



# Cambridge

## Food Poverty Alliance

### A Collaborative Action Plan for Cambridge



**CAMBRIDGE SUSTAINABLE FOOD**

**2020 - 2023**



## Foreword from Daniel Zeichner, MP for Cambridge

Access to Healthy and nutritious food should be the basic requirement for everyone and, while national policy continues to drive an austerity agenda, how we collaborate and take action on food poverty in Cambridge can make a real difference to whether local residents and their families go hungry.

Food poverty in Cambridge and elsewhere is a symptom of wider inequality driven by economic policies that do not address the root causes of poverty and, in most cases, exacerbate it. Food is often the one thing that people experiencing poverty have control over in terms of spending. Skimping on variety, quality and/or missing food is often a hidden necessity in keeping children fed or the rent paid.

I was shocked and saddened to hear some of the stories of people going hungry in our City and to learn that many are struggling to access a healthy and varied diet. Going without food that is healthy and varied can lead to health inequalities such as obesity, diabetes, malnutrition; cause poor learning outcomes and inattention in school and ultimately lower life expectancy. Tackling the underlying causes of food poverty such as access to benefits, information and a living wage are as important as knowing that a free hot meal is available in your community.

I am very pleased to see so many of our frontline organisations in Cambridge, organisations that are providing community meals, emergency food provision and advice coming together to produce this Action Plan and I look forward to seeing how they work together to deliver change over the coming years.

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Daniel Zeichner".



## Setting the scene

**Executive Summary:** This action plan coupled with the report: 'Towards a collaborative food action plan' and the document, 'Are there Food Deserts and Swamps in Cambridge?' sets out a three year plan and the baseline data for measuring success. Over 200 people and organisations have had an input into the Action Plan through workshops, interviews, questionnaires and activities.

In this action plan we have tried to balance the need for making sure that there is emergency provision in the City for anyone who cannot access a meal whilst promoting those longer term measures that address the inequalities at source.

Whilst we recognise the role that surplus food, food banks, charities, and community solutions play in alleviating hunger, we also echo SUSTAIN's call on government, councils and other statutory partners to step up and tackle the root causes of food poverty together and in partnership with those who are working with or have experience of food poverty.

In putting this action plan together we have attempted to capture the voices of those experiencing food poverty as well as those working in frontline positions, financial advisors, statutory organisations and local community groups. We acknowledge that this action plan may need revising and view the process of delivery as an iterative one rather than a prescriptive one.

This Action Plan sets out work that can be collaboratively achieved through the work and direction of the Cambridge Food Poverty Alliance. It sets out measures that aim to alleviate food poverty through short, medium and long-term actions, focusing on crisis responses which deal with the immediate situation and preventative approaches which target the structural issues. Whilst we recognise that some of these actions are reliant on accessing resources and new funding streams we also note that some of the actions are included in existing and ongoing work by other organisations in the City.



# Cambridge Food Poverty Alliance

The Cambridge Food Poverty Alliance (CFPA), formed in October 2017, aims to work together strategically and collaboratively to alleviate food poverty in the city. The Steering group includes Cambridge City Council, Cambridge City Foodbank, FoodCycle, CHS Group, Church of The Good Shepherd, Cambridge Community Ethnic Forum, and Cambridge United Charitable Trust. The Alliance also includes 25 organisations who act as members of the Alliance and support this action plan. The Alliance is led by Cambridge Sustainable Food who received funding from Food Power and from Cambridge City Council to research, write and promote this action plan.

## **The Alliance was formed to:**

- consult with users of relevant services and organisations providing services
- share resources, best practice and information locally
- research what has been done successfully elsewhere
- develop a Collaborative Food Action Plan to ensure an evidence-based joined-up approach to food poverty in the City



## What work has happened so far?

Work of the Food Poverty Alliance is led by Cambridge Sustainable Food. Since forming the Alliance has:

- published the report: Towards a Collaborative Action Plan: A report on food poverty in Cambridge
- liaised with other organisations including other Cities in the region
- written a Food Deserts and Food Swamps report
- organised a Food Poverty Conference in the City
- organised steering group meetings, taking and distributing minutes
- created a signposting toolkit for use by agencies to direct people to emergency food supplies
- sourced funding for ingredients for holiday lunches across the city from a Cambridge college and are in discussion with the wider University and Colleges about formalising ongoing support, both financial and with Chefs/ staff
- continued CSF's Healthy Start vouchers campaign through training with midwives, engaging with businesses
- received funding for 3 community fridges and an associated surplus distribution scheme
- produced and maintained an online map of community and emergency food provision in Cambridge



# Methodology

In Oct 2017 the CPFA published a report into food poverty in Cambridge. Whilst it comes as no shock to those organisations working at the front line that people are going hungry in Cambridge, it may well come as a shock to many who believe Cambridge is an affluent and successful city. The report also sets a baseline snapshot of indicators of food poverty by which the Action Plan can be measured.

The report was presented to a Food Poverty Conference in October 2017, where 70 attendees from local organisations, community groups, local authorities and individuals who had taken part in the study started to formulate what an Action Plan might look like. A summary framework was written and circulated to attendees.

## Workshops

In March and April 2018, four themed workshops were held around the City. The following themes had been identified at the Conference in October as important to the attendees:

- Children's access to Food 365 days a year
- Emergency provision
- Tackling the underlying causes of food poverty
- Community solutions

The workshop used the summary from the conference round table discussions to build on ideas and actions.

## **Interviews/ questionnaires**

During both the writing of the report and the action plan we spoke to over 100 people and carried out in-depth interviews, questionnaires and sought opinions from people experiencing food poverty.

We talked to parents at holiday lunches at Buchan Street, Ross Street and in Barnwell as well as conducting two in depth interviews with Mothers who attended Buchan Street Holiday Lunches.

We attended two Winter Comfort service users forums where we spoke to people about food poverty as well as running a workshop session where we spoke to users about their experiences using photo cards to prompt discussion.

We carried out questionnaires at Foodcycle community meal and the CHS Group surveyed users of their service.

## **Steering Group**

The CPFA steering group has been invaluable in directing the work, setting the aims and in prioritising which actions should be taken forward in this 3 year plan.

## **Are there Food Deserts and Food Swamps in Cambridge?**

This document looks at three areas of Cambridge using the criterion of distance to calculate whether there are Food Deserts and Swamps in Cambridge. The report finds that in Abbey, East Chesterton and Trumpington people were having to walk well over the recommended distance to access fresh and affordable food.



# THE ACTION PLAN



# Aim 1: to ensure children's access to food 365 days a year

## 1.1 Increase the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers amongst those that are entitled to 80% in low income areas

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Develop an easy read sheet that clearly explains Healthy Start, cascaded to every person or group in low income areas where beneficiaries may attend, e.g. community centres, Churches, Holiday Lunches, doc surgeries etc	See action below. CFPA to develop and make provision for circulating leaflet	CFPA, CSF,	2020	Number of leaflets given out
Local leaders to target families in low income areas to promote Healthy Start Vouchers	Identifying and training local leaders and health professionals about healthy start vouchers to include info resources - leaflets, sign up booklet	CFPA, Family Workers, Neighbourhood Workers, Community Development, Churches, Community Groups	2020 - 2021	Number of sign up sheets/ leaflets given. At present none given out.
Increase number of shops that accept the vouchers	Funding from Cambridge Community Foundation to do this work	CSF	2020 - 2021	Increased number mapped on CSF website
Run at least 1x trial scheme of accepting healthy start vouchers at stalls run at for example: Community Centres, Childrens Centres, Churches	Individual Churches ( St James, Queen Ediths) , Community Centres, children's centres can register to accept vouchers or work with local businesses	CFPA, CSF	2020	1 trail scheme run

### 1.2 Increase the uptake of Free School Meals amongst those who are entitled in the City

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Research why uptake is different for different schools	Methodology and research tbc	Free School Meal Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council	2020-2022	Research findings and recommendations
Conduct study re: drop off of uptake amongst teens at secondary schools and make recommendations for action	Methodology and research tbc	Free School Meal Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council, CSF	2021-2022	Research findings and recommendations

### 1.3 Engage children and parents-in learning about food, nutrition and budgeting

Continue to develop and deliver Cookery Workshops throughout the City to Families both in Schools and in Community settings		CSF, Red Hen	2020-	Number of sessions and number of attendees
Promote the Food For Life campaign to schools in Cambridge	Run campaign with Schools	CFPA	2020-2022	Increase in schools joining the FFL

### 1.4 Establish a City Wide approach to Breakfast Clubs

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Map who is providing, for how many and how much against need	Use existing data and contacting all schools in the City	CSF, CFPA	2021-2022	Research findings and recommendations
Establish a network of providers and explore ways in which a city wide approach may be developed.	Hold one network meeting	CPFA,	2020	Meeting held

**1.5 Holiday Lunches: Increase the provision of Holiday Lunches in those areas of the City where there is no provision and increase the uptake of Holiday Lunches amongst those who are entitled to free school meals**

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Develop a marketing plan that targets families in need of a Holiday lunch.	Collect best practice and what works well from existing providers. Survey participants to find out benefit/ free school meal status	Holiday Lunch steering group, North and South Community Development leads,CSF	2020-2021	Plan Circulated
Make available recipe cards for low cost	Publish on social media/ CSF website	CSF has booklet , check Red Hen Project and	2020-2021	Number of recipe cards/ booklets given out
Link with local faith groups and community leaders to target families	This should be included with Developing the marketing plan	Churches, Faith groups, neighbourhood community teams, Cambridge Community	2020-2022	registration question at hol lunches ' where did you hear about us?'
Develop funding strategy	Establish cost of Holiday Lunches, develop scheme with Cambridge Colleges,/ explore funding opportunities including sponsorship	CSF, Holiday Lunch steering group	2020-2021	
Develop links with partners - support/ training/ provision	Create list of organisations who are able to offer activities/ training or resources. . Detail what and when these activities available for use by the Holiday Lunch providers	CSF,CHYPS, Cambs Colleges, Kettles Yard, Cambs United, Cambridge Library, museum of Cambridge	2020-2022	No of organisations participating in and activities being offered at holiday lunches

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Continue to develop a participatory model which includes cookery workshops as part of hol lunch sessions.	Report on best practice/ what works and circulate to other Hol lunch providers	CSF	2020-2022	Report circulated
Introduce literacy/ reading activities as requested by parents at Ross Street	See developing links as above		2020-2021	Literacy activities at hol lunch sessions
Facilitate parent volunteering	Time Credits, Volunteer management	Holiday Lunch steering group, North and South Community Development leads,CSF, Time Credits, CCVS	2020-2022	Increase in parents volunteering
Implement a Sustainable Food / Climate Change policy	Policy written in conjunction with hol lunch steering group	CSF, Hol Lunch steering group	2020	Policy adopted by providers
Develop recipes for Hol Lunch providers	Scale up existing recipes or write up	CSF, Hol Lunch steering group	2020,2021	4 starter recipes for recipe for 30- 50 people
Develop a nutritional guide for Hol lunch providers	Understand what is happening at present by taking a snapshot over one week across all hol lunches. Write nutritional guidelines - partner with dietician	CSF, Hol Lunch steering group	2022	Nutritional guidelines published

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

### 2.1 Promote signposting of emergency provision

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Update and continue to promote emergency signposting toolkit with service users and frontline organisations	Use existing signposting toolkit and contact organisations to make sure data is up to date. Include any new emergency provision	CSF	2020-2022	Updated and circulated. Number of organisation circulated to.

### 2.2 Training of frontline workers in Food Poverty/ Emergency provision

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Raise awareness with frontline workers and volunteers by offering training/ sharing information.	Develop training for frontline workers plus information sheets	CPFA, CSF, CHS Group	2020 - 2022	Number of training sessions delivered, info sheets distributed

### 2.3 Support emergency provision organisations and projects to expand and develop services

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Encourage the development of Community Meals, so where possible, there is one free evening hot meal a day available in the city	Map existing provision and circulate timetable. Where possible ask organisations to fill in gaps or move service times so that meal provision is more even	FoodCycle, Wintercomfort, CHOP, CFPA	2021-2022	More days of the week have a free hot meal
Encourage the development of more social food provision such as Fairbite - social supermarket model	Consult Cambridge City Food Bank about future plans and encourage future projects	Cambridge City Food Bank, CFPA	2021- 2022	

# Aim 3: to tackle the underlying causes of food poverty in the city

## 3.1 Support cross sector partnership working so that no person goes hungry

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Map range of support being offered by frontline organisations such as Housing Associations	Contact all housing associations, Children's centres, neighbourhood community centres, doctors surgeries, Cambridgeshire financial inclusion team and CAB to find out what advice and signposting is in place. Identify gaps and best practice	CHS Group, CSF CFPA	2020	Research findings and recommendations
Maximise Family Income by better integrating money advice into food poverty programmes: eg: what advice can be given at Food Banks/ holiday lunches/ cookery workshops etc	Develop materials eg: display boards, leaflets, games etc that can be used at Holiday Lunches	CSF, CFPA	2020-2022	Materials produced and in use

## 3.2 Increase the uptake of living wage of living wage

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Work with City Council Living wage officer to Increase uptake of living wage in traditionally low-waged sectors eg: catering and hospitality	Run a City Wide Campaign with Food Businesses	City Council, CSF, CFPA	2020-2022	Number of businesses signing up to living wage from traditionally low-waged sectors

### 3.3 Increase employability through training and education as a route out of poverty (including in the catering Industry)

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Training programme for sustainable food startups and Community Groups	Carry out needs assessment	CSF, CCVS	2021	Needs assessment shows that training is wanted and needed
Volunteering with food projects in the City as a route to employment: references/ training eg Food Handling cert	Carry out needs assessment	CFPA, Time credits,	2020-2022	Needs assessment shows that volunteering opportunities are wanted as a route into work

# Aim 4: Promote and support community responses to food poverty

## 4.1 To increase funding for Community Groups to carry out projects

Develop case studies to raise the profile of existing projects	Write up existing projects with a focus on the narrative and telling people's		2021	Case studies available on CSF
Encourage/ develop grass roots network	Set up forum to encourage partnership working and collaborative bid writing	CPFA	2021,2022	Run 2 forums a year

## 4.2 Increase volunteering opportunities for those in food poverty

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Encourage participation and volunteering from those in food poverty by promoting, providing and administering time credits at eg: Holiday Lunches, Cookery Workshops, Community meals	Develop volunteer scheme for food poverty projects in the City	CCVS, CSF, CFPA, Time credits	2020, 2021, 2022	Number of volunteers active

## 4.3 Increase awareness of and access to healthy and fresh food

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Increase the opportunity for growing food	Develop partnerships bid for community growing projects in Abbey	CoFarm/CSF/ Abbey People, Groundwork,	2020, 2021, 2022	Number of people from Abbey involved in
Explore options to increase access to fresh low-cost ingredients	Work with Cambridge Food Hub to develop The Good Food For All Scheme	Cambridge Food Hub, CSF,	2021, 2022	



#### 4.4 Increase variety of Community projects

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Establish more community fridges	Funding secured for CSF to do this	CSF	2020	3 new fridges in
Small scale distribution for surplus food	Funding secured for CSF to work with 6 businesses and volunteers to distribute to fridges. Seek further funding to expand the scheme	CSF, time credits, local businesses	2020, 2021,	At least 6 businesses donating surplus food
Buddy scheme for those moving into accommodation for the first time - eg: cooking a 1st meal together/ dry store pack/ link with EMMAUS for move in cooking equipment	Develop project with homelessness agencies in the city and service users who expressed a strong interest in this	Wintercomfort, CSF, CHOP	2021, 2022	Number of people moving into accommodation receiving support from a buddy

#### 4.5 Facilitate participation in projects, campaigns and and empowerment of those in food poverty to have a voice

Establish an Experts by Experience programme	Follow up on relationships built through Holiday Lunches and at Wintercomfort	CSF, CFPA	2020, 2021, 2022	
Investigate what would help remove the stigma surrounding access to free food/ benefits	Carry out in-depth interviews/ workshops to build trust and elicit recommendations. Use tools developed by Leapfrog	CSF, CFPA	2020, 2021, 2022	Recommendations made by those experiencing food poverty

## Aim 5: monitor and evaluate the amount, type and extent of Food Poverty in Cambridge

Action	How	Who	when	Measure
Update baseline data on food poverty in the City and report annually	Use existing template developed for the Report in 2017 and update	CFPA, CSF	2020, 2021, 2022	Annual report
Continue to map all resources and provision across the City	Make available via the Community Food map on the CSF website; updated provision where appropriate	CPFA, CSF	2020, 2021, 2022	Annual update



# Thank you

**Acknowledgments:** *We would like to acknowledge the support of a number of people and organisations, without whom the Action Plan, Report on Food Poverty in Cambridge and the Paper on Food Deserts and Food Swamps would not have happened. In particular, we are grateful for the support of the steering group members: Cambridge City Council, Cambridge City Foodbank, FoodCycle, CHS Group, Church of The Good Shepherd, Cambridge Community Ethnic Forum, Cambridge United Charitable Trust for taking the time to share information, taking leadership as well as advising in the development of the Cambridge Food Poverty Alliance.*

*Thanks to the wider membership of the CFPA and to the attendees at the Conference and subsequent workshops for your expertise and passion.*

*Thanks to the support from the team at CSF who carried out interviews and conducted questionnaires as well as transcribing and carrying out secondary research. We are also grateful for the support provided by Food Power – Simon, Maddie and Ben through funding as well as support and advice. Thanks to Cambridge City Council for funding the work of the Alliance and supporting the Food Poverty agenda in Cambridge.*

*To Kalyani Gupta who wrote the report on Food Poverty and to Sally Fenn who investigated whether there are Food Deserts and Food Swamps in Cambridge, we wouldn't and couldn't have done it without you.*

*Finally, we are extremely grateful to all everyday experts for sharing their experiences of food poverty as well as suggestions of how we could improve the current situation.*

The Cambridge Food Poverty Action Plan was written by Sam Dyer, Food Partnerships Coordinator at CSF

