



**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

**Press Release: Lord Mayor of Liverpool Launches Healthy Fruit & Veg Project**

**Where:** Liverpool's Women's Hospital, The Staff Conservatory, the Liverpool Women's Hospital, Crown Street Liverpool L8 7SS

**When:** Monday December 4<sup>th</sup> 11.30am to 12.30pm

The Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Councillor Malcolm Kennedy, today launched a new scheme designed to support healthy eating and tackle food poverty for families on low incomes in the City.

The Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg project, set up by the Alexandra Rose Charity in 2014 has received funding from the Big Lottery Fund & Esmée Fairbairn to expand the project into Liverpool. Liverpool was one of two cities to receive the funding after applying through a national competition to host the scheme last year.

The Rose Voucher project helps families on low incomes to buy fresh fruit and vegetables, while developing the skills and confidence to give their children the healthiest start in life.

The project works with local children's centres to identify families who could benefit from the scheme. The vouchers are worth £3 per child (or double if your child is under one year of age) and can only be redeemed for fresh fruit & veg from participating retailers. In Liverpool the scheme is working with local community interest company '*U R What U Eat*' who run fresh fruit & veg stalls in Liverpool's hospitals as well as mobile fruit & veg buses that visit areas of the city where easy access to fresh healthy food might be a problem.

The project will initially run in partnership with Granby & Belle Valle Children's Centres and will support up to 240 families. It is hoped over time the scheme will spread to other children's centres in the city and will partner with further retailers including Liverpool's local markets and traditional green grocers.

Jonathan Pauling, Chief Executive of Alexandra Rose Charity, said: "We are delighted to be bringing the Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg project to Liverpool. It's all about early intervention - preventing diet related health problems and supporting children from the youngest age to enjoy a healthy life.

"Children's Centres benefit by making contact with families and the money goes directly into the pockets of independent retailers – supporting a healthy, local, food economy. Above all, children get access to healthy food which parents might otherwise not be able to afford. Thanks to the generous funding from the Big Lottery Fund & Esmée Fairbairn we hope we can help break down the barriers for achieving a healthy diet."

Lord Mayor, Councillor Malcolm Kennedy said: "The Rose Voucher project is a great way to tackle childhood obesity and food poverty in our city. It not only increases the amount of fresh fruit & veg that families consume but it also puts money back into Liverpool's food economy supporting local jobs and improving access for all."

Councillor Nick Small, Assistant Mayor and Cabinet member with responsibility for children's centres, said: "The vouchers will work in tandem with our existing offer to support families to adopt healthy lifestyles in the crucial years before school starts. With additional support such as cook & eat classes and weaning workshops that we already run we hope the vouchers will give our families that little extra spending power so they are more able to adopt a healthier diet."

The project was launched at the Liverpool Women's Hospital at one of the fruit & veg stalls run by U R What U Eat. The launch also featured one of their big buses that will transport fruit & veg to locations across L8 & at Belle Vale to enable families to purchase the fruit & veg with the vouchers. Vouchers will also be able to be redeemed at stalls at hospitals across the city including the Royal Liverpool Hospital, Alder Hey Children's Hospital and the Women's Hospital.

Robert Clarke, Chairman of the Liverpool Women's Hospital said "We are delighted to support such a fantastic initiative that will give so many families across the city access to much needed fresh fruit and veg".

ENDS

#### **Notes to Editors:**

The Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg is an Alexandra Rose Charity project designed and delivered in partnership with Food Matters. Alexandra Rose Charity works in partnership with local children's centres to identify families who could benefit most from the scheme as well as providing support such as cooking classes to build their skills and confidence. An evaluation undertaken by independent researchers shows the Rose Vouchers project is effective in increasing the consumption and variety of fruit and vegetables in both children and their parents. A full copy of the evaluation can be found at: <http://www.alexandrarose.org.uk/evaluation>

Alexandra Rose Charity was founded in 1912 by Queen Alexandra to mark her 50<sup>th</sup> year in the UK and has been supporting vulnerable members of society for over 100 years. In 2012, the charity changed its focus to concentrate its efforts on the issues of food poverty and healthy eating. More information about the Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg project can be found on the Alexandra Rose Charity website: <http://www.alexandrarose.org.uk/>

The Rose Vouchers project, set up by the Alexandra Rose Charity in 2014, has received £372,790 of National Lottery funding from the Big Lottery Fund & £150,000 from Esmée Fairbairn to expand the project into two new areas – Barnsley & Liverpool – as well as growing the scale of work in the three London Boroughs the scheme currently operates in –

Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, & Lambeth. The aim of over three years is to support up to 1,200 families across the five sites with the vouchers. The project aims to increase consumption of healthy fruit & veg while giving families the skills and confidence to adopt a wide range of improved health behaviours.

**U R What U Eat** is a community interest company and mobile fruit and veg business that travels across Liverpool selling produce to local communities to encourage them to eat healthily at affordable prices. UR What U Eat also run stalls at many of Liverpool's hospitals, providing a vital link to fresh food for visitors, patients and staff.

**Granby Children's Centre** based in L8 offers a range of inclusive services for children and families, from early education and childcare to health and family support.

**Belle Valle Children's Centre** located in L25 delivers services across two sites – Belle Vale and Hunts Cross, providing free weekly fun activities for parents, carers and their children and support and advice for families and expectant parents.

**Food Domain** – the project is being supported in Liverpool by The Food Domain – a new independent food advisory, and the Sustainable Food Cities Network. The project will be led by a local steering group including ward councillors, Liverpool Public Health consultants and the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores and will report into the council's Poverty Action Group chaired by Cllr Jane Corbett, Assistant Mayor of Liverpool and Mayoral Lead for Fairness and Tackling Poverty.