

Brighton & Hove Food Poverty Action Plan – Progress Snapshot one year in (draft)

Draft to circulate to partners – please send any additions/amendments by end of March 2016 to Emily@bhfood.org.uk

Find the Brighton & Hove Food Poverty Action plan 2016-2019, plus report of the 'One Year On' Event which informs this report at www.bhfood.org.uk/resources

Winner of the 2016 Community Works Sector Star Award for the 'Most Innovative Commission or Public Sector Service'

Acclaimed nationally, with Sustain using the Food Poverty Action Plan as a model and the GLA offering funding to London Boroughs to encourage them to do something similar



PART I: Food Poverty in Brighton & Hove - what have we learned?

Aim 4 of the Food Poverty Action Plan (see below) involves tracking levels of food poverty

1. Emergency / Crisis Food Poverty: survey of food bank use

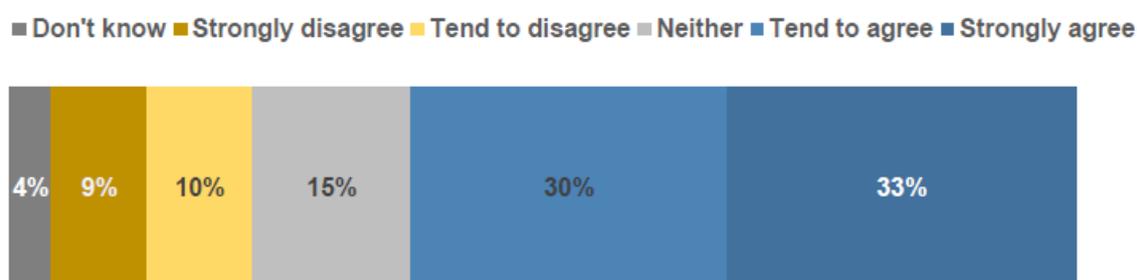
BHFP's annual survey of food bank use¹ continues to provide a useful insight. The 2016 survey found that despite the improvements in the national economy, food bank usage remains steady in the city, increasing slightly on 2015 figures. **15 food banks in Brighton and Hove gave out food parcels to an average of 298 households per week.** The average value of a food parcel was £23. Nine of the fourteen food banks reported an increase in demand over the last year.

2. Long Term Food Poverty/ Household Food Insecurity

(a) City Tracker Survey, January 2017 – citywide

For the third year, Brighton and Hove City Council have included a question on food/fuel poverty in their annual weighted survey of residents:

“Thinking about the next year, how much do you agree or disagree that you will have enough money, after housing costs, to meet basic living costs? By this I mean to pay for food, water and heating?”¹



The answers reveal that levels of insecurity have slightly decreased since 2015

- Overall, one in five residents (19%) don't think they will have enough money in the coming year (down from 23% in 2014 and 2015 - NB this is not a statistically significant drop)

Those most likely to struggle with meeting basic living costs continue to be concentrated in particular groups:

- Over a third living in **social housing** (38%) and 31% **renting privately** disagree that they will have the ability to meet basic living cost in the coming year compared to only 11% of those who own their home either out right or on a mortgage.
- Over a quarter **aged 18 to 34** (27%) compared to only 15% of those aged 35-64 and 11% of those ages 65 or over
- A third of those with a **health problem or disability** that affects their activity (35%) compared to only 17% without.

¹ [BHFP annual survey of food bank use 2016](#)

As part of the food poverty action plan, organisations have included [BHFP's questions](#) in their monitoring to help build a picture of food poverty in the city.

"I am so glad we asked this set of new questions in this year's STAR survey, it has highlighted there is a need,"

- BHCC Housing Department

[Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project](#) in their annual centre survey in December 2016 found that:

- 42% of our centre users said they have **reduced the size of their meals or skipped meals** because they couldn't afford food.
- 56% of our centre tended to agree or strongly agreed that they would not have enough money to **pay for food, water and heating** costs after paying housing costs.
- 62% of our centre users tended to **eat less healthily at home** because they couldn't afford healthier options.

[Brighton & Hove City Council Housing Department](#) in a two yearly STAR [survey of tenants](#) found that:

52%

agree they will have enough money next year to meet basic living costs

39%

agree their household tends to eat less healthily because of affordability

21%
skipped meals or reduced portion sizes in the last 2 months because they **couldn't afford enough food**

- Whilst more than half of those who responded (52%) agreed they would have enough money next year (after housing costs) to meet basic living costs, a **fifth disagreed (19%)**.
- This figure rose to 29% for the **youngest age group** (16-34), more than half of whom 'strongly disagreed' (17%). In contrast, only one in ten of those aged 65 or over disagreed they will have enough money next year to meet basic living costs (11%).
- Households containing someone with a **disability** more likely to disagree than nondisabled households (24% and 13% respectively).

[Warmth for Wellbeing programme](#) (which includes advice services & BHESCo, a fuel poverty organisation) found that **56% of their clients regularly "missed meals or reduced portion sizes** because they couldn't afford enough food:

Options	Count	Percentage
Never	100	44%
Occasionally	21	9%
A few times a month	25	11%
Twice a week or more	33	15%
Daily	48	21%
Total	227	

PART 2: PROGRESS REPORT ON THE FOOD POVERTY ACTION PLAN

Aim 1: Tackle the underlying causes of food poverty in the city

Progress

- ✓ BHFP's information and advice page for people experiencing food poverty continue to be well used [links at end of this document]
- ✓ Progress on integrating food with money advice and including BHFP in Money Works Partnership, though future funding for this work is uncertain
- ✓ The [Brighton & Hove Living Wage Campaign](#) has been going from strength to strength and has now signed up 298 employers, with nearly 3000 salaries raised. The current rate is £8.25 per hour.
- ✓ DWP has run awareness sessions on hardship routes for Advice & Food Banks workers and volunteers & improved practices around providing information and signpost
- ✓ It is hard to tell whether the situation with DWP delays, refusals etc has improved or not, however local food bank use figures record this as less of an issue than nationally. ² The Fairness Commissions has included recommendations on reducing delays in benefit system for taking forward.
- ✓ Workshop with Senior BHCC housing staff and BHT led to changes in BHCC working practices including inclusion of food poverty questions in STAR tenancy survey; and pilot pre-tenancy workshop with BHFP and BHT.
- ✓ BHCC Welfare Reform identified those most affected by benefit changes (the biggest impact being the benefit cap) and directly supported those households. They also produced a newsletter for people who work or volunteer with those who may be affected, to clarify the changes and signpost to support.
- ✓ Food Matters have carried out research into the 'poverty premium' in relation to food in the city, and the cost of a healthy basket of food vs and unhealthy basket.
- ✓ Food poverty is being looked at in the 2017 Migrants Needs Assessment (Migrants are identified as a group at risk of food poverty)
- ✓ BHCC Communities Team has kept the issue of food poverty on their agenda for example informing the new prospectus funding arrangements. BHCC Public Health have been very proactive, taking the report to Health & Wellbeing Board, taking a lead on Council reporting, and taking forward recommendations. BHFP presented to the Equalities and Inclusion Partnership.

Sticking points & challenges

- ✗ BHFP funding for food poverty work including FPPA oversight and facilitation, and practical actions e.g. maintain web resources, annual survey of food bank use etc is uncertain
- ✗ Housing Crisis, low wages/ insecure employment continue to be a huge issue in the city.
- ✗ Likely rises in energy and food prices (compounded by Brexit) could be a tipping point for many people in the city who are just getting by.

Aspirational/ Next steps

- a. Partners to continue to raise awareness of issues at policy level, and continue (as with 1B of the action plan) to raise food poverty issues in other arenas.
- b. Fairness Commission to continue to push on recommendations including around DWP, child poverty and poverty proofing the school day.
- c. CCG health engagement group's research topic for Jan – March 2017 is food and food access. Once focus groups have been completed consider any action to be taken
- d. Partners to work with food employers to become part of the solution not part of the problem: living wage, apprenticeships, fair tipping practices etc, including Possability People Journey to Employment project
- e. Partners to continue with taking a preventative approach including early access to money advice before crisis; and access to planning for later life.

² [BHFP annual survey of food bank use 2016](#)

- f. Brighton & Sussex University Food Network continue to engage with food issues and seek funding to support relevant research
- g. BHFP to revisit food poverty awareness training for frontline workers, to continue to engage with new partners especially those working with groups identified as most vulnerable to food poverty and continue to share learning locally and nationally and engage with national campaigns.
- h. Engagement with Housing Committee (*suggested at One Year On Event*)

Aim 2: As a bare minimum, ensure that every child, and every vulnerable adult, can eat one nutritious meal a day.

Progress

- For 2015/16 exclusive breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks is 57% – the highest rate in England. There are a range of initiatives in place focusing on areas and groups with lower rate in the city.
- 1100 children attend a primary school breakfast club every school day in Brighton & Hove and 66% of the city's primary school breakfast clubs have been supported to improve the nutritional content of their breakfast provision through the Healthy Choice Award. BHFP produced a [Primary School Breakfast Clubs in Brighton & Hove report](#) and a good practice booklet for staff and volunteers working in breakfast clubs
- The school meal service has continued to deliver universal infant free school meals at silver food for life standard, and has developed innovative new ways to improve uptake of free school meals
- Public Health Schools Programme collates data (from the Safe and Well at School Survey, IMD data on child poverty etc) to develop school profiles and with the schools (and other partners) develop priority initiatives such as healthy eating.
- There was a push on awareness about Chomp holiday lunch clubs, culminating in leaflets distributed in school bags in a partnership between BHCC & the Trust for Developing Communities (TDC), with food poverty guidance and access to local resources including food banks, Chomp holiday lunch clubs and shared meals in local areas. TDC continue to promote Chomp and shared meals.
- A successful pilot partnership (combining Chomp holiday hunger club with funding and staff from the School Meals Service) took place at West Blatchington Primary School, and is set to continue
- When the community meals (meals on wheels) contract ended, an independent review by ASC checked whether individuals had a new meals provision in place or had made alternative arrangements. A list of shared meals and lunch clubs was produced. The majority of people were happy with the outcome and some had found inventive, alternative ways of getting access to meals.
- BHCC ASC have promoted shared meals, casserole club and also promoted BHFP's Nutrition Course for Carers through various events, including the Care homes forum, and via the My Life portal.
- Recommission of the Public Health Community Nursing service 2017-2020 to include Healthy Weight & Healthy Nutrition and the service will have a targeted element to areas/families with higher needs who are often more likely to experience food poverty.
- A joint campaign has been developed between Public Health, Children's Centres and BHFP to increase uptake of Healthy Start vouchers and vitamins, including local posters and work to improve knowledge amongst health professionals, with retailers and in community settings. *Please support this campaign and help to spread the word – currently 3 in 10 eligible families in the city are missing out – worth up to £900 per child.*

Aim 2 cont: As a bare minimum, ensure that every child, and every vulnerable adult, can eat one nutritious meal a day.

Challenges/Sticking Points

- ✘ Children – particularly in larger families & single parent families – have already been disproportionately affected by welfare/tax credit reforms and will be hit by the next wave. This makes actions aimed at families (such as Healthy Start vouchers, Schools & Chomp) particularly important.
- ✘ The climate in ASC, CCG, and BSUHT has been incredibly challenging which has made it difficult for food to be priority, though individual staff have been amazing.
- ✘ The end of the community meals contract could have been an opportunity to divert funding to allow new social enterprise models to develop, as has happened in other areas and it was a shame this did not take place, reflecting the very challenging times.
- ✘ BHFP facilitated a meeting on food and hospital discharge, which came up with important recommendation on both ‘food to go’ bags and food and hospital discharge more widely, however there was no attendance by either CCG commissioners (due to changing personnel/ uncertainty over ownership of this agenda) and BSUHT frontline staff (due to managing crisis situations back at hospital) which makes uncertain how these can be taken forward.

Aspirational/Next steps

- a. Whilst there has been some progress, schools could engage much better with food poverty agenda. Possibility of a head teacher conference looking at food issues; more scope to explore pupil premium for healthy food related activity
- b. BHFP to work with Real Junk Food Project to explore opportunities to deliver Fuel for Schools programme in the city
- c. Early years workshops to look at what next for food and early years work building on the success of partnership work around Healthy Start voucher uptake, breastfeeding work and links between public health and children’s centres.
- d. Go for Alexandra Rose funding, if a second tranche comes up, to give top up fruit & veg vouchers to low income families, adding value to Healthy Start.
- e. ASC & CCG actions in Aim 2C around building nutrition and hydration into care assessments, creating innovative ways to allow people to eat together by combining Adult Social Care (ASC) care packages, ensuring that food issues are considered in Home Care Commissioning Process, developing a trigger mechanism when a meal service for vulnerable people is under threat; and how social enterprise model Community Meals/ Meals on Wheels delivery could be stimulated. (NB some of this may be taking place already but not reported back to BHFP).
- f. Better embedding of MUST (malnutrition screening) tool in both community and health settings.
- g. Improving hospital food at BSUHT and in care homes.
- h. Via the Healthy Ageing Steering Committee deliver work on the recommendations of the [Healthy Ageing and Food Report](#)
- i. Increased Engagement with GPs, CCG, Health and Wellbeing Board.
- j. ASC & CCG actions in Aim 2C around building nutrition and hydration into care assessments, creating innovative ways to allow people to eat together by combining Adult Social Care (ASC) care packages, ensuring that food issues are considered in Home Care Commissioning Process, developing a trigger mechanism when a meal service for vulnerable people is under threat; and how social enterprise model Community Meals/ Meals on Wheels delivery could be stimulated. (NB some of this may be taking place already but not reported back to BHFP).
- k. Better embedding of MUST (malnutrition screening) tool in both community and health settings.
- l. Improving hospital food at BSUHT and in care homes.
- m. Via the Healthy Ageing Steering Committee deliver work on the recommendations of the Healthy Ageing and Food Report

Aim 3: Brighton & Hove Becomes the City that cooks and Eats together

Progress

- ✓ BHFP and other partners have continued to promote run classes in cooking and shopping skills including Cooking on a Budget.
- ✓ BHFP, Impetus and BrightDials Digital Marketing set up [Casserole Club](#) to reduce isolation by encourage neighbours to share a meal. One Church also promoted via Know My Neighbour week which also focuses on isolation.
- ✓ FareShare have continued to support many shared meals and encourage term-time projects to set up holiday lunch clubs.
- ✓ Possability People made sharing food a discussion theme at a Citywide Connect event, leading to action plans around promoting casserole club and new shared meals.
- ✓ Digital Brighton partners exploring including food ordering in any 'getting online' training.
- ✓ Sheltered Housing refurbishments to include a fridge/freezer rather than a fridge with icebox as this helps cooking on a budget for one or two people. Also encouraging shared meals in sheltered housing premises and promoting casserole club.
- ✓ BHFP good food grants & development support now support shared meals. Brighton Women's centre looking at adding a meal to their food bank service.
- ✓ Real Junk Food Project found premises to offer a meal 5 days a week, and found better storage facilities, though they are still seeking a permanent site.
- ✓ BHCC worked with restaurants and caterers on healthier options, as part of the Sugar Smart Campaign (which also ran much wider) and produced a guide to Healthy Choice catering.
- ✓ The Local Transport Strategy (March 2015) stresses both connecting people with shopping areas, and the importance of local shopping centres in allowing access to food, as well as creating healthier environments that encourage walking and cycling to be used for food shopping journeys.
- ✓ Possability People made the 'It's Local Actually' Directory easier to search for lunch clubs
- ✓ BHFP submitted a far reaching submission to City Plan 2.

Challenges/Sticking Points

- ✗ BHFP won the BHCC City Innovation Challenge, with the idea of offering free market stalls outside libraries but this ran into red tape and didn't happen.
- ✗ There could be more engagement with businesses including major retailers.
- ✗ Although Casserole Club has proved popular during the pilot, longer term funding to support the work is not secure. Awaiting decisions from the CCG on the overall funding for the befriending coalition, ongoing work to develop relationships with local businesses who may sponsor the scheme and grant applications.

Aspirational/Next steps

- a. Production of tip sheets e.g. older people's nutritional needs and how they change, cooking with limited cooking equipment e.g. in temporary accommodation
- b. Continue to look at in-kind support for shared meals, training, and new venues. Understand better what it would take for existing projects to add cooking and eating to together to their existing services – volunteers? Ingredients? Ready cooked meals from another setting?
- c. Continue to look at privately run veg vans/ market stalls e.g. outside privately owned premises or Doctor's surgeries.
- d. Continue to explore how City Plan Part 2 and planning processes can encourage local food access and a healthier food environment e.g. /healthier take-aways.

Aim 4: When Prevention is not enough – ensure there is crisis and emergency support so that people do not go hungry.

Progress Achieved

- ✓ Although funding was reduced, BHCC continued to support the Local Discretionary Social Fund meaning that people experiencing an emergency are not reliant purely on the voluntary/community sector
- ✓ FareShare have increased their volunteer number and their food supply, as well as their reach. They have encouraged healthier food donations. Public health has committed funding for FareShare food redistribution until 2019.
- ✓ Grassroots action to redistribute surplus food has been enhanced with new peer to peer apps and platforms including Olio and Food Cloud. Supermarkets including Lidl, Tesco and Sainsbury's have been much more proactive at offering surplus.
- ✓ Food Banks have continued to expand provision and expand it to include access to advice services and a focus on prevention³. Moneyworks partners have worked more closely with food banks, with more advisors attending food bank sessions.
- ✓ BHFP continue to support and seek to secure funding for the Food Banks and Emergency Food network, bringing food banks together with other services.

Challenges/Sticking Points

- ✗ Food Banks continue to report increasing demand.
- ✗ The LDSF funding is only secure year by year.
- ✗ As identified in section 1, Housing Crisis, low wages/ insecure employment continue to be a huge issue in the city. Likely rises in energy and food prices (compounded by Brexit) could be a tipping point for many people in the city who are just getting by.

Aspirational/Next steps

- a. BHFP are exploring funding to better network groups redistributing surplus food
- b. Food banks have identified Housing Advice as a gap⁴

Aim 5: Commit to Measuring levels of food poverty so we know if we are being effective

Progress

- ✓ BHFP's annual survey of food bank use⁵ continues to provide a useful insight. The 2016 survey found that despite the improvements in the national economy, food bank usage remains steady in the city, increasing slightly on 2015 figures. 15 food banks in Brighton and Hove gave out food parcels to an average of 298 households per week. The average value of a food parcel was £23. Nine of the fourteen food banks reported an increase in demand over the last year
- ✓ BHCC's city tracker question continues to provide extremely useful picture of household food insecurity or 'long term' food poverty. In 2016, one in five (19%) don't think they will have enough money in the coming year (down from 23% in 2014 and 2015). Those most likely to struggle with meeting basic living costs continue to be concentrated in particular groups:
 - Over a third living in social housing (38%) and 31% renting privately disagree that they will have the ability to meet basic living cost in the coming year compared to only 11% of those who own their home either outright or on a mortgage.
 - Over a quarter aged 18 to 34 (27%) compared to only 15% of those aged 35-64 and 11% of those aged 65 or over

³ [BHFP annual survey of food bank use 2016](#)

⁴ ⁴ [BHFP annual survey of food bank use 2016](#)

⁵ ⁵ [BHFP annual survey of food bank use 2016](#)

- A third of those with a health problem or disability that affects their activity (35%) compared to only 17% without.
- ✓ Several organisations have included BHFP's questions in their monitoring and responded with answers. BHCC's Housing departments found food poverty to be a surprisingly high issue. Other organisations have also found high levels of need. This information is being compiled into a report.

Challenges/Sticking Points

- ✗ The absence of a government measurement makes it hard to compare with other areas.
- ✗ As the external climate changes it is hard to know
- ✗ As elsewhere, over-reliance on food bank use figures masks a much bigger long term food poverty problem of those skipping meals and trading down to healthier choices.

Aspirational/Next steps

- a. Continue to encourage groups to adopt the monitoring questions developed by BHFP to understand food poverty, and share their responses.
- b. Explore how MUST (malnutrition screening) data and data on childhood obesity in low income areas can help with understanding food poverty (also see Aim 2)

Amendments/additions to the Food Poverty Action to change in next print run

2E.1 change "work in partnership with other local NHS Trusts around a joint catering production unit," to "a joint catering procurement unit."

3B.3: reinstate missing action (this was left out of the printed version) : Encourage registered providers (social landlords) to ensure adequate kitchen provision in refurbishments/ developments (a) appropriate kitchen space (b) appliances to enable budget cooking; e.g. accommodation aimed at single people/couples includes a fridge freezer (rather than a fridge with icebox)

3C.7: add underlined words: "support via direct funding and/or in-kind support especially storage facilities for surplus food and/or strategic support"

New Partners- these logos will be added to the next print run: Big Fig, Hangleton & Knoll Project, Universities x 2, and Digital Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Food Partnership: Food Poverty Resources:

Advice for people experiencing food poverty <http://bhfood.org.uk/food-poverty-advice>

How to refer to a food bank (includes infographic map of pathways produced with food banks in the city) <http://bhfood.org.uk/referring-to-a-food-bank>

Notes from food bank network meetings: <http://bhfood.org.uk/support-for-food-banks>

Budget eating advice: <http://bhfood.org.uk/eating-on-a-budget> (also printed leaflets)

Free & low cost meals: <http://bhfood.org.uk/accessing-low-cost-meals>

*Our resources page includes the **food poverty action plan, One Year On Report, our annual report into food bank use, and other publications** e.g. research on shared meals <http://bhfood.org.uk/resources>*

