If using, add any herbs or spices, place lid on slow cooker and leave to cook
4. When the vegetables are cooked, add the milk, any additional flavourings and if you have a blender use it to create a smooth soup.
5. When the soup is ready check for seasoning and add any flavourings that you like.



**Why not try:** You could serve with wholemeal wheaten bread or a baked potato

# 3.0 Mains



# 3.1 Irish Stew

This is a great classic stew based on simple and cheap ingredients.

**Serves:** 6

**Equipment:**

- 1 slow cooker
- 1 sharp knife
- 1 peeler
- 1 chopping board
- 1 spoon
- 1 cup

**Ingredients:**



500g lamb stewing steak,  
minced meat or beef



3 small onions



4 medium carrots



6 medium potatoes



2 reduced salt beef or  
lamb stock cubes



3 Cups of boiling water

# 3.1 Irish Stew

**Preparation Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Time in slow cooker:** 8-10 hours LOW / 4-6hrs HIGH

**Method:**

1. Preheat your slow cooker on HIGH.
2. Add meat to the slow cooker.
3. Wash, peel and cut your vegetables into small pieces
4. Wash, peel and cut the potatoes into 4 pieces
5. Add stock cubes dissolved in boiling water
6. Place lid on slow cooker and leave to cook, when finished check for seasoning and add any flavourings that you like.



## 3.2 Veggie Curry

This curry is pretty easy to make yourself, especially when buying curry paste.

**Serves:** 4-6

**Equipment:**

- 1 slow cooker
- 1 sharp knife
- 1 cutting board
- 1 tablespoon
- 1 peeler
- 1 measuring jug
- 1 tin opener

**Ingredients:**



4 tablespoons of  
curry paste



1 large onion



1 cauliflower



1 sweet potato



1 carrot



1 parsnip

## 3.2 Veggie Curry



1 reduced salt vegetable stock cube



2 peppers



400ml can of reduced fat coconut milk

**Preparation Time:** 15mins

**Time in slow cooker:** 8-10 hours LOW / 4-6hrs HIGH

### Method:

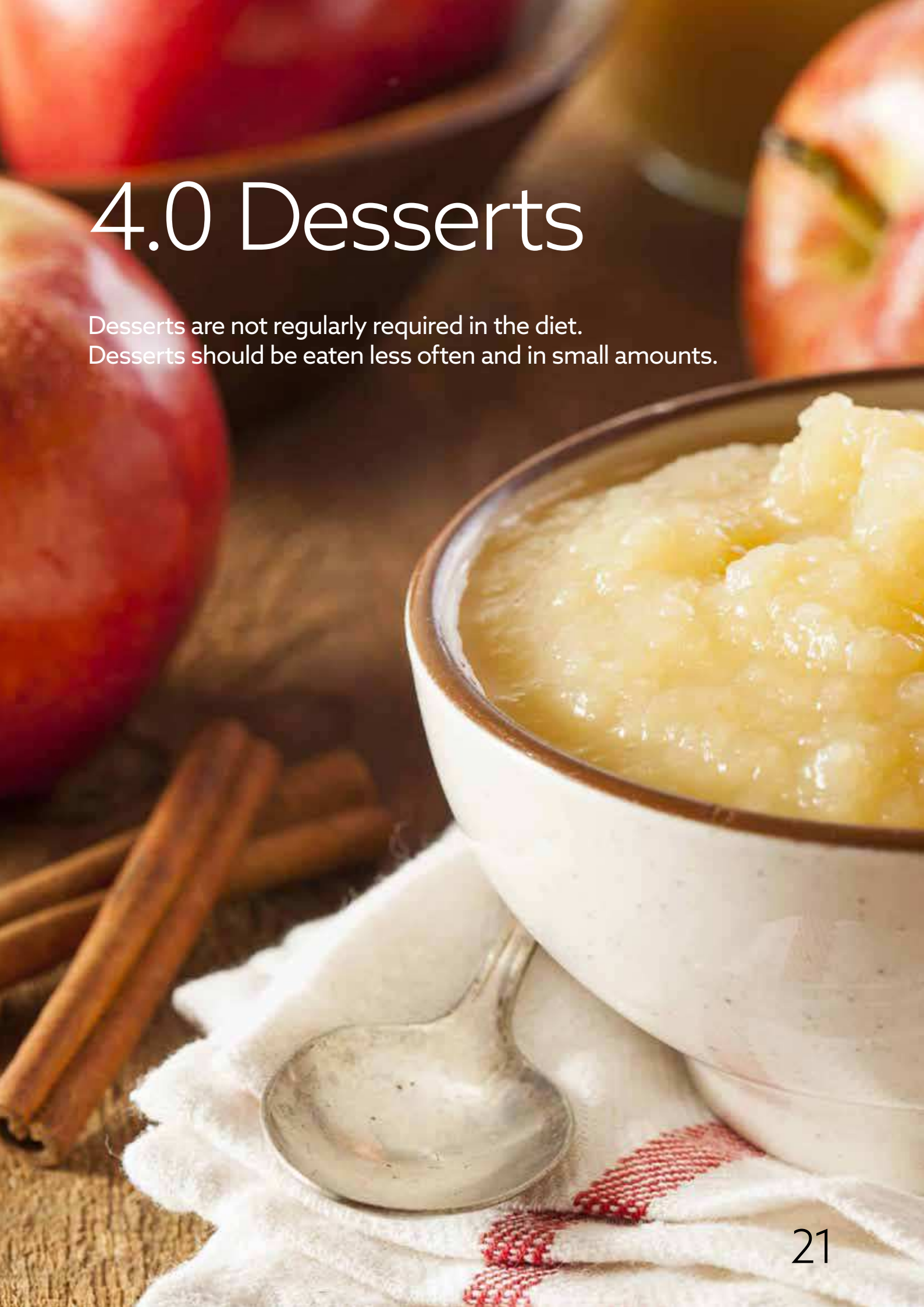
1. Preheat your slow cooker on HIGH.
2. Wash, peel and chop your vegetables into small pieces
3. In a jug add the curry paste to the coconut milk
4. Add the stock cube dissolved in boiling water and cover the top of the ingredients
5. Place lid on slow cooker and leave to cook
6. Check the seasoning and add any flavourings or more curry paste.



**Why not try:** Adding any vegetables that you like, and bulk it up with lentils, potatoes, beans or fish. You can also serve with cooked rice.

# 4.0 Desserts

Desserts are not regularly required in the diet.  
Desserts should be eaten less often and in small amounts.



# 4.1 Rice Pudding

This is an all-time favourite dessert. It's so simple to make and delicious hot or cold.

**Serves:** 6-8

**Equipment:**

- 1 slow cooker
- Scales
- 1 measuring jug
- 1 Tablespoon
- Microwave (optional)
- Saucepan (if using cooker)
- Bowl (if using microwave)

**Ingredients:**



100g pudding rice



2 tablespoons of sugar



25g of low-fat spread



800ml of  
semi-skimmed milk

# 4.1 Rice Pudding

**Preparation Time:** 15mins

**Time in slow cooker:** 3hrs on HIGH

## **Method:**

1. Preheat the slow cooker on HIGH.
2. To grease put the low fat spread onto a piece of kitchen roll and rub around the inside of the slow cooker.
3. Heat milk in the microwave or in a saucepan until hot
4. Add the other ingredients and stir.
5. Place lid on slow cooker and leave to cook
6. Add any spices or flavourings and enjoy.



**Why not try:** Having it with fresh fruit or cinnamon



## 4.2 Stewed Apple

Once cooked, you can use the stewed apple in so many ways.

**Serves:** 10 - 12

**Equipment:**

- 1 slow cooker
- 1 sharp knife
- 1 peeler
- 1 chopping board
- 1 tablespoon
- Scales
- 1 measuring jug
- 1 Apple Corer (optional)

**Ingredients:**



1kg of cooking apples



1 tablespoon water



8 tablespoons of sugar



1 small knob of  
low fat spread

## 4.2 Stewed Apple

**Preparation Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Time in slow cooker:** 2hrs on HIGH or 6hrs on LOW

### **Method:**

1. Preheat your slow cooker on HIGH.
2. Wash, peel, core and chop your apples into small pieces.
3. To grease put the low fat spread onto a piece of kitchen roll and rub around the inside of the slow cooker
4. Add the water to the bottom of the cooker
5. Add the fruit, sugar and stir.
6. Place lid on slow cooker and leave to cook.



**Why not try:** Putting it over yoghurt, on bread instead of jam, rice puddings, porridge, muesli and the list goes on. Plus you can add spices like cinnamon to add some flavour to your stewed apple.

# 5.0 Acknowledgements

This recipe book has been developed by  
Mid Ulster District Council and the  
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