

Healthy eating plan launched

By ZOE BURN

THE first stage of a planned network of community food co-operatives gets under way this week.

The Wansbeck Real Food Co-operative is being launched to encourage people to eat more healthily by buying fresh fruit and veget-

ables delivered almost to their own doorsteps.

The co-op – a partnership between Wansbeck's Heathy Living Centres, the '5-a-day' initiative, Northumberland Care Trust, Sure Start and the East Ashington Development Trust – is this week holding a series of taster sessions so people can find out more about how it will work and enjoy a plateful of healthy pancakes at the same time.

The first session was today in Ashington, with one planned at the Healthy Living Centres

at Cleasewellhill Centre, Guide Post on March 15 and Bedlington Station on March 17. Both are from 3.30–5pm.

Bags

Each week from the beginning of next month, bags of fruit and vegetables will be available from a network of Read Food Co-ops around the district, packed full of seasonal produce for £2.50. Membership of the co-op will cost £1.

Each week a member of each local co-op will place an order which will then be delivered in bulk

to the various outlets.

The produce will then be divided into individual bags and sold to co-op members.

David Malone, project co-ordinator, is hoping to establish between 12 and 15 co-ops in a variety of venues such as community centres, schools, clubs, churches, welfares or sheltered housing units and is asking any such premises that might be interested in joining the initiative, to contact him.

He is also seeking volunteers to run local co-ops as well as packing and distributing the fruit and veg bags.

"There is mounting evidence that poor diets and declining levels of activity could be leading to health problems and obesity among more and more people," he said.

Shortage

"Lack of public transport in more outlying areas and a shortage of local shops, also makes it more difficult for some people to purchase fresh produce on a regular basis.

"We hope that by setting up a network of community food co-operatives we will be able to overcome some of those problems and concerns by giving more people greater access to fresh fruit and vegetables every week."

He can be contacted on (01670) 854422.



HEALTHY OPTION: David Malone