

Food Bank Survey Results

Adur and Worthing

August 2020

Introduction

At the start of the national pandemic of coronavirus in March 2020, Community Works, worked together with Adur and Worthing Councils to pull together a network of the emergency food provision in the area. Through regular meetings online the group continued to meet to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing these projects.

In June 2020 the group pulled together to form the **'Adur and Worthing Food Partnership'** and with Community Works as lead provider, were successful in applying for **'National Lottery Awards'** funding to further develop the network.

As part of this funding a baseline survey was identified as a way to understand and measure any needs and subsequent impact of the work undertaken by the Partnership as well as a way to build further understanding across projects about their geographical spread, their offer and their methods to deliver.

Since March the partnership has met a total of 7 times. A shared email group with 33 individuals has also been set up generating 112 emails, sharing information and resources.

The membership of the partnership includes the following groups

- Worthing Food Bank
- East Worthing Food Bank (now East Worthing Food Foundation)
- Lancing and Sompting Food Bank
- Shoreham Food Bank
- Shoreham, Southwick & Fishersgate Community Support - Gateway Hub
- Fishersgate Food Bank

- Worthing Vegan Food Bank
- Turning Tides
- We are Food Pioneers
- Adur & Worthing Councils
- Community Works

In mid June we sent out a Survey Monkey questionnaire online to the food banks within the partnership. There was a 100% response and the summary of the answers, follows.

Survey Participants

The following organisations took part in the questionnaire:

- Worthing Food Bank
- East Worthing Food Bank (now Worthing Food Foundation)
- Lancing and Sompting Food Bank
- Shoreham Food Bank
- Shoreham, Southwick & Fishersgate Community Support - Gateway Hub
- Fishersgate Food Bank
- Worthing Vegan Food Bank
- Turning Tides

Legal Entity

In order for the partnership to work to its strengths and also for Community Works to understand the next steps and support requirements of the projects, it is important to understand the legal structures of each project:

The Food Banks operate under a range of legal structures including:

- Registered Charities
- Churches
- Foundations including Trussell Trust (affiliated projects)
- Community Interest Company

All the Food Banks are operating under incorporated legal structures. 2 Food banks are Trussell Trust run. 1 food bank is looking to move to a more independent legal structure as it currently sits within a CIC not intentionally set up to run a foodbank.

Number of people supported

Each food bank was asked how many individuals they have supported during the pandemic, answers ranged from **41** people to **1713** people provided with emergency food. The total number of individuals provided with emergency food since the beginning of the pandemic to June / July was **3879**. (please note this is only indicative as some respondents answers were some time apart)

Number of Food Parcels delivered per month

Food Parcels containing basic food for 3 – 4 days are provided to those in need. The foodbanks are providing between 40 and 280 boxes per month, the total number of boxes being delivered per month is approximately 923.

“923 Boxes delivered in Adur & Worthing per month”

Accessibility

The criteria for the food banks to provide a food parcel varies between the food banks, 2 food banks pre-COVID19 required referral from agreed agencies such as citizens advice, this was relaxed during the pandemic.

6 out of 8 foodbanks determine the eligibility based on need and have no set criteria.

“if you need food, we provide food”

Contents of the Boxes

All the foodbanks offer very varied boxes ranging from store cupboard tins and jars with pasta and rice, to children's clothes, hygiene products and washing powder. This is a snapshot of their boxes.

Ambient food, fresh produce, fruit and vegetables as well as household cleaning and personal care items and nappies etc where required.

We provide basic parcels, any fresh food we have, plus kids clothes, toiletries, laundry & home care, personal care, kids toys & books, activity packs for adults & kids - tailored to the need of the household. We swap out according to dietary need

milk, tea, coffee, cleaning products, tinned meals/ vegetables/ fish/ meat, pasta, rice, prepared meals (fresh) biscuits, toiletries, distraction packs, any fresh produce we have

Standard emergency non-perishable plus toiletries and a meat/fruit/veg voucher

3 days supply of long life tinned food, milk, juice, tea, pasta/rice, biscuits any extras that may have been donated e.g. coffee, pot noodles, jelly, We also add shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste/toothbrush, shower/bath, shaving foam/razors, baby stuff if we have any.

Basic tinned and dried plus fresh (plus any of the following bread, toilet rolls, hand soap, shower gel, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving foam, sanitary towels, tampons, baby wipes, baby food, baby milk, nappies, washing powder, washing up liquid and cat/dog food)

Rice, pasta, tinned food (chopped tomato, baked beans, vegetables, fruit), sweets and crisps, plant milk, sauces, bread, oats / cereal, fresh vegetable and fruit - all items 100 percent vegan and where requested, gluten free

4 out of 8 foodbanks would like to provide fresh food, eggs and bread alongside the non perishables products. 1 foodbank would like to set up community fridges to enable the storage of fresh food, eggs and bread. 1 foodbank would like to be able to offer more household products such as washing powder. Permanence of location and suitable storage facilities are preventing the storage of fresh, frozen and pre-prepared meals.

Information in the boxes

Sharing information in the boxes enables the foodbanks to communicate with recipients and can include information such as recipes, local advice, debt advice and other referral agencies.

Currently 6 out of 8 foodbanks provide no information or some details of their organisations.

Two of the foodbanks are including a signposting leaflet to local organisations. In the meetings there has been discussion about including recipe cards and 2 of the organisations are looking at developing information leaflets.

Coverage

The following areas are covered by the foodbanks:

Worthing & East Worthing

(including Castle, Central, Durrington, Gaisford, Goring, Heene, Marine, Northbrook, Offington, Salvington, Selden, Tarring)

3 Foodbanks in the Worthing area are collectively covering the area including a Vegan Food Bank.

Lancing & Sompting

1 Foodbank covers this area

Shoreham, Southwick & Fishersgate

3 Foodbanks are collectively covering this area.

There is nowhere in the district that does not have foodbank provision. 1 Foodbank is offering support out of area to Littlehampton, East Grinstead and Horsham.

Partnership working

The foodbanks are well connected to partners including other charities, councillors, parish councils, churches, schools, health services, children and family centres, and national networks such as The Trussell Trust.

Full list of current partners:

- local schools and health services
- Covid-19 Mutual Aid group I
- Trussell Trust network of local/regional foodbanks,
- Adur and Worthing Councils.
- Shoreham Academy
- Primary Schools
- Emmanuel & Baptist Southlanders Neighbourhood Store
- Parish councils,
- Lions club,

- Electric Storm Youth,
- Churches,
- Children and Family Centres.
- Redeemer Church
- Adur & Worthing Council,
- West Sussex County Council
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Change Grow Live
- Local vegan food outlets

Staff

All the foodbanks rely on volunteers, with only 2 foodbanks having employees. 1 of which is Turning Tides with 100 staff, Turning Tides is long established charity operating in Worthing that also relies on volunteers. 1 other foodbank has a part time paid member of staff.

The majority of the foodbanks are volunteer led.

Volunteers

All the foodbanks rely on volunteers and volunteer numbers range from 5 per organisation to 300 plus. 6 out of 8 foodbanks are working with between 5 – 40 volunteers.

6 Foodbanks when asked did not require any more volunteers, 2 foodbanks would like to recruit more volunteers.

50% of the foodbanks felt that more volunteers would help to share the load, with 50% disagreeing.

‘Balance needs to be struck between small number of experienced volunteers and having to increase admin for larger numbers’

Response Times

The food parcels are delivered to recipients as quickly as 20 mins. 50% of foodbanks are delivering on the same day or within 24 hours. 50% of the foodbanks have set delivery days but can also respond in an emergency.

Food Providers

Food boxes are made up food, household and hygiene products and the foodbanks rely on a number of sources for these items

Supermarkets in the area supporting the foodbanks through customer donation banks include:

- Co-op
- Morrisons
- Tesco
- Waitrose
- LIDL
- Sainsbury's
- Asda
- Savers

Community collections are contributed to in store and collected by the foodbanks. This forms 26% of total donations.

Other forms of support include

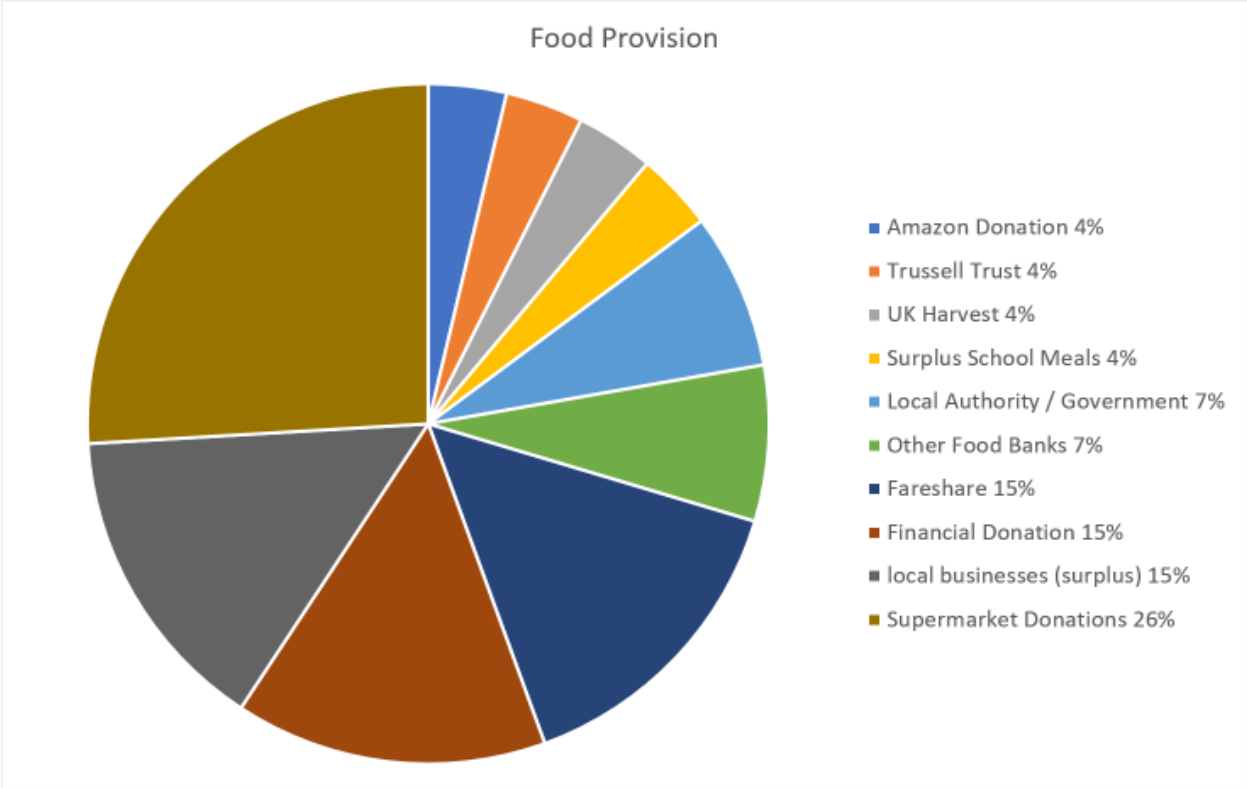
Financial donation

Surplus school meals

During the pandemic, local businesses such as Fontwell Race Course, and Vegan manufacturers have been supportive.

The foodbanks also relied on the Adur and Worthing Food Depot, and used surplus Government shielding boxes.

National organisations such as Fareshare, Trussel Trust and UK Harvest also offer support.



School Holiday Provision

When this survey was collated the government's position was that they would not be continuing with the free school meal vouchers during the summer holidays. This position changed and the government continued providing vouchers to eligible children.

In the event of school meal vouchers not being available, and in response to holiday hunger the 100% of the foodbanks said they would be in a position to support an increase over the holidays. Two of the foodbanks already run specific holiday hunger projects.

Unemployment Impact

In the potential situation where unemployment rises due to COVID19, we asked the foodbanks to share their thoughts on how to reach out to people who haven't previously used food banks. Some example responses were:

- Befriending schemes
- Newsletters with case studies
- Making places welcoming and friendly
- Word of Mouth
- Facebook community groups

- Parish magazines
- Support workers
- Health care workers
- Social Media Drive
- Keeping in touch with partners

One food bank is currently running bi-monthly 'food on the table' events in local parks where they hand out free food to anyone who'd like some.

“Not asking too many questions but building relationships”

Stigma

One theme we have seen in the meetings and nationally is the issue of stigma and how people feel when they come to a position where they might need a foodbank. We asked the foodbanks how this might be tackled. Making foodbanks more accessible through good venues and increased activities

- In ‘normal times’ we talk through issues the Client may be experiencing and provide signposting to other agencies.
- offer Client prayer, which if accepted, they are very grateful to receive.
- Including food bank within other activities such as coffee mornings or social meals or children’s clubs
- Don't have any criteria
- don't police or gatekeep your provision
- treat people as peers and with kindness
- sharing stories
- showing there are lots of different people who access the food banks
- opportunity for user involvement
- re-branding the idea of a food bank

The foodbanks are very aware of the shame and embarrassment of seeking food aid and try to recognise it in the way they speak with visitors. One food bank said their approach is completely non judgmental

“For these exceptional circumstances we need to normalise it”.

Training

As part of the partnership bid one outcome was to have better informed and trained volunteers. We asked the foodbanks to identify training needs to ensure the training plan is delivering against need.

In priority order:

1. Overview of the Benefits system
2. Recognising domestic abuse and safeguarding issues
3. Mental health awareness
4. Developing sustainability in your volunteer 'programme'
5. Community fundraising
6. Developing paid roles within your project
7. Equality and diversity training
8. GDPR

One Foodbank suggested building and growing a foodbank into premises as training topic.

The training plan is currently being shaped up to offer the foodbanks bitesize recordable training through the bi-weekly meetings.

Conclusion

This survey clearly shows we have excellent food banks supporting a large number of people across the area. Both Adur and Worthing are well served for foodbanks and all the foodbanks are able to provide emergency food without strict criteria when it is needed. The use of foodbanks locally and nationally continues to rise as we recover from the economic downturn caused by COVID19.

The ambition of the Food Partnership of which you are a valued member, is to improve:

The sustainable supply of food:

- ensure sustainable supply for all areas (not rely on phone calls at 9pm and be rushing around to access food donated by goodwill, leading to volunteer burnout and dropout)
- to ensure parity of quality across all areas (some areas have a high quality offer, others are changing week by week, unreliable for families in need)
- ensuring all are able to cater for different dietary requirements or religious needs through partnering with specialist foodbanks (Vegan Foodbank)

The coordination of referrals

- ensuring timely coordination of referrals
- mapping and building on current referrals processes (basic SPOC model but also ‘no wrong doors’ approach)

The coordination of offer

- Mapping criteria and geographical areas – supporting projects to understand differences in provision and to use available data to prioritise areas of need (e.g. some foodbanks not supporting FSM children while others were, research from CW with WSCC and local schools uncovered that the national FSM vouchers were patchy and so a need was there)
- Develop agreed process to ensure people can easily refer or self-refer where appropriate and receive the emergency food they need
- Development of volunteer recruitment and management good practice – to ensure all foodbanks have a well supported and sustainable pool of volunteers
- Development of a project steering group and ‘expert panel’ of people experienced in food bank users

This is a stimulating time for innovation and sharing best practice amongst the foodbanks as well as taking the opportunity to undertake some pilots. The project has support from Brighton and Hove Food Partnership and already we have made links across the area. Nationally Food Bank Partnerships are offered support from **Sustain** which could inspire the development of the partnership and the **Sustainable Food Places** website also offers excellent support and resources, including funding and government legislation updates.

Food Poverty nationally is something we would hope, one day, not to have to deal with but whilst it is an ongoing need in our towns and villages, this partnership and the volunteers within it are committed to making access to our foodbanks easier and healthier. With the support of the National Lottery we are one step closer to making the shared ambitions a reality.