

Feeding Bradford & Keighley Annual Report for AGM 25th Oct 2021

Feeding Bradford & Keighley (FB&K) is a membership organisation with 93 member organisations (11 Oct 2021) who are organisations or individuals working to address food poverty across the district. Our vision is a Bradford District free of food poverty where people have access to affordable good food. Feeding Bradford & Keighley is a pilot group of Feeding Britain, sharing ideas and good practice across the country, working in partnership to do larger joint funding bids and feeding into the national political agenda.



The coordinator Cathy Henwood is employed by Wellsprings Together.

We are also members of West Yorkshire Food Poverty Network which is now also part of Feeding Britain.

Quarterly meetings: Feeding B&K has run 4 quarterly network meetings which are open to all interested in food poverty, these have all been by zoom, though we hope to return to face to face meetings soon. Alongside that we have held specialist meetings like our 'What Next for our Foodbank?' and information for food providers supporting those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Steering group: Feeding B&K has a steering group which meets at least quarterly and is made up of representatives from community food providers, a NHS nutritionist, food distribution organisations and the council. These members were agreed at our 3rd AGM this time last year with co-oped member Ian Brewer the Inclusion officer from Bradford Credit Union joining us early this year.

Highlights of last 12 months

- The huge response from all of you and many non-members to continue feed Bradford & Keighley during this pandemic
- Our growing low cost food market network providing a step up the ladder from (or prevention of the need to access) foodbanks with increased choice and empowerment.
- The 'Find food in Bradford' Website (www.bradfordfoodbanks.org.uk) improving accessibility for members of the public and professionals of our foodbanks and other provision.

New Website

Bradford Foodbanks Website was set up during COVID to be a place where groups could advertise their Food offer and organisations could signpost clients who needed a food bank or food provision. This was in place of trying to find a common referral for the Foodbanks. The site was launched last year and has had around 12,000 visits. Food providers can update the website by emailing ben@innchurches.co.uk clients can signpost to www.bradfordfoodbanks.co.uk In addition to this Birgit still maintains the Wellsprings brochure which can be found here. This contains the most up to date information about feeding projects around the city. <https://wellspringstogether.org.uk/whats-new/new-meal-provision-in-bradford-booklets>

Council and other support for Foodbanks during the pandemic

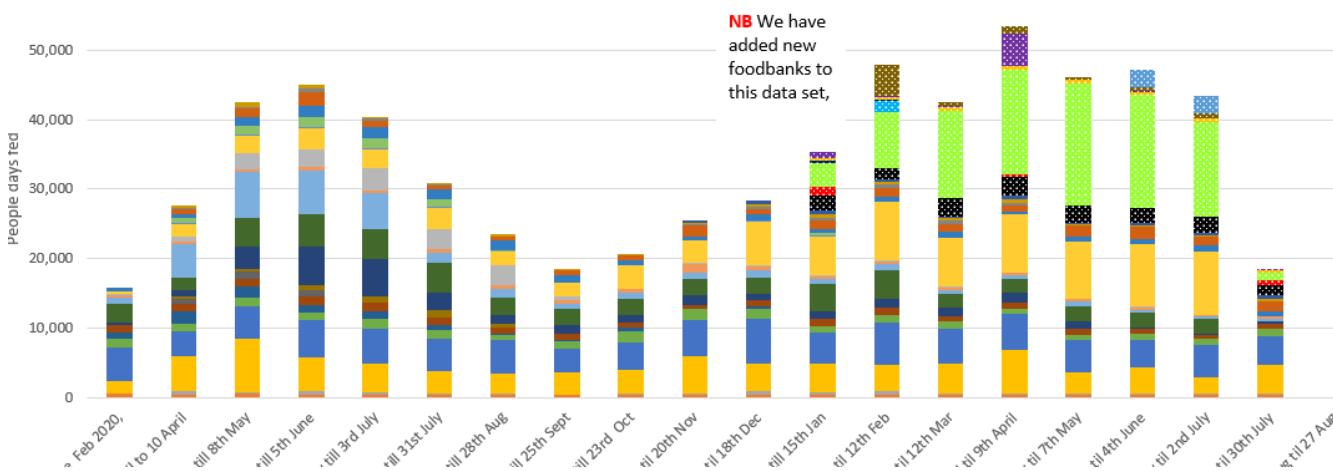
Alongside Feeding Britain, Inn Churches, Bradford VCS and the Council, we supported the purchase and distribution of additional food to foodbanks. Initially FB&K collated foodbank orders centrally, but it became apparent this was an unwieldy process. FB&K continued to monitor food parcel data collection and Inn Churches took charge of stock and distribution.

Initially there were stock issues as panic buying and staff absence had depleted stock availability, and some food lines were impossible to get. In particular, foodbanks reported that although they had funding for food, empty shelves and purchase restrictions meant they were not able to buy enough stock.

DEFRA's parallel work providing food for shielded groups was invaluable, but meant that a lot of stock was taken by the big companies supplying them, leaving short supply for others. Initial calculations we were given were based on an average food parcel cost of £15, when in reality foodbanks are distributing parcels of varying sizes, some worth up to £30.

Contact Feeding Bradford & Keighley – email cathy.henwood@wellspringstogether.org.uk

Inn Churches distributed £225,000 of purchased food, and over 450 tons of intercepted food to our network, with a wholesale value of £639,000 to supplement council and Feeding Britain Stock. Of course we are aware this is just the tip of the iceberg as Fareshare provided food across the district and many community and Faith Groups stepped up to show their support.



Feeding Bradford and Keighley have been collecting food bank stats since March 2020. Which shows a sharp rise in foodbank use and the extra provision provided by new foodbanks – many of these now don't have the crisis funding so figures are again reduced. We are also aware that we are missing some data as there has been a change in personnel for some foodbanks and reluctance to providing data.

What next for our Foodbank?

Our longstanding Foodbanks worked incredibly hard during the pandemic, and there was a number of new foodbanks start-ups too. Having a huge free food sector doesn't seem sustainable after all food isn't really free. We had a very useful webinar challenging foodbanks to consider 'What next for our Foodbank?' We are encouraged that several organisations who were giving out food parcels are now changing or in some case reverting to more sustainable models like mini markets and pop up pantries where customers contribute to the cost of their food. At FB&K we have also brought in speakers from food providers and other organisations to help foodbanks consider how they best move forward or sustain their existing provision.

We are also challenged by the 'Cash First' campaign that Trussell Trust and others are leading. Without adequate benefits many people are pushed towards food charity. We don't want to be better at providing more and more charitable food, we want to tackle the root causes, benefits set at a very low rate is one of these.

Work with Meal Providers

We have continued to support meal providers this year within a changing and challenging environment.

We keep an updated places people can get a free meal without a referral. This is available in a printed booklet with an update slip and online at Wellsprings Together website www.wellspringstogether.org.uk/resources and on the Find Food in Bradford website at www.bradfordfoodbanks.org.uk. We also support groups via a Facebook page and WhatsApp group. We have run update sessions last winter and this summer about services and accommodation help available to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and those with complex needs due to addiction or mental health problems.

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Low cost food

For several years FB&K have been promoting the benefits of low cost food projects as an alternative or step up from foodbanks. People in food crisis often find it hard to go from free food from foodbanks straight back to being able to afford commercial prices, many also would rather be able to pay a little towards their food but still have the choice and dignity of being able to select what they want rather than having a free handout. Low cost food markets and food clubs provide this. We are pleased that this has now become a more widely adopted idea across the district.

Foodsavers and transition to pop up pantries

Prior to COVID we have been keen to support the “pantry model” and we are thrilled that many providers have switched to that model. Pantries are an alternative to the foodbank where members or customers pay a subsidised fee or membership and can choose items towards their weekly shop. We currently have 15 food pantries across the district with several more in the planning stages. In addition to food we are supporting the development of FoodSavers at some of these pantries where customers can save from a £1 a week by opening a Credit Union account. For some this is the first time they have saved money in their lives.

Pathways out of Poverty

This programme puts an advice worker directly into food setting (foodbanks, free meal providers etc) to be on hand to give first line benefits, housing and other advice and to refer on when needed. Bradford was one of 4 areas nationally in this Feeding Britain project. We delivered it locally in partnership with Girlington Advice Center. Due to lower referrals during the height of the pandemic we opened these sessions (at that time telephone advice) to other foodbanks as well. Currently the project is actively working with Central Foodbank and Gateway Community Centre. It was funded by the lottery for two years from February 2019 to Feb this year – however as there was underspend due to Covid meaning that much of the training, volunteering and many of the advice sessions didn’t happen in the way planned and were reduced or had to be done remotely. The lottery gave permission for money to be spent to continue the project through to July and Feeding Britain have found funding to continue though to the end of the year. Funding is being sort to continue this work in the future

Bradford Council’s Food Strategy

Members of FB&K have been participating in the development of the council’s food strategy in the Tackling Food Insecurities area. This is still work in progress. The outcomes decided upon are

Outcome 1: To ensure children have access to good food 365 days a year:

Outcome 2: When prevention is not enough, ensure there is good crisis and emergency support so that people do not go hungry

Outcome 3: Tackle the underlying causes of food poverty across the District

Outcome 4: Promote and support sustainable community responses to food poverty

Outcome 5: Monitor and evaluate the amount, type and extent of Food Poverty in Bradford

Holiday Provision – The HAF (Healthy Activity and Food) programme

For the first time since 2017 FB&K has had no direct part in this programme. This year Bradford Council ran a large programme funded by the Department of Education. We have done our best to support the programme with advice, information and contacts. We were delighted with the increase of national funding, something we had campaigned for years that this should be a wide public funded programme. The council reports that:

The DFE funded Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme had a successful summer. This funding is specifically for Free School Meal (FSM) Children. Non FSM Children were supported from other provider funding pots; Living Well and JU-MP

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- Over 106 providers delivered Holiday Clubs across the 6 week summer break. A total of 34,964 children participated across the District
- A total of 20,912 children attended Holiday Clubs. 14,166 Free School Meal Children and 6,746 non Free School Meal Children
- HAF Sports and Leisure Parks sessions were held across the district. The 42 sessions had a total of 14,052 children participate. 8,431 Free School Meal Children and 5,621 non Free School Meal Children

All children received a meal at holiday clubs and the park sessions

Looking ahead - Challenges?

- **Covid 19 hasn't gone away, no one has a crystal ball and we have the uncertainties of Brexit cutting deeper, reductions in UC and fuel price rises too.** We will continue to work with you all to support your efforts, champion our sector and share information. Please keep us informed and in touch with what you are thinking and needing.
- **Moving on from crisis.** This is a key area, we need to keep this work going both with the low cost markets development and continuing the work with crisis meal providers to help all from the commissioned and statutory services to informal feeding projects work together to improve outcomes for those stuck in cycles of deprivation, homelessness, addiction and mental health crisis.
- **Collecting data** Since March 2020 we have been collecting foodbanks data, but there have been big changes – some new provision is now very much reduced as the funding is finished – does this reflect an over inflated use of foodbanks while funding was there or their now being lots more unmet need. Time will tell. We haven't done a wider data collection for the full range of food providers for over 3 years now. With changes in the sector, the move towards more low cost provision and the risks of more need for crisis food due to rising costs and reductions in benefits it is hard to say what causes what. It seems clear we need to re look at data collection and decide what data would be most useful to collect in the year ahead.
- **Have your say** – what other challenges should we be meeting? –arrange to talk to any of the steering group about your ideas, or you can email Cathy.