

# HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD



Report subject	<b>Eliminating Food Insecurity - Update from Access to Food partnership</b>
Meeting date	18 March 2021
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides an update on the work of the Access to Food Partnership, which helps to support residents experiencing food insecurity across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. It shares the Partnership's vision, strategy and desired outcomes in order to seek advice and constructive feedback from the Health &amp; Wellbeing Board. Whilst this issue existed pre Covid, the report highlights how the scale of the problem has been exacerbated due to the pandemic. The Partnership wishes to discuss how it can better engage and connect with the Board as part of the wider systems approach and work on this priority theme.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) The Board agrees an approach on how to engage and support the work of the partnership (as outlined below)</li><li>b) The Board allocates a Champion to help drive forward change for eliminating food insecurity</li><li>c) The Access to Food Partnership report progress and seeks advice from the Board at least every 6 months</li></ul>
Reason for recommendations	<p>To support the Board's priority to promote healthy lives through one of its key themes to eliminate food insecurity, as outlined in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2023.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Nicola Greene, Portfolio Holder for Covid Resilience, Public Health
Corporate Director	Kate Ryan, Environment and Community
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	Recommendations

## 1. Report from Access to Food partnership

### i. Background

- Dorset's Hidden Hunger 2019 conference shone a light on the number of people in our area who could not feed themselves and their families, day to day. The conference highlighted the need for more cohesion in our response, as well as additional opportunities for communities to access food that would not only meet immediate food need, but help people regain food security.
- In response to the extra pressure of the Covid pandemic, an "Access to Food" workstream was set up under the Together We Can Community Resilience overarching programme. The partners in this workstream focused on ensuring there was effective crisis food available to all who needed it; built collaboration within and across neighbourhoods so that more people were helped out of food insecurity; and developed a food map to show what community food was available to help people self-serve and professionals better signpost.
- Now a year on from the initial lockdown and as we move beyond Covid-19 pandemic lockdown it is highly likely that these estimated local figures from 2019 will have escalated. As we begin to see the longer term impacts it is likely that economic hardship will increase again and the reality of food insecurity and poor diet will escalate further still for many, with those already on low incomes being hit the hardest.

### ii. Vision, Mission and Outcomes

The Partnership agreed an initial charter with a vision to emphasise the "strengths-based" focus: *"Our Vision is of a Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole where everyone is able to feed themselves and their family nutritious food, all of the time."*

The Partnership mission is:

- A. To ensure everyone can **access food when in crisis**,

- B. To **equip individuals & families with the confidence, skills & resources** to consistently feed themselves nourishing food.
- C. To **bring local communities together** to identify needs, seize opportunities and solve problems, using local strengths and community assets,
- D. To **share good information** about the local community food offering
- E. To **make access to food a priority** in local policy and decision making.

Our outcomes will seek to answer the question “is anyone better off?” – there will be many successful achievements along the way, but “direction of travel” measures such as the following will help to show if we achieving our overall vision:

- Qualitative: case studies showing how individuals and groups of people now have regular food, or have the confidence, resources and skills to cook;
- Quantitative: changes in “star outcomes” for individuals, and key measures of change e.g. *% population needing long term crisis food support, % using food settings that lack of equipment, # on cooking courses, # engaging with a food setting*

### iii. Level of need

Public Health insight for the Hidden Hunger conference had shown a local problem: 46% of the BCP population (85,000 households) were not spending enough money per week to eat a healthy diet – and 27% were either in food crisis or unable to afford healthy food (Sept 2019 based on information from Food Foundation report and local census data)

Clearly, the Covid pandemic in 2020 led many more to need emergency food:

- Foodbank usage in BCP increased 100% in March/April 2020 over previous year.
- Demand continues: in February, Christchurch foodbank is 42% up on previous year

The economic data suggests that many are facing a financial challenge:

- Universal credit claimants increased by 97% between March 2020 and January 2021
- The number of claimants actively seeking work has increased from 6,521 to 14,585
- Currently 17% of eligible employments at the end of January 2021 were furloughed (compared with 15% in England). This represents 30,800 employments

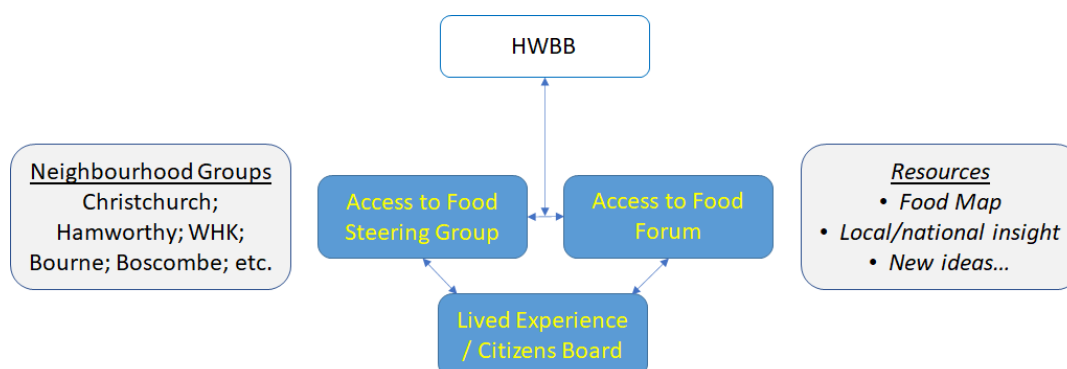
### iv. Achievements in first year: highlights (full detail in Appendix 1)

- 20 organisations sign up to Partnership charter; 84 organisations engage in some way with the Partnership Forum;
- BCP [Access to Food Map](#): 50+ community food settings across the conurbation; 6,500+ hits since launched to public, after roll out to professionals
- New joint initiatives result: e.g. Grounded Enterprises and Your Planet Doctors working together to develop growing hubs; Hope for Food gifting Feed Our Community (Boscombe) initiative a van to enable stock pick ups and deliveries;
- Neighbourhood conversations in priority deprivation areas: e.g. West Howe partners now coming together to set up a community fridge;

- Funding distributed from central gov funding (£106,049) to Access to Food partners to e.g. top-up bulk food demands on local pantries; help with cooking skills and equipment
- WhatsApp Group created to quickly distribute 70+ surplus food donations from businesses to 20 food initiatives;
- Compiled and shared online list of 30 additional one-off Christmas food projects that provided hampers, hot meal deliveries and community connection over holidays;
- 19 schools attended sessions specifically for schools' representatives to gain info on community food initiatives, 3 with 35%+ pupils eligible for free school meals
- The Covid winter funding grant led to the provision of food parcels during October half term 2020 and the creation of a holiday food voucher system being issued via schools.

## v. Approach, stakeholders and governance

The following structure has been developed for the programme, with the proposal that the Chair and Vice Chair report into the HWBB board every 6 months:



The steering group meets fortnightly to review the action plan and deal with barriers to delivery. A wider partnership forum meets monthly to share progress, encourage questions and ideas, and create useful link ups across BCP. Membership of the core group included representatives from Public Health, Voluntary and Faith sector, CAN, BCP Council Communities, Children & Families and Crisis teams, and a Cabinet Councillor. Meanwhile, the Partnership are seeking to engage as many stakeholders as possible, outlining the food offers that are locally available through the food map.

## vi. Action Plan

Appendix 2 highlights initial draft actions planned for 2021-22 under each “mission” heading including:

- Building a “menu” of local cooking skills training, and making it easy for people to replicate locally;
- Linking schools to local food settings;
- Using the food map to identify gaps, and then hosting neighbourhood conversations;
- Develop listening pathways to understand barriers and ideas;
- Develop an Access to Food communications strategy and website;
- Analyse research from local Insight teams to develop targeted strategies.

## **2. Options Appraisal**

The partnership steering group welcome the opportunity to report to the HWBB members. There are several areas where the HWBB can accelerate change so that together we get closer to fulfilling our vision of “Everyone can feed themselves...”

- A. Understand and Champion the issues – language, insight, leading;
- B. Grow Crisis and Recovery pathways across ICS – fast out of crisis, community recovery and preventing food insecurity;
- C. Build community resilience to prevent crisis – lived experience, education, all sectors;
- D. Capacity building – creative resourcing, broader set of members in the partnership e.g. CCG, DHC and others when appropriate such as planning and licensing.
- E. Keep and inspire momentum – link point for grass roots to meet statutory governance.

Specifically, the partnership would like to request a Champion on the HWBB, and to report progress and seek advice and constructive feedback every 6 months.

### **Summary of financial implications**

- 3. No specific financial implications from the update report.

### **Summary of legal implications**

- 4. For information only

### **Summary of human resources implications**

- 5. For information only

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

- 6. For information only

### **Summary of public health implications**

- 7. 20% of premature death is attributed to dietary risks (Global Burden of Disease report 2017). Research for the Dorset Hidden Hunger 2019 conference found that 27% of BCP residents were either in food crisis or unable to afford a healthy diet in accordance with the UK's Eat Well Guide.

Research has suggested that adults who are food insecure are at an increased risk of negative physical and mental health outcomes including obesity. Some studies found higher rates of chronic disease in low-income, food-insecure adults between the ages of 18 and 65. (Gundersen C, Kreider B. 2009).

Food-insecure children may also be at an increased risk for of poorer health outcomes, including obesity. They also face a higher risk of developmental problems and lower educational outcomes compared with food-secure children. ( Nord M. Food insecurity in households with children)

Many of those experiencing food insecurity find ways to cope with limited access to food often at the detriment of their mental health as well as their physical health. At the Dorset Hidden Hunger event in 2019 several GP practices

## **Summary of equality implications**

8. The partnership includes a workstream to focus on lived experience. This work seeks to engage with those that have experience food insecurity to better understand how they can be supported to access food and enable recovery and prevention. The partnership gathers feedback from community food partners and frontline staff about how all communities and residents access food and any barriers or impacts resulting from service changes.

## **Summary of risk assessment**

9. The Access to Food Partnership is currently reliant on limited resource and generous partnership working. The Partnership lacks a longer term sustainable resource and funding strategy.
10. The Partnership's draft action plan includes several short-term objectives that could become delayed without sufficient focus and resources.
11. The impact of the pandemic may be larger than we have anticipated.

## **Background papers**

Dorset's Hidden Hunger [video](#)

BCP Insights Paper: Economy Monthly Update February 2021 – Published Work [report](#)

BCP Access to Food [map](#)

Dorset Hidden Hunger event 2019 Echo [press article](#)

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Food Insecurity [Panel](#)

Affordability of the UK's Eatwell Guide; September 2018, Food Foundation [report](#)

Global Burden of Disease [report](#) 2017; summarised in [news articles](#) highlighting findings [here](#).

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1. Access to Food Partnership - Year 1 review report

Appendix 2. Access to Food programme - Draft Action Plan March 2021