

TRANSFORMING PLYMOUTH TOGETHER[⊕]

Feast of Fun at Home A Year of COVID Report



August 2021

Introduction

This report looks at the work of Transforming Plymouth Together and the projects we have led or been involved in over 2020 (particularly from March at the start of the pandemic) until June 2021.

Due to the nature of the pandemic and the vast range of projects TPT has been involved in, the qualitative aspects of previous reports were unable to be achieved for this report. This report will summarise the undertakings and key reflections and feedback given.

A key priority for TPT during the pandemic was to enable churches to engage with a number of challenges that families across Plymouth faced. This was not to be solely food poverty and instant provision of essentials but to ensure that families were given good quality, healthy nutritious items as well as a few luxuries as well as games and activities and games for the whole family. Another challenge faced by families, and in some cases particularly parents, was social isolation and emotional poverty from inability to meet and chat with others during the lockdown. In this case building relationships was even more important for Feast of Fun at Home, though a usually key aspect of Feast of Fun, many were not seeing any other adults during the beginning of lockdown. Feast of Fun not only was to provide food but to be a regular source of contact and a listening ear.



Looking back at the work of TPT over the last 16 months, it can be seen that the impact of the work of Feast of Fun at Home and other projects is vast. Working with 23 churches to consistently and frequently reach hundreds of families across Plymouth, the work of countless volunteers has made such a difference in so many people's lives. There were also a number of other organisations and churches that TPT connected with and were able to support in one off contributions throughout the year.

For more on the Feast of Fun project prior to 2020 please visit the 2019 report [Appendix 1].

Child Poverty

There is much research on child poverty, both within the UK and globally, much of which links issues of child deprivation and malnutrition with lower engagement socially, abilities at school and general development [Appendix 2]. However despite the overwhelming conclusions, there is still little gathered evidence regarding the impact of COVID on the lives of children and their development. This may be for a number of reasons including the fact that we are simply still living within the pandemic and the repercussions may not be fully established for quite some time.

Despite the lack of information about long term impacts, there has been significant research which at least starts the understanding of what families have experienced since March 2020. A report from UNICEF and Save the Children [Appendix 3] observed that lockdown has pushed millions further into poverty. 'Families on the cusp of escaping poverty have been pulled back in, while others are experiencing levels of deprivation they have never seen before'. Many have recognised that those who were on the breadline were just coping prior to the pandemic. Then as the nation was thrown into lockdown, part-time or zero hours contract jobs were lost rather than furloughed (this more often occurred in less secure positions), childcare and family support were reduced so those families felt the impact of lockdown more significantly than others who were in more secure jobs or employment that easily adapted to remote working, or those who were already receiving benefits or other support. However, no matter the employment position of an individual, Child Poverty Action Group [Appendix 4] found that 'around three-quarters of families are finding it harder to manage financially, due to rising living costs, additional caring responsibilities, reduced child maintenance payments and problems accessing other financial support'. There was also the additional observation that poverty is not limited simply to monetary value but extends to health, education, nutrition, housing, relationships and more. 'There are not only more children experiencing poverty than before, the poorest children are getting poorer as well' [Save the Children - Appendix 3].

There are many who experience hidden poverty - those who live seemingly successful lifestyles whilst being on the brink of challenges if income changes. This could include owning a large house with big mortgage, or car, payments whilst living paycheck to paycheck. This has been highlighted during COVID as it has caused major issues for many of those individuals who relied on work at full pay and were then furloughed or even let go.



Food Poverty

The reality of 'poverty' is more than whether a parent can afford a holiday, a treat or not, but for many it's a matter of 'heating or eating' which in winter is a difficult choice to make for parents. In the summer, however delightful for some it may be, it's six weeks of having to entertain or to pay for activities or trips, as well as having to feed and to manage without access to support through schools. Christmas can also be an incredibly challenging time with pressures of gift giving to match others spending, attending numerous events and parties as well as providing an overabundance of good food during the holidays.

The Food Foundation [Appendix 5] shared that UNICEF reported in 2017 that 10% of children in the UK are affected by severe food insecurity. There is the challenge for families who are experiencing poverty and difficulties with food shopping, who will be likely to buy cheaper, less healthier options or will be less likely to have access to different shopping options. There can also be a perception that many of those who fall under these challenges may be inexperienced in cooking healthier meals and therefore may not choose suitable items when shopping. The Food Foundation's research [Appendix 6] found that healthy foods are on average three times more expensive than unhealthy foods.

Research undertaken by The Trussell Trust [Appendix 7] over the last few years has shown that the usage of food banks has gone up steadily. Some of the top reasons for using the foodbanks have included low income, benefit delays and benefit changes amongst others. This shows that those who use the foodbanks are still employed (possibly through part-time, zero hour or seasonal work) but the wages may not be enough to feed their families. However this research does not encompass the full extent of the state of food poverty in the UK. There must also be the consideration that there is often a huge amount of shame and loss of dignity in having to use a foodbank. For many, especially prior to the pandemic, there was perceived stigma attached to asking for help. However, the response to the pandemic by providers has shown that there is no judgement if help is needed and that issues resulting from the pandemic can affect anyone.

Devon Community Foundation [Appendix 8] observed that there are often logistical issues that can be faced when shopping for healthier items. These factors may include

- Lack of public transport in rural areas.
- Lack of food shops in poorer neighbourhoods.
- Lack of cooking facilities at home.
- High densities of fast-food outlets are often found in the most deprived areas.
- Although they provide a nutritionally balanced food parcel in the form of non-perishable foods, most food banks can't distribute fresh vegetables because of storage issues and health and safety regulations



Poverty in Plymouth

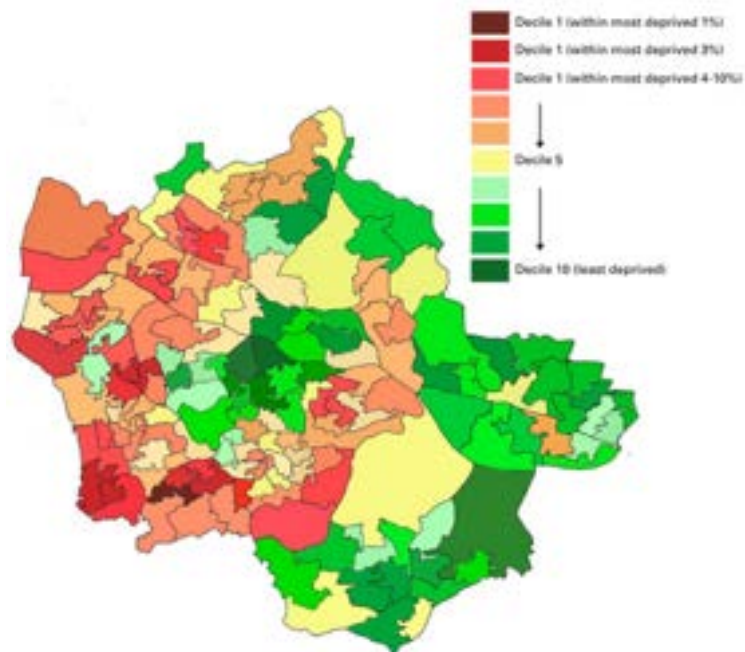
(For more information on the previous Feast of Fun including the report for 2019 and all references mentioned in this section, please visit the [TPT website](#) or see Appendix One)

As covered in previous Feast of Fun reports* Plymouth is within the 30% most deprived of all local authority districts in England.

Despite much economic and cultural development, the city still experiences high levels of poverty including in-work poverty or those in cycles of low or no pay. Plymouth has some of the highest levels of personal debt across England and has the highest in the South West. As shared in the previous Feast of Fun report (2019) the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation report highlighted many times that Plymouth was featured within many shortlists for deprivation across the country, including 16.6% of Plymouth population living within the top 10% of deprivation for the country. High numbers of school children (28.6% of secondary and 24.3% of primary) were eligible for free school meals (FSM).

There were already huge concerns that holiday hunger was an issue for many families, especially during the six weeks of summer holidays where very little support was available. Through the work of past Feast of Fun events, there was a slowly increasing awareness amongst churches that this was an issue that should be faced.

The 2015 LSOA map of Plymouth highlights the disparity of areas in Plymouth, whilst they are indicators of the level of deprivation in those areas. As mentioned already, there are many who experience hidden poverty, so whilst there are many green areas within the city, it should not be dismissed that there may be a number of families who are experiencing poverty (of whatever sort) despite the perception of living on a nice street with a nice car.



Poverty During Covid

Poverty in Plymouth (2020-2021)

It can be seen clearly that poverty in Plymouth was already a huge challenge that many families faced, especially during holiday times. With the chaos over the last year, even more families have experienced, and will continue to live with the impact caused by COVID for many years to come.



One of the biggest issues that has come to light is that prior to 2020, many families (and individuals) were just coping, treading a fine line of part time work, care support from families, provision from school, neither thriving in life yet not qualifying for more official support from government or local authority. With sudden closures (or limited contact) of schools, not being able to see grandparents or other family members, support and childcare became much more of a challenge. With the added hurdle of many industries shutting shop - hospitality, retail, and even the aviation industry [Appendix 9] roles were either furloughed (which was often not enough) or were made redundant resulting in many who relied on the part time, zero hour contracts that in the past had been suitable, suddenly finding themselves thrown into severe financial instability. These people weren't in any support or local systems and were therefore new to applying for benefits, universal credit (which had massive delays at the start of the pandemic) and faced issues of pride and loss of dignity. A further challenge for those having to go through this was that many services had to close or reduce availability so there were fewer opportunities for personal support or even to ask simple questions. However this has not reduced the number of people applying for Jobseeker's Allowance or universal credit with reports claiming that in April 2021 there were 2.6 million seeking the support compared to 1.4 million in 2020. [Appendix 10]

Regardless of the employment and income situation of an individual or family, it cannot be denied that for a huge number, the cost of living during COVID has increased. An article in the Guardian commented on research by The Resolution Foundation which found that whilst general spending across the UK had dropped, for low-income households the cost of basic living had increased. The article further pointed out that not only were there many struggling with financial issues but that due to these concerns, many would experience worsening mental health because of the anxiety [Appendix 11].

There are also the challenges faced by parents in balancing work (whether still at a location or even from home) and care of children. They were suddenly having to manage childcare (with limited help where previously there were neighbours, family members or out of school clubs), taking on schooling as well dealing with the cost and energy of feeding, heating and entertaining.

Another crisis faced by many individuals is not just coping with the loss of jobs but the reality of the risks that may be faced resulting in catching COVID. An article by the BMJ [Appendix 12] suggests that those who experience higher levels of deprivation may be at a higher risk of the disease. There is a higher chance of exposure to COVID in lower paid, manual roles especially those in the care, retail and service sectors, where there is less support for protection, PPE and training. There is also an added risk of exposure for those who live in more densely populated areas such as flats, HMOs and spaces with communal areas.

The article in the BMJ further goes on to say that whilst the long term impact is still unknown, the expectation is that children have to pay the greatest price due to reduced personal development through less socialising with friends as well as lost education.



Feast of Fun

The Feast of Fun project developed out of the Hope4Summer initiative that was started in 2017 following a project with a group from St Peter and the Holy Apostles who went into their local school to teach a few families how to cook a meal and then ate together. In the summer of 2017 a small collection of churches in the St Budeaux community worked to offer families the chance to come together, prepare, cook and eat a healthy meal together. These events reached over 550 children, and parents who took part, during the summer of 2017.



In 2018, 26 events by 13 churches were run and provided over 2,000 meals for families.

For the summer of 2019, the project was rebranded to 'Feast of Fun', to allow the development of events to happen during other holidays, not just the summer. The project worked with 18 churches across a number of denominations to run 40 events over the summer.



With a large financial dilemma faced by TPT for the coming year of 2020, the future of the charity was uncertain so the team decided to create a larger programme of events to build a legacy for the organisation. However with the sudden lockdown of the country in response to COVID, the project was pivoted to fit with the upcoming changes and restrictions in place. Through numerous applications to funders, many successful bids were made resulting in an even larger year of Feast of Fun, working with more churches, offering more food and reaching more people than expected.

To make adjustments to the restrictions, the delivery of projects has been temporarily rebranded as 'Feast of Fun at Home' to accommodate the fact the activities and food consumption would happen at home rather than on the church sites whilst still maintaining the aspects of fun and food. For TPT, there was an importance that the project be continued to address both food poverty as well as social and relational poverty. The focus should not be simply about providing food to families but connecting and keeping in contact with the families to enable a sense of familiarity, comfort and through that, hopefully an increased confidence to share any challenges with the church, which may then be able to signpost to further help.



Feast of Fun at Home in Action

Very early on in lockdown, TPT was keen to explore what the support offered to churches and families could be. Many churches had effectively shut their doors with activities and community gatherings being stopped and services being moved online. This provided an opportunity to link the available physical buildings as well as the many individuals and groups who had significantly more free time on their hands and were looking for ways to support those in need during the difficult times.

Working in the first instance with St Pancras Church who were already linking with their local schools to offer a place where families could collect food parcels (a system that was already in place from the previous year), TPT was immediately able to offer extra hands to pack as well as start to source additional food to supplement the parcels. This sparked an idea that perhaps the Feast of Fun project could be moved to a more parcel based, almost popup foodbank format that would still allow for a weekly point of contact as well as food and fun provision.

Sourcing Food



Prior to the pandemic, the food provided to St Pancras by an alternative partner was suitable as many of the families were used to the parcels, they were slightly unusual surplus items but families expected and could factor food shopping around it. However as the first few weeks of lockdown passed, there were comments from families about finding slightly more basic or essential items that were difficult to find in the shops such as bread, milk or toilet paper. Accessing affordable food became difficult with, for some, the added complications of needing to visit other stores that may be more expensive, limited transport options (for example no car) and concerns about the safety and cost of travelling on public transport and what to do with children if they are at home.

The team at St Pancras were also utilising additional sources of food such as FareShare Go to supplement the food parcels. At this time the organisation who provided the food planned to charge for the food particularly as the number of families who required food was increasing. The parcels were also identified as being not SMART [Appendix 13] in that they contained inconsistent, unusual or short life items which made food planning and preparation difficult, especially for those who were already in a situation of financial restriction.

Working with emergency food charity Provide Devon, stocks of tinned items (soup, beans, veg) dried (pasta, pulses, rice) as well as a few sweet treats were used by the church to make parcels so that families could expect the same, or similar, items each week, and could meal plan around, or buy to supplement, for fresher items. This became the template for the packing list for the rest of the project, subject to stock availability and requirements.





As the summer drew closer and more churches were interested in joining Feast of Fun at Home, the question of where would much of the food be sourced from were asked. In prior years each church was responsible for sourcing its own food as it would cook and serve a single meal for the attendees as opposed to providing nearly a week's worth of shopping to a whole family. In many cases one parcel if purchased from a supermarket would have cost the same amount as one Feast of Fun 2019 event.

TPT were then offered the chance to receive food from the 'Love Your Neighbour' project set up by St Matthias Plymouth and HTB through a local DEFRA bid, which allowed TPT to collect much larger quantities and varieties of food. This was stored at St Mark's Church for a central hub of Feast of Fun food stock which was then able to be sorted and distributed accordingly.

New model roughly worked as follows:

- Church wants to get involved, can identify a number of families (completely up to them and team) and dates for upcoming events (just in the holidays or throughout term time as well as timings)
- TPT assigns items, writes packing list and assembles at St Mark's Church
- Church collects food from St Mark's or TPT delivers
- Some dietary requirements were able to be catered for
- Fresh order placed by TPT
- Fresh delivery direct to church
- Church team packs parcels on site
- Distribute as suited to church (families collect/ school collects/ to door delivery)



Churches

Shortly after this new format was developed, more churches became interested in setting up something similar.

The ability to offer food to families in need that fit with COVID restrictions, availability of teams and volunteers meant that Feast of Fun at Home was a good fit for many churches to take part in. Many found that they wanted to get involved in an activity or project that supported their local community.

There were a number of churches who had been previously involved in Feast of Fun in previous years, had run events and were familiar with the work of TPT. There were some new churches who had not worked with TPT before but were keen to do something. 47% of the churches who joined the project over the year were new to the Feast of Fun family.

Some churches worked individually, some worked as community collectives, but each worked in the way that was best for them.

The list of churches involved in Feast of Fun at Home:

- Derriford
 - Derriford United Reformed Church
 - New Life Fellowship
- Devonport
 - Devonport Baptist Community Church
 - St Aubyn's Church
 - St Michael's and St Barnabas
 - Stoke Damerel Church
- Eggbuckland
 - St Edward's Church
 - The Rock Community
- Hope Baptist Church
- Plymstock
 - Hooe Baptist Church
 - St Mary's Church of England
 - Plymstock United Reformed Church
 - Plymstock Chapel
- Plymouth Christian Centre
- St Budeaux
 - St Boniface Church
 - St Budeaux Baptist
 - St Budeaux Methodist
 - St Budeaux Parish Church
- St Francis of Assisi
- St Jude's Church
- St Mark's Church
- St Pancras Church
- St Peter and the Holy Apostles



Other churches which connected through the year included St Aidan's Church in Ernesettle and Mutley Baptist both of whom were new to working with TPT.

The motivation behind the churches decision to do Feast of Fun was varied; many felt, due to projects, activities, services and other events having to be halted for lockdown, that they had capacity both on site and with teams, to be able to get involved in something that supported their local community.

Following the survey sent to churches to ask for feedback, some of the reasons for getting involved included:

supporting our community

Love your neighbour as yourself, help those in need. Building up relationships with the families with an opportunity to also provide spiritual support.

To reach members of the community who are struggling nearby us

Helping those in poverty. Building community. Love

*To support the community and reach out to families during a difficult time
To build relationships with families in the community and learn how best to support them
or connect with them*

Covid Response - Church in action

We had been actively involved in last summer's events and wanted to continue some involvement with local families and help in their circumstances.

It brought about a real sense of sharing the responsibility amongst our church members as well as working with another fellowship. It has also increased the knowledge of our work amongst the community through these weekly support packages.

The gradual addition of churches who got involved was a surprising benefit which allowed the project to explore and improve as well as developing its overall logistic management, which included simply accessing enough food. It is unlikely that the relatively smooth sailing of February half term 2021 and Easter 2021 would have been possible without the experience and food provision at Easter and Summer 2020.

There were some challenges faced that will make the new model harder to sustain if needed. The first is that for many churches, it relied on a handful of people to connect the families, collect the food as well as organise volunteers. As other projects restart again, or simply as many of the teams become burnt out because they have worked so hard during lockdown, there will be fewer people available to coordinate Feast of Fun at Home. Before Covid Feast of Fun might be possible as there is less logistical requirement for food and family contact as it is open to anyone and everyone. Also, churches may become reluctant to use their buildings and people for more complicated projects as halls, buildings and people are required for other activities that may have been run in the past.

There may also be challenges to sustaining the amount of food given as funding and sources of bulk food may be harder to access. Additionally, the time and energy in packing and distributing the food may be a deterrent for the teams.



Early on in lockdown, TPT discussed the opportunity and responsibility to make sure that projects foreseen to be more long term were responding to the global crisis and helping individuals, families and communities to not just survive but thrive going forward. How could we go from reactionary, instant reflex action, to the problem at hand, to responding, intentionally and carefully, to create long term change in people's lives?

Identifying Families

Families were identified by the churches through several different approaches. Many were identified through the schools and family support workers who referred families they knew who would benefit from a bit of extra support. Others were identified directly by the churches, either by members of staff or those who knew of families in need. Some referred friends or even themselves. There were a few occasions where other projects or organisations referred a family as it was felt that the Feast of Fun project would be slightly better suited to the families needs by location, church support or long term offer of the project.

However one of the most important conditions of referrals was that no financial proof or evidence was required. It was important that the families were given as much dignity as possible without needing to 'prove' if they qualified. It was by the knowledge of the families and the trust of those who referred that was all that was required.

Whilst there was no deadline or cap on how many parcels a family could receive over the year and churches actively encouraged the families to receive them as long as they needed, there were occasions where families informed churches that they were ok and didn't need the support anymore. Families expressed gratitude to the churches even the following was mentioned -

'Thank you but I don't need a Christmas parcel, maybe it can go to someone else who needs it more'

Programme of Events

2020

- Easter - Feast of Fun
- May - Feast of Fun
- June - Unify Plymouth Exchange
- July/ August - Summer Feast of Fun
- October/ November - Half term Feast of Fun
- December - A Very Merry Feast of Fun P1
- Families Right 2 Healthy Food
- With Love This Christmas

2021

- January - A Very Merry Feast of Fun P2
- February - Half term Feast of Fun
- Families Right 2 Healthy Food
- March/April - Easter Feast of Fun P1
- Families Right 2 Healthy Food
- Easter Feast of Fun P2
- May - Half term Feast of Fun



Sourcing Food

The following is a sample packing list that was given to churches. The lists have changed depending on the stock available and past packs to rotate items such as tea one pack, coffee another.

If these items were to be purchased from a supermarket the cost would be over £55 and that does not include the games as well as any additional items that may be surplus from previous packing events or where larger families would have packs topped up. [Sample packing list Appendix 14]

The food provided covered a range of requirements for a family, health and a few treats, protein, carbs, fruit, veg (both fresh and tinned) as well as dairy items with many being long life items that would provide backup stock for families if they were able to put away.



It was acknowledged that the packs were not to provide everything that a family may want but to provide a majority amount of food with other items required to be purchased, for example, fresh meat or specific favourite items.



Over the summer of 2020, there was a significant shortage of a few items such as tinned meat and pasta sauce but with the provision of food from Fareshare through Love Your Neighbour, this was resolved and a larger variety of items was added to the TPT stock resulting in more diverse packs being possible.

Whilst the ambient items were sourced through the food action partners across Plymouth, fresh was something that was required to be purchased. After working with Tamar Fresh on Families Right 2 Healthy Food, TPT worked primarily with that organisation for fresh provision as their quality and level of service was excellent as well as having the benefit of supporting a local business. Tamar Fresh would go over and above their provision, understanding the requirement of delivering separately to the churches.

Putting the Fun into 'Feast of Fun'

As stated already, as much as the food is an important part of the project, the other side is the providing the children with fun and activities. At previous Feast of Fun events there were multiple activities to get involved in - various types of crafts, bouncy castles, basketball, air hockey, bowling and sumo wrestling. Whilst practically these activities were impossible to do during COVID, it was initially challenging finding an alternative that would be cost effective and available during COVID, as well available to everyone where some families might not have spare paper, glue or colouring pens.



To fit around the seasons and likely activities of the families, there was a rotation of activities to include. To begin with (during Easter 2020 holidays) small craft kits were given out with some paper and coloured pencils that were purchased from The Range. The next holiday, with increased numbers of families, craft kits were purchased from Hobby Craft, these included everything from paper, to glue and decorations so that no family would be unable to use the activities as they didn't have the right materials. Whilst not an activity, families were also given some sweet treats in the form of small Easter eggs to enjoy.

Over the summer a combination of craft kits and outdoor games were given out to encourage families to do something inside but would also get families outside and keeping active. These sports included football, badminton, quoits, cricket, boules. A bonus of the sports games is that they last beyond just one use so can be played with again and again.



In the Autumn events, TPT worked with Plymouth Play ScrapStore, to purchase a number of craft bags that included a number of 'lovelies' (the term for the recycled and reused items from the Scrapstore) that may even spark the creativity of families to use items in their own homes to create something.

As a Christian organisation and the obvious faith direction of churches, there has never been a pressure for the activities to be exclusively faith focused or evangelistic. The more important thing was for the families to feel welcomed and leave having had fun.



Whilst most holidays there is not usually a focus either way (though Easter and Christmas are clearly a time where churches can lean into it) one that causes concern for the churches is the October half term that will fall around 31st October and therefore Halloween. Many churches in the past have actively avoided any mention of it whilst others have used it as an opportunity to raise the awareness of God's light. The decision of the churches has been completely up to them.

However due to building relations with Tamar Fresh, there was an opportunity to purchase some pumpkins with an additional amount being generously donated. These were then offered to churches to give out if they chose to, along with activities and instructions on a Christian perspective of that festival including colouring sheets [Appendix 15]

At Christmas, a time of year where there are usually a number of activities and events for families including craft afternoons, activities and Christingle services, TPT put together Christingle kits that would allow the families to make a Christingle together at home. The oranges were also generously donated by Tamar Fresh which allowed funds to go towards a number of other items meaning overall more kits were able to be handed out.

Some churches also decided to give additional items to the families such as St Budeaux who gave items that were collected by the congregation.



There were lots of positive comments from both the churches involved and from those they engaged with...

2nd visit to a single Mum in Whiteleigh, she said they had loved the activities too - she and her son had sat on the trampoline and done it together.

As you know, we kept the games equipment back for this half term. One Dad said he had just been in town to get shoes for his son, who asked him for a football as well. He said he couldn't afford it, then he looked in the hampers and there was a beautiful proper football. He was so pleased! God is good I said!

Hampers are a fantastic help and very much appreciated. Especially the special diet items and often resources to occupy the kids!!! I also look forward to getting out of the house for 10 minutes and having a chat with some friendly faces!!! Great to hear that the support is going to continue. Please pass on our thanks to all involved.



Numbers

Not all churches joined in with Feast of Fun at Home at the beginning of lockdown, however by Easter 2021 there were 23 churches involved in providing holiday parcels to over 350 families.

Whilst the numbers of families is important in that the more families reached, hopefully the fewer children go hungry, TPT maintains a strong favour towards the frequency and quality of contact with a family as opposed to larger quantities of families reached. For TPT the heart of what Feast of Fun is about is relationships and this can only be achieved by regular contact with a family, offering a chance to chat, provision not just for sustenance but for social and emotional wellbeing as well.



23
CHURCHES

158
EVENTS

Data collected shows that 4,328 parcels were given to families and with each parcel containing on average about 20 meals plus additional events where individual meals were served, TPT estimates that 88,202 meals were provided through Feast of Fun at Home. This also includes food provided to SEA Church, Mutley Baptist, Stoke Village Hub, The ARC and some additional weekly parcels provided to a handful of families during term time. There will also be the occasional surplus food given to such as Plymouth Food Bank, Devonport Help a Neighbour and a number of additional projects run by churches for isolated and vulnerable individuals. So it is likely that the total number of meals is nearer to 90,000, with hundreds of families and thousands of individuals being provided for during the pandemic.

4328
PARCELS

88,202
MEALS



Volunteers

An opportunity faced by many churches earlier on in lockdown was that many individuals were suddenly finding themselves with a lot more spare time available and a desire to do some community good. With many usual groups being stopped but the buildings becoming available as meetings and activities were suspended, Feast of Fun was a good project from a leadership perspective but also in terms of recruiting volunteers. The project required very little commitment except for a few hours on the allocated days, people could work with plenty of distance or even spread work out throughout the day if needed.

Some had teams who collected, another for set up and prepping, then another team for packing and another team for distribution or some churches had enough space to do many of the roles at the same time.

Motivation for why individuals volunteered in the project was varied and included :
they could tell there was a genuine need during these difficult times and they wanted to help.

Being able to reach out to the community

Because they have a heart for our community

They wanted to help families in the community and build relationships with others. One of our volunteers was new to the area and wanted to meet people as well as helping families.

Passionate about helping families in need

To share in the work of the church and to support the families we did.



Feedback given also indicated that many of volunteers benefitted themselves by getting involved in the project:

Our volunteers were very moved by how such simple acts of kindness helped those in need. They had a greater awareness of poverty and a change of lifestyle due to COVID. It gave the volunteers a sense of fulfilment.

Very fulfilling to be part of

They enjoyed being involved and being able to meet families in our community. Volunteers talked about how they have felt useful and glad to be able to help others. It has also built friendships and been a way of outreach to some volunteers on the outskirts of church or people who don't attend at all.

They loved being able to do something useful - we have built capacity to do larger number of families if this was required - they were concerned to support families at this time

They've felt resourceful and useful

It has given them an increased awareness of the need in the community and their role in it.

Many individuals during lockdown, not only Christians, found themselves with a desire to get involved and support their community. Many volunteered for food banks, NHS, isolation support projects and much more. Some of the churches found that locals, who neither attended the church or received parcels, were requesting to help with the event and other churches found that some of the families who received parcels wanted to help in gratitude to the church.

We hope that this spirit of service and consideration for others will last long after the pandemic is over.



Case Studies

The following sections are transcripts of churches who spoke at the 'Feast of Fun at Home - COVID Review' event held on Zoom on 12th May.

St Pancras Church

Lawrence - Vicar at St Pancras Church

Feast of Fun at Home emerged for us after getting involved in Feast of Fun 2019 BC (Before COVID) and during that time we began to connect and reconnect with a number of families who faced food insecurity during the school holidays and to offer a place of welcome and fun for families over that summer. Most of all it was about growing relationships with the community who had very little connection with the church and so much of the energy was about people being recognised and welcomed at that time. As we did that we heard of opportunities to serve in new ways so even before COVID we'd had some families and indeed the family support workers from the school asking whether there would be regular food provision and could a school move (the food provision) from the school car park to the church hall which meant that we could provide tea and coffee and provide space for people and provide ongoing communication during the week. Then of course COVID came and all the schools shut down and quickly we heard from families and schools asking if some kind of provision for those most in need could continue and that had to happen in new and fresh ways but it did mean we could continue relationship building with many of the same families but also have new referrals from the local schools. It was humbling for many of those families, the only contact they had week by week in that first lockdown was from us as the church and it meant a great deal to them. It also meant that we had to find new partners quite quickly and TPT were really important to us in establishing partnership with Provide Devon, later on with Love Your Neighbour as well, working out new relationships with FareShare and even with Plymouth Argyle Community Trust. It also meant we could cooperate with other churches and eventually bid for City Council Funding for some of the work we were doing.

But all the way through it comes back to being able to recognise people in our community, people who time after time from schools and churches and institutions and employers have heard 'you're not good enough' and during COVID the fear was that they're not even good enough to feed their families.

So Covid has actually been an opportunity to say in a way that they might have not heard before that 'we as a church are glad to see you, we're glad to listen to you, we're glad to serve you' and to do that by name, week by week, month by month, and so to develop those relationships over this time. And Covid has actually provided a real opportunity to grow those relationships.



Sarah - Curate at St Pancras Church

It's been a wonderful opportunity for us to engage with people in the community and we've been building what we refer to as thick relationships and it has evolved, what's happened is that we've started to get people initially being referred by families but what's also happened is that people have started to self refer - the word is getting out and we're somewhere where some resource can be found. And that's usually the initial contact for people is the resource, the food we are offering. But again as Lawrence suggested, the real beauty is not only to feed people who are going hungry but to build a relationship with them and to help them to know that they are loved. And that makes such a big difference. It's grown as well. It started as a small group and grown to a bigger operation, Hannah mentioned about us adapting to smart packages; well we have had to adapt to smart packaging and we started to look at the makeup of some of the families - some were 1-2 people, some 3-4 people and some are 5 or more. So we decided to lay out tables small/medium/ large in order to better match the requirements to the families in which they were going.

Moving slightly away from the food provision, with the creation of those thicker relationships with people we then sat down and had a conversation at the end of the summer to ask 'how can we maintain that relationship beyond the food provision' and suffice to say that we identified a Christian charity 'Kintsugi Hope' and four of us from church trained up as leaders and offered that from the beginning of January And what it's about is offering tips and tricks to cope with the huge mental health crisis that going on at the moment and we' managed to get some people coming along to that over 12 weeks, and each week we look at an issue - shame, guilt, anger, disappointment, loss, anxiety, depression. When we did the training we were told to expect people to start to gel and open up a bit at about week 3 or 4, but what we found was the very first week, one person opened up and that lead to other people being given permission.

It's become such a little community that the participants themselves are being able to support one another in a whatsapp group we've set up. So in many ways the food provision was the initial spark but it's evolving into something completely different from church now. But also as we've come to the end of the systems, we didn't want to have a cliff edge with the food, we've been able to offer community food larder which people are able to dip into if they are still struggling now the children are back at school

Mariksa - Families Worker at St Pancras

We are now seeing many of the families who have received hampers become volunteers themselves. 6 of the people who were receiving the hamper, have come along and help plan the event, 3 are helping to organise the larder each week.



Ben - Mission Development Worker at St Peter and the Holy Apostles

Last summer we had a mobile Feast of Fun outside the school with an ambulance (Fr. David) a young lady came along, a single mother, very shy, very quiet and didn't want to talk, we gradually built a relationship so that she would start to talk but she wasn't too keen on being near men. It started off with me offering to take her food parcels to her home, which was only over the road but she wasn't keen on the idea, eventually she would let some of the female volunteers help her. It then progressed to her allowing a female volunteer to accompany us whilst I helped with carrying the food. Then by Easter, it happened that we'd progressed that far, that I could carry her bags to her home, to her front door without her feeling scared and actually quite confident. Also on the way that she has talked about various aspects of her life, she's talked to Fr David a couple of times and made a lovely relationship with us which is great progress for her. We don't know much about her background but it's been a great outcome for us working with families.

At St Francis, there have been some families that we met through Feast of Fun 2019 and were able to invite them back to receive Feast of Fun at Home parcels in 2020 and there is one young family that we've been able to see continual support.

One family booked a baptism from the physical Feast of Fun and over the last year we've been able to continue to offer support. At Christmas we were able to knock on the door, offer a Christmas food hamper and pray with them on their doorstep. It's been great to see the progression of the families, who experience many needs and barriers yet are now having the confidence to share them with us and it's a joy to continue to share with them.



Ruth and Sue - Churches Together in Devonport

One of the important things for us was that we were able to work with churches together in Devonport. All the churches represented were able to come together and we had a really good team, getting to know each other but also working together, and I think as well as the contact with the families and what we're trying to do but I think it was really encouraging to all of us that we were able to work together, and still continuing to do!

Chris - Minister at New Life Fellowship

We worked with Derriford and Mark which was lovely to do. We are very grateful to Derriford for their help and assistance in putting it all together, ours was the smaller one. But there is such a huge gratitude that we met on the doorstep, and it is that getting to know people. And slowly there was a family that I am getting to know. First it was just the family then I'm finding out the issues a family faced and I was talking to them about that. Then after a few times, I was invited in and I could offer prayers which they were very happy to accept. So there was a lot of gratitude and am so thankful to TPT for being able to make that possible



Mark O - Minister at Plymstock Chapel

I echo what's been said before, Feast of Fun has been fun working with the other churches and the team at TPT in making all this happen, it's been great to have something so positive to do, and physical to do, in amongst anything else. The churches who've helped lead it and given volunteers at Plymstock, it's become a wonderful team to work together with.

The various families have been developed into 'thicker' relationships. One lady when you brought radio four down and she told her story with a changed name to the report, and I had heard some of it before, I'm not that soft but I did have tears in my eyes at the end because she'd moved to Plymstock, it turned out because of an abusive relationship with three kids and she has major health issues, regularly in hospital. So she had lots going on that I didn't know of when we were delivering to her and then on top of that because of lockdown and soon as she got there she was locked down, and she told the reporter that the church was the only group she was seeing and I thought my goodness I only see in the holidays once a week. So from there once we started the weekly deliveries of the food from the warehouse when there was lots more fresh items around, I started seeing her weekly and prayed with her and her health is improving. At Christmas my wife got presents for the kids and we took them around. To see that kind of thing and God working in her life now and a new sense of hope, it's been so humbling and such a privilege to be involved in someone's life like that, we pray with her and she knows we pray for her. I don't think she's been in hospital in 2021 yet, God has been good to her and it's all come from that initial thing of a food parcel on the doorstep to a relationship like that where faith is so obvious. It's been such a privilege and a lot of fun as well!



New Relationships - New Projects

TPT also started working with a number of secular organisations across the city to deliver more effective support both to communities some churches were not involved with but also to utilise resources and funding bids.

Unify Plymouth

Working with Plymouth City Council, Plymouth Argyle Community Trust (PACT), Diversity Business Incubator, Plymouth Hope and Plymouth Octopus Projects, the team UNIFY PLYMOUTH was established to encourage more community cohesion between differing groups in communities.

One of the projects delivered earlier in lockdown in June was a cultural exchange. Argyle Community Trust organised cream tea ingredients and kwik cricket sets to be given to migrant communities via DBI and Plymouth Hope. They in return made an ingredient kit for Nigerian rice dish, a book on football in Nigeria and a football given to English families via TPT.



At Christmas, as part of the Unify Plymouth partnership, we worked with PACT to provide 200 Christmas dinners in a box. Through donations, fundraising and generous gifts from businesses a meal of

- Turkey, Pigs in blankets
- Potatoes, brussels sprouts & other veg
- Pudding, chocolates
- Games, crackers

50 parcels were for individuals in Cornwall linked with isolation identified through Plymouth Argyle Community Trust. 150 were then allocated to families to be referred through TPT and the families who received Feast of Fun at Home parcels. These families were identified through the churches, especially those who were facing a particularly difficult Christmas, either with limited or no work or those who had expected to spend the holidays with other family members therefore saving money.

Feedback was positive especially for those who were fans of Argyle football club. Many would not have had much at Christmas.

I just wanted to say 'Thank you' on behalf of our Feast of Fun/CAP families for the Christmas hampers, who would have struggled through with very little.

We've had some lovely responses to our Christmas hampers.....stories of being able to have full larders for this time at Christmasto being excited at being able to arrange all the groceries on her shelf instead of having empty shelves..... oh, I didn't have any chocolates to give my son this Christmas, thank you so much.....the turkey was lovely.....we've been playing the Bingo game every day.

Hi Mariska and all the wonderful team of volunteers and donors of our wonderful Christmas hampers were the best in our time of need all the help and support every week at the church as been so helpful and grateful and then on Christmas Eve you all made it very special for my family you arranged a hamper from Plymouth Argyle and that lifted everybody's spirit my teenage daughters loveing there greatest football goal keeper knocked on there door very special moment thanku all of you lovely people hope you all have a great new year all our love Carl & caroline Carrington and all our lovely children



Working with partners from a number of different backgrounds and experiences has helped the work at TPT to become more known across the city especially in those organisations that are not religious. This has raised the profile of churches working together, the capacity and capability of smaller groups working together. This has helped the group apply for bigger pots of funding as well as support each other's weaknesses. For the Christmas project, Argyle said they would find it hard to identify, refer and communicate with 150 families who were in need at Christmas, which TPT could easily do through the church relationships already established. Conversely TPT would not have been able to resource all the items required for the Christmas hampers without significant cost, something that PACT were able to do by linking with a lot of their commercial sponsors, supporters and those who used the facilities.

'Being able to combine with partners such as TPT is so meaningful to us, in setting our self aside from being a sports delivery organisation, to a charity that delivers across multiple objectives across the southwest.

We're grateful for their efforts and determination to ensure those people who are most in need, are supported adequately.'

Daniel Hart - Plymouth Argyle Community Trust

It also highlighted the reality that many of the churches TPT work with are predominately white, despite much of the poverty and food insecurity faced by families in Plymouth being within those from migrant communities. Partnering with Christian organisations such as DBI and Plymouth Hope has helped to open our eyes to other ways of working that might not be typically used in 'traditional English churches'. This has significant impact on the future work of TPT especially considering that one of the themes of our work is in 'Migrant Vulnerability'.



Families Right 2 Healthy Food

The Families Right 2 Healthy Food project is a partnership between TPT, Food Plymouth, Food is Fun CIC and Provide Devon as a united bid for funding from Unicef. This was to support children and families at risk of food insecurity during the pandemic to be run from Christmas 2020 to Easter 2021.

The project is part of Unicef's national Food Power for Generation Covid initiative with Sustain, the sustainable food and farming network. The funding was the first time Unicef had funded domestic emergency response in its 70 year history and allowed a larger amount of fresh and specifically nutritious food to be purchased

The goal was to run a four month project to enhance food access for 120 Plymouth families (hopes to reach over 350 children) who were identified as living with long term food insecurity. This specific project would improve the nutritional quality of emergency food parcels between December 2020 and February half term 2021 with ongoing targeted family support looking to address educational, nutritional, social and relational challenges. Further focussed family work (Jan-Feb 2021) would include a tailored virtual cooking/budgeting skills course delivered by Food is Fun CIC who also produced a 'Cookwise' recipes/tips booklet that was included in parcels packed by churches through TPT. TPT included this within the Feast of Fun programmes, meaning the same teams and activities could be done with simply a different source of the food and packing list.



Three churches in the more deprived areas of the city were chosen to deliver this project: St Pancras in Honicknowle, St Edward's and The Rock Community in Eggbuckland/Leigham and Churches Together in Devonport. Similar to Feast of Fun at Home, the churches were responsible for identifying the families, linking through with schools and then for the packing and delivery of the packs.

Thank you for supplying the food for this session and the one before. We had some amazing feedback about the quality of the food. It is so good to know that many needy families in Devonport will have food to feed their families, especially with many no longer getting regular meals at School.

The project had a particular focus on healthy eating and providing nutritional ingredients so when developing the packing list, there was more consideration for the amount of fresh items included. This side of the project influenced the rest of the Feast of Fun at Home packing lists as it informed the team what were more suitable options for nutritious eating and what should be ordered fresh. The first version of the packing list used in December 2020 can be found at Appendix 16.

However, after the first events, the partners realised that despite the blessing of a good amount and selection of food for a family, it was typically too much for one person to pick up (often with a child in a pushchair or pram). The packing list was evaluated and adjusted to reflect the capacity of someone coming to collect the packs. [Appendix 17]



Tami, from Food is Fun CIC, also created a cooking book that was given during the Christmas parcels to help support the families during the holidays [Appendix 18]. Inspired by the resource and the usefulness for the families, during the following FR2HF events, a small flyer was made offering advice on budgeting and making food go further.



The families that received the food parcels were also offered the opportunity to participate in ongoing cookery training and educational and relational support.

Tami, Food is Fun CIC

The reason for adding a cooking element to the project was to reach those with very limited or no cooking skills. From experience of working with vulnerable communities, we know that this group experiences high levels of anxiety and stress as they try to feed themselves and their families on such restricted budgets. They have low confidence; some have mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. They do not know how to menu plan, budget, or make meals from limited ingredients. Without these skills they are buying low-cost high fat/high sugar processed foods and ready-meals that are not nutritionally balanced and contribute to weight issues and poor mental health.

Plymouth University Dietetics students

Through Dr Clare Pettinger's links teaching at University of Plymouth, graduate dietetics students were brought in for part of the project. And over March reviewed the parcel list and compared it to dietary guidelines to provide recommendations to improve the nutritional elements of it.

Offering an analysis of the packing list, there were improvements suggested that had already been made following the changes after the December packs which were an encouragement to the partners that the right decisions had been made.

Some of the key recommendations made were to replace some items for similar healthier options, this included cereals for porridge or granola (which are suitable for children), substituting white bread, pasta and rice for wholemeal alternative which also decreased the refined sugar content as well as increased fibre. There were also recommendations to reduce the chopped pork or other certain tinned meats to reduce salt and saturated fat but that may also cause offence to some religions or vegetarians/vegans.

To help broaden the possible meals that could be made, recommendations were to include items such as onions and garlic as well as to include a cooking booklet with recipes and suggestions, both of which had been resolved already by the partners.

The students acknowledged that many of their suggestions had already been made in the February events and commended the changes made to improve the nutritional value of the parcels which they identified as well thought out and nutritionally complete as all food groups were represented.

The students also recognised that the addition of certain 'fun foods' such as custard, cakes and crisps were an important aspect to make the parcel uplifting and exciting especially for the children with further comments that this was also important to mental health and wellbeing. [Appendix 19]



Plymouth University Occupational Therapy Students

At the beginning of 2021 TPT were contacted by Plymouth University to explore the opportunity of having Occupational Therapy students doing a work placement. The students were split into two groups: one to look at the Feast of Fun project with Hannah and the other working with Dave on COVID Cash Recovery.

The projects were further explained and the students were tasked with producing resources that could be handed out during the delivery of the projects. Through their different experiences, they asked questions that provoked new understandings of the project to the TPT team. The different perspectives made it clear that the projects benefit even those who may not fall into the groups that the church traditionally works with. There was also the awareness of how much the different ministries within churches actually can be linked to a number of wellbeing benefits, for all members of the family and vice versa, that churches should look at what they offer and how it reaches the whole family. This could include thinking about what parental activities are provided, not just for mother but for fathers as well. Are there groups that might offer or link with local service providers for adult education or job clubs, especially if the church is situated in a particularly deprived area of the city.

The group used their occupational therapy knowledge and frameworks to create a case study family that would allow both the students and TPT team to understand challenges and barriers that many families would face. TPT were able to give hypothetical solutions by offering church activities that may be run.

The discussions helped to educate the TPT team in realising how the ripples of the various projects can support families and offer not just a spiritual or biblical teaching but many practical skills or holistic development that many would not expect a church to provide. Creating a sample family with some of the challenges a family may face at the moment, the students looked at all individuals and what they may benefit by both short and long term.

Alongside collective discussion and reflection, the students produced resources including activities and cook books for Feast of Fun and CV guides and budgeting support tools for our work. The Feast of Fun group explored how the project would be able to help families in not just a spiritual level but also an integrated health and wellbeing approach. They produced two booklets to be included in the food parcels. The first was a cooking guide that covered budget cooking, tips on how to make food go further as well as how to get children involved in cooking. The recipes took into consideration a number of the items that were included in the food parcels such as tinned veg, corned beef and pulses.

The other booklet was an activity guide for families, encouraging them to visit the parks in Plymouth, free activities to engage with nature and helping children to learn and explore.

The other group, looking at CCR, explored how families may be impacted by the financial struggles caused by COVID. They produced a guide on occupational therapy and how it relates to health and wellbeing as well as guides on creating CVs, sample CV's and guides on budgeting for beginners. [Appendix 20 and 21]



Feedback

There is an overwhelming list of feedback, comments and responses made by families to the churches as well as by other churches to TPT.

We have chosen a short collection of comments made throughout the year

This is actually building relationships with the adults in a way I never got to do whilst policing a bouncy castle or supervising small folk with glue and scissors, and having the contact in place from previous years must surely count as a bit of a modern miracle.

Many opportunities arose to give personal support and counselling, but their stories are confidential. This service to families reflected the church in a very positive way.

It brought about a real sense of sharing the responsibility amongst our church members as well as working with another fellowship. It has also increased the knowledge of our work amongst the community through these weekly support packages.

There was a lot of gratitude each week from all the families. Some spoke of "passing it forward" by trying to help others in difficult circumstances. I was given a small gift from 1 young lad who wanted to say thank you for all our help.

Thank you so much again for a wonderful hamper. Such lovely wholesome foods that we can't wait to enjoy as a family. I look forward to helping in January.

Many opportunities arose to give personal support and counselling, but their stories are confidential. This service to families reflected the church in a very positive way.

One family was daughter, mother and Gran. Gran leaned forward on the last visit and very sincerely said, 'I don't know how we would have managed without this'.

Some mentioned how pleased they were to receive the toys/crafts and other extra items for the whole family to share, others said how the food was a real godsend for them as things were really difficult without the free school meals in the holidays.

[To volunteers] Just a quick note to say a BIG THANK YOU for all you did for last week's Feast of Fun. Everyone worked so well togetherand we didn't have too much confusion at the end!!

Another Mum came rushing in to tell me that they'd had some hospital results for her Gran, who we'd been praying for a couple of weeks ago. The diagnosis wasn't as bad as she had feared and her Gran could have an operation to help cure the problem. Keep praying, she said!

Thank you all, and for TPT for all the food and games.

Thank you for the chat and the hamper was absolutely FANTASTIC – the take-aways were a good idea. We went on moors and played with the bat and ball my son loved it and it got him out as he has been shielding

Some mentioned how pleased they were to receive the toys/crafts and other extra items for the whole family to share, others said how the food was a real godsend for them as things were really difficult without the free school meals in the holidays.

I couldn't go to bed without thanking you and all those lovely people – we had such a great family meal tonight (its been a while since we all sat together) with the lovely food you provided – a special evening. God Bless you all



Resources /Partners

Whilst TPT had a number of good relationships with partners prior to 2020, many of whom represented both faith and secular organisations and groups. However with the challenges faced by many during lockdown, new partnerships were formed to both receive and provide support for.

The partners that TPT have received support from have included:

- FareShare
- FareShare Go
- Love Your Neighbour
- Provide Devon
- The ARC
- ScrapStore Plymouth
- Lidl donations
- Tesco Roborough
- Plymouth Argyle Community Trust
- Plymouth City Council
- Plymouth Hope
- Diversity Business Incubator
- Torbay Council

TPT also supported

- Residents in Wyndham Square
- Plymouth Foodbank
- Derriford Meals on Wheels
- SEA Church
- Devonport Help a Neighbour
- Goshen Homes
- The ARC
- Mutley Baptist Church
- Stoke Village Hub
- Churches Together in Plymouth



Additional Support

COVID Cash Recovery

It was clear that the pandemic, in 2020 and beyond, was going to impact people in more ways than food poverty. Consequently, in late August/Early September, we joined other members of the Together Network who, in partnership with the Just Finance Foundation (JFF), were delivering the Covid Cash Course.

We realised that due to the financial chaos caused by the pandemic, it would be difficult for people to know what they would be entitled to, all the options of support that were available to them and how they might cope financially. Covid Cash Course, as it was then known, was a stand alone Zoom session that was designed so that churches, charities, community leaders and other social support organisations could provide information and resources that would help their communities recover from money issues that arose as a result of COVID-19. Each 2-hour session covered General entitlements, Universal Credit, Budgeting, Government and charitable grants, Money strategies for making it through the coming months, Help with bills and, although purposely not debt advice, Dealing with debt.

From these early beginnings, the course has evolved into the current Covid Cash Recovery course, still covering the above core issues, but in a more streamlined format moving from five separate PowerPoint slide sets to a single set split into four sections. From the very start, the team at JFF have ensured that the master slides were kept fully up to date with all the latest government support information and guidance and we were then able to incorporate more tailored information and local resources that would target the specific communities that our local attendees were supporting.

Our first sessions were for attendees from the Plymouth area and were very well received by those who joined. Those who attended came from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances, which was very encouraging, and pointed to the wide appeal that the course had, both then and now.

Having established the course and a routine, we then looked at how we might expand the reach of the course and in particular to those from a black, Asian or ethnic minority community, and were very fortunate that DBI (Diversity Business Incubator), a Community Interest Company, were very interested in partnering with us to deliver the relevant support and information to those in need in that community. This did require some slight linguistic adjustments to the content to make it more culturally appropriate where necessary. This partnership has proven to be very successful for this community and has now developed from the original Zoom format to one where members of the DBI team who attended the main sessions are now delivering the information in an even more informal one-to-one format that is tailored to the specific needs of the person being supported.



With the Plymouth and DBI sessions in full swing, we expanded our outreach even further and in partnership with Torbay Council we set up sessions for support organisations in that area. These also have proven to be a success and well received by those who attended. Again, the backgrounds of attendees were very diverse, ranging from Citizens Advice volunteers and DWP Work Coaches to NHS social care workers and supervisors.

To add some data to the above, since we started in September 2020, we have delivered 23 Plymouth sessions to 89 attendees, 17 DBI sessions to 85 attendees and 24 Torbay sessions to 64 attendees. That amounts to 64 full sessions to 241 attendees, which, even if we assume each attendee was only able to offer support to 5 individuals or families, means that potentially over 1,200 people received a piece of information that would dramatically reduce the effect that the pandemic would have on them and their family.

Here are some of the things our attendees have said:

"Although we had been supporting people with practical issues that had arisen because of COVID, we'd been getting a lot of questions about money, Universal Credit and entitlements."

"With the local Citizens Advice closed, we didn't know how to signpost those in need – or any information that could help them with the money issues many were experiencing"

"We had an individual, Daniel, who was really struggling from the support available for the self-employed... he had some really difficult months before attending the course" ...
"COVID Cash Recovery helped him realise that despite being self-employed, he was actually entitled to Universal Credit support, and he is now doing much better financially"
[Daniel* - pseudonym]*

"The options for water support really struck me, we had three people attend who have worked in water before and there were still support options they weren't aware of"

"Everyone thinks Universal Credit is an unemployed benefit, the course made it really clear where others may be entitled to support from UC or other schemes"

"Ability for participants to be anonymous and ask anonymous questions was really helpful"

"Great how people could turn their camera off, be anonymous and still actively participate in the course"



All the above has been an extremely satisfying progression, but Covid-19 will be a part of our lives, and affecting people adversely, for many months or years to come, so there is much still to do. For us the process has been one of learning as well as delivery, and we have had to adapt quickly to the ever-changing circumstances that we were and are encountering. Who knew that zoom would enter our language as more than a word to describe the speed of something! That platform has been the ideal way to disseminate this vital resource to a group of people who were unable to meet in person, but as we look forward to a world with fewer restrictions, we must look at new ways to provide the support that CCR can deliver. Many people are now exhausted and tired of an endless round of virtual meetings and it may be that a 2-hour zoom session is less attractive than it once was.

CCR has from the beginning been a resource that has evolved and changed to meet the prevailing circumstances and as we enter the next phase of living with Covid perhaps it is time to look at how the information can be presented to real people in a physical environment. Covid-19 may be less deadly in future as a result of a successful vaccination programme, and the virus itself may in time fall out of people's immediate thoughts and concerns but its effects, both physical and mental will be a factor in our lives for a long time to come and the link between financial insecurity and mental and physical health will be hard to break. Whatever CCR looks like in the coming months we are convinced that it will remain a vital tool for those who are working to support their communities.



Mayflower

The Mayflower 400 commemorations were expected to occur over September 2020 and whilst TPT was not directly involved in any key events, there were a few activities that overlapped with the commemorations.

Working with Plymstock Chapel and RE:source, 4Front Theatre were commissioned to write a series of short plays that addressed the faith aspect of the Mayflower story. These were then filmed and additional material has been written to be able to take the films into schools, along with lesson plans and questions to spark interest in the Pilgrims story.

Over Thanksgiving In 2020, TPT worked with Churches Together in Plymouth to produce a week-long campaign to promote an attitude of gratitude and thanksgiving during that week. A series of videos were produced and small prompts were posted on social media to encourage others to find something positive despite the difficult times.



Other Projects

Alongside the work of Feast of Fun, churches have run a number of other activities and groups to offer further support to the families they are linking with. Some of these have included Alpha and Sunday School style church gatherings, whilst Kintsugi Hope has been a course started by St Pancras church that has now been introduced to a number of other churches keen to start their own. St Jude’s Church saw an opportunity for linking Feast of Fun at Home style format with their Tot’s Time that was not running due to lockdown. They bagged up games and activities for families to collect, borrow for a short time and return in exchange for a different bag with different toys in it. This allowed for the team to have semi regular opportunities to talk with parents coming to receive or return a ‘Bag of Fun’.



Publicity

Receiving publicity or press had not been a priority for TPT, however it was pleasant to have some times of publicity to raise the awareness of the reality of lockdown for many families and the response of churches to the crisis. There was a particular peak of interest over December when the announcement of the UNICEF and Food Power funding was made public.

A few of key features have included:

- BBC Radio 4 (Families Right 2 Healthy Food/UNICEF)
- Spotlight (Families Right 2 Healthy Food/UNICEF, Feast of Fun at Home)
- Radio Devon (With Love This Christmas, Feast of Fun at Home, Covid Cash Recovery, Mayflower 400)
- BBC News online (Families Right 2 Healthy Food/UNICEF)
- Diocese of Exeter (Families Right 2 Healthy Food/UNICEF, Feast of Fun at Home)

Where available, links can be found in Appendix 22.

In April 2021, TPT was visited by a team from the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation to share the story of the Feast of Fun project combating child poverty in Plymouth. They also visited one of the churches and were able to speak to some of the families who were receiving the parcels. This programme is due to run globally covering a number of other projects happening across the world to combat child poverty partially during the pandemic.



Whilst publicity of the work of TPT is not a priority, there were benefits to the raise awareness of the work as TPT found an increase in private and individual donations following the December publicity.



Looking Forward

The future of what national or regional guidelines will be, with regards to what churches will be able to do, is difficult to substantiate even at the time of writing this report in June 2021. Churches are easing into activities that were run prior to lockdown but it is unlikely that events will look identical to past Feasts of Fun. Current conversations with churches indicate that many would like to do a hybrid model that offers something on site (a meal or refreshments, activities and fun), the chance to converse and connect but will also possibly offer something to take away such as a smaller parcel for anyone who needs it). This may prove more manageable to start the summer and TPT is still able to offer a provision of food that can be used for parcels or to serve.



Other ideas have included:

- Café style set up (with craft etc) - cake, biscuits, simple food and drinks
- Food parcels with a focus on fresh food
- Additional voucher for food bank or a food bank box for any family needs additional support
- Signposting to other services (Kid's Matter, Covid Cash Recovery, Kintsugi Hope etc)



Funders

TPT would like to express it's sincerest thanks to every funding organisation and individual who has supported the work of TPT, Feast of Fun at Home and other projects run from March 2020 to June 2021.

This include:

- Church Urban Fund
- The Diocese of Exeter
- All Churches Trust
- The Rank Foundation Pebbles
- The Rank Foundation
- The Devon Community Foundation
- Western Power Distribution
- Bellefonte Trust
- CAF Bank
- Tesco
- Transforming Lives For Good
- Food Power Plymouth
- The Albert Gubay
- Plymouth Astor Trust
- Plymouth City Council
- Van-Neste
- St Budeaux Parish Church
- Love Your Neighbour, FareShare and LIDL who provided food in kind.



Throughout the year we have also had many gifts from churches within the city and also private donations. To all we are so grateful and without YOUR support TPT would not be able to continue its work.



A Huge Thanks

The team at TPT would like to thank so many organisations and individuals for their support, help and prayers.

- Trustees of TPT
- Staff at St Mark's Church
- Team members at Diocese of Exeter
- Ayshea Cross
- Mark Oliver
- Ben Otley
- Colin Bate and his vans
- Provide Devon
- The ARC
- Churches Together in Plymouth
- Tina and the team at Love Thy Neighbour
- Dan, Dwain and the team at Plymouth Argyle Community Trust
- Unify Plymouth Partners
- Food Plymouth and Food is Fun CIC
- All the churches and teams already mentioned throughout the report



Appendix

Appendix 1

- [Previous Feast of Fun report can be found at FoF-Report-2019.pdf \(transformingplymouthtogether.org.uk\)](#)

Appendix 2

- <https://adc.bmj.com/content/archdischild/101/8/759.full.pdf>

Appendix 3

- <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/150-additional-children-poverty-covid19>

Appendix 4

- https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/Poverty-in-the-pandemic_update.pdf

Appendix 5

- <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/new-evidence-of-child-food-insecurity-in-the-uk/>

Appendix 6

- <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/The-Broken-Plate.pdf>

Appendix 7

- <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/end-year-stats/>

Appendix 8

- <https://devoncf.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Food-Poverty-and-Fair-Access-to-Food.docx.pdf>

Appendix 9

- <https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-crisis-where-jobs-have-been-lost-across-the-uk-12029604>

Appendix 10

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52660591>

Appendix 11

- <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/11/poor-families-living-costs-have-surged-during-pandemic-uk-study-finds>

Appendix 12

- <https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n376>

Appendix 13

- SMART parcels

Whilst not an official formula used by the churches over the duration of the project, however upon reflection of this report, it was observed there were a number of common features on many of the parcels.

S - Sustainable (do they last in the cupboards and can the standard/quality of food keep going)

M - Measurable / Mix (does it cover the basic guidelines for food - carbs, protein, fruit/veg and can they make different meals)

A - Accessible (can anyone use them regardless of skills or equipment)

R - Regular (Will they be regularly given to a family. not just a one off)

T - Treats (something nice to bring something good despite the challenges)



Appendix

Appendix 14

- Sample packing list




NAME.....

Church – Plymstock

Item	Packing on 19/08	Checked off
Tuna	1	
Spaghetti	1	
Pasta	1	
Baked beans	2	
Soup	2	
Sweetcorn	1	
Pasta Sauce	1	
Long life milk	1	
Dried pulse	1	
Juice	1	
Cereal	1	
Custard	1	
Sugar	1	
Coffee	1	
Ketchup	1	
Biscuits	1	
Pot Noodle	1	
Milk	1	
Bread	1	
Butter	1	
Eggs	1	
Bananas	As Many As Possible	
Satsumas	As Many As Possible	
Potatoes	As Many As Possible	
Carrots	As Many As Possible	

Appendix 15

- Christingle worksheet



As we can't have our usual Christingle services, we've put together a small Christingle kit for you to make your own at home.

What you'll find:
 - orange (with tape!)
 - candle
 - tin foil
 - cocktail sticks
 - sweets & raisins

What you'll need:
 - a knife
 - a plate
 - some matches or lighter

Make sure you do this activity with a responsible adult to help you with any difficult bits. Don't forget to wash your hands before you start!

Step 1 - Have an adult help you cut an 'X' across the top of the orange.

Step 2 - Wrap the bottom of the candle in tin foil.

Step 3 - Put the bottom of the stick into the orange, spread evenly around.

Step 4 - Put the candle and foil in the centre of the X.

Step 5 - Put your sweets and raisins on the small cocktail sticks. Make sure to be careful!

Step 6 - When you're ready, light the candle. You could sing a carol and think about how Jesus is the light of the world.

What does it all mean?
 Each part of the Christingle represents something for us to reflect upon during Christmas.
 The orange represents the world
 The red tape represents the hair and blood of Christ
 The sweets and dried fruit represents all of God's creations, the goodness of God and even the four seasons
 The lit candle represents Jesus's light in the world, bringing hope to people living in darkness

To find out more about the Feast of Fun, please visit transformingplymouthtogether.org.uk



Appendix

Appendix 16

- FR2HF packing list one

PRODUCT	Qty	INFO
Long Life Milk	40	To be used from Provide Unit 07/12/20
Tinned Tomatoes	40	"
Tinned Meat (Chopped Pork)	40	"
Tinned Fish (Tuna)	40	"
Tinned Peas	40	"
Tinned Chickpeas	40	"
Tinned Mushrooms	40	"
Tinned Soup	80	"
Tinned Beans	80	"
Pasta Sauce	40	"
Pasta	40	"
Rice	40	"
Lentils	40	"
Madras Curry Powder (per 10g)	40	"
Tinned Fruit (Peaches)	40	"
Mustard (750g)	40	"
Cereals	40	"
Burrito Chips	40 (x per pack)	"
3Ll Carten Juice	40	"
Tea (pkt 20)	40	"
Coffee (pkt 50g)	40	"
Bread	40	"
Milk	40	To be used from Provide Unit 07/12/20
Cheese	40	"
Butter	40	"
Eggs	1 box = 80	"
Potatoes	8 x 25kg	"
Carrots	8 x 10kg	"
Broccoli / Cauliflower	40	"
Apples	5 boxes	"
Oranges	8 x 10kg	"

FEBRUARY/EASTER PRODUCT	Qty	INFO
Tinned Sweetcorn	1	Provide
Tinned Tomatoes	2	"
Tinned Fish (Tuna)	2	"
Tinned Peas	1	"
Tinned Chickpeas	1	"
Tinned Bullbebeas	1	"
Tinned Mushrooms	1	"
Tinned Carrots	1	"
Tomato puree	1	"
Pasta	1kg	"
Rice	1kg	"
Lentils	500g	"
Madras Curry Powder (pkt 50g)	1	"
Mixed Herbs (pkt 50g)	1	"
Tinned Fruit (Peaches)	2	"
Mustard (750g)	1	"
Cereals Wwetable (x2)	1	"
Bottle of squash	1	"
Tea	Pkt 40	"
Coffee (pkt 50g)	50g pkt	"
Bread	1	"
Milk	2ltr	To be used from Provide Unit
Cheese	400g	"
Butter	250g	"
Eggs	1/2 Doz	"
Potatoes	1kg	"
Carrots	1kg	"
Broccoli / Cauliflower	1	"
Onion	1/2kg	"
Red Pepper	1	"
Garlic	1 Bulb	"
Apples	1kg	"
Oranges	1kg	"

Appendix 17

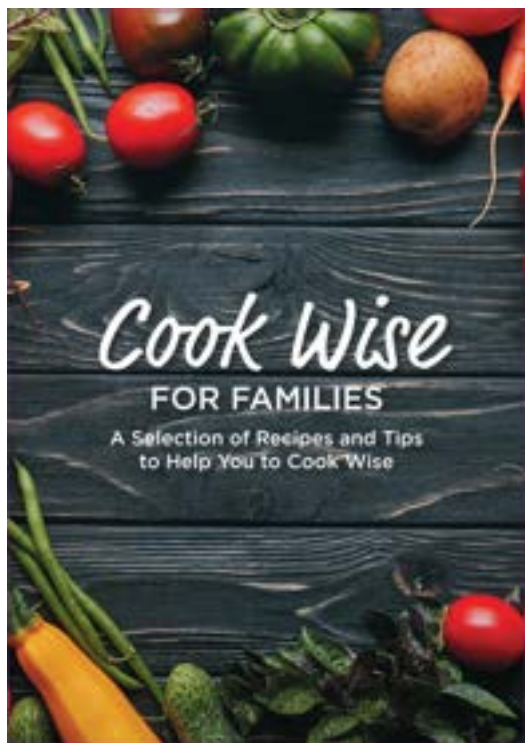
- FR2HF packing list two



Appendix

Appendix 18

- [FR2HF cooking book 'Cook Wise For Families'](#)



Appendix

Appendix 19

- FR2HF student doc



Appendix 20

- Feast of Fun activity booklet



Appendix

Appendix 21

- [PUOS CCR posters](#)

How to Write a CV for a Care Support Job

Writing a CV can seem daunting and difficult, but it doesn't have to be. Simple tips and easy to achieve goals can help you create a great CV and prepare you for an interview.



1 Personal Information

Personal information includes your full name, address, telephone number and email address if you have one. If you don't have an email address you could ask a friend or family member to use theirs or alternatively you can leave it blank.

Tip Tip: You don't have to write your date of birth or ethnicity.

1 Education

If you haven't got many qualifications or training, do not fear. A care and support employer is mainly interested in who you are as a person, and will often help you earn a Care Certificate for free when training. So you will become a qualified care support worker.

Tip Tip: Start by writing your most recent qualifications/training first. They do not need to put your grades if you don't want to.

2 Experience

Employers expect a brief paragraph describing who you are, your reasons for applying for the job and what you can bring to the role. If you don't have experience doing for someone you could describe your personal skills and experience from other jobs that may apply to the job.

Tip Tip: Make sure you mention everything they've written in the job description that is applicable to you and your skills.

5 Employment History

Whether you've had one job or ten, relevant employment history is important. Choose the jobs you think are most relevant to care work and bullet point the key tasks and responsibilities you had in the role. Then list your other roles in a separate column - this should include job titles, employer name and the dates you were employed.

Tip Tip: Don't be worried that you may not have a lot of work experience. It's not as important as being reliable and kind - and employers will see this in your key skills section.

3 Key Skills

Personal employers are reading your CV to see if you have the personal skills and qualities to care for someone. They will also include reading, math, writing, and good listening and speaking skills can be written from being friendly and polite to self-motivated and kind.

Tip Tip: Start by listing all the skills you think you have. Do really think about what you're most proud of. Are you a good listener? Are you calm under pressure or in difficult situations? There are lots of things employers are looking for, so include them in this section.

6 Keywords

Words you may want to include in your CV to demonstrate your work and personal skills are:

- **Reliable/Trustworthy** - you can be relied on to do a job.
- **Kind** - you're thoughtful and put the service users needs first.
- **Caring** - you listen and respect service users and care for them.
- **Communication skills** - you're good at talking to people.
- **Flexible/Adaptable** - you are calm and comfortable with the service users needs and abilities.
- **Hard-working** - you take the work seriously and do it well.
- **Motivated** - you keep going even when you may find the job or being a tough day.

Created in collaboration with Plymouth University, Devon Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Transforming Plymouth Together.

Budgeting for Beginners

A step by step guide to making the most of your money.



1 Create A List Of Monthly Expenses

Start your budget by listing all outgoing expenses, including **essential items** e.g. housing, groceries, utilities, transportation, loan payments and child care costs. As well as **non-essential items** e.g. gym memberships, entertainment allowances, gifts, clothing and travel.

Tip tip: Looking through past bank and credit card statements can help you to see exactly where your money is going monthly.

1 Check If You Have A Surplus Or Deficit Budget

After adding together your monthly income and taking away your outgoing, any money left is called a **surplus** and can be used to pay towards debts or added to a savings account. If you're spending more than your income you have a **deficit**, increasing the risk of financial difficulties.

Tip tip: Revise your budget to see if you can cut back in any areas to reduce the deficit or consider getting debt advice.

2 Calculate Your Income

Your income is the money you receive weekly or monthly from any work you do, benefits, pensions, investments or money from relatives. By working out your income, you can subtract your outgoing and determine what's left over.

Tip tip: If you are self-employed base your budget on your net amount (what's left after taxes are deducted).

5 Review Your Budget Regularly:

When budgeting, it is important to review your spending regularly. This should include any increase or decrease in your income, if there are items included that are no longer used, if your benefit entitlements have changed and if you've planned to build up any savings or pay off any debts.

Tip tip: Try using a small diary or budgeting app to track your spending (don't forget to check your online banking!).

3 Consider One-Off Expenses:

When budgeting it's worth considering whether you will need to pay for large one-off expenses later on in the year, these could include Car MOT's or emergency house repairs.

Tip tip: By doing any one-off expenses by Q4 and adding them to the monthly budget you can put this amount aside every month in a savings account to help you avoid spending it.

6 Consider Setting Up A Savings Account:

If your budget allows it you could set up one or more savings accounts to put money aside. One for planned one-off purchases and another for creating an emergency fund. **Baby day** savings can help you avoid getting into debt from sudden income changes e.g. redundancy or illness.

Tip tip: To avoid dipping into your savings, try getting an account with a different bank that isn't linked to your current account.



Appendix

Appendix 22


- BBC Radio 4 (Families Right 2 Healthy Food/UNICEF)
- [Spotlight \(Families Right 2 Healthy Food/UNICEF, Feast of Fun at Home\)](#)
- Radio Devon (With Love This Christmas, Feast of Fun at Home, Covid Cash Recovery, Mayflower 400)
- [BBC News online \(Families Right 2 Healthy Food/UNICEF \)](#)
- [Diocese of Exeter \(Families Right 2 Healthy Food/UNICEF, Feast of Fun at Home\)](#)





Thank you to our trustees, supporters and funders, those who have helped move food, spread the word of the project or prayed for us.
We couldn't do it without you!

This document is a report of the 'Feast of Fun at Home - A Year of COVID' and the work done between March 2020 and June 2021 during the Covid pandemic which alongside further information on the project can be found at transformingplymouthtogether.org.uk/initiatives/feast-of-fun

f TransformingPlymouthTogether
 @plymtogether

transformingplymouthtogether.org.uk

Transforming Plymouth Together (TPT) is a registered UK charity, limited by guarantee in England (Company No: 9716832 & Charity No: 1166026)

