

Ministry of Food Interim Evaluation: December 2009

The following background is presented in the Ministry of Food Project Initiation Document (PID) (V0.3 March 09) and serves to set out the context and challenges which the evaluation has aimed to address:

BACKGROUND

The Jamie Oliver Ministry of Food and Pass It On concept were launched in All Saints Square, Rotherham in April 2008. The Ministry of Food centre, which has been the central focus for all the activity associated with the project, subsequently opened its doors in June 2008.

The centre and all related activity formed the background to Jamie Oliver's channel 4 programme which was aired in September and October 2008.

Since its launch in April 2008 the MOF has delivered a wide range of activities through partnership working and establishing links across different agendas.

Some of the key achievements to date are:

- RCAT: 5 students on NEETs programme, 1 job secured at Jamie Oliver restaurant, curriculum development for 3rd years.
- NHS Rotherham: 10 referrals to health trainer programme (14% of referrals)
- MOF: 350 people per week using centre, over 400 people benefiting from 'Pass It On'. 20 cooking classes established with a range of groups, from schools, workplaces and community groups.

The outputs demonstrate that the MOF project quickly attracted a large number of people. Nearly 3000 people have been involved in 'Pass It On'. Currently (Nov 08) there are several cooking classes running and more in the pipeline. Good links have been made with RCAT and NHS Rotherham. Both organisations have been supportive of the initiative and have benefited from their involvement.

Based on this good progress RMBC, in partnership with NHS Rotherham, has agreed to support, in the first instance, a further 12 months operation of the MOF, running from the end of November 2008 through to the end of October 2009. This PID relates to the continuation of the MOF operation and the Pass it on concept through more local ownership and control.

This next 12 month period will present two key challenges:

- Momentum: To maintain the momentum and reach of the initiative once the 'celebrity effect' has waned.
- Outcomes: To evaluate the longer term impact of the programme on the lifestyles and behaviour of the recipients.

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PROJECT EVALUATION: 'Stages of Change'

The primary purpose of the project, delivered through a series of 10 week courses, was to help facilitate behavioural change concerning attitude to food and dietary health. Evaluation of success, therefore, requires a methodology which reveals process of behavioural change but also in manner which can be applied to large numbers of individuals. The model used here for evaluation is based on Prochaska's 'Stages of Change' (SoC) model and was provided by NHS Rotherham. The model helps to track the sustainable effect of intervention, and not just its immediate impact, through relating people's experiences through five stages, these are: Precontemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action and Maintenance.

Stage 1: Precontemplation

In this initial stage, the individual is not necessarily considering changing their behaviour and may therefore be unreceptive to external help. Those in 'precontemplation' tend to defend their current behaviour and may be resistant to intervention. In this stage, action to improve habits is not considered in the foreseeable future (usually considered as any stage within the next six months). The individual may be in 'precontemplation' because they are either uninformed or under-informed about the consequences of their actions. Alternatively, they may have tried previously to change their habits but have failed due to lack of motivation or support.

Stage Two: Contemplation

In 'contemplation', people are aware of the consequences of their action but primarily at a superficial level. They might recognise some of the key benefits related to changes in their behaviour but motivation is low. Long-term benefits are often related to the short-term costs of behavioural change which, therefore, may act as a barrier to action. Unless subject to external assistance, individuals may remain in 'contemplation' without achieving any further action, although, change *within* six months is considered a possibility. 'Contemplation' is considered to be a critical stage of change as the individual is both willing to consider action but is also somewhat ambivalent about its initiation. Members of a community which may be considered to be in the 'contemplation' stage are therefore a key target audience for programmes which seek to improve practice and foster improved and sustainable behaviour.

Stage Three: Preparation

The third stage of change represents an important initial movement towards commitment. Individuals in 'preparation' will actively seek support or information which may help them achieve behavioural change or they may discuss proposed action with others. This is an important stage for intervention as people may aim to move directly from 'contemplation' to 'action' and therefore miss the critical 'fact-finding' stages which will help prepare them for significant life-style change. The time-scale for expected change in the 'preparation' stage is usually considered to be one month. This is the stage where the individual may retreat back into 'contemplation' or 'pre-contemplation' if they feel that the necessary support mechanisms are not available to them or that the short-term costs are too significant.

Stage Four: Action

This stage represents the main body of action which an individual is undertaking in order to change their lifestyle habits and patterns of behaviour. The SoC model considers this to be a relatively short stage, often comprising one to six months. Efforts for change are made in the 'action' stage and so this represents the period whereby most individuals will require some kind of positive reinforcement or tangible evidence of benefits.

The level of change required to approach 'action' may in itself be very significant for some individuals which is why a method of evaluating direction of change rather than solely the single outcome is important – especially for those who may have been initially resistant to change (precontemplation stage).

Stage Five: Maintenance

The fifth stage of 'maintenance' involves being able to sustain behaviour. Rather than being a static stage in the model, 'maintenance' may require continued reinforcement or may also result in new goals and a reappraisal of 'self'. For this reason contact is made again with those who have completed the courses at the 6 month and 12 month stages.

Figure 1 illustrates the simple pre- and post-course evaluation questionnaire which was used to highlight changing eating habits for the purpose of evaluation.

	YES	NO
1. I currently EAT HEALTHILY	a <input type="checkbox"/>	b <input type="checkbox"/>
2. I intend to EAT MORE HEALTHILY in the next 6 months	c <input type="checkbox"/>	d <input type="checkbox"/>
3. I intend to EAT MORE HEALTHILY in the next month	e <input type="checkbox"/>	f <input type="checkbox"/>
4. I have been EATING HEALTHILY for the past 6 months	g <input type="checkbox"/>	h <input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 1: Ministry of Food questionnaire

Based upon the five stages of change descriptions, the following self-evaluation model was formed

If b and d are circled: Stage 1 – PRECONTEMPLATION

If b and c are circled: Stage 2 – CONTEMPLATION

If b and e are circled: Stage 3 – PREPARATION

If a, e and h are circled: Stage 4 – ACTION

If a, e and g are circled: Stage 5 – MAINTENANCE

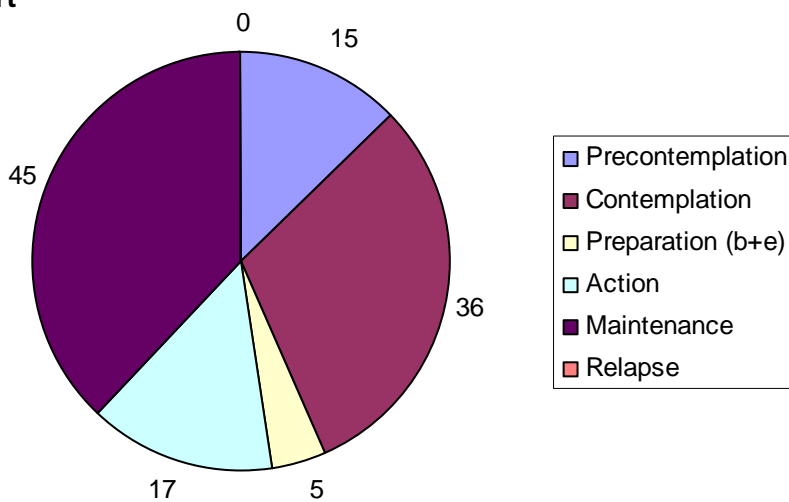
The evaluation was designed to be as simple and rapidly conducted as possible so as not to act as a barrier for participating.

INTERIM RESULTS

Questionnaire Evaluation

	Start	Finish
Precontemplation	15	0
Contemplation	36	2
Preparation (b+e)	5	1
Action	17	51
Maintenance	45	36
Relapse	0	1
TOTAL	118	91

Start



Finish

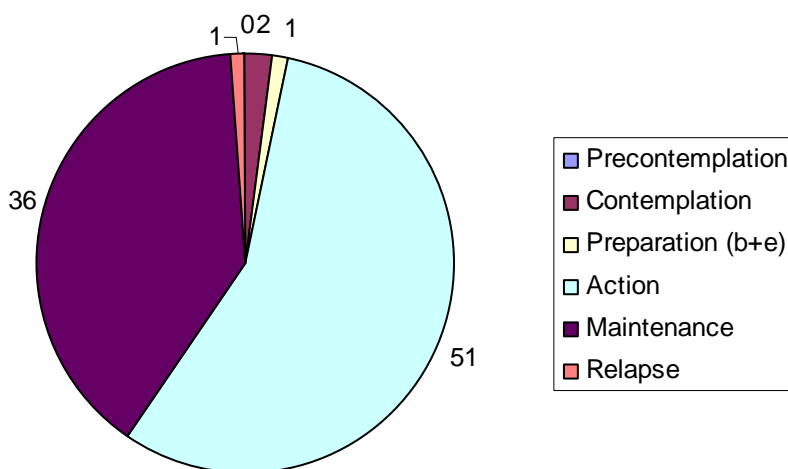


Figure 2: Results**SUMMARY**

The biggest shift in behaviour from the start to the end of the ten week course can be seen in the stage of 'action' (Figure 2). In this case, 17 were attributed to 'action' at the start of the course and 51 were in this stage by the end of the course.

In examining the breakdown of transitions from one stage to another, a total of 80/91 could be tracked. The remaining 11 individuals left unanswered questions on either the 'course start' or 'course finish' questionnaire sheets. Therefore, these represent spoiled questionnaires which, whilst counted in either of the total figures presented in Figure 2, were unable to provide tracking information for the transition breakdown below:

Transition Breakdown:**Unchanged or moving forward through the Stages of Change**

Precontemplation to Precontemplation	0
Precontemplation to Contemplation	0
Precontemplation to Preparation	0
Precontemplation to Action	10
Precontemplation to Maintenance	2
Contemplation to Contemplation	0
Contemplation to Preparation	0
Contemplation to Action	25
Contemplation to Maintenance	2
Preparation to Preparation	0
Preparation to Action	0
Preparation to Maintenance	1
Action to Action	12
Action to Maintenance	1
Maintenance to Maintenance	26
TOTAL	79

Transition Breakdown:**Unchanged or moving backwards through the Stages of Change**

Maintenance to Action	1
Maintenance to Preparation	0
Maintenance to Contemplation	0
Maintenance to Precontemplation	0
Action to Preparation	0
Action to Contemplation	0
Action to Precontemplation	0
Preparation to Contemplation	0
Preparation to Precontemplation	0
Contemplation to Precontemplation	0
TOTAL	1

Stephen Dobson

Corporate Research, Chief Executive's Directorate, RMBC DEC 2009

CONCLUSIONS

The most common behavioural change experienced by those on the course was the transition between 'contemplation' to 'action' (25) and 'precontemplation' to 'action' (10). 'Precontemplation' to maintenance' (2) demonstrates the most drastic change in behaviour from an initial reluctance to maintaining a changed level of behaviour. Whilst all of these impacts may be considered as positive outcomes for the MoF programme, the missing out of a 'preparation' stage could be considered a potential concern for sustained change. In this case, the enthusiasm fostered by the course may wane through the individual not fully appreciating the personal commitments needed to remain in 'maintenance'. This will be investigated further in the follow up interviews. It is possible that 'preparation' was actually achieved mid-course and so follow-up questions will aim to establish this.

'Action' to 'action' (12) demonstrates a significant level of continued commitment to change, however, if the individual is to make the transition to 'maintenance' they may need further forms of motivation and support. Only one individual was calculated as moving backwards through the model and so might appear to have been suffering 'relapse' ('maintenance' to 'action'). However, since they ended the course in the stage of 'action' this transition does not necessarily represent a level of disengagement or 'disillusionment' but may refer to their reappraisal of habits. In this case, the course might have illustrated that they were still able to make further improvements which they then became motivated to address.

At the six month stage, all individuals are contacted again to help monitor progress. Individuals who have completed the course are contacted by telephone and are again asked to respond to the questions in Figure 1. This enables a continued process of change to be mapped six months after the course has finished and will be repeated at the twelve month stage. Key questions here will track to what extent the course may have had an impact upon both individuals and/or their families. Any information regarding eating patterns and diet, for example, will help profile the course influence.

Whilst initially being a means of assessing whether learnt good practice is still in effect, the phone interviewer is also placed in a key interventional position. For example, those individuals who may be experiencing waning enthusiasm and perhaps relapsed into 'contemplation' or 'precontemplation' may be motivated back to the stage of 'preparation' or 'action' through a few well chosen words of encouragement or offers to return to the Ministry of Food centre in All Saints Square.

Stephen Dobson
Corporate Research, Chief Executive's Directorate, RMBC DEC 2009