

South Tyneside Sugar Shake Up!

Employer: South Tyneside Council

Area: South Tyneside

Theme: Healthy Eating



One of our key campaigns for the Silver Award was healthy eating. One of the ways we decided to promote this to the whole workforce of South Tyneside Council was to produce a sugar display. The display featured a range of items that could be found in an average family's weekly food shop. Items included cereal, pasta sauces, bagels, crisps, children's snacks, tomato ketchup and bottled drinks. The idea behind the display was to show how much sugar is 'hidden' in everyday foods. We deliberately chose items that many people might consider to be a healthy option, instead of more obvious high sugar items such as chocolate, sweets and fizzy drinks.

We used sugar cubes to illustrate how much sugar was contained in each item. We also provided a lower sugar alternative to each item and showed their sugar content in sugar cubes too. This gave an easy visual of how much sugar each item contained and the difference between the regular and lower sugar options. We also gave examples of the recommended serving size for items such as the bottled drinks, cereal, jam and tomato ketchup. This was to show people what a portion or single serving of certain items looks like as consuming portions that are too large is one of the major contributors to obesity. We provided an information sheet alongside the sugar display to give information such as the eat well plate, correct portion sizes and maximum daily sugar allowance.

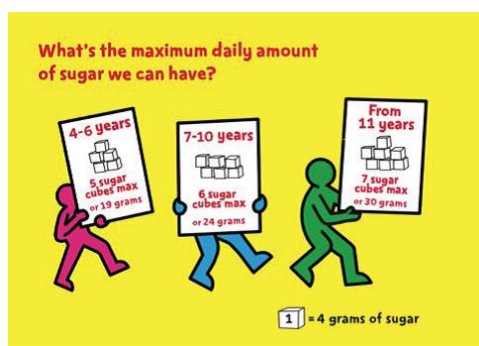




South Tyneside Council



To make sure that as many people as possible saw the display, we took it on a tour of council buildings between August and October. An email was sent to all staff to let them know about the display and encourage them to look out for it in their workplace. The display stayed in each location for at least a week so it could be seen by as many people as possible. It started off on a tour of each of the kitchens in the Town Hall then moved to three other council buildings in the borough before coming back to the Town Hall. It was displayed for the elected members during their communications session and in the waiting area of one of our staff flu vaccination clinics. The health advocates took turns moving the display between locations.



We made sure that there was a new evaluation form in each location so that people could let us know their thoughts. We received some excellent feedback from colleagues across the council. Some of the comments were: -

‘Very surprised at the content in the fruity water and smoothie as I would think both items were healthy’

‘Very eye opening, makes you want to make better choices re sugar’

The sugar display has been very positive in promoting our healthy eating campaign and has provoked lots of conversations about what’s in our food. Several comments left on the evaluation forms said the display will change the way they shop and the choices they make for themselves and their children.

‘I will definitely look at sugar content from now on when buying food’

‘I will make changes when shopping after seeing this’

Following this display, we have had requests to do similar displays for fat and salt content in different foods. It also inspired us to put together an alcohol display for alcohol awareness week that showed how many calories were in different alcoholic drinks. This was to highlight the link between alcohol and obesity. Similarly, to people being unaware of the hidden sugar in everyday items, the number of excess calories that can be consumed via drinking alcohol can be surprising.

Now that the sugar display has finished touring council buildings, we are going to donate all the non-perishable items to the local food bank.

