

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Bristol charities collaborate to deliver groundbreaking new food and cooking course to improve health for people with disabilities.

Square Food Foundation, Brandon Trust and Milestones Trust have joined forces to deliver the first in a series of innovative new food and cookery courses that aim to improve diet and health of people with disabilities by instilling the principles of healthy eating, providing simple food preparation skills and supporting learners to make the connection between what they eat and their physical and mental health.

Supported by NHS Bristol North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (BNSSG CCG), this new 'Healthy Me' course stands out from others that have gone before by working with people with disabilities **and** the people responsible for their care to ensure that everyone involved in daily meal planning, shopping and cooking has the same understanding of what is a healthy diet and has learned the same skills in order to achieve it.

Poor diet is associated with negative health outcomes and this is especially evident among people with disabilities. 60% of people with learning disabilities (LD) are constipated compared to 10% of people without LD, and 80 of 100 people with learning disabilities had constipation as a factor in their death.

Rosi Shepherd, Director of Nursing at BNSSG CCG said:

"Maintaining a balanced diet may seem straightforward for many of us, but a lack of knowledge on how to cook and eat healthily for people with learning disabilities does have a negative impact on the risk of long-term health conditions and shortens life expectancy.

"This new initiative provides hands-on, simple steps to make healthy eating more enjoyable and part of an every-day routine for people with learning disabilities and their carers. We're really excited to see this innovative new programme develop and benefit the lives of local people."

Delivered by Square Food Foundation cookery school from its teaching kitchen in Knowle West, the Healthy Me course starts 6th May and runs once a week for 12 weeks. Each programme will have space for 12 learners - six supported people and their support workers.

Learners will work together to cook a range of healthy dishes with a focus on fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and fibre. Along the way, they'll gain practical and planning skills and key nutritional knowledge about maintaining a healthy diet. Session topics will include knife skills, healthier baking, cooking with spices and breakfast ideas, among others. At the end of every session, learners will take home a DIY recipe kit - with all the ingredients and instructions they need to cook a dish from scratch at home.

Square Food Foundation Founder and cookery teacher, Barny Haughton said:

*"We know that people with disabilities are more at risk from poor health outcomes linked to diet, and that they often depend on other people for their shopping and cooking. By equipping people with LD **and** those that support them in their everyday lives with exactly the same skills and knowledge, we're removing a barrier to better health."*

Lisa Bayley, Head of Learning at Milestones Trust said:

"We know from our own work that the food people eat impacts both their physical and mental health. So, we're excited to continue our journey with Square Food Foundation, supporting people with learning disabilities with healthy choices. Not only are the recipes nutritious, accessible and affordable, but the classes are also about having fun. Now the pandemic is easing, it's important that the people we support feel able to get back out into the community again, connecting with other people."

James Densley, Area Manager for Brandon Trust said:

"People with a learning disability face significant health inequalities throughout their lives, leading to serious consequences for their mental and physical wellbeing. Food and nutrition is a key factor, with research showing that less than 10% of adults living in supported accommodation eat a balanced diet. We're delighted to be working with the Square Food Foundation on this brilliant initiative to equip people we support with the skills and knowledge they need to be able to cook and eat well. We think the course is going to be incredibly valuable for everyone taking part and can't wait to see the positive impact it has."

For more information on Healthy Me, visit www.squarefoodfoundation.co.uk/healthy-me

The course starts on Friday 6th May and runs weekly for 12 weeks.

Ends

About Square Food Foundation

In 2021, Square Food Foundation celebrated its tenth anniversary. We've been tackling food poverty and teaching people to cook healthy food from scratch since 2011. As a registered charity, Square Food Foundation delivers free and subsidised cookery courses and workshops for charities, schools and community groups.

Square Food Foundation was founded by Barny Haughton. Best known for opening Rocinantes Tapas Bar in the 1990s, followed by Quartier Vert, and then Bordeaux Quay, Barny is now director and head teacher. In 2020, Barny was awarded an MBE for services to the community when he led the Square Food team to cook and distribute more than 26,000 meals to local families that were at risk of hunger.

www.squarefoodfoundation.co.uk

For further information, please contact:

Claire Allen – Fundraising & Communications

claire@squarefoodfoundation.co.uk

About Brandon Trust

Brandon is a charity that supports children, young people and adults with a learning disability, autism or both. They work across the South of England, the Midlands and London, supporting over 1,500 people.

They provide a wide range of support, from light-touch enabling support to nursing homes for those with very complex disabilities, all focussed on ensuring the people they work alongside are able to live life in the way they chose.

(quote reference: [Voluntary Organisations Disability Group Tackling Health Inequalities discussion paper](#))

www.brandontrust.org

For further information, please contact:

Emily McMullin – Communications Officer

emily.mcmullin@brandontrust.org | 07816124798

Jo Wild – Head of Communications & Marketing

jo.wild@brandontrust.org | 0117 952 8225 or 07464 670 200

About Milestones Trust

Milestones Trust is a not-for-profit charitable organisation with a 36-year history of offering safe, person-centred support to vulnerable people with learning disabilities, mental health needs and dementia.

The Trust was formed in 1986, as the local long stay hospitals started to close and people moved into local communities. They now run services throughout Bristol, South Gloucestershire, and North Somerset.

They support more than 750 people in specialist residential, nursing and supported living services. They also support people through community recovery services, respite services, and day opportunities groups.

For further information, please contact:

Matthew Rogers, Head of Communications and Marketing on 0117 970 9305 or email matthewrogers@milestonetrust.org.uk with any media enquiries.

About Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire CCG

Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire CCG is the NHS organisation responsible for planning, buying and monitoring the majority of healthcare services for the 968,314 people who live in our area. We are a membership organisation, led by GPs from the 77 General Practices in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG). Our members use their knowledge of the local population's health needs to guide the services we plan and purchase on behalf of local people.