



Food Poverty in Exeter – creating a joined-up approach

Final Report

June 2021

Contents

Update

Executive Summary

1 Background

2 Our Brief

3 Our Approach

4 Overview – the emergency food landscape in Exeter

5 Focus on education-based provision

6 Strengths and Opportunities

7 Challenges and Barriers

8 Experience from elsewhere

9 A Food Poverty Needs Framework

10 The Way Forward

Appendices

- A. Organisations Engaged
- B. Exeter City Council Food Poverty Motion
- C. Developing a Food Poverty Alliance – Food Power Advice
- D. Summary Information on Food Poverty Networks
- E. Potential Principles and Features of the Exeter Community Food Network.

Update

As this report was being finalised, Exeter Community Initiatives had taken over responsibility for the Free Food Network that had been established by Exeter City Council and has been operating since late February. We understand that the Network, which will be called the Community Food Network, will be incorporated into the Exeter Connect programme managed by ECI and supported by Exeter City Council. We see this as a good opportunity to “stand back” and reflect on the role, purpose and membership of the Network. We hope the findings in this Report will be helpful contribution to this process of reflection, any re-design of the Network and in determining the Network’s short- and long-term ambitions.

Executive Summary

- There is a great diversity of emergency food provision in Exeter ranging from well-established city-wide services to local, community-based initiatives set up by individuals and businesses in response to the Covid pandemic.
- Schools and other education settings have played and continue to play a major role in addressing food poverty in Exeter.
- There is a recognition that food poverty and insecurity and organisation's capacity to meet this need will change as we move into different phases of the Covid pandemic – but there remains uncertainty as to what the emerging “landscape” will look like.
- There is a wide range of provision that is relevant to people in food need (for example help with cooking equipment and cooking classes) and is not simply about providing food.
- The range and diversity of provision is a great strength and offers choice for people in need but also presents a challenge in terms of collaboration, coordination and collective effectiveness.
- There is broad recognition that the stigma people feel when seeking free food is a major issue and that access to such support needs to be as easy as possible. However, it is also important that, where possible, people can access advice to help them move out of food poverty.
- There is a widespread desire amongst groups in Exeter's emergency food “sector” to share ideas and experience, to network and to collaborate but there is also a sense of competitiveness, protectionism and distrust that hinders collaboration.
- The establishment of the Exeter Community Food Network has been widely welcomed and there is broad support for its membership to be widened and for the Network to be a mechanism for facilitating collaboration and innovation as well as information-sharing.
- The lack of coordinated and shared up to date information on food and related provision makes it difficult for food groups to plan their provision and coordinate with others. It also hinders effective signposting and referral for beneficiaries.
- Data on beneficiaries receiving food support and how this relates to need is inconsistent across the sector and there is a case for supporting groups to improve data collection and sharing.
- A Food Poverty Needs Framework was developed during the project and was widely felt to be a helpful tool in enabling groups to understand their role in the system and in advising beneficiaries.
- There is strong support for establishing a cross sector and multi-agency partnership to develop a collaborative long-term plan or strategy to address food poverty and insecurity in the city.
- Potential actions to tackle food poverty and insecurity in the short and long term have been identified in the following areas:
 - strategic approach
 - collaboration
 - networking
 - information and communications
 - data
 - helping people out of food poverty and insecurity
 - quality of provision
 - new types of provision

1 Background

1.1 This is the Final Report presenting the findings and recommendations from Clarity CIC's work on *the Food Poverty in Exeter – creating a joined-up approach* project commissioned by Food Exeter and Exeter Community Initiatives, funded by Devon Community Foundation. This project is one of a portfolio of similar pieces of work commissioned by DCF, each one focusing on the emergency food landscape in a specific District Council area in Devon.

1.2 Clarity was formally commissioned to undertake this work at the end of January 2021 and undertook most of the research and engagement with stakeholders between mid-February and mid-May 2021.

1.2 This project complements the work of [Food Exeter's Advice and Information Mapping project](https://foodexeter.org.uk/what-we-do/present-projects/), which researched the provision of support and advice to people experiencing poverty. The findings and recommendations from the Advice and Information Mapping research highlighted the importance of developing more consistent referral and support across agencies, especially emergency food providers; and better information and resource sharing – themes also reflected in the following report. (See <https://foodexeter.org.uk/what-we-do/present-projects/> for more information.)

2 Our Brief

2.1 Our brief was to research the scope to improve the provision of emergency food in Exeter, possibly through the creation of a network or alliance of some kind and explore ways to expand emergency food activities into prevention of and routes out of food poverty, including 'hidden hunger'. (See <https://foodexeter.org.uk/what-we-do/present-projects/> for more information.)

2.2 More specifically, our brief required us to provide:

- an overview of the current emergency food landscape in Exeter including activity by schools and other education settings;
 - an understanding of how emergency food activity might relate to longer-term action on fair access to nutritious food;
 - evidence of any appetite to develop and/or enhance a local food network or equivalent and a description of the added value any proposed network would bring;
 - recommendations or suggestions for specific activities and or new ways of working that could be trialled; and
 - proposals regarding the way forward.
-

3 Our Approach

3.1 The first and main stage of our work focused on talking directly, one to one, with organisations, groups, schools, and individuals providing emergency food in the city and agencies in the voluntary and public sector which work with people in need and may refer or signpost them to food providers. Our interviews, using a semi-structured schedule, were undertaken by phone or Zoom, and conducted on a non-attributable basis.

3.2 We then prepared an Interim Report, reflecting our emerging findings and potential ideas for action. The Interim Report was circulated to all those who we had engaged or had been invited to participate in interviews. The circulation of the Interim Report was accompanied by an invitation to comment on our emerging findings and to participate in one or more of a series of online workshops to explore issues and ideas in more depth.

3.3 We held two online workshops in April and a further final workshop in May, the last focusing on future priorities. These were attended by a total of 21 different people. (Some participants attended more than one workshop.)

3.4 We have also undertaken desk research and one interview reviewing experience in other parts of the country around collective action in the food poverty field including networks, alliances, partnerships, and food poverty plans.

3.5 We have kept in close contact with Exeter City Council during this project – liaising specifically with the Programme Manager – Communities. We felt this was especially important given that ECC established the Exeter Free Food Network as this project was getting underway; the Network continuing to meet on a roughly monthly basis. We presented and sought feedback on our Interim Findings at a meeting of the Free Food Network in April.

3.6 We also shared out findings at a meeting of representatives of Exeter City Council, Devon County Council and Devon Community Foundation on 26th May 2021. This meeting reflected

3.7 A list of organisations, agencies and schools with whom we have engaged during this research is included in Appendix A. In most cases this has involved an online or phone discussion with one or two people from the organisation concerned – although some schools gave their views to us via an online survey. We appreciate that we have not been able to involve every organisation and individual involved in emergency food provision in Exeter, but we feel this report is an accurate reflection of the diversity of views and perspectives in this field.

3.8 Statements in ***bold italics*** are verbatim comments drawn from interviews and survey responses.

4 Overview – the emergency food landscape in Exeter

4.1 There is a wide range of emergency food provision in Exeter, including well established and formally structured providers, such as Exeter Food Bank, and small, local community-based and private initiatives. Some of these newer “pop-up” initiatives rely heavily on social media, such as Facebook, for reaching beneficiaries. We estimate there are over fifteen emergency food providers regularly operating in the city.

4.2 However; this pattern of provision has changed significantly since the start of the pandemic and will continue to change as we move into a different phase of restrictions. Some organisations are currently reviewing how the need for emergency food will change as Covid restrictions ease and some of the temporary financial, employment and other support measures come to an end. They are also aware that their capacity to provide the current level of support may reduce as some volunteers on which they depend return to work and have less scope to engage in community activity. Equally, the need for emergency food support is likely to change as we move towards more “normal” times – although the nature of this change is by no means clear-cut. (While some people may have reduced need as they

move back into work others will be negatively affected by the cessation of some of short-term protection and support measures put in place by government.)

4.3 Our rough estimate is that at least 1500 families or households in Exeter have been supported with emergency food each week during the past year, with around another 500 helped during school holidays. This excludes the food and vouchers provided to families and students by schools and colleges – which reflect a substantial part of overall emergency food provision in the city. (It needs to be emphasised that this is a very approximate calculation – not all providers make available robust data on their beneficiaries.)

4.4 It is difficult to assess the extent to which current emergency food provision aligns with the geography of need in the City. This is mainly because most providers do not collect data on their users nor restrict their service to a particular geographical catchment, indeed some are explicitly city-wide services.

4.5 We think that more significant may be the extent to which emergency food providers are reaching and engaging particular sectors of the population. This includes BAME communities, where there can be particular cultural barriers to seeking support (including free food) and also issues around the supply of appropriate food. Many groups also highlighted the needs of older and/or isolated people and that their provision needed to embrace this section of the community as well as families and children upon which there has been particular focus. It was also recognised that since lockdown eased from March 2021, people who are homeless or vulnerably housed having been moving out of temporary hotel accommodation and into supported housing where they need to provide and cook their own food. The difficulties of this transition need to be recognised and supported.

4.6 It is important to recognise that providing the “raw materials” of food may only be part of the solution to some people’s emergency (and long term) food needs. Our interviews and discussions highlighted the importance of people having the physical equipment (including cookers, ovens, fridges and pots and pans), suitable space for food preparation, affordable energy and the confidence, skills and capability to cook. Organisations providing support in these areas are a significant part of the overall emergency food landscape. While much of this type of provision continued during Covid lockdowns, cooking classes and other face to face activity had to be curtailed.

5. Focus on education-based provision

5.1 Our interviews with and feedback from those involved in providing and managing food provision for children and families in schools and other education settings reveal a very substantial range and level of activity. It is clear also that the individuals involved are showing great commitment, passion and energy in helping “their” children and families at a time of great difficulty; many are going way beyond what might reasonably be expected of them in their professional role.

5.2 The key insights we have gained from our engagement with the education sector are summarised below.

Insights into food poverty

5.3 Our school interviewees generally appeared to have very clear insights into the nature and causes of poverty facing their families and the linkage between different aspects, such as housing, mental health, debt and the stigma associated with seeking support.

We always try to support those families who say they are in financial difficulties; if they were previously on FSM at primary school, we'll support them to make the claim. In case of family breakdown, we'll help them to spread the costs of school uniform with a payment plan. I also have a larder stacked with food here which I can bag up and hand out when it is needed.

If there were more ways that they could access help directly; empowering them to do it for themselves. Stigma is an issue for some.

5.4 Many schools highlighted the significance of people's skills, knowledge, confidence and physical equipment around making healthy meals.

Would it be possible to get some packs of basic equipment, with some straightforward, simple, nutritious recipes, that come with the food to cook, and basic equipment like frying pan, saucepan etc? I know from personal visits to families that some of them just don't have the basic equipment. Could there be a loan scheme? An organisation that could loan things out – from an equipment pool; it just needs a space, a store.

We have run cook cookery clubs with parents and children, but it's difficult when they've not even learned the basic skills, often because that's how they have been brought up – it's cycles of deprivation. They lack understanding of nutrition and how to make cheap, nutritious meals.

5.5 School interviewees frequently commented that they regularly saw children in food need who were not eligible for Free School Meals – they recognise that there is a much broader cohort of children from families who are experiencing food poverty. (This resonates with feedback from food groups who are supporting a "new" cohort of people impacted by covid who have not previously engaged with the welfare system.)

We are offering families food more because of Covid, so they're telling us more about what's happening. We offer it to all, it's not just those you think might be in poverty; sometimes with families – I am surprised by who is struggling.

Some families will also telephone me to say that they're struggling. If a child repeatedly comes in hungry and is not on free school meals then we'll talk to the family and will ask if they have applied for everything, will signpost and support them to claim if they need it.

Community Relationships

5.6 Schools, by their very nature, have strong links into their local communities and can proactively identify children and their families who are struggling. Schools are skilled in spotting children and families who may be facing particular problems (for example around safeguarding) and are applying this experience in relation to food poverty.

We've been proactive in addressing children coming in who have had no breakfast or have had an inappropriate breakfast such as a doughnut or a fizzy drink. They say they are hungry; we can see they are tired, can't focus, will steal other children's food and the snack time fruit.

We always have food to give out if families ask, and we offer it to families who we think are struggling a bit, perhaps because they've lost their job or they've been furloughed. Staff are very good at knowing that they can suggest that to parents.

We support families to access FSM; we have very close contact with our families, and we support them as much as possible. If the class teacher thinks that they might be eligible, she'll signpost them and the information is also in the school newsletter.

Food – integral to education provision

5.7 Schools are already engaged in providing or enabling children to access meals and food – through school meals, including free school meals support, breakfast clubs and holiday food vouchers. Schools recognise that providing food is an integral part of their education provision.

There are gaps and sometimes these are not picked up because families don't want to let on, it's their pride. Somehow, we need to reduce the stigma, so that families are more willing to ask, to say "I could do with a hand"; that stigma needs to be changed. There is nothing wrong being in that situation; they need to feel that it's okay. Everybody's circumstances change – we could all be in that situation.

5.8 Schools have been able to use some of their resources, in terms of kitchens, space (for providing meals and storing food), staff capacity and funds to support those in food need. This support has been most evident and significant during periods of lockdown and school closures.

5.9 Some schools are keen to develop food provision for their local community on a permanent basis – for example by establishing community cafes on their premises. (One school highlighted the value of such an initiative in bringing parents into school who might otherwise be difficult to engage on educational matters.)

Collaboration with other food providers

5.10 There is a big variation in how well schools are linked into other providers of emergency food and support across the city. Some appear very well connected, work in partnership and can refer and signpost families effectively. Good links with Exeter Food Bank were commonly cited. Others, however, tend to be working more in isolation and have more limited connections with other agencies. This may reflect the scale of the perceived food poverty "problem" and staff capacity in individual schools. However, in general schools appear to want to be, and be regarded as part, of the broader emergency food system.

During the pandemic, the Food Bank was delivering to those families who were isolating; that has been a godsend. The Food Bank is fantastic. We give back when we can, once or twice a year we have a big collection for them. It is quite emotional; we see families who really can't afford it, putting in a tin of beans.

It all needs to be more joined up - it wasn't in lockdown; we were doing the best we could but were isolated.

5.11 It is probably helpful that all secondary schools in Exeter, bar one, as part of a single Multi Academy Trust. This structure has the potential to enable a coordinated effort and provide capacity for schools to collectively engage in activity at a strategic level.

All secondary schools in Exeter are now part of the Ted Wragg Trust except St Peters. We keep close links with each other. Previously we had delivered very different solutions, but we are now coming together under Ted Wragg. It can't be exactly the same because all schools and demographics are different, and some schools are quite new to the Trust; however, we are trying to work as a team across schools.

Sustainability and long-term support

5.12 There is concern amongst schools about the need to support children and families experiencing food poverty in the long-term. It is clear that many schools devoted a great deal of time and resource to providing this support during lockdown and school closures, but this level of effort is not sustainable in the long term. Some schools reported that their capacity to provide pastoral and community support of this nature has diminished as funding has become tighter and, specifically, the Pupil Support Adviser roles are no longer resourced. There is a common assumption that food poverty will be a continuing problem for a significant number of families long after the worst of the Covid pandemic has passed.

We have not had any extra money or resources for this sort of thing, we just don't want our children and families to be hungry!

Networking

5.13 No one from the schools we engaged with was able to participate in any of the workshops we ran to develop thinking about the way forward. This is perhaps understandable given the mid-morning and early afternoon timing of these workshops¹ and illustrates the limited capacity schools have to engage in activity of a strategic and development nature. It does not, in our view, demonstrate a lack of desire to be involved (many school-based interviewees said they wanted to be involved) and it will be important that any future networking mechanisms and opportunities are designed to make it easier for schools to participate.

6 Strengths and Opportunities

6.1 A key strength of the Exeter emergency food “ecosystem” is the diversity of provision including food boxes and parcels containing dry goods, hot and frozen meals and vouchers provided by a range of organisations operating from bases across the city and responding to the needs of different communities. Schools and other educational settings are major contributors to this provision.

Variety of provision is good – allows access for a wide range people.

6.2 The range and scale of provision demonstrates the effectiveness of the well-established providers and the commitment, passion and sheer hard work of many individuals, small community groups, schools, and businesses. Most of the individual and small community initiatives have arisen in response to the Covid pandemic and often involve a substantial commitment of an individual’s own financial resources as well as their time and skills.

6.3 Many of the emergency food providers we interviewed were very proud (justifiably we think) of how quickly they responded to the Covid pandemic. New emergency food services were established very quickly – largely down to the initiative, commitment and energy of individuals and small groups of people.

[We are proud of] ...how quickly we were able to set it up! As lockdown was announced we went OMG what are we allowed to do - everyone needed shopping, food; lunch club for vulnerable

¹ In retrospect we should have considered running at least one of the workshops at a time more suitable for schools.

clients. Be adaptable, quick to react... up and running within a matter of days/hours. Being small local charity meant we could do it.

Incredibly proud of how we changed our model to keep helping people when the ** hit the fan; transitioning our service in a difficult time.**

6.4 Some providers highlighted their relationship with schools which they felt was critical to reaching children and families in need. (However, as reported in section 5, in general schools want to strengthen their relationships with emergency food providers in the city.) Several of the community-based groups also felt they were especially effective in reaching people who were not always connected into the welfare system.

Our strength is link to schools as we work with them. Historically we are good at engaging with those who don't engage with other more mainstream organisations.

[We are proud of] ...reaching the unreachable

We have been working well with schools – we have good relationships – and with nurseries too. Schools know the families – schools send emails to families [about our service]

6.5 Organisations and groups providing emergency food that had a broader community support function reported that they were in a good position to advise and support people in food need on other matters.

The sense of community having a focus and people pulling together - e.g. working with doctors and schools; a real strength is in linking with other groups in city which has been good.

6.6 Exeter has a small number of organisations helping individuals, including children and families to improve their confidence and skills around food, cooking and nutrition. This work recognises that providing the “raw materials” of food is only part of the solution – some people are not well equipped to translate food into healthy meals. Much of this activity has been on hold during the pandemic but there is clearly a desire to reintroduce cooking classes and related activities as soon as circumstances allow. This type of provision is an important element of Exeter’s food landscape but, we think, needs to be better connected with emergency food providers and part of collaborative efforts to tackle food poverty at a strategic level.

6.7 We also identified that some people facing food poverty and insecurity needed help with equipment, appliances and meeting the energy costs associated with cooking. One housing association we interviewed, and we assume other social housing providers have similar approaches, can supply tenants in need with cookers, ovens, fridges and freezers, pans and basic cooking utensils. Some agencies refer tenants to Exeter Community Energy for help and advice around energy use as part of its “healthy homes for wellbeing”. Again, we think this type of provision is an important component of the range of activity needed to address food poverty and needs to be connected into the work of emergency food providers.

6.8 We note that some groups are currently re-thinking their provision. They are reviewing their experience of the past year or so and looking at what kind of provision is required as we move out of the most severe phase of the pandemic. Indeed, most groups recognise that the profile of people requiring emergency food is likely to change over the next few months although most are uncertain as to what this will “look like”. There is a recognition too that not all existing provision will be sustainable

over the coming year. We sense too that with some of the immediate demands and pressures lifting (as lockdown eases, children return to school, shops and other businesses re-open) that some groups are able to devote a bit of time to thinking more strategically, in particular about how the root causes of food poverty and insecurity, and poverty more widely, can be addressed.

6.9 We also think this is an appropriate time, with some of the immediate pressures easing, for the more informal groups to consider whether they need a more formal structure and governance by, for example adopting a constitution, registering as a charity, and possibly even incorporation as Charitable Incorporated Organisation or Community Interest Company as a platform for their long-term development and sustainability.

6.10 For these reasons this also seems to be the right time for emergency food groups individually and collectively to think and plan for the medium and long term.

6.11 In our view there is a widespread desire amongst Exeter's emergency food system for groups to collaborate, coordinate and work more closely together. Indeed, some potential collaborations involving different types of providers are already being explored. Many groups have demonstrated their desire to network and share information and thinking by participating in the "Free Food Network" which was launched earlier this year and is currently facilitated by Exeter City Councillors. This informal network appears to be generally welcomed with most groups feeling it is a useful forum which should be built upon and developed. Note, however that responsibility for the Network is shifting to Exeter Community Initiatives as highlighted in the "Update" at the start of this Report.

6.12 Exeter City Council has demonstrated a commitment to tackle food poverty in the passing of a motion (set out in full in Appendix B). In this motion, ECC resolved to: develop a city-wide food action plan; set up a working group to research and map the extent of food poverty in the city; commit to setting up a food partnership with Devon County Council, city-based partners and stakeholders to develop and implement the Exeter Food Action Plan; and campaign at a national level for changes in policy, legislation and funding. While we are not aware of the progress that has been made in implementing the motion it is clearly a positive statement of intent.

7 Barriers and Challenges

Information about emergency food provision

7.1 A key barrier identified in many of our discussion was the lack of a central, accessible source of information about food provision, including emergency food, and related services and activities such as food skills training and energy advice. This is a problem because it is difficult for emergency food providers to plan and coordinate their provision, meeting gaps and avoiding duplication, if they do not know or cannot easily find out what other provision is available. It is also problematic for food providers

wishing to signpost their clients to other sources of food help and practitioners and professionals (for example health visitors, community nurses and tenant support officers) who need to refer and signpost their clients to emergency food provision.

7.2 Some of our interviewees said that they tended only to refer people to Exeter Food Bank – because it was the only provider, they were aware of and were confident about the type of service it offered. We know some agencies maintain databases of emergency food providers (and other sources of help), but this information tends not to be shared with other organisations or indeed food groups themselves. The emergency food sector in Exeter has been particularly changeable during the pandemic, as new initiatives have sprung up and others have ceased, and we expect this “volatility” to continue for some time. Furthermore, the supply of donated or surplus food can also be highly variable, requiring quick turnaround times. Effective mechanisms for getting real time information on new supplies out to groups, are needed.

7.3 This lack of accessible, widely circulated and regularly updated information on emergency food provision that reaches staff and volunteers working directly with clients is, in our view, a major barrier to improving provision and maximising reach and engagement with people in need.

We need a mechanism for getting groups together in emergency, need cohesiveness, need better information on what food is being provided.

The “system” does need some coordination and better linkage between groups – it’s a bit of a wild west situation out there. We are not as tied together as we could be.

We need a leaflet on where food provision is and an email communication chain – getting information to volunteers/workers - not just heads of organisations. We need to get out updated info on new services, changes, closures etc.

Helping people out of food poverty

7.4 There is a range of perspectives amongst those involved in emergency food provision in the city as to whether food should be provided on the basis of formal referral and criteria or on an open access (“no questions”) basis. For some this is about values and fundamental philosophy; for others it is about enabling and ensuring people get “wrap around” advice and support which addresses their needs on a holistic basis. Effective referral systems can and should enable people get this wider support – for most people seeking emergency food, simply providing food will not address the fundamental problems they are facing. This resonates with the findings of the Advice and Information Mapping Project referred to earlier.

7.5 A very small number of interviewees felt that open access emergency food provision is and can be abused. There were a few comments about some people taking advantage of free food provision and taking more than they need, although it was also pointed out that this can be part of how people coped with a stressful situation and reflected underlying issues. We have not seen any evidence of the scale of such activity, However, the majority felt that while some inappropriate use was inevitable, this was generally limited and was far outweighed by the advantages of making food easily available to those in need, especially those who were not connected with, or reluctant to contact, referral agencies.

7.6 Most providers commented on the stigma associated with seeking help, especially in relation to help with food, with some feeling that very local community-based easily accessible provision was

particularly important in reaching people who would otherwise be especially reluctant to access emergency food and other forms of support.

7.7 Our sense is that some of the debate has been polarised between referral-based provision and free open access food. We think it is more helpful for providers and other agencies to think how they can best support people to address their wider needs and help them find a route out of food poverty and insecurity. It should be recognised that some people will be referred to emergency food providers as part of a package of advice and support – whilst others will be referred or signposted to other sources of advice and support at the point they are in contact with food providers.

Unreferred/unregistered people in need will not come forward if provision is too regulated.

Social stigma needs to be tackled.

I think that what we've proven is it much easier for people to accept help from people they know etc; people have not felt embarrassed or stigmatised. It's a big plus. If people have a need, they will not be judged here; it's a perception.

We are only able to reach those in need by not having barriers.

Reaching people in need

7.8 Many providers commented that during the Covid pandemic they were seeing a new cohort of people seeking emergency food. These are people who normally coped reasonably well financially but through events and circumstances arising from Covid, such as loss of job or home re-possession, were now struggling. Characteristically, such people would be unfamiliar with the benefits system and sources of advice and possibly also particularly reluctant to seek help until they reached crisis point. It is relevant that most schools observed that they had children in food need who were not eligible for Free School Meals. There is a challenge here for providers and other agencies to ensure they reach people who are in need but may lie outside existing established criteria for support.

Our main groups are children and families, but we recognise the need for support for older and isolated people, people with mental health issues (where money is not necessarily the main problem) and "newly deprived" who have been especially impacted by Covid.

7.9 There is widespread recognition that while the nature and demographics of food poverty will change as the day-to-day impact of Covid, and the associated restrictions lessen the level of need will continue to be substantial – with one interviewee feeling it may “accelerate” as some of temporary support mechanisms are removed. But there is uncertainty as to how food poverty will change and what it will “look like” over the coming months and years – which clearly makes forward planning challenging. There is a common feeling that the pandemic has put the spotlight on a fundamental social problem that has always existed and will continue unless concerted action is taken at local and national levels.

Scale will change as we move into post Covid.

Lots of problems will remain – they have been there a long time.

There is substantial need “out there” and that will continue (though change) as impacts of covid continue to be felt.

Relationships, collaboration and strategy

7.10 There are also key challenges to be addressed around relationships and communication between food groups and with relevant agencies and the lack of strategic leadership and planning. While most groups do appear to want to work more closely with each other there are some tensions between established providers with structured referral systems and local and individual initiatives which provide food on an open access basis.

7.11 It is clear also that some groups feel there is a sense of unhealthy competition within the emergency food system in Exeter. We think that this is at least partly about organisations being concerned about their long-term survival and protecting their interests. Certainly, ways need to be found to encourage and support a more open and collaborative culture.

So many people are making it into a competition, and I'd like to get on with it.

I think less competition and more openness is needed.

I think people can get quite competitive about funding; ends up lots of people doing similar work. Formal ways and informal ways of collaborating can be better.

The system needs a collaborative approach; where everyone has buy-in; co-design so that everyone knows their place. It needs some organisations to ignore their pride and bow out and maybe empower some smaller groups to do less.

7.12 There is a common desire amongst food groups to address the medium- and long-term issues around food poverty and insecurity, and most are thinking about what need will be like and thus what provision will be required in a "post Covid" world. However, there is no structure, framework, or leadership around facilitating this thinking and planning.

No one is taking the lead.

Needs leadership from the Council(s)

Weight of all organisations working together or with shared common voice could be highly influential.

In the wider scheme of things - connecting up all organizations is key

8 Experience from elsewhere

8.1 There are over eighty food poverty alliances and networks across the UK listed on the Food Power web site <https://www.sustainweb.org/foodpower/map/>. They cover urban and rural areas and operate at a range of scales, including at regional, unitary/county and district/city levels with some focusing on individual towns. These alliances and networks and the Food Power web site itself are a valuable source of information about the nature of activity at sub-national level in the field of food poverty.

8.2 It is clear that tackling food poverty is now regarded as a key priority in many local areas by local authorities and other statutory agencies and voluntary and community groups. Most of the structures, plans and activities in place and being developed at this local level pre-date the Covid pandemic, although the impact of Covid especially on families and children, has highlighted the scale and importance of tackling food poverty. Our sense is that on the ground activity has scaled up and/or been

re-designed to tackle the growing need for emergency food and related support as a result of the pandemic while work of a more strategic nature – for example, strengthening partnerships and networks and developing and implementing food poverty action plans – has, at least in some areas, taken a back seat as the focus has been on responding to people in immediate need.

8.3 The extract from the Food Power website in Appendix C provides a summary of the different approaches adopted across the country for food poverty networks, partnerships and alliances. There is clearly no “one size fits all” model. For example, in some cases the network (or equivalent) is part of a broader structure relating to sustainable and healthy food (as Food Exeter), while in others it stands “alone”.

8.4 Our research reveals that many of the issues, roles and activities performed by food poverty networks across the country resonate with our findings from the Exeter-focused work. In particular it appears that the majority of networks take or facilitate action in relation to both immediate short-term responses for people in need and have a strategic role in developing long term solutions to food poverty.

8.5 Also, partnerships and networks vary in their breadth of membership – with some (as with the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership – profiled below) involving up to 50 different groups and agencies with a wide range of interests in addressing poverty more widely with others based around a smaller group of organisations (commonly 10-20) focussed specifically on food poverty. However, it does appear that most networks embrace groups specifically focusing on emergency food provision (e.g. Food Bank), those operating in the community food and nutrition field (e.g. running community cafes, providing cooking classes, providing breastfeeding support) and organisations which have a broader role working with disadvantaged people and communities (e.g. Citizens Advice, Community Centres, Furniture Re-use projects).

8.6 In most cases the relevant local authority (or authorities) are members or actively engaged in the network – and in a number of areas local authorities have been instrumental in the network’s establishment and are key to its resourcing.

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership

An independent non-profit hub for information, inspiration & connection around food. Also coordinates food strategy. The Food Poverty Action Plan aims to reduce levels of crisis/emergency food poverty; reduce long term food poverty (household food insecurity); embed food poverty prevention into policy; & become 'the city that cooks and eats together'. Over 78 actions, each with an agreed lead partner, work towards these outcomes. Partners adopt 10 principles on food poverty work in the city.

Members: The Food Poverty Action Plan has over 50 cross-sector partners. Key stakeholders include Brighton & Hove City Council (partners in over half of the actions); Other statutory sector organisations; Community, voluntary & faith groups; Food banks via the Emergency Food Network; Shared meals settings and Advice services. The food poverty work sits under Spade to Spoon, the city-wide food strategy & action plan which also has many partners - see <http://bhfood.org.uk/food-strategy>

8.7 Food poverty networks across the country undertake a range of roles and functions relevant to the Exeter context. These include:

- Improving coordination of food provision to address gaps.
- Providing a mechanism for securing funding for new activity.

- Promotional campaigns – for example to increase the take up of Healthy Start vouchers
- Developing and implementing a food poverty action plan
- Improving knowledge within the food poverty sector of provision and changes to enable effective signposting and navigation for beneficiaries and better coordination.
- Empowering and enabling people with lived experience (of food poverty) to engage in service design and policy.
- Supporting, encouraging and in some cases leading innovation
- Establishing shared principles around food poverty work
- Mapping provision
- Sharing resources, information and best practice

8.8 Summary information on a selection of Food Poverty Networks in other parts of the UK which have been informally identified by Food Power as especially relevant to the Exeter context is provided in Appendix D. This provides a useful indication of the breadth of activity across the country and the range of functions and initiatives undertaken at local level.

8.9 We interviewed the Manager of one Food Poverty network to explore his experience and the lessons that might be relevant to Exeter. Although this Network operates in a part of Scotland where the local government structure, approach to community planning and national, regional and local political context is very different we think his perspectives, summarised below, are germane to the Exeter context.

- Importance of having a broad (and ambitious vision) – in this case “no one should be going without food or fuel”.
- Relationships with the city council have been crucial – they have been involved from the outset.
- The local authority has played a central role in bringing food groups together.
- Success dependent on having “champions” at Member and Officer levels in the Council.
- A key individual with a very good understanding of the local food poverty landscape and system and good contacts and relationships with organisations is a key factor in a successful partnership and network.
- Value of having different models of food provision operating.
- Successful experience in developing community pantries which are membership-based, give users the ability to choose the food and goods they want and purchase at low cost and link into health and social support.
- Currently developing two mobile pantries – one focussing on an especially disadvantaged part of the city and the other serving the surrounding rural area. Noteworthy that similar “model” being explored for rural and urban communities.
- Currently supporting and developing a training kitchen to improve people’s capability in using food.
- Identified a “new” cohort of people in food need who had previously been living “comfortably” but during the pandemic experience a big and sudden change in their circumstances.
- Collective recognition that “handing out food” is not a long-term solution.
- Lots of myths around abuse of the emergency food system – people need choice and not to be judged.
- Development of strategic approach has effectively been on hold during the pandemic as the focus has been on meeting immediate need but recognised that this now needs to “get going” again.

9 A Food Poverty Needs Framework

9.1 During our discussions with food providers and agencies we developed the concept of a “Food Poverty Needs Framework” as a tool for helping organisations to understand where they sat within the Exeter food poverty landscape. (This was a common theme expressed by many of the participants in our workshops.)

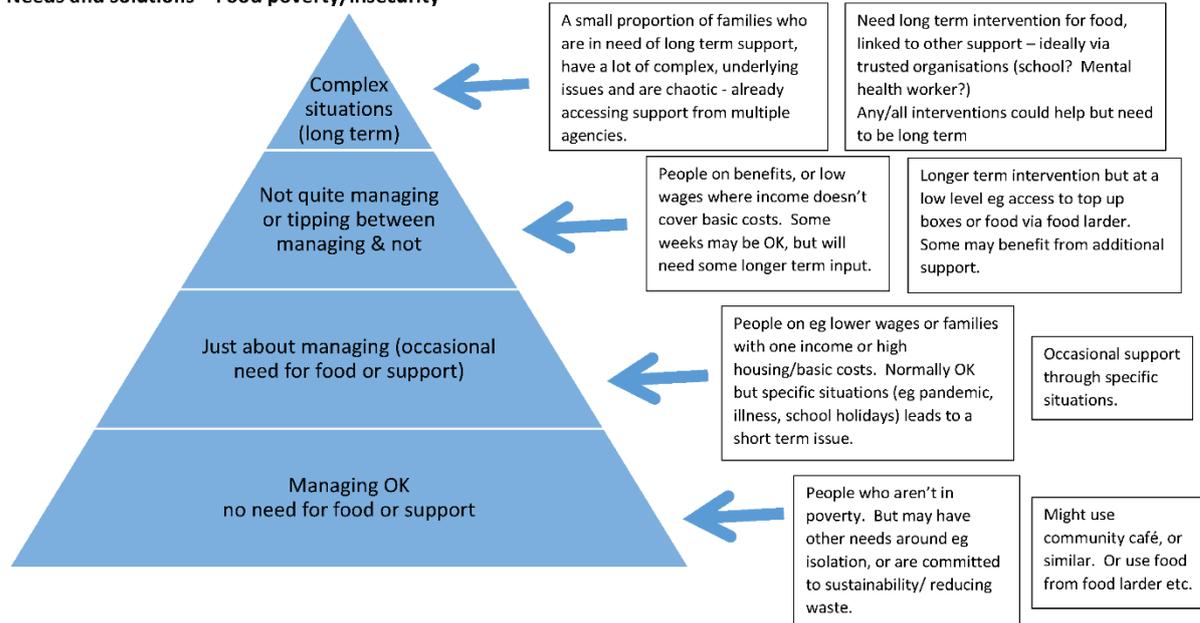
9.2 Our initial concept for such a framework is illustrated below. This was tested with participants in the second workshop who felt it would be a useful tool, although it almost certainly needs refinement. We feel the framework could be particularly useful in helping identify gaps in provision and facilitating collaboration and coordination. We appreciate that the activities of most emergency food providers, and other organisations with a role in helping people in poverty, span a range of “levels” in the Framework. The intention here is not to describe the work of organisations narrowly and only in relation to specific levels of need but to aid understanding of the whole system.

9.3 The framework could also help in the development of a collective vision and strategy for tackling food poverty and achieving equitable and fair food in Exeter.

9.4 We have had some feedback that the framework should embrace and reflect the ability of people to access healthy and nutritious food; food poverty and insecurity is about quality as well as quantity. This is an important point and should be taken on board in the development of the framework as useful tool in both strategic and operational contexts.

Emergency Food Provision

Needs and solutions – Food poverty/insecurity



The aim is to move people down the pyramid – or at least maintain them at the level they are at rather than moving up. Evidence suggests that the pandemic has led to an increase in the people in the two middle sections.

This draft document has been prepared by Clarity CIC as part of the Food Poverty Collaboration Project commissioned by Food Exeter. Contact: Steve Woollett steve@claritycic.org or Pauline Haggerty pauline@claritycic.org

10 The Way Forward

10.1 Our discussions and research have highlighted a number of potential actions which could be pursued to improve the provision of emergency food and address the long-term causes of food poverty, and poverty more widely, in Exeter. These are intentionally not described as formal “recommendations” because as they need to be tested further with the individuals, groups and agencies who are at the front line of supporting people facing food poverty and insecurity in Exeter.

10.2 Our proposed actions are summarised below.

Strategic Approach

- Emergency food groups, Exeter City Council and other public and voluntary agencies with an interest in tackling poverty should establish a cross sector and multi-agency partnership to explore together developing a collaborative long-term plan or strategy to address food poverty in the city building on Exeter City Council’s commitment to work with stakeholders to “develop a city-wide food action plan”.

- Exeter City Council should consider taking a leadership role in developing a collaborative strategic approach to tackling food poverty and allocate appropriate officer capacity to this work.
- Resources and a mechanism, based on further exploration with stakeholders, for implementing a strategic approach to tackling food poverty should be secured and developed.
- Exeter City Council and Devon County Council should work together to explore how to best utilise the resources they have available to address food poverty in Exeter.

Collaboration

- Encouraging and fostering more collaborative and trusting relationships amongst food providers through skilled facilitation that enables open and honest discussion,
- Developing a Food Poverty Charter or Values Statement which articulates a shared vision and commits organisations to some key guiding principles as to how they operate.
- Developing and maintaining a Network that encourages and supports collaboration – as stated above.
- Designing an approach to securing and allocating funding which is based on and requires genuine collaboration.
- Establish a programme of training for food providers (and others) which in itself encourages collaboration and brings together individuals from different organisations.

Networking

- Emergency food providers should explore further the benefits and added value they seek from networking opportunities and consider whether the existing ECC facilitated “Free Food Network” needs to be developed further to deliver what is required or whether additional mechanisms are needed. (But note Update at start of this report.)
- Exeter City Council and existing members of the “Free Food Network” should clarify the potential on-going long-term role of the Network and consider broadening its membership to all formal and informal emergency food providers.
- Consideration should be given to the need for a broad network of organisations engaged or with an interest in the field of food poverty and insecurity and food skills and capability as well as a more focused network of organisations specifically engaged in emergency food provision.
- Schools and other education settings engaged in meeting food need should be encouraged and supported to engage and network with other emergency food providers.
- Emergency food groups should consider establishing focused “task and finish” groups addressing specific issues and opportunities.
- Suggested features of an Exeter Free/Community Food Network are set out in Appendix E.

Information and communication

- A single agency and a post within this agency should have the responsibility for maintaining a comprehensive, detailed and up to date database of emergency food provision and related services and making this freely available to the staff and volunteers in provider organisations and referral agencies. An individual in this role who becomes known for their knowledge and

expertise around food poverty is critical to ensuring the effective flow of information and facilitating connections and collaboration.

- A regular (say monthly) bulletin reporting changes in provision and other relevant information should be produced and made available directly to front line staff and volunteers.
- A database of emergency food provision should also be used to provide up to date online and print information for the public – feedback from beneficiaries should inform the detail of this type of information.

Data

- Emergency food providers should be supported to collect and analyse appropriate data relating to their users and use of services to assist them in understanding their reach, user profile and impact.
- Emergency food providers should explore together the scope for developing shared and consistent approaches to collecting and analysing data to help in understanding their collective reach and impact.

Helping people out of food poverty and insecurity

- Emergency food providers should share their approaches and ideas and draw on best practice around helping people out of food poverty through effective advice, support, signposting and referral to other agencies.
- Emergency food providers should explore the scope for developing shared values and commitments around helping people move out of food poverty and insecurity that is proportionate and relevant to their capacity and capability.

Quality of provision

- The scope for an appropriate and proportionate environmental health assessment specifically geared to the different types of emergency food providers should be explored.
- Emergency food groups should review whether additional physical infrastructure is needed to cook and freeze meals as existing kitchen facilities “return” to their pre-Covid functions.

New types of provision

- Emergency food groups and other stakeholders should explore (or continue to explore) the scope for new types of provision which would address the needs of people experiencing food poverty and insecurity. This should draw on experience in Exeter as well as successful models in other parts of the country. Examples include:
 - The Community Pantry model which are member-led food clubs, run by volunteers providing food, advice and support; and developing skills.
 - Eco Shops, developed in Middlesbrough, which are- pop-up social supermarkets, commonly linked to schools, providing communities with access to affordable food.
 - Linking the provision of food and meals for people in need with production of locally grown food in allotments, private gardens and other suitable spaces, as being developed by Oxford Mutual Aid.
 - Mobile, vehicle-based services, including Community Pantries and Food Banks.

- Development of local “food hubs” bringing together community café, food bank and other types of provision – potentially linked into school-based provision.
- Linking the provision of dry goods and staples (through Food Banks) with hot and/or frozen meals.
- Providing simple recipe-based food boxes possibly linked to online app-based advice and information.

June 2021

Researched and written by Clarity CIC for Food Exeter

www.claritycic.org

Appendix 1 Organisations Engaged

Representatives of the following organisations were engaged in the research for this report.

Food Providers and Community Organisations

- Beacon Heath Community Centre
- City Community Trust
- Estuary League of friends
- Exeter Food Action
- Exeter Food bank
- Feed Our Community - Maia Thomas-
- Foodcycle Exeter
- Grab and Go scheme
- Inclusive Exeter
- St Petrock's
- St Sidwell's Community Centre
- St Thomas Community Larder
- St Thomas Food Fight
- The Hot Food Project
- Wonford Community Centre

Schools and Colleges

- Alphington Primary School
- Barley Lane School
- Ellen Tinkham School
- Exeter College
- Exwick Heights Primary School
- ISCA Secondary School
- St David's C of E Primary School
- St James School
- St Leonard's C of E Primary School
- St Luke's Science and Sports College
- Redhills Community Primary School
- St Michael's Church of England Primary Academy
- Whipton Barton Federation
- Wynstream School

Voluntary and public agencies

- CoLab
- Exeter Citizens Advice
- Exeter City Council - Councillors
- Exeter City Council - Officers
- Exeter Public Health Nursing Team
- LiveWest

Appendix B Exeter City Council Food Poverty Motion

The full ECC Council passed the following food poverty related motion on 15th December 2020.

This Council notes that:

The Covid-19 emergency has exposed major inequalities across the country, with children and families suffering disproportionately. Between March and August 2020 there has been a 115% increase in Universal Credit claimants nationally, and in Devon an even greater increase: 165% for all claimants and 173% for 16-24 years old. Trussell Trust research shows three million children in the UK are at risk of hunger during the school holidays.

Foodbank use has dramatically increased. The Independent Food Aid Network recorded a 59% increase in demand for emergency food support between February and March 2020. The [Exeter Foodbank states](#) that figures from Citizens Advice show a 78% rise in enquiries about food banks in the past six months.

The UK Government has committed to UN Sustainable Development Goals, which have an international and domestic commitment to ending hunger by 2030.

The UK Government has asked businessman and cookery writer Henry Dimbleby to lead on producing a [National Food Strategy](#).

This Council believes that:

- *No one in Exeter should go hungry, and children least of all.*
- *Food justice is about taking action on the causes of hunger such as affordability and availability of good quality nutritious food.*
- *The current Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown imposed on the majority of the City's economic activities have revealed and exacerbated existing inequalities, leading to further unemployment and income insecurity, and more food poverty as a result.*
- *Exeter City Council, Devon County Council, schools, faith and voluntary groups have played a key role in supporting those suffering food poverty during the Covid-19 pandemic, and that should be recognised.*

The Council resolves:

1. *That the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Culture supported by the Member Champion for Equality and Diversity take responsibility to:*

- a) *develop a city-wide food action plan.*
- b) *set up a working group to research and map the extent of food poverty in the city.*

2. *To commit to setting up a food partnership with Devon County Council, city-based partners and stakeholders to develop and implement the Exeter Food Action Plan;*

3. *To campaign, in association with Exeter MPs, for Government to:*

- a) *legislate the existing commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals to end hunger by 2030;*
- b) *commit funding in the next spending review to increase access to nutritious food, whilst awaiting development of the National Food Strategy;*

c) *support local food production and suppliers, so that food supplies are sustained throughout the pandemic and as a result of exiting the EU, to protect workers' jobs, and to contribute to Exeter's commitment to Net Carbon Zero 2030; and*

d) *increase Universal Credit to help people suffering food poverty, with an equivalent uplift to those on legacy benefits.*

Appendix C Developing a Food Poverty Alliance

Extract from Food Power web site <https://www.sustainweb.org/foodpower/alliance/>

Developing a food poverty alliance

There are different approaches to developing sustainable alliances and networks in order to ensure organisational longevity and financial stability.

What is a food poverty alliance?

- A food poverty alliance is a partnership or consortium of organisations, usually drawn from across the public, voluntary, community, faith and sometimes private sectors, who commit to working together to tackle food poverty in a given geographical area.
- Alliances can take different forms. For example, some are sub-groups of pre-existing food partnerships or have formed following development of a [food poverty action plan](#) and some have recently emerged from coordinating responses to Covid-19. [Find out more](#) about the different alliances involved in Food Power.
- Working together can help to coordinate efforts, share practice and to have more impact. The [Food Power Collective Impact Tracker](#) is designed to help alliances assess their impact.

How can a food poverty alliance's work be sustainable?

There are different approaches to developing sustainable alliances and networks in order to ensure organisational longevity and financial stability. Networks, partnerships and alliances that are most successful in this area do so by:

- Ensuring that sustainability is a shared responsibility among member organisations, rather than for example relying on an individual such as the alliance coordinator, as well as proactively develop the skills of others as part of delegation or succession planning.
- Striking the right balance between forming a 'coalition of the willing' and reaching out to those who are harder to engage.
- Considering sustainability beyond finance, for example considerations should also factor in maintaining relationships and reviewing an alliances' shared vision.
- Maintaining an alliance's momentum during periods of lower periods of funding and/or activity, for example commitments to continue arranging meetings through in-kind support.
- Ensuring that an alliance can both deliver projects, but also feedback experiences to shape local and national policy.

How are food poverty alliances developing sustainable activities?

There are a number of examples of how alliances are developing their approach to sustainability:

- Leveraging Food Power financial support to bring in more match and/or in-kind funding.
- Using Food Power financial support and advice to build a robust evidence base and action plan to make a strong case to other funders for further support, including implementation or roll-out.
- Engaging other potential funders in discussions about activity supported by Food Power, including building on activity when Food Power support ends.
- Developing a consortium approach with member organisations agreeing to develop and seek funding for joint projects.

- Considering whether the alliance could develop into a Sustainable Food Places partnership.
- Taking action to open up under-used assets or resources even where this may not immediately benefit the alliance financially, for example low uptake of welfare benefits, Healthy Start vouchers and free school meals or underuse of local services and venues.

Appendix D Summary Information on Selected Food Poverty Networks

Area	Notes
Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance	<p>Shared vision: <i>We think that everyone in Shropshire should have access to healthy and affordable food.</i></p> <p>Aims:1: Fewer people experiencing food poverty in Shropshire; Aim 2: Increased access to affordable healthy food in Shropshire; Aim 3: Ensure there is crisis and emergency support so that people do not go hungry; Aim 4: Food poverty placed on the local and national policy agenda; Aim 5: Commit to measuring levels of food poverty so we know if we are being effective</p> <p>Alliance has Council and voluntary sector members</p> <p>Interactive map on food poverty which links to detailed interactive map of Covid mutual aid groups</p> <p>Shropshire Larder site lists Food banks – but no other provision. The Shropshire Larder is a community food resource which brings together local and national knowledge on different types of support available in Shropshire.</p>
Cambridge Food Poverty Alliance	<p>Developed a Food Poverty Action Plan – Collaborative Plan</p> <p>Alliance has core steering group (e.g. Food Bank, Church, City Council, Ethnic Minority Forum) plus wider membership of 25 groups.</p> <p>Alliance led by Cambridge Sustainable Food</p> <p>Signposting tool</p> <p>Online map of provision</p> <p>Have sourced/brokered funding for specific projects</p>
Moray Food Partnership	<p>Developed a Food Poverty Action Plan – with these top outcomes (each outcome has a series of actions):</p> <p><i>Remove stigma around poverty</i></p> <p><i>Income maximisation</i></p> <p><i>Increase access to emergency food – develop range of options</i></p> <p><i>Increase food knowledge</i></p> <p><i>Develop holiday food provision</i></p>
Plymouth Food Partnership	<p>Online Food Access Guide lists 8 providers</p> <p>But several steps (asking questions about need) to get there</p> <p>Food Power Alliance – planning an action plan</p>
Oxford	<p>Appears to be online map but only accessible if given permission</p>
Aberdeen Food Poverty Alliance Aberdeen	<p>FPAA formed in response to rising demand for emergency food provision combined with concern about the rapid increase in food banks. Partners include 76+ public sector staff/ services, charities, community organisations and faith-based groups involved in supporting people in food poverty/ insecurity.</p> <p>Food Poverty Action Plan</p> <p>Long term prevention/reduction and crisis provision</p>

Newcastle Food Poverty Group	<p>Developed out of Good Food Plan Co-facilitated by Food Newcastle and City Council Particular focus on improving coordination and navigation of local welfare safety net Developed a signposting tool – essentially a leaflet – in two versions – for practitioners and professionals and public Recognise importance of strategic view</p>
Middlesbrough Food Power Alliance	<p>Alliance is sub group of Food Partnership. Run by members with 4 sub groups Members include Council – in various guises, university, college, Food Bank and range of voluntary groups Food Action Plan Flags a “signposting tool” but not evident on web site</p>
Brighton & Hove Food Partnership	<p>Has Food Poverty Action Plan – over 78 actions with an agreed lead partner for each. Partners adopt 10 principles on food poverty. 50 cross sector partners signed up to Plan Also, an Emergency Food network Food poverty work sits under Spade to Spoon – city wide food strategy and action plan. Detailed directory of Food Banks and Community Hubs on web site – geared mainly to professionals Bulletin for advisors and professionals every 2 months to share latest service schedules Also, good clear web site on “other considerations when tackling food poverty” e.g. re-equipment, cooking skills, eating well on budget, fuel, healthy start vouchers.</p>
Southwark	<p>Southward Food Action Alliance Not obvious that Council is a member</p> <p>Interactive online map of emergency food provision- collaborated with Community Mapping Alliance aims to: 1 build a network of community based organisations working with people either in food poverty or at risk of food poverty in order to give emergency help, sign post to support or provide free training, workshops and advice as needed; 2. Provide quality resources, advice and training; 3. Develop a three tier way of working; 4. Link food distribution with food growing; 5. Build lasting partnerships to support local people to tackle food poverty.</p>
Blackburn with Darwen Food Alliance	<p>The aim of the Alliance is to bring public, third and private sector organisations together to address food poverty. 40 public and voluntary groups involved. Facebook page only</p>
Leeds	<p>Leeds Food Aid Network (not sure if linked to Leeds Food partnership) Leeds Food Aid Network (FAN) exists to help bring different people, initiatives and institutions together who are involved in tackling food poverty in the city of Leeds. Detailed information on food providers Protected signposting information for professionals only</p>
Cardiff,	<p>Mainly information/signposting on web site – not a priority focus on food poverty but has secured funding for a 3-month project making and delivering meals for families/children in need involving 3 member projects.</p>

Appendix E Exeter Free/Community Food Network

Drawing on our research and engagement with a range of stakeholders we suggest that the development of the existing Free Food Network or any new network should be based on the following principles and features:

- The purpose, function and structure of the Network should be informed by and based on consultation with organisations engaged in addressing food poverty.
- The membership of the Network should be open to public, voluntary and community organisations that can demonstrate a role in tackling food poverty.
- Membership should also be open to individuals and businesses engaged in tackling food poverty where there is no personal or business interest.
- Exeter City Council and Devon County Council should play an active role in the Network and provide resources for its operation.
- The Network should be facilitated in such a way to foster collaboration, coordination and the sharing of information and experience.
- The management of the Network needs to be explicitly resourced and include staff capacity to develop the Network, facilitate information-sharing and collaboration and progress agreed actions.
- The Network should develop a shared vision around tackling food poverty and consider also the development of a Food Poverty Action Plan or similar.
- The Network should consider establishing sub-groups or task groups focussing on specific issues and themes.
- The Network meetings should be facilitated to maximise participation and achieve consensus.
- Mechanisms should be put in place to enable effective communication amongst members between formal meetings.
- The Network should be creative and innovative in how it operates and avoid being and being perceived as “yet another set of meetings”.