

Webinar “What’s next for our foodbank?”

28 April 2021



Opening statement from Cllr Doreen Lee, Lord Mayor of Bradford: summarising the situation during / since the pandemic

- Huge rise in people needing foodbanks and the network, lots of them have not needed foodbanks before
- Trussell Trust figures: 6 emergency parcels given out per minute, total 1.2 million parcels April-September 2020
- At the peak of the pandemic, usage increased 4-fold from figures in Feb 2020
- Independent foodbanks grew by approx. 1000
- Children and families hardest hit
- Credit to people running foodbanks, and thank you to everybody who has been there in the pandemic

Andrew Forsey, Feeding Britain:

- Feeding Bradford & Keighley network is one of 28 regional partnerships
- Foodbanks initially trying to help people who had “fallen through the cracks”, now lots of long term use
- Feeding Britain is supporting:
 - o School holiday projects
 - o Advocacy & casework into foodbanks
 - o 2 weeks breathing space for gas & electricity
 - o Building affordable food networks
- Emergency response since March 2020:
 - o Didn’t know what was happening last March
 - o Lots of emergency provision needed
 - o Loss of work / income
 - o Other issues eg access / isolation, exacerbated through pandemic
 - o Outpouring of goodwill & determination, kept it going
- In recent months – helping develop affordable food network:
 - o Not sustainable to give out lots of free food in huge quantities
 - o Offering nutritious food and holistic support
 - o Helping foodbanks set up eg food pantries for low cost food
 - o Serving more than 5000 households at the moment, working to extend
 - o Improving self-reliance and self-sufficiency
 - o £2.2billion pa saved on food shopping by those households
 - o Giving choice, dignity, mutual support
 - o Source of stability, security, employment & training opportunities, credit & saving, better health
 - o Reducing need for foodbanks who then can concentrate on most vulnerable
 - o This model is beginning to make a difference in people’s lives

Juli Thompson, Inn Churches:

- At the start of the pandemic, were asked by Bradford Council to purchase food to support foodbanks and ensure demand was met
- Also prepared meals and food parcels for homeless guests plus NHS and emergency services
- Liaising with organisations in Keighley, making sure nobody was going hungry
- Early days were chaotic, but improved
- FareShare distributed 345 tons to 37 foodbanks across the city, equivalent to 820,000 meals
- Inn Churches gave out enough food for 860,000 meals, but we will never know how much food was given out in total
- Foodbanks were a lifeline for many people
- Pop-up foodbanks & meal providers were set up, some just in immediate crisis, others are by now established
- Hundreds of new volunteers

Josie Barlow, Bradford Central Foodbank

- In the early part of pandemic, distributed 5 tons of food per week
- Pre-lockdown helped 500 people per month, which went up to approx. 2500 in the pandemic, and is currently serving about 1500 people per month
- Working through referral process, including doctors, schools, job centres, charities
- Some problems are short term (eg waiting for benefits to come) but others not, so want to help with the cause of the problem
- Offering benefits advice once per week, benefits are often the root cause
- Establishing the cause and helping with that, or signpost to other organisations who can help
- Vision is to serve fewer people but more in depth

Graham Walker, Bradford Metropolitan Foodbank:

- Foodbank operates through third parties, don't have direct contact with the clients. Working through eg housing organisations, health workers etc, supplying food to those and they deliver to clients
- Increased culturally appropriate bags, currently 30% halal bags
- Also supplying some smaller foodbanks
- To help with increased demand, they took on a part time coordinator and lots of new volunteers
- Future concerns:
 - o Less funding available
 - o Furlough scheme running out
 - o Brexit – fewer imports? Higher job losses?

Juli (Inn Churches) & Councillor Sue Duffy:

FoodSavers Model:

- Working to put mini-markets into community groups, linking with Credit Unions.
- Food uncertainty leading to anxiety, ill health etc
- **Food for health not wealth**
- Affordable food: including rescue and surplus food
- Don't want to create dependency
- Opened social supermarket, charge £6 for people to use it, but £1 of that goes into a Credit Union account
- In supermarket, choice of healthy food to cook for family
- Dignity
- Empowerment
- Behaviour change
- Financial inclusion - some people never saved before
- Feeding Britain is happy to support organisations that move to the FoodSavers model

Q&A:

- People can contact Cathy of Feeding Bradford & Keighley network if wanting to discuss further cathy.henwood@wellspringstogether.org.uk
- Starter cost of pop-up pantry can be from £500ish. Feeding Britain have offered to financially support setting up FoodSavers. Bradford Council are looking to support the transition from foodbanks to FoodSavers
- In Kirklees, larger foodbanks are established, also have community shop linked to foodbank
- Pop up pantry at Shine West Bowling: some people have not saved before, they are opening saving accounts and attending pantry regularly. Shine are helping people with budgeting, they can pay in advance for pop-up pantry. People have continued to put money into account without taking any out.
- Through this, credit unions are reaching people difficult to reach. Looking to expand into other places
- A recording of this webinar is on YouTube <https://youtu.be/jajdMW2Vuq0>
- Please can you complete a short questionnaire for feedback and further training & support <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/JCX16D/>

Andrew (Feeding Britain) thanked everybody for providing a vital lifeline.