



Third Sector Leaders Kirklees in Partnership with Kirklees Council

Feeding Kirklees: Working together to find a sustainable local approach to food insecurity - Meeting Notes

Wednesday July 21st at 9.30am on Teams

Introduction and welcome – Val Johnson, Chief Officer TSL

Mel Meggs - Strategic Director of Children & Families, Kirklees Council

We know that a healthy start to life includes eating well, developing those early habits as our brains grow and as our body grows at the quality and the quality of food is fundamental to how we age well, so there is a link between what we have put into our bodies in the past five years. We don't always acknowledge that the work that we do in the early years gives us that sort of lifelong protection from some of the things that really mean that we don't live well in older life, so that so the work that you do in your organisations do are absolutely fundamental to us achieving improving the position round health inequality.

We know that food poverty has a significant impact on children's development and others had, and as a child myself that was entitled to free school meals and I have to be honest as a child it was a bind having to use my yellow ticket or my red ticket at school which look different to everybody else is and I was a particularly problematic eating myself and didn't like free school meals and didn't really understand that I was an adult about why my mom was so upset with me when she had a letter home from school. To say that because I was eating my free meals at school, she would have to send me in with sandwiches. Clearly the economic pressure this put on my mom was significant and I child it's often one Monday, you know, did really well to protect us from understanding that, but I you know, I come from a point of passion about the fact that you know, you know moms like mine, lots of others out there today should not be in a position where they're struggling to feed, feed their children, or worrying about three jobs to make sure that we have food on the table.

But I would never have survived without free school meals and without holiday activities that also fed us during the summer and I was a child of the 70s where I was able to go to a play scheme from the day school finished. Today it restarted. I was lucky enough to grow up in London where there was lots of vision and the fundamentals around healthy eating and their social, emotional and physical.

The impact of having good quality food that is secure, where people are not worrying, is one of the things that is really important to us. So, what we know is that we know that children can't study if

they're hungry. We know that if you turn up for school and you've not had to have an evening meal or have breakfast, it's much more difficult to concentrate. The work that you all do is not just about making sure our children have healthy bodies, but actually that they are able to study well and attain well and we need to build on that. There's no doubt that Covid has really shone a light on health inequalities particularly, but food security particularly has been an issue for us all.

I wanted to take the opportunity just to say a big thank you for what you've all done before Covid and I think it's been phenomenal. I think the Kirklees response to feeding all residents, including our children and families has been absolutely phenomenal. Organisations like in those schools making packed lunches themselves, taking them out, delivering them to families. The mags, all of the voluntary sector organisations coming together to make sure we coordinate our response. I wanted to do a particular shout out to the welfare team that process thousands more applications for free school meals and issued preschool mail vouchers and worked with the school system to ensure that whether the government was funding, the more the councillors funding them that the money was there for our children during that time, and we know because of the feedback from families that we had. But this is really important and I think we need to participate in the national campaign to think about how we build on this to ensure that families are entitled to free school meals during the holidays, not just in term time. I think there's something really important for us on that, so I think a big thank you for all that you've done. I think it's really important to acknowledge that all of you have gone the extra mile, your organisations, and many others to make sure that our children get fed and as it stands today, we've got 50,000 places happening in Kirklees, some of the healthy holiday programmes is 50,000 opportunities for children to come together with. Thank you to those of you who are running schemes.

For us again, it's been a massive, massive endeavour. It's the largest scheme ever, so we are also providing vouchers but rules, so providing 50,000 places on the holiday activity schemes and we couldn't do that without all of the help and support that you provide for them and what we know we want today whilst recognizing the ongoing challenges faced by our families as we recover from COVID, I think it's really important that we absolutely see the links between economic security is inextricably linked to food security, and so now I know today that you're going to have the opportunity to reflect on what's been achieved to be thinking about what we want to build on in life and post-pandemic, I hope where we physically meet together, share our ideas, our enthusiasm, and our passion for making sure our children are not just fed, but fed well.

That contribution that we made to ensure that families are well is an instrument to be linked. So, for us, an opportunity to reflect and to think about what it is that we want to take from messages that we've learned to work together. And how do we get to a position where no child is left hungry, and no family should be worrying about where their next meal comes from? Our ambition is about making sure that we give our children the best start we can, and that means that they are not just fed and not stressing about food security.

I thank you for what you've all done. I would have been one of those children that you've been helping and I know from my own experience the difference that what you do makes to children's lives every day. I hope you enjoy the opportunity today and I look forward to us being able to work together to make sure no child goes hungry in part.

Setting the scene for food insecurity in Kirklees

Lucy Wearmouth - Public Health Manager, Wider Factors, Kirklees Council

****See accompanying slides**

Lucy manages the wider determinants of health theme and part of that is managing the tackling poverty strand for public health and shares the context around food insecurity in terms of poverty and local data including:

- Framework around food insecurity - Food ladders approach
- Poverty in Kirklees pre and post Covid
- Unemployment poverty
- Free school meal uptake
- The need for food activities and skills

Contact details

Lucy Wearmouth - lucy.wearmouth@kirklees.gov.uk

Dr John Lever - Centre for Sustainability, Responsibility, Governance & Ethics, University of Huddersfield

A “Safe” and “Just” Regional Food System

****See accompanying slides and project report**

John previously worked at Cardiff University on a number of European projects, international projects and some local projects around food systems. He was also co-commissioned to carry out a project about how a local food partnership could improve health of local people and also contribute to the local economy into the local environment.

Most recently, the University of Huddersfield funded research which involved over 30 interviews with regional food system and local/ national policy actors. This research was conducted between April and December 2020. The research set out to understand:

- The pressure points that emerged in food supply and demand across the Kirklees region during the Covid-19 crisis
- The solutions that emerged in response to these challenges
- The innovations required to enhance food system sustainability and food security for future generations.

Contact details

John Lever: j.b.lever@hud.ac.uk

Experiences of local providers & Covid Response groups from before & during Covid

Kate Auker - Interim Chief Executive, The Welcome Centre & Kate Harris - Manager, Fusion Housing

****See accompanying slides and project report**

The Welcome Centre and Fusing Housing talk through their provisions, COVID response, and plans for the future.

Both provisions are working very closely together to try and get a more uniform approach across the whole borough.

Fusion Housing

Fusion Housing is a charity based in Huddersfield that helps individuals who are experiencing housing related problems and need support with learning and employment.

They also run a Food Bank service based in their offices in Dewsbury and serving the North Kirklees area and provide toiletries and sanitary packs, cleaning packs, baby packs and have provided grants for white goods. They provide around 1500 food packs a month?? to people across South Kirklees.

They are predominantly run by volunteers and have around 100 volunteers across both sites. They are currently developing and expanding their advice, guidance and support to address the underlying causes of food poverty and their aim is to move people through to independence as quickly and as robustly as possible.

The Welcome Centre

The Welcome Centre helps local families and individuals in crisis with food, toiletries, and other essential items. They also provide advocacy, guidance, and support to address underlying issues.

Covid Response

In February 2020, they were giving out the equivalent of 19,600 meals to people in need. By April, that was up to 35,000. An increase of 46%. Free school meals have also increased from 190 children per month to 300.

During the first part of the pandemic where they used to be able to get normal food supply for additional items from supermarkets, because of food shortages there was no surplus and they had to approach hospitality suppliers which came at an additional cost. They also moved towards looking more at the markets, accessing quite a lot of fresh fruit and veg from the markets.

The demographic has changed with a slight reduction in repeat clients. Clients that come to them quite regularly have actually benefited in some way through this last year because of the Universal Credit Uplift. Additional grants are being provided from the local authority, which have really helped people to access what they need and to engage better with services in a way that works for them. As Universal Credit uplift drops off, we will start to see the fuller impact of the pandemic in terms of jobs and job security. We could potentially see clients returning to us and seeing new clients that are coming to us that have not accessed the food bank before.

Funding & Support

They received prompt financial support from the Council and fantastic support from public health workers, many of whom keep offering to come back and volunteer.

They also received support through third sector leaders, One Community Foundation, The Pier Partnership, as well as additional benefits for our clients including The Uniform Exchange, Auntie Pam's and partnerships with Yorkshire Children's Centre enabled us to get healthy start vitamins into our packs as well as leaflets and questionnaires.

They have been able to provide through the winter grant through the local welfare provision, including additional fuel support, fuel, debt support, white goods, etc. that was a real factor for some people struggling and already in food poverty.

The West Yorkshire Anti Poverty Action groups were really useful in terms of doing joint funding bids to gain more donations and grants for food throughout the pandemic.

Looking forward

- Food dignity & choice - increase the different entry levels of support for the food bank and look at different models e.g., crisis, emergency food.
- Additional learning - e.g., face to face cookery classes to provide a hand up, not a handout
- Working closely together to try and get a more uniform approach across the whole borough.
- Continue developing relationships with partners including Council and local food networks.

<https://www.fusionhousing.org.uk/>

<https://www.thewelcomecentre.org/>

Contact details

Kate Auker - kate.auker@thewelcomecentre.org

Kate Harris - kate.harris@fusionhousing.org.uk

Wendy Russell - Trustee & Treasurer, Batley Foodbank

Wendy tells us about the history of the food bank and how they have been operating throughout the pandemic.

<https://youtu.be/Sxjr5i4T6hk>

They are looking for new promises so if anyone has any ideas please do get in touch. If you would like to visit the foodbank or would like to discuss working together contact Wendy.

Contributions from other local food banks and services

Bridget Hughes - TSL Kirklees Supporting Communities Lead

Bridget has been working with community and mutual aid groups providing food during the pandemic. Last winter, TSL was really fortunate to get some winter grant funding through local welfare provision which enabled us to support groups by giving out over 90 small grants to over 70 organisations to support people during the pandemic to do more of the great work that they were already doing.

Contact

Bridget Hughes: bridget.hughes@tslkirklees.org.uk

Louisa - Loving Hands Outreach Team

The Loving Hands Outreach Team is a very small team of volunteers and has been working with Bridget Hughes, TSL Supporting Communities Lead to help the families that they support, the majority on low income including some elderly people with very basic foods that get donated and encourage them to cook. They cover Batley & Spen, Heckmondwike, Liversedge, Cleckheaton.

Every week they have put a recipe on their Facebook page, with a following of 2.5k, that consists of tinned foods supplemented with some fresh food depending on what they have available. They want to do more of that if that is feasible but are volunteer-led and they have little funding.

They have been sending out 50 parcels a week, on a rolling basis meaning everybody gets one every two to three weeks, reaching around 200 families or households. They are trying to get fresher food to families and improve food education but are very restricted with the resources that are available.

The team received a small winter grant from TSL and some funding from One Community. They have also had fantastic support from the big retailers, particularly Asda and they work with Birstall Community Partnership to save food that would normally go to waste.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/563020001235883>

Beverley Juniper - Dalton Together

Beverley previously worked for Public Health in Wakefield managing the Community Food & Health Team and is now a freelance community worker.

Dalton Together received funding to get some slow cookers and they delivered bags of ingredients. Beverley did an online video from her kitchen and recipients were able then to cook the dishes. They provided 6 online cooking sessions during the lockdown.

<https://www.facebook.com/DaltonTogether>

Paul - Skelmanthorpe Community Pantry

The pantry is a membership discount grocery shop that supports families and individuals who are living in hardship. Pantry Membership is for people on benefits and membership is FREE. Members pay £3.50 per visit and get ten items free from the shop. Members can pick up additional items at very low prices. They are open 3 days a week.

<https://www.ddc.org.uk/pantry>

Julie Oxley - Spen Hub Community Coordinator, Beacon Together Project

Julie has been working with a number of schools in Spen to help build bridges with families using the medium of food.

They have run some sessions called eating together with two schools with families who have really struggled through Covid, children not engaging with the online learning provision or families who have found financial hardship and changes in that area of life.

They used the sessions to build some peer to peer support to increase family's knowledge and capability of making healthy food on a budget of £7.00 for a main meal and a pudding for a family of four. They received funding through TSL to put on these sessions over a four week period.

Some families had children with SEND and some children had been quite so detached from learning even before Covid. It was a real building project for schools to renew that relationship, but also for parents to get a bit more support from each other. The feedback was amazing.

We made a real variety of different things. The children did vote on each week to see which recipes they preferred and the feedback from the families was that it hadn't just ended at the four weeks that it had actually gone on from that and children have been more adventurous with what they were prepared to try and encourage them to look at different things when they were going shopping.

The feedback from schools was that the children were really animated after the sessions and talking about what they made, they were so proud of what they had achieved and how that got really stuck in themselves. The families came back to me and shared their successes with photographs and we did some recipes together for each setting. They also said how it built bridges with school and they felt more able to talk to the school about some of their issues.

Initiatives from around the UK

Andrew Forsey - National Director, Feeding Britain

***See accompanying slides**

Feeding Britain operates in partnership with more than 500 grassroots organizations across the country through 30 regional partnerships at three levels.

The first of those is that we seek to establish and offer practical support to those regional partnerships, with the aim of identifying and nurturing innovative projects which can meet the immediate need, but also try to prevent hunger rather than just relieve it and ultimately to try swinging the pendulum away from a model of sheer relief, so one that's characterized by resilient indeed.

Practically all of those 30 regional partnerships are doing what they can to follow the Megan Blake approach around resilience and these projects tend to involve what we call affordable food networks which encompass membership based pantries and initiatives like Food Club, Citizen Supermarkets, and food buses, all of which offer low cost food along sustainable lines, as well as projects like fuel schemes, school holiday and breakfast programs and specialist advice and support around things like finance, benefits and cookery, all of which we seek to Commission and make available on the spot within Community food settings so we can try addressing some of those underlying causes of hardship and give people a pathway out of poverty so that in number typically interested to learn more about Kate's plans and how we can help there and elsewhere.

We also seek to embrace initiatives that have happened due to the abundance of food being grown or produced in or near our communities and divert what we can to some of these projects with a particular focus on supporting people who are just about keeping their heads above water from one week to the next but are only really one large bill, benefit problem or school uniform cost away from being hungry and relying on food banks or free food parcels. With that in mind, each of our projects really is aimed at a reduction in crisis or emergency need for food aid.

As well as a corresponding increase in very few affordability and access ability if decent food in the communities we serve, all of which goes with the grain of those local needs and circumstances and compliments that existing provision but is at least informed or sometimes influenced by the good practise that's emerging elsewhere within our national network. In fact, barely a day passes by at Feeding Britain without us looking to develop and identify some new ideas and support them quickly through some upfront or seed funding, as well as ongoing fundraising and food support, project planning and the offer of templates and policies from similar projects elsewhere and leveraging in some national services and goods.

Secondly, immediate ongoing practical help. We try to build a mutual support hub that acts as a knowledge exchange or troubleshooting forum throughout that national network. We organise a

regular series of webinars on particular projects or practical matters and ideas to help our partners from the frontline. Both share and learn from some good practice and addressing common issues or questions. Recent topics for those included preparing high quality programs for the upcoming summer holiday such as developing the children's kitchen model as a means of getting more families, cooking well on a liberty budget with fresh produce, forging links between local food growers and community food projects and also creating food buses and mobile pantries, these are all default form the basis of some toolkits and then shared across our network and upon which all of our partners are welcome to draw down and it really would be remiss of me at this stage not to mention how our colleagues, Julie Thompson and Dave Patterson from the West Yorkshire Food Poverty Network.

Instrumentally much of that work both in their use of some pioneering ways to introduce new affordable food models which fill the gap between supermarkets and food banks, but also in their generous contribution of knowledge to our partners across the country who are looking through similar things in their area.

Thirdly, we are really determined not to let the government off the hook for its role in preventing hunger and chronic poverty, so that the civil society in the voluntary sector doesn't bear the whole of that burden.

To that end, we attempt to gain systemic change in policy change by building up a big robust bank of evidence on the drivers of hardship and food insecurity and then using that information to present politicians and decision makers with workable solutions. In the past three years alone, Feeding Britain's policy recommendations that were in that supply the government resulted in an additional £2.5 billion in public spending towards anti-poverty measures. The latest of those was a quarter of a billion-pound concession in the budget earlier this year.

There is some recent data suggesting that the number of people relying on food banks is actually dropped by a sixth compared with pre-pandemic levels, and that's not least due to the Universal Credit increase as well as additional support aimed towards families in school holidays and the raft of measures that have been introduced to both protects and create jobs. Now we pursue these changes by submitting regular briefings to civil servants, ministers, select committees and others, all of which are based directly on the trends that are being identified by our regional partners.

Contact

Andrew Forsey: andrew.forsey@feedingbritain.org

Mark Game - CEO, The Bread and Butter Thing

*See attached information

The Bread and Butter Thing is a community-led charity based in the North of England. Mark has been working to stopping the food from going to waste for over 20 years and ran a community shop for 15 years. He was the founder of The Community Shop, the first social supermarket in the UK.

The three rungs of the basic food ladder are:

1. Crisis
2. Moderate food insecurity
3. Everyday retail

Making sure that you have all three aspects so that people have a choice in what to engage is really important to us because that's how you start to build resilience.

We sit in the middle in the capacity building as many pantries and food clubs do and we bridge the gap. It's much too large a step to go from crisis, food bank food up to everyday retail. But whilst we bridge that gap, it's a really good opportunity to engage with people as well and start to develop other areas that we know are so difficult.

Our model is a push model which means that people don't get to choose what's in the bags. But we see that as a fair distribution method. Lots of organisations that run social supermarkets have surplus food and by the very nature of surplus food, it means you don't necessarily know what you're going to get be that you will not have enough for everybody. Our model generates income and is a sustainable model.

In the six or seven years that we've been operating, when we've committed to going into an area and had the initial funding, we have never had to go back and say we're having financial difficulties. Each region has continued to sustain itself.

We talked about community resilience earlier as well and just wanted to kind of give you some ideas of what this looks like for us. So, we look at it two ways. We try to triage. Every neighbourhood is different and every organization that we deal with it in areas is different too. We try to make sure that first of all, we don't step on toes. If the project is already delivering a really good employability service, we won't bring anybody in offering employability because it's really important that the projects that we work with feel that it's their project and we are a support model to them.

Secondly, we know because of the volume of Members that we engage with, how we engage with them. We create clusters once a week where you'll get 50 to 100 people all coming to collect their food. That creates opportunities to engage, and that's what a lot of service providers really like. For example, in Trafford in Manchester, we're working with welfare rights and Citizens Advice is given 4G tablets to engage or cues while they're waiting to pick up the food. But what's really interesting about it is we're actively encouraging trying to get as much face to face as possible because digital exclusion is really significant in the communities that we're trying to serve.

A good example of this is a 45 year old IT engineer who's found himself down on his luck because he's been laid off because of COVID didn't know what to do, was very stressed and didn't want to go to the GP. He's getting counselling and is developing his self confidence and out there again looking for work.

One of the other things that we see quite a lot of is people tell us how lonely they've been, particularly over the last 18 months. 2 out of 3 of our members have said how they've definitely felt less lonely and over 2 out of 3 of our members are cooking healthier at home and are eating more fruit and veg.

Some of the other work we've done is around dietary diversity. Because of our push model, people are trying new foods, and that's something that is really difficult when you're on a budget because there's a risk factor involved with trying new foods and diversifying your diet can significantly improve your general health and wellbeing.

Contact

Mark Game: mark@breadandbutterthing.org

Questions, Thoughts & Ideas

Paul Bridges, Huddersfield Mission - *In terms of what we can do as a local community and the third section of the Council, what can we do locally? Also, what influence can we have for more national and global issues?*

Anne Firth - Huddersfield Town Foundation - *If you teach a man to fish, he eats for life and I think that is really important and that resonated with me. What are we doing to teach the men? Do we know that these donations are being used wisely? Do we know that people know how to cook the things that they're being given? And is there any work that can be done to develop that education?*

People don't know how to cook and people don't understand because they don't know where their food comes from. We need a more balanced food system, so a place-based approach isn't just looking at food within Kirklees.

Claire Worley - Member Pioneer, Coop - *I'm really interested in everyday experiences of food and how people access food, the need to try and understand stigma and understand if somebody is given some food, what do they do with it? Is there any research going on locally to try and gauge that and to try and understand people's experiences of access to food?*

Dr Megan Blake, Senior Lecturer at Sheffield University is an expert on these issues. She has done work in local areas including Kirklees, Barnsley and Manchester.

Email: M.Blake@sheffield.ac.uk

Co-op Community Fridge Fund

This funding is aimed at supporting any UK based group/ organisation wanting to set up a new Community Fridge within the next six months.

Alongside the £4,000 funding, successful groups will receive dedicated project set-up support, guidance and information, plus access to our Community Fridge Network forum.

The deadline for applications is 16th August.

<https://www.tslikirklees.org.uk/co-op-community-fridge-fund/>

Follow up meeting

A follow-up event will be arranged to discuss next steps and start to come up with a plan for Kirklees.