

BCP Food & Energy Support Fund – 23/24 - Impact report

This funding programme was delivered by Dorset Community Foundation on behalf of BCP Council, with funding awarded to successful groups in July 2023 (for activities over the summer, autumn and winter) and November 2023 (for activities over the winter). All grants were used to address food and energy insecurity and spent on projects including: food parcels, food vouchers, cooked meals, winter warm spaces and food skills initiatives. All projects utilised grant funding by the end of March 31st 2024.

- Total funding of £400,000 has directly supported **26,771 local residents**
 - 12,311 In Bournemouth
 - 2830 in Christchurch
 - 11,630 in Poole
- Projects have involved **1408 volunteers**

Summary - awards in July 2023

Grant recipient	Project area	Grant	Beneficiary households	Number of beneficiaries	Number of volunteers	Project summary
Access Dorset	BCP	£10,595.44	10% older people 90% disabled	80	6	Drop in with free lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with sessions on budgeting and healthy eating, and access to advice from other local agencies
Ashley's Birthday Bank	BCP	£8000	100% families	200	2	Food shopping for vulnerable households referred by trusted agencies
BH1 - Boscombe Salvation Army	Bournemouth	£7500	20% older people 15% disabled 15% disabilities 65% vulnerable	300	30	Food for rough sleepers and welcome packs of food for those moving into their own accommodation who do not have the basic essentials
BCHA	Bournemouth	£10,000	3.5% older people 19% families 77.5 vulnerable	181	4	Food vouchers and essential household items for customers in BCHA's BCP homelessness and housing services
Bournemouth Community Church	Bournemouth	£10,000	58% families 7% older people 35% vulnerable	2600	14	Vouchers for local butchers and greengrocers for local households in need

Bournemouth Foodbank	Bournemouth	£15,000	35% families 35% older people 30% vulnerable	1750	60	Expansion of Social Canteen project working in partnership with Grounded, Friendly Food Club and SWRAC, and hot meals for households experiencing poverty, at the Foodbank cafe
Christchurch Foodbank	Christchurch	£9450	50% families 20% older people 30% vulnerable	800	61	Meal in a bag recipes and ingredients, cooking equipment for households in need, community suppers, school holiday hunger bags and winter warm bags
EDAS	Poole	£14,320	25% families 40% older people 35% vulnerable	121	4	Meals to be provided at café Serenitea via a voucher scheme for vulnerable residents and sessions on cooking-on-a-budget
Friends of Kinson Community Centre	Bournemouth	£3500	60% older people 20% disabled 20% vulnerable	100	4	Warm welcome space with games and free refreshments / soup and a roll, with workshops on cooking-on-a-budget
Grounded Community	Bournemouth	£14,200	25% families 25% older people 25% disabled 25% vulnerable	400	85	Support for existing projects Feed our Community and Grounded Gatherers, supporting other groups to set up Social Canteens following successful pilot at Bournemouth Foodbank, set up of new kitchen at Vale Lodge assisted housing space – to feed residents but also homeless people in Springbourne area
HealthBus Trust	Bournemouth	£8500	1% families 5% older people 94% vulnerable s	59	6	Hot meals, 'Go Bags' of food, and food vouchers – all provided for vulnerable people experiencing homelessness
Home Start Wessex	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	£3000	100% families	40	12	Practical support to address cost of living crisis via volunteer 1 to 1 support and at our groups – includes food vouchers, help to access food provision and access to other sources of support, budgeting and meal planning advice
Hope Community Church	Bournemouth	£7500	45% families 36% older people 19% vulnerable	125	34	Meals in community café, monthly community meal for over 65s, weekly after school meals for children, school holiday meals for children plus a parent
Hope Housing ,Training and Support Ltd	Bournemouth	£5500	100% vulnerable	103	9	Weekly cooking activities and a pack of household essentials for residents of sheltered accommodation
MS Centre Dorset	BCP	£6000	100% disabled	425	30	Hot meals provided at low cost for members coming to the centre, also provides warm environment in the winter – grant includes cost of new freezer

Poole Communities Trust	Poole	£14,220	60% families 20% older people 20% vulnerable	2200	21	Funds to fill shortfall of funding for Foodstones in Turlin Moore and Bourne
Poole Community Exchange	Poole	£15,000	73% families 22% older people 5% vulnerable	3781	90	Contribution towards cost of community pantry
POOLE FOODBANK - a project of Faithworks Wessex	Poole	£12,000	80% families 10% older people 10% vulnerable	950	30	Grant to purchase fresh foods for food parcels, voucher scheme for hot meals at The Spire café, and Recipe bags to help families cook and eat together
Poole Waste Not Want Not	Poole	£14,524	41% Families 40% older people 19% vulnerable	1506	32	Energy saving cooking equipment for households, food stock, Christmas & Easter hampers, Cook bags and new tables for cafe
Pramalife	Bournemouth & Poole	£8500	90% older people 10% vulnerable	62	8	Lunch clubs in Boscombe and Hamworthy
Recreate Dorset	Bournemouth	£8500	70% older people 30% vulnerable	57	10	Weekly provision of The Olds School Bruch' for vulnerable residents locally, including refugees and Polish community members
Safe and Sound Dorset	Bournemouth	£10,000	10% families 25% older people 25% disabled 40% vulnerable	120	33	Community meals at drop in sessions, vouchers and low cost appliances for those most in need, and cooking sessions to create frozen meals to distribute when needed
Salvation Army - Winton	Bournemouth	£7500	80% families 15% vulnerable 5% older people	1960	100	Provision of food at Community Café in Winton, including free meals for children in the school holidays
Somerford ARC Community Centre	Christchurch	£8280	62% older people 37.50% families	100	7	Funding to support Lunch Club for elderly people and children's Breakfast Club
Somerford youth & Community Centre	Christchurch	£13,200	70% families 10% older people 20% vulnerable	350	6	Support for Somerford pantry including stock (food and household items), energy efficiency advice literature and warm space with hot meals
The Friendly Food Club	BCP	£12,000	60% families 16% older people 6% disabled 18% vulnerable	571	6	10 cookery workshops delivered through partnerships in different locations, 10 workshops to promote Access to Food recipe booklets, plus 10 community events

Townsend Community Association	Bournemouth	£10,000	45% Families 25% older people 30% vulnerable	550	30	Cooking demonstrations and sharing meals with Friendly Food Club, Warm Welcome space in winter, Food stock for community fridge, community breakfasts and lunches
Water Lily Project	Christchurch	£7181	50% families 50% vulnerable	18	4	Delivery of three, 8 week cooking-on-a-budget courses for vulnerable women
We Are Humans	Bournemouth	£7500	22% families 16% older people 62% vulnerable	500	20	To support existing but early stage group with children's breakfast club, pensioners lunch club, and a new food party – plus warm space provision in the winter.
West Howe Community Enterprises	Bournemouth	£9289.56	70% families 10% older people 20% vulnerable h	650	20	Support for households facing hardship in West Howe - meal ingredient bags in school holidays with tuition from Friendly Food Club, lunch club, social events with fish and chips supper, provision of toiletry essentials.
Westbourne Rotary Club Trust Fund	Bournemouth	£6240	40% families 50% older people 10% vulnerable	700	26	Donations of donated surplus food in the community, working with asylum seekers & refugees to cook meals to be distributed in the community
Wimborne Minster Folk Festival	BCP	£1000	32% families 44% older people 24% vulnerable	155	39	Contribution to Wimborne Community Food Supply, for those households residing in BCP who receive food provision
TOTAL		£298,000		21,514 beneficiaries	843 volunteers	

Summary - awards in November 2023

Grant recipient	Project area	Grant	Beneficiary households	Number of beneficiaries	Number of volunteers	Project summary
Access Dorset	Bournemouth	£3080.44	10% older people 90% disabled	40	4	Funding for Crisis Support Worker to be available at existing Warm Space provision, during the winter months
AIMCommunity	Bournemouth	£5500	85% families 5% older people 5% disabled 5% vulnerable	102	3	Opening additional hours to provide a warm welcome space, with wrap around support and signposting for local children and their families who are impacted by cost of living crisis
Bournemouth Community Church	Bournemouth	£2945	100% older people	40	13	Hot meal for members of their senior citizens group on a Monday lunchtime
Bournemouth Foodbank	Bournemouth	£1000	100% vulnerable	26	0	Provision of meals at Garden Rooms Cafe and possible cooking on a budget training

Bournemouth Methodist Church	BCP	£1450	40% families 60% vulnerable	209	14	Warm welcome space with free food over the winter
Bournemouth Parks Foundation	Bournemouth	£4500	51% families 17% older people 32% vulnerable	500	79	Distribution of vouchers for use at community cafe's at Redhill Park and Winton Recreation Ground, as well as cafe's at partner organisations Salvation Army and Hope Community Church.
Bournemouth Ymca	Bournemouth	£7284	100% vulnerable	44	3	Provision for 20 local homeless individuals of a weekly meal, weekly take away soup, and access to shower and laundry facilities
Christchurch Community Partnership	Christchurch	£5617.56	1% families 90% older people 5% disabled 4% vulnerable	178	72	Introduction of a monthly roast dinner, and a weekly lunch club in Christchurch town centre, to fill gaps identified in the recent Hidden Hunger report with BU
Dorset Community Action	Christchurch	£5500	35% families 31% older people 34% vulnerable	26	4	Working in partnership with Somerford Primary School, Somerford Family Hub and Christchurch Community Partnership, to deliver cookery and home growing workshops with families impacted by the cost of living crisis
Dorset Polish Centre	Bournemouth	£6500	15% families 45% older people 40% vulnerable	50	6	Warm space provision for members of the Dorset Polish Centre who are impacted by the cost of living crisis – to include social activities and a hot meal at The Old School House, Boscombe
EDAS	Poole	£5000	10% families 70% older people 20% vulnerable	28	2	Creating a social club for older people 3 afternoons a week, providing a warm space with free hot drinks and cake
Faithworks Wessex	BCP	£7500	50% families 10% older people 40% vulnerable	350	35	Creation of a One Stop Glut Hut, to take in excess foods and redistribute for use across the Access to Food Partnership
Gateway Church Poole	Poole	£2000	10% families 50% older people 40% vulnerable	200	30	Warm space provision and winter hampers for those in need
Hope Community Church	Bournemouth	£4000	57% older people 43% vulnerable	105	30	Warm Welcome space with hot food and a Christmas meal for over 65s and for local families
Hope Housing ,Training and Support ltd	Bournemouth	£2500	100% vulnerable	117	13	Education and Empowerment Workshops to educate residents on energy conservation, reducing energy usage & costs; hot meals will be provided during these sessions

Immaculate Conception and St Joseph's Church	Christchurch	£1731	15% families 65% older people 10% disabled 10% vulnerable	150	30	Winter Warm Space initiative, following on from last winter's success
Kinson and West Howe Foodbank	Bournemouth	£2000	79% families 6% older people 15% vulnerable	138	18	Grant for the purchase of additional food stock to meet increasing demand
LOVECHURCH	Bournemouth	£6100	90% families 10% vulnerable	560	46	Fund N Food sessions for local families including cookery tuition with Friendly Food Club, Children's breakfast club, Slow Cooker gifts with training, and Christmas hampers for vulnerable women in partnership with Safe and Sounds
Parish of St Nicholas and St Hubert	Poole	£3500	65% families 35% older people	400	50	Warm space initiative with food offer, other community meals and support for Foodbank
Poole Foodbank	Poole	£4224	80% families 10% older people 10% vulnerable	250	30	Cooking equipment with cooking tuition, for families experiencing poverty
Poole Methodists Church	Poole	£7500	100% families	1200	28	Free meals for children from low income backgrounds and for those sleeping rough and otherwise in financial need
Poole Waste Not Want Not	Poole	£3500	41% families 40% older people 19% vulnerable	300	32	Christmas lunches, vouchers for volunteers, additional overheads and new hand wash sink
Safe and Sound Dorset	Bournemouth	£2000	10% families 25% older people 25% disabled 40% vulnerable	60	4	Hot meal and warm space for vulnerable women attending housing sessions.
Southbourne Food Bank	Bournemouth	£4560	40% families 8% older people 52% vulnerable	160	15	Faithworks Wessex Foodbank offering meal in a bag, cooking equipment, food vouchers, café vouchers and warm blankets
Water Lily Project	Christchurch	£2508	60% families 40% vulnerable	24	4	Free community lunch weekly for vulnerable women supported by the charity, who are struggling to make ends meet
TOTAL		£102,000		5257 beneficiaries	565 volunteers	

Thanks to Dorset Community Foundation and BCP Council

“This grant has had such a positive impact on our charity and the people who come here. We've developed the warm space into so much more than the funding was requested for and it has had a lasting impact on what we as an organisation provide to people. Warm space has become a space where the support, welcoming and non-judgmental vibe will continue even though the funding has now come to an end.” Access Dorset

“Thank you so much for funding our project. It has been a life line for many people and has provided a fantastic foundation for us to develop further work with families for which we are very grateful.” AIM Community

“Thank you so much for this grant it is an enormous help to those who are struggling to make ends meet and it also enables us to show warmth and care to those who are vulnerable.” Bournemouth Community Church

“The application process, the speed of approval and the ongoing communications have all been straightforward and swift. We are all incredibly grateful for your support and, on behalf of our beneficiaries, please accept our huge thanks for this funding.” Bournemouth Parks Foundation

“We really appreciate the support for these projects as we believe they have made an enormous difference to the quality of life of the beneficiaries and enabled us to reach many more of our isolated residents and connect them back into community, as well as meeting a nutritional need for many. Thank you!” Christchurch Community Partnership

“We are very grateful for the invaluable support provided by the grant from DCF. Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to serve a larger number of clients within our community, witnessing positive transformations in their lives. The financial assistance has empowered us to address pressing issues faced by our community members. We deeply appreciate the trust and confidence you have placed in our organization” Dorset Polish Centre

“This process was very straight forward, support and guidance were available at all stages. We are incredibly grateful for the grant and it has had a huge impact on our provision.” Kinson & West Howe Foodbank

“The process of completing this application has been straight forward and knowing that I can always contact (DCF Grants Manager) if I have any difficulties has made me feel confident. We particularly enjoyed seeing (DCF Grants Manager and Trustees) when they recently visited the Centre. This made the process much more personal and we appreciated the effort they made to come and meet our members and Trustees.” MS Centre Dorset

“We are extremely grateful to you for your support in helping us make a real difference in the lives of the most vulnerable in our community; you not only support funds but help in so many other ways, advice, promoting and believing in our mission. Together we are creating positive changes and building a stronger, more resilient community. A big 'Thank You' from us all.” Poole Waste Not Want Not

“The involvement with BCP Council & DCF has been extremely welcoming, warm, informative and supportive. If we have ever encountered a query or issue, you have always been quick to respond and seek solutions.” EDAS

“I am very grateful for the grant which has made such a difference to us as a Community Drop in Service and the support we have been able to give to those in the Community struggling financially and those without funds.” BH1 – Boscombe Salvation Army

Access Dorset (2 grants)

Funded activities

On Tuesdays and Thursdays we provided free refreshments and lunches prepared by disabled young people. We also started a cooking on a budget group on a Thursday, teaching people how to cook nutritious meals for under £1.50 a serving, how to grow vegetables in limited space and budgeting skills.

The second grant meant we could provide, in the winter, a Crisis Support Worker to ensure beneficiaries of our Warm Space had support to address the hardship-related challenges they faced. This advocacy support included supporting applications for small grants, to address furniture poverty for example, to access the benefits to which they are entitled and to access statutory support. This involved working with BCP council housing team, Shelter, CAB and DWP benefits services.



Outcomes

Having the Warm Space provision has drawn people into Access Dorset as somewhere to go to have something to eat in a warm and welcoming space and kept them coming through the companionship they've found and the other activities on offer such as chair yoga, quizzes and bingo. Participants have been equipped with the skills necessary to budget and cook healthy nutritious meals on limited income, take care of their physical and mental health, grow and forage their own food and to form and nurture friendship and peer led support groups. Participants have commented on how taking part in the cooking groups has inspired them to cook more meals of their own. *"This is the first time I've cooked jacket potatoes, I never realised they were so easy."*

People accessing Warm Space have felt more confident to approach our Crisis Support Worker as it is part of the Warm Space offer, rather than with the stigma of directly approaching another agency, such as CAB or Shelter. We have helped people with Universal Credit, Employment and Support allowance, and Personal Independence Payment claims and given advice on Carer's allowance, Attendance allowance and Pension applications, including eligibility for Pension Credit. Those advised that their situation is too complicated for us alone, have been happy to approach more specialist agencies with the help of the support worker. One of the advantages of having the Crisis support worker available during Warm Space was that they were often immediately accessible for clients, which was invaluable for those with mental health issues, anxiety and learning disabilities, who sometimes struggle with services that can be difficult to access immediately.

"I got the help I needed and now I've got the right support person in place to make sure I can pay my rent and bills."

"I just wanted to let you know that I followed the advice you gave me, and things are moving forward for us now. Housing have accepted that they have a duty to us and our worker at Shelter is finding out whether we will be offered emergency accommodation. Thank you for being there for us"

Stories of change

A young woman in her 30s with complex needs decided to add Thursdays to her volunteering schedule because of warm space. She was homeless and in temporary accommodation when she started volunteering with us. With our help and support she secured private rented accommodation using BCP council's rent deposit and landlord's incentive schemes and is working towards addressing her mental health & addiction issues. She has made friends with some of the other people coming to warm space and now socialises with them outside of Access Dorset. She is gradually taking on more responsibility and we are looking at helping build up her skills to enable her to start applying for work. A couple of weeks ago she brought 2 friends along to warm space who are also currently homeless, and they have signed up for the free "cooking on a budget" course and our OCN woodworking course.

A young man in his late 20s with a learning disability, has been attending Access Dorset for a long time. He has been attending warm space due to struggling with the cost of living and his personal circumstances. Whilst coming here for the food, warmth and companionship he also saw an opportunity to work with another volunteer here to set up the “YouTube fun” activity. He has been working with other people attending in delivering what people want during the activity. This has boosted this young man’s confidence and we have seen him blossom as he takes on more responsibility. We hope that this new found confidence will help him to think about what sort of paid employment he would like to do once he is ready to move on.

A young couple started attending Warm Space to access food. They had recently moved into the area and were homeless, drifting between sleeping on friend sofas/floors and sleeping in an empty garage. They both suffer from mental health and long-term physical illness. We gave them advice and referred them to Shelter, while supporting them through Warm Space. They now attend Access Dorset at least twice a week and sometimes more often, depending on what appointments they have. They are starting to get their housing situation sorted out and are participating in a number of activities here. We’re hopeful that once their housing is more stable they will consider volunteering and ultimately work towards building their self-confidence, and get into work.

Sustainability

We now have one year’s funding from Wessex Water to run the “cooking on a budget” course to end of December 2024. Information, advice and advocacy will always be offered by Access Dorset, but it will be hugely reduced by this grant ending. We will continue to seek funding to reinstate and expand this service.

AIM Community

Funded activities

We created a Warm Space delivery team and extended our opening times for 3 hours a week between 23rd November 2023 and 25th April 2024 = 66 additional hours delivered over 22 sessions. At every session we offered signposting and support, hot drinks and meals, social, health related and learning activities and a safe, warm space. 72 individuals and their families from our local community benefitted.

Participants took part in a variety of activities from how to prepare nutritious meals on a budget, to making candles, pilates classes, to planting seeds and spending time in our Green Space garden, arts and craft activities, playing games, creating and performing music, writing and reading. Internet and IT access was available to do homework, research and play games. Toiletries, feminine hygiene products, food, socks, hats, gloves, hot water bottles and blankets were made available to those who needed them. Energy saving advice was available to participants through the Ridgewater Trust and we had two workshops throughout the delivery time period.

Outcomes

We have been able to cater for a variety of needs and create pathways for people to try different flavours, diets, foods and creative challenges. Creativity can be a therapeutic process and we have made the space for this to happen. A place for people to pause the business of their lives, allowing the brain space and time to process and or an escape from their troubles.

Two of our young people have been able to become volunteers for the WarmSpace project and we have been able to use funds from the budget to upskill them both in a Level 3 Food Hygiene course, gain practical experience and a reference which will benefit them on their C.V’s and employability skills. Our third volunteer is a parent of one of the young person volunteer and she has been brilliant in networking the local community and raising the awareness of the WarmSpace Project and AIMCommunity.

The WarmSpace has been a blessing to those who have attended and also for our organisation too. It has provided an opportunity for us to gather further data about the lived experiences and needs of families living in the area, test out approaches and bid for resources to deliver further work. An unexpected benefit has been that Warm Space provided space for young people and families to successfully transition on to other projects in our AIMCommunity.

Stories of change

'SE', a 19 year old who has been isolated from peers in part due to his autism, has been attending weekly and is now volunteering. His interest and involvement also piqued the interest of his family and many of his immediate and extended family have become regulars. During the lifetime of the project, he has been able to complete his Level 3 Food Hygiene Certificate and has taken the lead on much of the menu setting, food preparation and cooking. The boost in his confidence has seen him really develop into a key member of the team and enabled him to interact with peers and others who attend WarmSpace. SE has been able to use the experience to support his job search. He provides peer support to other young people using the project.

'SI', her father, mother and younger brother are a 'blended family' who are facing some tough challenges. SI has been finding school really difficult due to autism, PDA and changes within the family as well as coming to terms with the imminent loss of a grandparent who is terminally ill. Warm Space has provided a vital space for family members to have quality time together as well as connecting with other families and peers whilst accessing support. There is still a long way to go for SI and her family but they are better connected with the community, have been sign posted on to other services.

Sustainability

We have secured funding for the work over the summer months through a grant from BCP Council.

Ashley's Birthday Bank

Funded activities

Due to the cost of living, referrals for food shops have risen dramatically. The cost of food has also risen. These families are in severe poverty, or have also been through domestic violence, abuse or neglect. The funding has enabled us to continue providing much needed food shops for 50 local families. We have been able to provide meat, bakery products, dairy, fresh fruit and vegetables, nappies, baby milk, toiletries, cleaning products etc.

Outcomes

Without this funding, we would have to start declining some of the referrals, and that would be devastating to these families. The grant has made a massive difference to the families - the parents are made to feel guilty, useless, a failure etc, and the children were going very hungry, without even the basic food, let alone nutritional and healthy foods, to enable them to do well at school, focus, sleep better, behave better etc. Mental health improves for the whole family.

"Thank you so very much – it has been a major stress not being able to provide food for the girls, and you have honestly helped me so much. Thank you"

"I am just messaging to say THANK YOU!!!! It's just more than I ever expected and full of our favorites! I was an emotional mess unpacking it, after all we have been through your kindness has touched my heart! Can't wait to show the kids when they get home. I'll be forever grateful!"

"I cannot thank you enough – it was like an instant relief from worrying and stressing about feeding my children. Myself and my husband were up most of the night crying and I was having panic attacks about it. Thank you again – you are both amazing!"

Sustainability

We continue to apply for grants, and do our own fundraising through fetes etc

BH1 - Boscombe Salvation Army

Funded activities

A variety of meals were prepared and cooked with fresh meat and vegetables, for homeless and vulnerable in Boscombe Community. We also provided fresh fruit. We have served a total of 36 meals most days for the past six months. We have also provided cereals, milk and toast for breakfast and during the winter provided Bacon Rolls each Monday morning for up to 45 people.

Outcomes

The grant has made a significant difference in peoples lives and their wellbeing. For those who have no benefits in place and could not afford food, the meals have made a difference to their wellbeing and health. We have noticed an improvement with everyone to their presentation meaning they are happier and healthier.

“Good evening, I hope everything is fine with you. In fact, I am very happy, a happiness equal to the size of the universe, with the service I received from you. I wish you the same happiness that I feel and more.”

Stories of change

One client has grown up in the UK but had no documents and was unable able to get benefits. While his immigration was being sorted out he was on the streets and had no money at all. We were able to give him nutritious meals and support him until he was funded by social services.

Another Client came to BH1 street homeless without benefits and we were able to support him with food. He engaged with support, had regular meals and is now in supported accommodation, in receipt of benefits/ Receiving food at BH1 has made a huge difference to his life. He now is a volunteer at BH1

Sustainability

The work continues but the quality of food will be limited due to finances as we are completely funded by donations, the amount of meals may be less.

BCHA

Funded activities

We purchased pre-loaded (£40) supermarket cards for distribution. Applications requested information on whether food or warmth was the primary requirement for the application. To capture the widest group of vulnerable clients, we included our young people's and mental health teams and refuges. Clients being supported were housed in a range of housing (temporary, sofa surfing, general needs, supported accommodation, refuges etc.). We were able to allocate cards for pick up within 48 hours from receipt of an application. We supported:

- 18-25 years of age: 30% of clients
- 26-65 years of age: 66.5% clients
- 65+ years of age: 3.5% clients.

5% clients expressed having a learning disability, 73% expressed having a mental health difficulty, 4.5% cited physical health as their primary issue. 4.5% beneficiaries worked part-time and 43% beneficiaries received PIP and/or were placed in the LCWRA group of Universal Credit.

Outcomes

BCHA were able to support some of the most vulnerable people that are worked with and with the help from this grant were able to provide some much needed respite from worry for a while. As the application was completed with support workers and income officers the we promoted BCHA courses in money management, cooking on a budget and to discuss other agencies able to provide support around debt advice. 14% of people took up these opportunities.



Story of change

MR X was referred to service after losing his job caused by a mental health crisis. He had few savings, was not in receipt of benefits and did not know how to claim them. He prioritised his rent and had very little money left for food, and was unable to pay for his utilities. We supported him to apply for benefits and contact his utility providers to prevent disconnection from services. We provided foodbank vouchers while waiting for his applications to be processed but due to his culture and a desire to avoid running up debts by cooking, these were not the best solution. We offered voucher instead. MR X was grateful for all the support he received. The voucher enabled him to shop for food of his choice that did not need cooking. This had a very positive impact on his mood, for which Mr X was very grateful. He is now in receipt of benefits; his mental health is recovering, and he is working towards finding new employment.

Sustainability

We will continue to horizon scan for funding opportunities for this meaningful work.

Bournemouth Community Church (2 grants)

Funded activities

The £10,000 grant has been fully spent on voucher food support in conjunction with our local greengrocer's and butcher's as originally planned. The second grant added a further £600 to the voucher scheme but was mainly used for the provision of hot meals for members of our senior citizens group on a Monday lunchtime. This included small equipment needs and qualifications for health and safety and driver medicals.

Outcomes

The voucher scheme has helped many people to feed themselves and their families with good quality food and has provided very good links with our local greengrocer's and butcher's. It has also given our clients more dignity and choice in their decision making as regards food and has enabled them to have a better diet. The food we give out as part of our own food programme and foodbank is all ambient tins and packets which can be very limited so everyone is very grateful for the help and support. The voucher provision has also meant that families can reallocate money they would usually spend on food to other essential items.

For lunch club, the tangible financial benefit of a warm space and a meal that has not been cooked at home or missed altogether, has been very clearly felt by those who came along, many who were struggling to feed themselves at home. There has also been the additional value of going out and meeting with others and all the benefits to wellbeing that brings. The group has been very thankful for the practical provision and for increased social interaction. Some of whom are in a position where they would be unable to go out were it not for this provision.

"We have benefitted so much from the vouchers as a family- knowing that for a set period of time we could allocate food money to cover electric and gas, as the vouchers helped cover fresh food for us. The butcher was always so friendly and helpful. Thankyou."

"How lovely to be able to go and choose some fresh meat, you have no idea how much we get used to eating tinned foods, it was such a treat to have choice"

"At a time where I am very unwell, this group has been invaluable in giving me the opportunity to have really good food and friendship."

Sustainability

We will continue to support those who are struggling with food poverty and other life dominating issues through our warm welcome hub, foodbank and family food programme called 'Munch'. We anticipate being able to offer a subsidised lunch club service with grants and a minimum level of member contributions.

Bournemouth Foodbank (2 grants)

Funded activities

The Garden rooms cafe is the central part of the building and has become a safe haven where people can come and sit and have some hot food and drink either for free if collecting a food parcel, or at very reasonable prices. We have been able to extend the daily opening hours of the Cafe by two more hours each day. The funding also enabled us to commit to running a regular Social Canteen night every Friday from 1 September 2023 to 22 March 2024. We have also been able to take the same concept into other special themed events during these 7 months on a pay what you can basis. There are many regulars but also a growing number of new people coming along. We have continued to base menus on using as much surplus fresh food as possible but we have had sufficient funds to purchase extra. We have also been able to provide hot food and drink for the users of the Foodbank when collecting a food parcel.

The Social Canteen involved SWRAC students having a 6 week rotating Hospitality training placement preparing food during the day, followed later in the afternoon with volunteers from the community who ran the actual event during the evening. We engaged Friendly Food Club to supply the cooks and trainers and engaged a Grounded Social Canteen coordinator.

With the second grant. We facilitated several sessions of training in the café, working with BCHA Learn, including a young people's cooking on a budget course and four Italian cooking courses from mid November to late March.



Outcomes

Conversations confirm the loneliness and fear people have during the continued cost of living crisis and utility cost increases. More recently there are definitely more people experiencing homelessness for the first time and several in tents across BCP including single men who have a low priority for housing. Most are experiencing some level of mental health issues. Social Canteen and the daily option of spending time in the cafe has given much more dignity and self-worth. *"Meeting new people and being able to afford to have a meal out. I live alone and it's so nice to be able to eat with others."*

At our Italian sessions, participants also had the opportunity to complete Food and Safety Hygiene Certificate. At the end of our 2-session programme every person felt ready to work within the hospitality sector, in restaurants, cafes, pubs and coffee shops. We gave 26 young people (ages 16 to 24) the skills to be able to cook well and make healthy nutritious meals on a budget. All have some vulnerability and all most are in short term or temporary housing situations.

"I love being here preparing food, it's so much more relaxed not over whelming at all very relaxed"

"I really enjoyed the atmosphere it has really built my confidence with people and new places"

Story of change

"To be around people and have a break from cooking a healthy meal for me and my daughter with the £ saving that gives us too...like going to a restaurant which we'd never do otherwise due to cost. A real treat. Great for my mental health and my daughter loves the place too and getting to see other children and experience different food."

Sustainability

We are continuing although currently without funding for a long period - we have funds for the next 12 weeks at least and have other grant applications out.

Bournemouth Methodist Church

Funded activities

As we anticipated, a large number of families and individuals facing finance hardship visited The Welcome Inn Cafe this winter. Many of them benefited from the 'Pay it Forward Board' and had access to free food and drinks. From the 7th of November to the 31st of March, the Board was used 209 times. The grant helped us enormously towards the cost of all the meals/drinks offered. The grant has also been used to purchase a new upright freezer which was essential to store the many extra batches of soup, bread, cakes, scones etc.

Outcomes

The Welcome Inn Cafe has become a well established Warm Welcome Space in our community. People have been signposted to us from different organisations or simply word of mouth. The grant has made an enormous difference for two main reasons: first, we haven't had to turn down any person who approached us asking to be fed. Second, when seeing what was happening, those who could afford have stepped up and supported the board themselves with extra donations. This meant that once the grant money was all used up, we were able (and still are) to continue offering free food. We have offered a safe place for people of different backgrounds and experiences to meet and find friendship and support. It's been wonderful to witness the intergenerational mingling and how myths are being busted and unconscious biases are being challenged.

Stories of change

'N' moved to the area last January, could not afford food and has been coming twice a week with his dog. The staff set a table for them outside and slowly other customers started to interact with them. He now arrives and sets his place himself. Another week, a customer's dog died and she gave N all the toys, food and dog stuff she had. For him, it means a lot to be seen and acknowledged as a person, as much as it is to be offered free food.

'A and D' (single mum and daughter) always come to the Cafe for the free meal and for a safe place to play and read books. D struggles with school and Mum has mental health issues. A month ago they started bringing another family alongside, this time a dad and child, whose mum died of suicide last December. 'A' said the cafe is a safe place for her family, and she hoped it would be safe for this new family too, a place where they could be known by name and not only by the tragic story that accompany them.

A young lady with Downs Syndrome who is one of our volunteers is supported by her personal carer. She has flourished in the café environment, her confidence has grown and her family hopes it won't be long before she will be able to look for paid employment in hospitality as a result of her experience.

Sustainability

We are in the process of applying for other grants: for salaries and for refurbishment of the Cafe Area, as the existing kitchen is too small for the demand now.

Bournemouth Parks Foundation

Funded activities

We created 450 food vouchers (£10 each) which we gave to; Salvation Army (Winton), LIFEhouse at Bournemouth Community Church (Moordown), and Hope Community Church (Winton). They distributed vouchers to those who are struggling financially. The vouchers could be spent at two of the Parks Foundation's community cafes: Redhill Park and Winton Recreation Ground. The cafes also offered a warm space where people could spend as much time as they wanted, and many of our free activities (such as natural crafts, bulb and tree planting, knit & natter) are held in or around the cafes for those who wanted to get involved.

Outcomes

Feedback from our partners was that the vouchers were really useful:

“As one of our primary purposes is cost of living support to vulnerable households, being able to offer the vouchers in addition to our own services has been very valuable. We have noticed a much larger take up of food support in the over 65 group than in previous years - it appears that the cost of living rise is impacting those on pensions. This cohort can be quite reluctant to ask for help so being able to offer vouchers was a good method.” Hope Hub

“It is refreshing to be able to offer something for free that is not a financial burden to us. Those who have received the vouchers have all said everything is so expensive so to be able to go somewhere, offer refreshment and be no cost to them is such a relief to them.” Salvation Army

“It’s been lovely to be able to offer the vouchers out as part of support alongside food parcels. An opportunity for a hot meal.” Lifehouse

Due to an exceptionally wet Winter, our cafes offered a welcome warm space. Many of those who came in hadn’t known about the café and/or hadn’t previously ventured inside. They referred to enjoying the warmth of the cafes, enjoying time spent in the company of others, and the fact that they weren’t rushed and could while away a couple of hours. Parents of young children also thanked us for the use of the toys and games.

Stories of change

One of our single parents was really worried about how to occupy their child without spending any money. This was a great lifeline for her and for us - it felt we were able to offer something that actually helped her. Her child loved the park and they visit regularly to enjoy the open space as they have no garden.

One retired couple in their 80s found themselves unable to pay their bills at the end of last year and were worried sick and very stressed. Being able to offer the cafe vouchers, along with a package of food & other support helped them to address their situation. They were very grateful for the vouchers.

Sustainability

Although this was a one-off project created thanks to this grant, our four organisations will continue to work together and support each other where possible. The Parks Foundation is soon opening another park-located community café, so we will seek other funding opportunities of a similar type

Bournemouth YMCA

Funded activities

The funding has allowed us to provide a weekly 2 course meal plus takeaway soup, within the YMCA's canteen, to clients who attend the Healthbus service (20 hot meals per week). We have also offered use of our shower, washing machine and dryer to allow laundry to be cleaned at the same time. This project had an additional benefit of enabling time when they were eating, to talk and share issues that were important to them, which enabled additional support to be offered. On a few weeks where the 20 meals were not taken, remaining food was taken into Bournemouth Town Centre and given to other rough sleepers.

Outcomes

The provision of weekly hot meals by the YMCA to HealthBus clients has had a profound and multi-faceted impact on the well-being of homeless individuals. From immediate improvements in physical health and mental well-being to the strengthening of charity services and forging of collaborative partnerships, this initiative embodies the holistic approach needed to address the complex challenges of homelessness and health inequalities.

Stories of change

Despite being in temporary accommodation for over six months 'Ben' struggled to access essential healthcare until connecting with the HealthBus team. Through interactions with the mental health nurse, Ben began to understand the critical link between his diet and his overall well-being. By incorporating nutritious food into his routine, Ben noticed a significant improvement in his severe anxiety and stomach issues. The support provided not only helped address his immediate health concerns but also empowered him to take control of his well-being in the long term.

Sleeping in wet and cold conditions exacerbated 'Emma's cardiovascular condition, compounded by a limited and unhealthy diet. However, the outreach nurse's support and education on the importance of nutrition played a pivotal role in Emma's journey to recovery. Despite her challenging circumstances, Emma's transition to temporary accommodation enabled her to focus on improving her diet. With the goal of having three small hot meals a day, Emma's commitment to embracing nutritious food reflects the profound impact of empowering individuals to prioritise their health and well-being despite adversity.

Sustainability

We have already continued the project as it has been so successful. For the next 3 months the Healthbus have found some funds for continuation.

Christchurch Community Partnership

Funded activities

We have run a weekly Lunch Club at Homelands, a local sheltered housing development owned by Christchurch Housing Association, working in partnership with the Friendly Food Club who have provided the menu planning, purchasing and catering. We have also run a monthly Sunday Roast event for those particularly isolated at weekends, this included our annual Christmas Day Community Lunch and an additional Easter Sunday event. Both of these events have been a great success, much appreciated by the beneficiaries and attracting many new volunteers. Whilst there has been a regular core of attendees, we have also regularly seen new people at both events.

Outcomes

For our Sunday Roast beneficiaries it has meant that they get to socialise with other people on Sundays, which can be a very lonely day for many, as well as enjoy a nutritious roast dinner. It has also opened up volunteering opportunities for many working age adults, sometimes with their children too. For the new weekly Lunch Club at Homelands it has benefited both residents of the complex, but also many completely isolated older residents who we pick up using our buses, including some from another sheltered social housing complex housing many residents with additional needs.



Stories of change

A Homelands residents told one of our staff that whilst they used to sit in their flat, preparing their own meals each day, they now have the opportunity to eat together with 3 other friends once a week which has made a huge difference to them and they can also plan to do other activities together outside of the Lunch Club.

A resident of the neighbouring sheltered housing development who was always active in the community but is now severely disabled, is absolutely thrilled that he can get to the Lunch Club on his mobility scooter and encourages others there to accompany him either on our bus or in convoy of scooters. He tells us that the standard of the meals would cost £14 elsewhere!



Sustainability

We have consulted with the beneficiaries who have agreed to pay an extra £1 per week, as they really want it to continue. We also approached Christchurch Housing Society (who own Homelands) to ask them to subsidise the difference between what they pay and what it costs. They have agreed to do this until July, so we are seeking alternative funding to continue beyond that as the pilot has demonstrated that there is a definite need. We are also continuing the monthly Sunday Roast project by primarily using volunteer chefs and bus drivers.

Christchurch Foodbank

Funded activities

We were able to provide Meals in a bag with full ingredients and a wok or slow cooker to help families learn to cooker shop and eat on a budget. We held a community supper every Wednesday nights for families, individuals, workers and non-workers, and anyone struggling in isolation. We had on average 65 people eating a hot homemade meal. Hot water bottles and gas/electric top ups were given to help those with no utilities and no funds. We were able to pack school holiday hunger bags to give to families struggling to provide food and meals normally given by the school.

Outcomes

The grant had a huge benefit to our families and the community. The community supper is a wonderful meal that brings people together and friendships are made over a hot meal and safe, caring space. Feedback from a lot of the visitors is that they are so lonely and the meal is the only food they eat with others and off a plate.

Story of change

The winter warm project helped a couple in their 90's who had not put their heating on for three months - we were able to top their gas up, give them hot water bottles and also provide an electric throw that cost 3.5p an hour. They said it saved their lives as they were so cold.

Sustainability

We are applying for grants to enable us to continue the great work we started thanks to the funding

Dorset Community Action

Funded activities

Eight full day workshops were delivered by two coaches in Somerford covering the following; Eating vegetarian meals, Shopping seasonally and buying wonky, Using surplus food websites and apps, Batch cooking, Energy-efficient cooking, Cutting down on food waste and Grow your own food, indoors and outside. Slow cookers were purchased to give away to attendees along with ingredients to make soups and stews. Part of the workshops included a tutorial on how to use a

slow cooker and create fresh, healthy meals with recipes cards and ideas being given to the attendees. Growing kits were also purchased to give away to attendees, which will enable the growing of fresh salad leaves and vegetables at home. The workshop also covered the basics of how to plant, grow, harvest and prepare fresh vegetables grown at home. As part of the workshops, a DCA staff member specialising in energy efficiency, delivered information on how to save money on fuel bills, how to cook efficiently and where to go to get support if struggling with bills.

Outcomes

The grant has enabled all attendees to look at healthier food and life options, reduce their food waste, save money by cooking efficiently and learn how to batch cook. A number of the attendees stated they would be taking what they have learned into their daily lives and homes. Learning how to use and being given a slow cooker, has helped and encouraged attendees to prepare meals using different healthy ingredients, eat healthier and have a more balanced diet. Attendees also expressed interest in growing their own food and have begun to try and grow herbs, tomatoes, salad and other vegetables. Five attendees have requested to sign up to the Seed2Plate growing garden at the Somerford Family Hub which is a growing space built for the community to learn how to grow fresh fruit and veg which will be given away to the community. Delivering the workshops from a local community centre has enabled the attendees to learn about and access other types of support on offer.

Stories of change

A attendee just had her 85th birthday and wanted to start looking after herself better by eating healthier and making her own dinners rather than relying on ready meals. Not having used a slow cooker before, she was very pleased to learn how easy it is to batch cook. Since the workshop, the attendee has made the most of her free slow cooker by making lots of meals and freezing them to eat throughout the week and has now stopped using food delivery services which in turn has also saved her money. *"I will be looking at life in a different way. Saving more energy and eating healthy foods"*

An attendee signed up to the workshops as she wanted to find out more about slow cooking, how to grow her own food and get involved in her local community. The attendee confessed to having a 'black thumb' in that everything she tries to grow dies, so confidence in growing her own fresh fruit and veg was low. Since the workshop, she has begun growing salad leaves for a continuous harvest and has made the most of her slow cooker by cooking everything from stew and dumplings to a roast chicken. The attendee grew in confidence and has asked to sign up to volunteer on our Seed2Plate project at the Somerford Family Hub. *"It will save money for my family eating healthy meals and lovely to talk to other people. It's given me new ideas to use in the future. Also good to hear other peoples ideas. The time went really quickly learning new things"*

Sustainability

We will be actively looking for further funding to continue this work in the BCP area.

Dorset Polish Centre

Funded activities

We provided a welcoming and nurturing environment for the elderly and vulnerable members of the Polish Community in Boscombe. A safe and accessible space where individuals can forge connections, socialize, and enjoy nutritious meals. These gatherings have been pivotal in combating isolation and fostering a sense of community among those most impacted by the cost of living crisis. Carefully chosen activities included board games, adult charades, gentle exercise sessions. Additionally, practical workshops, cooking/meals plans and engaging trips have been organised, enriching the lives of participants.

Recognising the specific challenges faced by our community, we have implemented a one-to-one advisory service: tailored support proved in assisting individuals with accessing local services, addressing language barriers, and navigating everyday tasks such as doctor's visits, bill payments, benefits and immigration.

Outcomes

Elderly and vulnerable members of the Polish Community in Boscombe often face significant challenges, from financial strain to isolation due to language barriers. By breaking down barriers and fostering a supportive community network, we have mitigated feelings of loneliness and isolation, enhancing overall well-being. The one-to-one advisory services, has helped beneficiaries overcome practical obstacles such as accessing local services and managing daily tasks. This has boosted their confidence and empowered them to navigate their lives more independently. The project has also strengthened community bonds and social cohesion.

For the organization, the grant has been transformative. It has enabled us to expand our reach and enhance the scope of our services, reaching more individuals in need and making a greater impact.

Story of change

'Maria and Janusz', a married couple in their late 60s, found themselves in a challenging situation when Janusz had become disabled, and Maria became his primary caregiver. Unable to speak English and lacking knowledge of local services, they struggled to access the support they desperately needed, exacerbating their loneliness. Our project became a beacon of hope for Maria and Janusz. With the support provided, they received assistance in navigating the complex benefits system, ensuring they received the correct assessments and financial aid. The opportunity to attend our meet-ups not only provided them with nutritious meals but also shattered their isolation. For the first time in two decades, they ventured out to a theater, experiencing a newfound sense of joy and connection. Additionally, they benefited from personalised meal plans, easing the burden of daily tasks and promoting their wellbeing.

Sustainability

To sustain our ongoing work, we will try seeking support from charitable foundations, government grants aligned with our mission. Additionally, we will explore fundraising initiatives such as community events, online crowdfunding campaigns, and partnerships with local businesses.

EDAS (2 grants)

Funded activities

From August 2023 to end January 2024, local residents were offered free food vouchers when attending Serenitea, our community café, and from February 2024 - end March 2024, free supper when attending the weekly evening event in our Life Room, post closure of the cafe in January 2024. They were also offered the opportunity to engage in healthy living sessions that focused on food science, macronutrients and cooking healthily on a budget. These opportunities were complimented by an extended invite to our evening supper clubs where we shared supper together and hosted quizzes, games nights and peer group support. With the second grant we provided a warm space drop-in 3 afternoons per week. Attendees were provided with free warm refreshments and cake. They chatted, play board games and shared experiences. We continued the warm space drop-ins after closure of the café and they continue to be well attended.

Outcomes

Attendees were extremely grateful for the free food voucher and for many it allowed them to have a hot meal that day. In the half term holidays and Xmas breaks, we offered a Kids eat Free scheme and this was well attended by many local families with young children. We provided games for the children to

participate in, pumpkin carving and Santa visits. Some attendees engaged in our healthy living workshops and brought forward recipes for us to make in the cafe and sell to customers on our Specials board. Their sense of inclusion from this activity was immense, with people claiming prowess to their recipe. Our weekly evening supper events attracted, on average 15 participants per week, many of whom were carers and those supporting people with mental health or addiction.

The project made a significant difference for local residents struggling with isolation and loneliness by providing a physical space where local residents could meet others in their community, fostering social connections and reducing feelings of loneliness. It created a sense of belonging and community among residents who may otherwise felt disconnected from those around them.

Stories of change

Susan is a 55 year old lady who lives locally. She is living on benefits and in rented accommodation which is damp and in need of repair. The cost of living has hit her hard and she has little remaining income for food after paying rent, utility bills and bus fares to and from looking after her elderly mother. She would come to the cafe at least twice per week for a hot meal and be able to relax, chat to staff and other attendees and build her social network. After a period of time, Susan started to engage in our learning pathways and as such has completed 3 nationally accredited courses and undertaking free counselling with us.

Leo is a local resident who frequented the cafe most days to use the internet facilities to look for work. He is unemployed and takes casual jobs as and when, to help support his day to day living expenditure. He uses the local food bank on a regular basis. Leo was given 3 food vouchers per week to eat within the cafe. He never abused the offer and would always make a small cash donation whenever he got a day's work. He said it was his way of 'paying it forward'. He wanted to reciprocate the kindness he felt we showed and would ask that his donation support our charity to help others in similar situations to himself. Leo remains a good friend of EDAS and visits the drop-in regularly to keep in touch and seek support when needed

Roger is an elderly gentleman who lost his wife in 2023. Prior to her death, Roger would come to Serenitea on occasions when his wife was in hospital. At the time, he was unaware of the support we offer at the cafe, but as time passed, Roger became a daily visitor and became a devoted 'friend of EDAS'. Staff attended his wife's funeral as they had no other family and Roger was completely on his own. He is eternally grateful for all the support we have offered him over the year and continues to attend the drop ins in the Life Centre. He says they are his lifeline - his only conversations and company he has.

Sustainability

At present we can only carry on the drop-in one afternoon per week due to funds. We will search for continuous funding from charitable trusts and grant giving charities, local authorities and NHS Trusts as the demand for this is clearly evident through the numbers supported in 2023/24

Faithworks Wessex

Funded activities

This funding enabled the Access to Food Partnership to set up the One Stop Glut Hut pilot, a shared storage facility for community food projects to help with the glut of donations, harvests and surplus over the Christmas and New Year period. This was a pilot project that tested the ideas partners had in how to manage 'the turkey problem', a huge surplus of Christmas produce that community food projects get left to sort out. Funding enabled the purchase of 2 fridges, 3 freezers, hiring of substantial space at Bournemouth Foodbank and paying for the time of George - the fantastic Project Coordinator who managed the pilot. Ten Access to Food Partners became active OSGH members. The OSGH pilot took place over 6 weeks, and then was extended for an extra 9 weeks to the 31st March. During that time 3573.2kg of food was donated into the hut and 3,293.1kg of food was redistributed between partners, then benefiting the community.

We learnt that you can never predict what's going to happen. We were planning for turkeys, but instead we got sprouts, dough balls and bubble gum ice cream. We were not able to make the most of the 'cook go team' to turn the food into more useful dishes but this is something we will explore in the future. On the flip side, the OSGH membership was opened up to share surplus of food adjacent items including pet food and nappies, which was an unexpected bonus.

Outcomes

By providing a space where partners can manage and share their surplus produce, we have:

- increased wellbeing of volunteers, who would often bear the weight of managing surplus stock with limited storage space.
- created stronger partnerships between community food projects, allowing the flow of more resources and the desire to continue working together
- gave access to produce that projects would not normally have access to; ie Fresh fruit and veg.
- nurtured creativity in how community food projects made the most of the eg: a babyshower party and a youth club knicker bocker glory night!

For us as a Partnership it has helped us to develop our practice in working together. In a larger project like this we have had to learn how to take on 'risk' together, where lead partners hold responsibility for different parts of the project. This is a new challenge for the partnership and one that we have valued learning through.

Story of change

"As an organisation we work with people from different backgrounds, locals as well as those from diverse backgrounds. The first time we came to the hut we didn't know what to expect apart from the iccream and frozen chips! The 5 volunteers who came were from Sudan, Syria and Poland. We were pleasantly surprised as we had planned on the next day a baby naming ceremony for one of our members from the Youth Integration Programme. We worked with him when he was an asylum seeker and now he is married and settled, and expecting their first baby girl whom they named Rita! We found cupcakes of different varieties and pizza dough balls so we took lots to the baby shower along with a few tubs of bubblegum ice-cream! On that same night we managed to distribute more food from the OSGH to 8 big households and an extra four the next day. They were met with lighting eyes and real joy!" Unity in Vision

Sustainability

We will be looking for match funding to go along with our existing Lottery funding. This will enable us to explore the OSGH in a new location (Poole).

Friends of Kinson Community Centre

Funded activities

We set up the warm space and provided Tea coffee and biscuits, along with hot soup and a roll. We also set up games tables with Chess, Draughts, Backgammon Scrabble, Snakes and Ladders, Connect 4 and plenty of card games. During one of the sessions we were told that there was a need for somewhere for Parents and Toddlers to meet and somewhere the Toddlers could play. So we set up the Coffee shop morning for them. Equipment for the Toddlers was set up in a corner of the lounge. We also have a selection of recipe books covering a wide range offering easy options, and have provided a small printer where they can copy the recipes. We also have a group of people with varying disabilities who find it difficult to access some of the local cafes etc and who love visiting and playing games, and chatting to everyone. We have also had Banners and signs done to promote what we offer.



Outcomes

The Service has enabled, people on their own to meet and chat with other people, in the warm. They also have access to lots of information about the Services they can access, and there is always someone there to help. The Carers of the Group with disabilities have told us how much they look forward to their visit as they can relax as well. Some of the people visiting the Warm space have also joined some of the groups that use the Community Centre, particularly the Fireside Club which meets every week. The grant has enabled us to provide so much for them all to enjoy ,things that would have taken a long while to raise funds for.

Sustainability

We will continue to fundraise. We have a Knit and Natter group coming along in May, who will be around when the Parents and Toddlers are in, a lovely inter generational mix. The CAB hope to be able to visit with their mobile office in late May and we hope this will be a regular visit.

Gateway Church Poole

Funded activities

Grant was used toward bills to keep the projects running throughout the winter months, and spent on Winter Hampers which were given to the community.

Outcomes

To have the building open, serving people good hospitality each week and pointing them to local services has had a positive impact. The 100 people (families, vulnerable individuals, and the older generation who received the Winter hampers) were all thrilled to have such useful items for the winter months to keep them warm but also luxury items which they could perhaps not afford due to the increase in cost of living.

Story of change

A mum living in a refuge with three children received a large winter hamper filled with food items, hot water bottles, family socks, and lots of hygiene products. She was so grateful to be offered such items and said *"I can afford to buy food, but sometimes items such a hygiene products we go without as I cannot afford. It was very kind to think of the need we had and to buy items that were useful this winter"*

Sustainability

The Church members give as much as they can, but the need in the community is growing more.

Grounded Community

Funded activities

Feed our Community has increased its support to local people via food boxes. In February alone 131 adults and 33 children received food boxes and 3-40 people a day came in for food. Foodbank has taken on our initial Social Canteen and operates Weekly. A new Social canteen at Kings Park School is in planning stages. A Social Canteen PDF is now available for other groups to participate.

January saw the launch of our exciting new Community Kitchen facility in Boscombe. This was made possible thanks to BCP Council Housing, who have given us the opportunity to take over a neglected kitchen facility and bring it back in to use. As part of this agreement, we can give other community groups access to this facility. Vale Lodge took a little longer to set up than hoped due to need for staff training in Fire and Kitchen safety. Currently weekly meals are being produced

here. We have a community fridge in the communal space which facilitates delivery of food. We also have a Preserving project called Gatherers which is now operating weekly. So far, we have partnered with Bee Mission, who produces 40 meals for local homeless people plus additional food for residents, Safe and Sound Dorset, whose beneficiaries produce a range of homemade cakes to serve to customers at The Well Coffee Lounge (not for profit), and SWRAC, whose young people are delivering cooking for residents. This has helped bring their Communal Room back to life with board games, conversation, company and more.

Outcomes

This grant has made a huge difference to Grounded Community, giving our own projects access to a fully equipped, commercial kitchen facility to preserve and process surplus food to support and further strengthening our links with other charities and community groups in the BCP Council Access to Food Partnership. We are currently in discussions with PRAMA and The Friendly Food Club about possibilities of joint working to benefit the wider community and also looking to work with Daisy Carr to explore the possibility of using the space as a learning centre to deliver in-person Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety Training. This training is currently available to volunteers free of charge through BCP Community Action Network but the training is online which makes it difficult for many.

Stories of change

M is a long term resident of Vale Lodge. He is in his 80's and has a life limiting, degenerative health condition that affects his mobility. M loves tending his small garden but is no longer physically able to do it. Since launching our Vale Lodge Community Kitchen M has regularly joined us on Friday lunchtimes for a cup of tea and bowl of our freshly made soup. M has clearly benefited from being able to come in for a chat and the opportunity to sit and eat with others. One Friday M turned up and asked if any of our student volunteers would like to learn how to play backgammon, a game he used to teach his own children. J (a young adult with special educational needs) jumped at the chance and spent a solid two hours playing backgammon with M, they then sat and had lunch together and shared stories of how it feels to be lonely and the importance of spending time with others. We are now looking to expand our work to offer M basic help with tasks in his garden, with our student volunteers undertaking the jobs that M is no longer able to do.

G was a beneficiary of a Food Box, she suffered great anxiety and had not been at work for a couple of years. We offered her volunteering opportunities and she thrived in the team, building in confidence. We then had the opportunity to put someone forward for a paid post for a collaborative pilot project with the access to food partnership. G took this on and was excellent. We have now found some funding for a day a week admin post and have now taken her on.

Sustainability

We have managed to get another 6 month funding for the main post involved in programming activities. We are now planning a shift to a Pantry style operation to cater for more people. We are also running a crowdfunder this year to get more local support for our project. We are in process of applying for another grant with the NHS (through DCF) which will give us a two year post for this work and also enable us to improve our evaluation practices. Operationally everything is now set to continue to provide support through activities at Vale Lodge and many partnerships in place. Feed Our Community is adjusting operations to continue impact and we are hoping more will take up the Social Canteen programme.

HealthBus Trust

Funded activities

We supported vulnerable HealthBus patients experiencing homelessness by ensuring access to nutritious food amid the cost of living crisis. This involved providing hot meals and drinks at our Thursday drop-in clinic in partnership with YMCA Bournemouth and providing 'Go Bags' containing essential food items for 2-3 days after medical consultations or screenings. We also offered food vouchers redeemable at Bournemouth FoodBank to those engaging with our Outreach

Nurse. Over time, we observed patients' reluctance to accept vouchers due to challenges with storage and cooking facilities in their transient situations. We shifted our strategy to providing essential food directly on the bus and at drop-in clinics, ensuring immediate access to nutrition.

Outcomes

We've addressed immediate hunger and malnutrition issues among homeless individuals in Bournemouth. This has not only improved their physical well-being but also provided a sense of dignity and care, contributing to their overall mental health and self-esteem. The provision of 'Go Bags' ensured that patients have access to nutritious meals for several days, even when they are unable to attend the clinic regularly. This has alleviated the stress and uncertainty associated with food insecurity, allowing beneficiaries to focus on other aspects of their lives such as seeking employment or accessing further support services. Furthermore, the distribution of food vouchers, although met with challenges, has demonstrated our commitment to addressing the holistic needs of our patients, and underscored the importance of collaboration with community partners like Bournemouth FoodBank.

Stories of change

Despite being in temporary accommodation for over six months, 'Ben' struggled to access essential healthcare until connecting with the HealthBus team. Through interactions with the mental health nurse, Ben began to understand the critical link between his diet and his overall well-being. By incorporating nutritious food into his daily routine, Ben noticed a significant improvement in his severe anxiety and stomach issues. The support provided by the HealthBus team not only helped address his immediate health concerns but also empowered him to take control of his well-being in the long term.

Sleeping in wet and cold conditions exacerbated 'Emma's' cardiovascular condition, compounded by a limited and unhealthy diet. The outreach nurse's support and education on the importance of nutrition played a pivotal role in her journey to recovery. Despite challenging circumstances, Emma's transition to temporary accommodation enabled her to focus on improving her diet. With the goal of having three small hot meals a day, Emma's commitment to embracing nutritious food reflects the profound impact of the HealthBus project in empowering individuals to prioritize their health despite adversity.

Sustainability

We are actively exploring avenues for sustainable funding, including joint funding bids with partners like YMCA Bournemouth.

Home Start Wessex

Funded activities

The grant helped us to provide targeted help to vulnerable families with children aged under 5 living in deprived areas of BCP who are struggling with the rising costs of living. We did the following:

- Issued food vouchers & helped to access food sources. Volunteers & staff collected food and distributed to families who struggle to travel to a food bank
- Helped with housing & accessing grants/ benefits
- Collected & distributed donations of nappies/baby formula
- Increased parental skills to manage finances, cook on a budget and address fuel poverty*
- Helped families access warm clothes/curtains/blankets – signposting to bundles that love, hope for food, as well as distributing in-house donations
- Washed/dried bedding and clothing for the families we've been working with at the homeless shelter in Poole
- Groups (at Kinson hub and our drop-in group in Tower Park) provided warm spaces for families to meet weekly
- Signposted to specialist services/resources such as Citizen Advice Bureau, Ridgewater Energy

Outcomes

As a result of our practical support:

- There is reduced stress/anxiety/pressure in homes
- Parenting pressure has been reduced, as a result of families being able to access food and energy support
- Parent and child mental health and physical wellbeing has improved
- Parents have been able to access more nappies, milk formula and food to feed their families. They have been warmer due to clothing/blankets/curtains etc
- Parents have improved budgeting/money management skills
- Parents have increased skills to plan/shop/cook budget, healthy meals for the family
- Access to expert support on fuel poverty advice, grants & benefits, financial advice, debt, housing has been increased
- Homeless families have had clean & dry clothes/bedding

Stories of change

A dad with a little boy under two was left on his own after mum recently committed suicide. The flat was in mum's name, so dad received an eviction notice. He was also left in a great deal of debt. He had to give up work as he couldn't afford nursery due to one of the debts of £4K to the nursery. Home-Start Wessex helped him through his eviction and into safe stable accommodation and helped him to get the essentials needed to make his home warm, clothing and issued food bank vouchers and helped him to get there. Food donations passed onto them. Also we helped dad to access debt advice to improve his situation going forward. He said of our volunteer, "I think my partner sent you to help us".

Mum and baby were referred to us after Child Protection team involved. Mum became a single parent after dad started violent behaviour and she made him leave. This was a very scary time for her and throughout the time we support mum continued to receive threatening messages. She is also very isolated with no friends due to his controlling behavior, and has no family. Mum and baby live in extreme poverty. Mum was scared she would not be able to provide for her child as she would be no good as a mother and has severe anxiety. At the end of support this was her feedback:

"Firstly I want to say a huge thank you for your support. It really was life-changing to have those visits and talks with Jo. You helped to strengthen me and make me believe in myself as a person and a mother. I'm really grateful for all the help Home-Start gave me, including the food/care packages."

Sustainability

We continue to fundraise via a diverse range of sources including trusts and grants, businesses, and are working on plans to open a charity shop.

Hope Community Church (2 grants)

Funded activities

A monthly community meal for over 65s. A free after school 2 course meal, freshly cooked for children and their parents once a week during term time. These families struggle to meet the cost of living and some are in very difficult circumstances with the children going without nutritious food. Sessions are aimed at building community and getting to know the families so we can help them with other forms of support with a view to addressing the needs that give rise to the food poverty situation. During the school holidays we provided hot meals for children and a parent. The children get to choose from our menu which avoids wastage and gives them a sense of "normality". They meet with friends and we have children's play activities or craft activities on offer, so families usually stay for several hours. This helps to build a sense of belonging to a community, reducing isolation and enabling us to help the families with other support.

The second grant enabled us to provide the Christmas food activities together with some food parcels for single people who were in food poverty but not eligible for support elsewhere. Thanks to the funding we were able to keep our premises heated and open to offer a warm space alongside offering free nutritious freshly cooked hot meals and hot drinks to those in need. This was offered alongside entertainment activities and facilities to warm up and dry clothes.

Outcomes

Without the grant we would not have been able to offer food support other than our non profit cafe, which although our prices are very low, is still beyond the reach of people who are already struggling to feed themselves or heat their homes. As we operate in a low income neighbourhood with complex issues and a lack of trust of “establishment” we have found that food activities enable us to encourage people to become part of a supportive community of people with similar challenges. This helps clients to identify and address issues that have created these circumstances. In some cases there is a solution, in others it is a longer term matter, but in a supportive community there is less isolation and more hope.

We have noticed a difference this year over previous winters as the cost of living increases have extended into another year, those on fixed incomes like pensions and disability benefits are finding it very difficult to manage and there is a limit to support available. We found had a lot of new clients accessing the warm space hot meals who had been attending a nearby food pantry. The majority of these were over 65s who are being increasingly affected by the rise in cost of living - some of these were people who had never accessed food support before. It is very concerning to find so many over 65s struggling to manage without heating their homes in the depth of winter and we were able to refer them to another charity which helped them to access heating efficiencies in their homes.

Stories of change

One lady was previously too anxious to leave her home. However, through accessing the school holiday meals for her children she was able to get to know us and to feel safe. She then started volunteering with us and built confidence and employment skills as well as a network of friends in a community she describes as like a family. She has been able to access some part time paid employment as a result of volunteering, something that previously seemed impossible.

P is physically disabled and dependent upon an electric wheelchair without the ability to speak or use both arms. Thanks to the food support he has been able to independently visit the cafe regularly for hot meals and this reduces his isolation. He is at home amongst our welcoming community and knows he will get the physical support he needs whilst with us. We realised that he was very happy helping where he could. We are devising a role for him to fit his abilities as we know that being part of a team and helping others has good impact on one’s sense of self worth.”

A couple in their 80s who had never accessed food support before and never imagined that they would have to, found themselves getting into debt with the cost of living increases outpacing pensions, and we were able to support them through this grant provision and refer them elsewhere. It made a huge difference to them psychologically to know there is support and has helped them to avoid getting into further debt.

Sustainability

We are actively seeking grant funding to continue these activities.

Hope Housing ,Training and Support ltd (2 grants)

Funded activities

We run weekly cooking events with resident learning different techniques and sharing knowledge between each other. We provided much needed welcome packs to every new resident moving in to give them the necessary basics and to feel welcomed into Hope. With the second grant, we have held a weekly life skills course covering ways that residents can help themselves the local community and the environment. This has involved cost saving bulk cooking and using the food we are donated by local suppliers. How to make small repairs so that items do not have to be thrown away to landfill and save the expense of a new item. looking at waste and how we separate and recycle looking at the harm it can do to our environment and the future long term effects.

Outcomes

Cooking classes are always popular and it brings people with different skills and different cultures together to show each other their cooking skills which can be basic to very good – it helps them come together through food. We have also been looking at cheap, cost effective recipes and ways of cooking in bulk to save electric time etc. The starter packs mean everything to people moving into their room. We provide new fresh bedding, basic crockery and a towel and toiletries. These items are all taken by the residents when they move on and therefore every new person we start again. The second grant project has really opened the eyes of residents to the effects of things they do individually and what effects this can have on their wider community. Really focusing on Food, repair, don't throw away and food and rubbish, waste and methods along with the cost associated with dealing with it. We found some understood areas more than others, and each resident can help teach other residents how to save costs and help the environment.

Story of change

We currently have a lovely young man who is multicultural and part of the LGBTQ + community. He has been badly abused all his life and suffers from Drug addiction, depression and anxiety. After coming out of rehab to us we have realised he has a great cooking skill and he has now been able to make friends and join in using his cooking skills.

Sustainability

We have been so impressed with the interest in the life skills courses we are starting them again this week with some unrestricted funding which has come in. We intend to apply to local businesses around us to fund tools equipment costs etc and possibly volunteer their staff to attend workshops and share their skills. We will also be looking to start a monthly repair group when residents can bring items to repair and we will be seeking basic tools and a sewing machine to help us do this. We hope to involve the local elderly population in nearby care homes who have these skills to come and pass them on.

Hope Community Church

Funded activities

This fund enabled us to provide Christmas food activities together with some food parcels for single people who were in food poverty but not eligible for support elsewhere. Thanks to the funding we were able to keep our premises heated and open to offer a warm space alongside offering free nutritious freshly cooked hot meals and hot drinks to those in need. This was offered alongside entertainment activities and facilities to warm up and dry clothes.

Outcomes

Without this grant we would have had to choose between offering a warm space and children & family food support. We have noticed a difference this year over previous winters as the cost of living increases have extended into another year, those on fixed incomes like pensions and disability benefits are finding it

very difficult to manage. We found a lot of new clients accessing the warm space hot meals who had been attending a nearby food pantry - people who did not live in the immediate area were travelling by bus to get food supplies and then come into warm up with us. The majority of these were over 65s, and some had never accessed food support before. It is very concerning to find so many over 65s struggling to manage without heating their homes in the depth of winter and we were able to refer them to another charity which helped them to access heating efficiencies in their homes.

Stories of change

A couple in their 80s who had never accessed food support before and never imagined that they would have to, found themselves getting into debt with the cost of living increases outpacing pensions. We were able to support them through this grant provision and refer them elsewhere. It made a huge difference to them psychologically to know there is support and has helped them to avoid getting into further debt.

Sustainability

We are actively seeking new funding sources for next winter

Immaculate Conception and St Joseph's Church

Funded activities

Weekly opening of cafe - home-made soup, sandwiches and cake with hot drinks. Becoming well established in the local community now. Daily newspapers, magazines, table tennis, toys etc. A warm welcome given to all. Many guests referred from Food Bank, which is on the same site. We understand the significant stigma that many may feel coming into a Warm Space, and we work hard to eliminate this by creating a warm and welcoming space that is open to all. We are very pleased with the diversity of our attendees. Some come because they are hungry, other because they are lonely, or carers needing some care themselves. We have produced a table giving details of other local Warm Spaces and similar initiatives as an information space for our guests – this is well received.

Outcomes

No one has to pay for the food they receive; this is hugely important to many, especially those referred from the Food Bank and others such as some widow(er)s who are struggling financially. 3 guests were homeless men who found a refuge at café. They came in cold, hungry and lonely, and appreciated the warmth of the environment, the food and most of all the non-judgemental attitudes of all they met. People know they can rely on us being there virtually every week. In the school holidays, our presence is especially valued by families served by the Food Bank, as these are the busiest times. We have a range of activities such as table football to help our young visitors have fun.

“No one judges you here. I’m so glad I’ve got the café to come to.”

“What a lovely day, the food was superb along with the singing...”

“To all the lovely people at Becky’s Café: ‘Thank you so much for making us always feel so welcome.’”

“You were all absolutely wonderful with S today. She is very open about the fact she attends AA. She has been dry for over a year but is keen to make new friends in a safe environment where she is not judged. Her self-esteem is sadly rock bottom. You all made a massive difference to her.”

Stories of change

'J' suffered from agoraphobia and would not leave the house. Family got in touch and together we managed her first visit successfully with her son in law staying with her. We arranged for her to sit next to the entrance door by the fire with an experienced older volunteer. We found out that J loved crafts. Following on from that first visit, J has thrived in the café environment and her confidence and self-esteem has rocketed. She is selling home made cards each week and is interacting with all kinds of people. This is something she never dreamed she would be able to do. She even had a stall at the Church Xmas Fayre. She recognises the progress she has made, and says she is very proud of herself.

'P' has come to rely on Becky's Café as a release once a week from her onerous caring duties. At first she came on her own and was blown away by what was on offer and all the wonderful volunteers. She is always so appreciative of everything we do. After a while, she managed to get her husband along with her – and he really enjoys the break from their usual routine and loves to chat with everyone! It is a highlight of their week, they say. We found out that P was a professional musician, and so we have made the piano available to her, and she has delighted guests with various songs on request.

Sustainability

The work will continue, through the generosity of our volunteers and also donations. We will also look, with the Diocesan fundraising officer whether there are any other financial pools we can explore.

Kinson and West Howe Foodbank

Funded activities

The grant was spent on purchasing food for our emergency food parcels.

Outcomes

The grant enabled us to buy 1.38 tons of food to go into our 3 day emergency food parcels. This enabled us to provide approximately 138 extra emergency food parcels this winter. During November, December and January we have provided 667 emergency 3 day food parcels, feeding 1137 adults and 618 children.

Stories of change

We had one family access the Foodbank in the run up to Christmas, Dad had just been made redundant and mums income was not enough to provide food, Christmas presents and pay bills. Our service enabled them to have food in their cupboards, extra snacks in for Christmas, crackers for the table and a few gifts to share.

Another family came to us just after Christmas after being referred by the school. Both parents are working however the cost of living crisis has had such a huge impact. The parents cannot afford to pay the bills and feed the family. We provided food and linked them up with our financial advisor partner to provide some financial maximisation support.

Sustainability

The Kinson and West Howe Foodbank is an ongoing project and will be operating for as long as its service is needed.

Lovechurch

Funded activities

Fun 'n' Food with Friendly Food club ran during February half term. Kids Breakfast club has run weekly during term-time. Slow Cooker course ran in January for 13 participants. 100 Christmas hampers distributed with Safe and Sound at Christmas.

Outcomes

This grant has allowed us to provide vital support to children and families struggling with food and financial insecurity in the Boscombe area. We work closely with two adjacent primary schools to identify families in need and aim to support them with food, community, and developing life skills to aid living on a budget.

Kids Breakfasts provide a nutritious breakfast to approximately 200 children (Thursdays). Benefits include better concentration, behaviour and engagement at school (described by teachers). Prior to starting Kids Breakfasts the teachers at the two local schools used to tell us that they would not infrequently have to take children out of class to give them some food as they had come to school without breakfast and were too hungry to concentrate. Also eases family life

Fun 'n' Food – provides food support to those struggling on low incomes, and free children's activities during school holidays. Through partnership with the Friendly Food club children and parents are taught how to cook and eat well on a budget –moving towards food security. We also signposting to other agencies.

Christmas hampers – 100 hampers gifted to local isolated and vulnerable women referred by Safe and Sound, provided a Christmas meal to individuals together with toiletries. Many individuals would have otherwise struggled to have a Christmas dinner.

Slow Cooker course – provided a slow cooker and meal ingredients to 10 households in partnership with the Friendly Food Club. Some had not cooked before. The course provided an opportunity to learn how to cook nutritious meals, simply and cheaply. It also provided a safe space to build community – participants are very keen for us to continue the sessions.



Stories of change

One teacher described how on the day we serve Breakfasts many of them are noticeably more alert, sitting up and ready to engage in learning. One of the school parents told us how she loved Thursdays: "it's easy to get them out of bed to come to school on a Thursday - they look forward to coming here"

One participant of Slow Cooker Course kept us updated on her progress on the course when she came to Kids Breakfasts with her children the following morning. She reported not cooking very much beforehand - but was delighted by the meals that she could make in her slow cooker to give her family. On the final week she proudly told us that she had used her slow cooker about 10 times in the previous three weeks. She said she felt like a real chef!

Sustainability

One major aim going forward is to provide Kids Breakfasts on two mornings each week. Currently we have some donations and are applying for other grants

MS Centre Dorset

Funded activities

Most of our members who stopped coming to the Centre due to Covid have returned and are obviously enjoying our lunches and the companionship which arises from being part of our Community again. We also have many more new members, so we have had to double the number of physiotherapy and yoga classes we offer to accommodate our expanding number. The grant was spent on a new freezer and kitchen items, level 2 hygiene training and in the main, on food for hot meals for our members.

Outcomes

Several people have mentioned that since offering these lunches, the Centre has become busier, more vibrant and inviting to our members. We intend to find the funding to continue offering this service to our members in the future, as we see it as a vital necessity for our members wellbeing.

Stories of change

"I love Thursdays because it is such an easy day for me! I find it very comforting to have a free, guaranteed, hot, good quality meal provided for me at the Centre. My diet is important in helping to control my MS and these lunches are ideal for this."

"It's very good and safer for me not to have to cook at night. My balance is poor so having to get food in and out of the oven is dangerous for me to do alone. The choice of food at the Centre is good and my meals are presented to me with a smile and I don't have to worry about buying or cooking food. It's great to be able to concentrate on the exercise opportunities in the gym and know there'll be a nutritious meal waiting for me in the dining room."

Sustainability

We are in the process of applying for other funds such as the Community Lottery

Parish of St Nicholas and St Hubert

Funded activities

A weekly Community lunch regularly attended by 40 people primarily elderly and including some carers. A weekly Coffee Shop on Saturdays providing a safe warm space for people to meet. A variety of family events including a firework and craft evening, Christmas craft and Easter craft mornings, with free refreshments. A Remembering service for those who wished to remember a loved one who had died, with free refreshments. A Christmas meal for 50 people.

Outcomes

By running the regular activities such as the community lunch and coffee shop we have reduced the impact of loneliness, helped signpost people to other services and made those attending, especially the elderly, feel that they are still valued members of the community. The community lunch has given people who are primarily on their own an opportunity to socialise and ensured they have a good meal. The family events have allowed families who would otherwise have struggled to attend such events due to the cost, share positive times as a family and engage with others in similar situations. This has enabled them to support each other - we are now running a Dad's stop and play session monthly as a result, and our Toddler Group is now fully booked weekly. The Christmas meal enabled those on their own or who could not afford or have the facilities to cook a Christmas meal, to come together and celebrate the day. All ages attended.

Stories of change

"Thankyou for such a lovely afternoon! So much fun & so much to do! The rocket has taken pride of place on our fridge door! I could not have afforded to take the children to an organised firework event and would have been wary of doing so on my own. The volunteers helping at your event made everything so easy and it was great to be able to relax and enjoy time with my children. They had great fun with the other children and loved the hot dogs!"

"I live alone and saw the meal advertised and decided that rather than spend Christmas alone I wanted to celebrate Christmas... I ordered a taxi so I could guarantee transport on the day. I have continence issues so needed an environment which was supportive and the team were great on the day when I had problems. It was the best Christmas I have had in years."

Sustainability

We are hoping to continue to run all the projects by applying for additional grants to support the work. We will also be using Church funds and legacies. There may be a need to put a nominal charge on to some of the events to make sure they break even

Poole Communities Trust

Funded activities

We have bought for our 2 community foodstores: fresh foods, milk, eggs, fruit and veg as well as stock items such as cereals, pasta and tins of soup. Our original application was based on 80 customers per week across the 2 stores, we are now regularly seeing 100 plus each week. The warmer spaces have been very popular especially through the dismal months of November to February. Every week several people say how this is a real lifeline for them and how it really helps them to know this is a regular date in their weekly calendar. Neither Turlin Moor or Bourne Estate have other similar spaces available within their communities and so these warmer spaces have become a really important place for them. We have been able to offer people signposting and information to help with aspects of their life that may be causing them anxiety or distress. These include Citizens Advice being at both sites, Ridgeway Energy and the Wardrobe Foundation. We are also promoting the Parks Foundation activities as we know enjoying the outside environment will boost mental wellbeing.

Outcomes

The Hubs are a great way for people to find out about all the other activities and events that are available to them. As an immediate result of coming to the foodstore people are able to access affordable and healthier food and household products. Every week they tell us how much this is appreciated and what a difference it makes to their weekly finances. Approximately 25 - 35% of the store customers stay on for the warmer spaces each week and this gives them a social space to relax in (some say the only time in the week) and many say how this reduces their feelings of isolation and loneliness. It has also been an opportunity for people to give views on some important local issues, such as the Access to Health project and the development of the Skatepark.

The range of agencies/organisations at the warmer spaces continues to be a great benefit to the customers, as enabling us to listen to what people are saying and feed it back to relevant agencies is very important. At Turlin Moor a social prescriber comes in monthly to the warmer space. She said it has been the best way to get to know people by sitting and chatting to them in an informal setting. She feels she has been able to build trust with people and has been able to offer individuals a variety of support because of this, e.g. referrals for Household Support grants, referral for a new fridge freezer which was a great outcome for the individual.

Stories of change

One customer who was recently widowed has worked out the savings he has made by visiting the foodstore each week. He said he saves at least £11.00 per week on food and he also spends time in the cafe having a warm drink and some lunch. With the time spent with us he was able to save on his heating at home which he estimates has saved him £24.00 a week. He also said that since losing his wife he feels lonely and he very much looks forward to coming out to the store and cafe once a week, spending time with people and that all the staff and volunteers have made him feel very welcome.

We have an 84 year old volunteer at one of the foodstores, She has always led a very active life and contributed to local activities and community. She has been volunteering at the store since 2021. She said she really looks forward to the store each week, she loves being part of the team and chatting the other volunteers while she works. The other volunteers think she is a real inspiration to them and how she brings great strength and joy when she walks in.

Sustainability

We will continue to apply for grants as and when they become available. We are exploring trying to get more monthly regular donations and legacies. We will continue to work with the Access to Food Partnership as we know there are other projects in the area in a similar situation. We do have a certain amount of income from customers who make a voluntary donation of £3.00 per shop and this will continue.

Poole Community Exchange

Funded activities

- * Community Living Room - a warm welcoming space where people can come and get a hot drink and cake, sit and chat, swap books, access WiFi, join activities
- Free and low-cost food and other essentials e.g. sanitary products and toiletries, through Poole Pantry
- low-cost Community meals – at lunch times (3 days a week) and after-school as part of the Regenerate project
- free Cookery tuition
- * food bank parcels as a satellite for Poole Food Bank
- * help and advice through Citizens Advice Bureau, Ridgewater Energy, Police Community Contact Point, Living Well Health Check and Chaplains
- * low cost and subsidised leisure activities including Crochet and Chat, Creative Writing, Tai Chi, Story Telling, Gardening, Art groups, games and puzzles

Outcomes

For our beneficiaries who are really struggling financially the pantry and meals are a lifeline, enabling them to survive. The warm space helps reduce heating bills and stretches limited budgets. People appreciate having a healthy hot meal at a very reasonable price.

We know that feeling connected with other people is one of the 5 steps to Wellbeing. People, particularly those who live alone and feel isolated have told us they value being part of the community, chatting over a cup of tea, joining in with the groups and eating meals with other people. Specific comments include:

"It's nicer than visiting a coffee shop and sitting alone"

"It's a nice and friendly environment, and easy to meet new people"

People value the wide range of activities and the chance to try different things. They particularly appreciate the creative opportunities and the supportive atmosphere which gives space to 'fail'. Our volunteers enjoy using their skills to help people for some, it gives them a reason to get up in the morning.

Story of change

'Phoebe' is a pantry member. She does not come for every session and appears sometimes to be very distracted and sometimes very tearful. Phoebe has many anxieties and problems, she is well known in the Pantry and often spends long periods talking to volunteers and other members unburdening herself and sharing her problems. Phoebe's life is quite disorganised and we have been able to help her in practical ways, by using the pantry shop and community fridge, by encouraging her to sit down with us and share a hot meal and on other occasions to supply her with warm clothes and new socks. She has tried to join in with the art group and creative writing but often finds it overwhelming to be in a group of people. She has done some knitting however and has done some work with soft pastels on black paper which was very effective. We have supplied Wendy with wool and needles and she has been doing some knitting on her own and at home although she says she cannot follow a pattern and will just do a simple scarf as she finds that more relaxing. She has also started to write poetry at home and that she is finding that quite helpful. Hopefully one day she will be feeling less anxious and will be able to bring her poetry into the group to share with us. We will continue to offer support to Wendy in whatever way we can.

Sustainability

Grant Funding, Donations, Direct Fundraising

Poole Foodbank (2 grants)

Funded activities

Ambient and fresh food have been provided to Poole based families and individuals experiencing food poverty. Whilst regular food donations go some way towards meeting the need, the funds awarded from this grant allowed us to fulfill the majority of the remaining need. In addition to regular store-cupboard items the grant allowed us to add fresh vegetables, fruit and meat to food parcels. From Jimmy's and our five satellite sites across Poole we issue more than 1000 food parcels per month to families and individuals. This has increased steadily at a rate of 30% year-on-year since 2021.

Cooking equipment was provided for our service users who did not own these items and who were struggling to prepare meals 'from scratch'. Equipment included air fryers, slow cookers, blenders, pots/pans, mixing bowls, tin openers and utensil sets. Using the recipes and ingredients provided as the result of this funding, our service users were encouraged to go home and 'have a go'. In some cases we were able to encourage children to be involved with cooking.

Outcomes

The provision of food to families and individuals experiencing food poverty in Poole not only reduces hunger, but reduces extreme anxiety regarding where the next meal is coming from and lowers a sense of shame from not being able to provide essential nourishment for themselves and their family. It also allows them to meet other financial demands such as increasing rent, utilities and fuel and prevents them further falling into debt. The time spent in conversation with each guest contributes to their wellbeing as our volunteers and staff can encourage and comfort them through this stressful time. They often find out about further agencies offering support and ways to maximise their income. Having support with making phone calls or filling in forms is much appreciated as they often struggle to verbalise their circumstances under pressure.

Households who did not possess cooking equipment / recipes spent time with us, discussing the health benefits of 'cooking from scratch' and the financial benefits of using an air fryer / slow cooker. This also included discussions around batch cooking and the associated benefits. Users were excited to be given the opportunity to 'experiment' and were encouraged to return to us to tell us how they had got on. As a food based charity, it was a privilege to be able to provide these items of equipment alongside the fresh fruit and vegetables and other ingredients, thus providing a 'real -life' experience instead of a simple food parcel.

Stories of change

We have a single man who has been sleeping rough since 2020. He visits twice a month for food parcels. As we bring his food parcel together he shares a warm drink with the volunteer team and sometimes meets with our colleagues from CMA debt advice. Throughout his visits we are able to encourage him about any progress he is making with regards to his housing, job applications and reconciliation with family members. He can charge up his phone and make calls to the variety of agencies helping him and he leaves with food to get him through. In March 2024, he was awarded accommodation and is about to start a paid apprenticeship with Sunseeker, crediting much of this significant progress in his life to receiving food, help and support from Poole Food Bank.

A family of two adults with three children in Turlin Moor visit PFB+ twice a month for food parcels funded by this grant. One of the children has severe learning difficulties and one of the parents is severely ill, unable to work or provide childcare. This makes it impossible for the other parent to sustain employment. They depend on benefits and have significant debts in excess of £7k from rent and utility arrears. One parent visits to collect food parcels regularly, often exhibiting extreme anxiety and stress. The grant has allowed this family to receive regular nourishment and fresh food alongside debt advice, budgeting training as well as a referral to the local Access Wellbeing Hub. They left a comment card at Jimmy's in March that said:

"If it wasn't for you at Jimmy's I don't know what would have happened to us. You are so friendly. Things are slowly getting better, and at least we don't have to stress about finding something to eat all the time. Thank you!"

The family are reducing their debts gradually and the visiting parent appears more optimistic and even able to have a laugh each time we see them.

We have a single father of a 2 year old boy whose partner passed away last year. He struggles to sustain work and childcare which creates a great deal of pressure and anxiety in his life. He visits us every fortnight for a food parcel and fresh recipe bag. In the last 12 months he has experienced acute challenges around housing, debt and benefit delays which combined to trigger mental health issues. We have been able to supply most of the cooking equipment he required in newly allocated housing. He told us that his partner had previously taken care of all cooking, and following her death he'd struggled to cook, often resorting to expensive and unhealthy takeaway meals. The fresh recipe bags have taught him how to cook 26 different, healthy, cost effective meals. In his own words "Thank you, Jimmy's! Your help has made it a bit easier every week and I feel that I do better for me and my son. We love your recipes and learned to cook!" He has made significant progress in the reduction of his debt, enjoys cooking and has a greater sense of being able to provide for his son.

Sustainability

We will continue the work through continued efforts to develop regular donations, giving and support each month.

Poole Methodists Church

Funded activities

"Kids Eat Free" provides a free nutritious hot meal for children during the school holidays. We also provided an average of five adult meals a week to homeless people and those sleeping rough as well as an average of 15 hot drinks a week to others in need. We provided: 148 meals in December 2023, 383 meals in February 2024 half-term, 694 meals in Easter 2024.

Outcomes

The need for Kids Eat Free has continued to grow. Financial pressures can lead to a decline in physical and mental well-being of both parents and children. We believe that the provision of a hot meal in a safe and welcoming place can help to alleviate that pressure a little. It is clear to us that the warm and comfortable surroundings of Wesley's community cafe, with its play area and its space for buggies, as well as its welcoming staff and volunteers, provide something of a

haven for parents who are struggling (some of them with the question of heating or eating) or "just about managing". Through the winter it has proved to be a place of warmth and support, not just for parents and children through Kids Eat Free, but also for a wide variety of people from the community we serve.

A homeless man who came to us for a hot meal several times a week clearly found it important to be somewhere warm and welcoming, where no one was going to judge him, no one was going to pry or ask him awkward questions and no one was going to look down on him.

"My three children really enjoyed their lunch. As a parent it's very helpful to have somewhere cheap and relaxed to bring the kids in the holidays."

"I'm a single mum on benefits. This makes a big difference as everything is so expensive. The Kids get lunch out as a treat. There is nowhere else that is like this"

Sustainability

Kids Eat Free and the provision of free meals and drinks for adults can only continue if sufficient funding is secured. We live hand-to-mouth, trying to secure funding as we approach each school holiday. Every time we think we may have enough to see us through more than one holiday, the demand increases.

Poole Waste Not Want Not (2 grants)

Funded activities

We have supported over 600 households to eat well at a price they can afford, we've cooked 866 free meals, packed 900+ food parcels, delivered 300+, supported 106 families with energy-saving equipment, handed out 97 Easter hampers, 142 Christmas hampers, given 300+ free joints of meats, filled 100's of bags with free food, given an abundance of fresh fruit & veg, filled 866 food bank crisis parcels, gave our homeless hot soup; held fun days, and free buffet lunch days. We also provided energy advice to address fuel poverty and signposted to Ridgewater. We offered help with housing issues showing our commitment to listening and helping fundamental needs. We explained and /or printed forms to help reduce further debt; we signposted over 50 members to Citizens Advice.

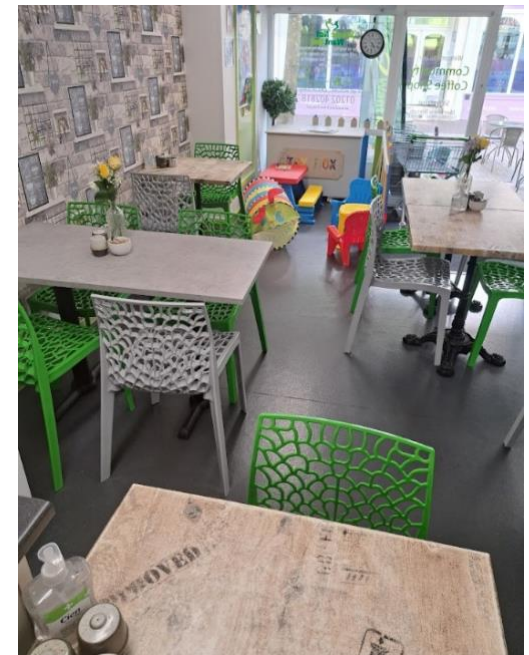
At Christmas, we had great fun, setting up our coffee shop as a restaurant. The primary initiative was to ensure those members living alone or struggling to cook due to ill health, could enjoy some festive cheer, and we achieved this by organising a 3-course festive lunch.

"You turned the stress of Christmas into fun and joy, my girls loved the big bag of toys... the Lego was amazing, and we all had such fun! thank you"

Outcomes

As our shop evolves, we are seeing an increase in members using us regularly which improves their finances. We are hearing savings of £60 per week for a family of four. By making fresh ingredients more affordable our households can eat well and we have seen positive changes in our members' shopping habits. 25% have learned batch cooking tips, 55% greater understanding of budgeting for daily essentials improves finances long term, 100% of our members reduce their food costs and shop more wisely. 40% have reduced energy bills via practical training and cooking demos.

"I am already seeing savings, my electric meter still has money on it, this never happens"



"I took the recipe home and cooked the gnocchi bake for my family, no meat which made it cheaper, comment from everyone "Mum that's the best dinner you have ever cooked"

For one lady, giving her a steamer has made it easier to cook healthy meals without the stress of lifting heavy pans *"I have been through so much; I was worried I would drop a saucepan, so I stopped cooking!"*

Story of change

"Back in the summer, I went to WNW to donate some food. I'd lost my job a few months before (due to a serious injury) and was struggling financially. I stayed for a cup of tea in the café and chatted to Erika about my situation. She then took me through the membership process, and I joined. I have always struggled with my mental health and have been particularly low since my injury. When I'm feeling low, I struggle to get out and about but whenever I'm in the shop, I've been made to feel welcome and supported. I don't mind admitting that their kindness has sometimes reduced me to (albeit happy) tears. The amazing variety of food they stock has ensured that I can keep myself physically healthy while taking away the stress of being able to pay my bills. Because of the support I've received, I offered to become a volunteer so I could help others in return. I love being part of the work they do, this is the one job where I've yet to have a bad day or dread going to work. It's hard to put into words just how WNW has improved how I feel about life in the past few months"

Sustainability

We are committed to securing additional funds and actively seeking new grants, which we aim to secure to sustain and expand our initiatives.

PramaLife

Funded activities

The lunch clubs that have been running at Old Rope Walk Hamworthy, has seen 27/28 people on average every week. We have supported 35 individuals with the majority of these consistently returning every week. For some of the people who attend this is the only activity they participate in. People attending have been given signposting and support to access other services: I have forwarded people to the community fridges and food banks as well as towards other clubs, groups and activities both provided by PramaLife and other organisations.

Boscombe Lunch Club sees an average of 25 people through the doors weekly. We also open as a Warm Space from 10.30am on a Friday. Over 50% of the attendees of the Lunch Club attend to play games and solve puzzles over a tea or coffee or two, with biscuits!

Outcomes

Everyone who has attended the lunch clubs has experienced improved mood as a result of having contact with people that they are becoming increasingly familiar with, and making friends with. Many of those attending have benefitted from information, signposting and support to other services, and this has enabled them to claim additional benefits, access food and nutrition from other sources, and receive support that they would not have known about otherwise. Signposting has also enabled attendees to attend exercise groups, art and craft group, knit and natter, carers groups and memory lane groups, as well as support from health and social care professionals regarding, housing, care support and GP assessments.

Both lunch clubs have provided the opportunity for volunteers to support the activity. This has given a valuable placement experience for a vulnerable volunteer who will eventually be returning to work, as well as an environment of health and social care insight for the college and university students.

Story of change

One lady who has started attending confided in me that she was becoming doubly incontinent. Initially I was able to supply her with incontinence pads that had been donated. I made a referral to the continence nurse and she is now supported through this service appropriately. The same lady has just been diagnosed with Dementia and I have joined her up with a Memory Lane Group as well as engaging her daughter and son in law in the Oakley Friends Dementia Carers Training and Monthly Group. This same lady has made a donation of clothing and other items to Prama and she started to bring books in to the lunch club for other attendees.

We've been supporting a Homeless gentleman and in return, he's been entertaining us with his amazing singing voice and by teaching people how to build Origami Owls! I have now also provided this gentleman with an Android phone and a sim card. And have secured him a laptop for his next accommodation. This engagement has seen this gentleman develop and grow and he is now able to fit in and function better than he could when we first met him.

Sustainability

Gaining funding for the lunch clubs is an ongoing struggle. We have initially identified the opportunity for a cheap lunch provision and a fish and chip lunch for Old Rope Walk in Hamworthy. This will be funded by the attendees, and for 3 months, by a small business owner.

Recreate Dorset

Funded activities

Community Mondays offer an hour of gentle exercise/dance/movement, a lunch of hot soup and then a 2 hour crafts session. We have a coordinator there for the full 4 hours so she is able to meet everyone and if they don't want to take part in the activities she is there to support them and make them feel welcome with other activities or just a cup of tea and a chat. As the weeks have gone by we have gone from 15 people attending to over 30.

Outcomes

People commented that Community Mondays gave them a safe space to meet that did not have connections to a church and benefitted from being held in a neutral space. Participants said they feel very comfortable and welcome at The Old School House and the different activities meant they can take part in as little or as much as they want. They have all given a very positive response to the hot soup - some just come for the food. We have received feedback to say this is the highlight of their week, it gets them motivated and in a positive state of mind to get them through the week. Many are vulnerable elderly single men. We have been developing our community garden and several of the participants have now joined that group as well and come along to volunteer in the garden.

Stories of change

K, woman in recovery and in an abusive relationship attended regularly. We were able to support her with a referral to the Household Support Fund to get a £200 voucher to help pay for her gas and electricity. K joined in the weekly Community Movers sessions which improved her self esteem and confidence. Over time she connected with other women regularly attending the group and felt able to talk more openly about her situation. She has now found the strength to end her relationship and is looking at opportunities to return to work or volunteer.



P, single man living in private rented bedsit and struggling to cook and eat well. P regularly joined us for lunch and it soon came to light that he needed practical help to be able to prepare and cook healthy meals at home due to high energy costs and a lack of money. We were able to support P with a referral to C3 in Boscombe who were able to give him a Soup Kettle. We worked with P to share the recipes used to make soup at The Old School Brunch, and source the ingredients through Feed Our Community so he was able to start making meals at home.

Sustainability

We are actively looking for more funding and at the moment are using our unrestricted funds from Heny Smith to extend the project until July.

Safe and Sound Dorset (2 grants)

Funded activities

We have provided cooked community meals at 2 of our main drop in sessions for women who are isolated or at risk in and around Boscombe. We have given £10 vouchers for a meal at The Well per month to up to 50 women. We have bought low cost and efficient electrical appliances to keep heating bills low and to save electricity and help to keep people warm. We have also offered cooking sessions to encourage women to make cheap meals with affordable ingredients. From the cooking sessions we have created frozen meals to distribute to disadvantaged people.

With the second grant we offered food at a weekly housing group in The Well coffee lounge.

Outcomes

The cooked community meals have meant that during the cost of living crisis, women have been able to come in and eat together. Many tell us they don't have finances to make many dinners in the week. The venue has provided a warm space for women who would not have had heating in their accommodation. Vouchers for meals at The Well has been the most impactful use of funds. It enables the financial barrier to come down, so that disadvantaged women can be like a normal paying customer, choose something off the menu, eat with friends and feel confident, giving a sense of worth and belonging, often bringing women out of isolation. 986 hot meals provided, plus 1250 lunches & 1200 snacks. The cooking sessions have been a wonderful experience for the women. The shopping, preparation and execution of the meal has been enjoyed by a varied small group of women regularly. *"The cooking group has increased my hand dexterity speed and concentration. The food we produce has helped me be more interested in eating better. This has helped me lose weight and be more motivated."*

We have bought electric blankets (18), heated airers (25), air fryers (20), slow cookers (10) and halogen heaters (14). These appliances mean that women have kept themselves warm and fed during the winter and kept their bills as low as possible.

"Love it! Jacket potato, Roast potatoes, Pizza, Pork ribs, Stuffing, So easy to use, Clean, Space wise, Brilliant, Pork crackling was perfect."

"The soup maker, blanket and heater helped when my boiler cut out."



The housing group we hold once a week sees up to 20 women each week who are in temporary or supported housing or who have on going maintenance or vulnerable housing situations. We offer a meal and a drink off the menu and it is a very civilised way to having support for housing needs. For some of the women we see on outreach (rough sleeping, sofa surfing, of no fixed abode, sleeping in tents) it is the first port of call to connect them up with a housing officer from the council, to begin their journey to having a permanent place to live. We have had our first cases of identity fraud, cat fishing and digital abuse with its devastating impact; women are blindsided by promises of money, financial and relationships, who end up parting with large sums of money.

Story of change

"I want to genuinely thank Safe and Sound Dorset for all the help and constant support I have received, in ways I didn't expect. I have been helped, emotionally, mentally, in my self esteem, practically (given an electric blanket, air fryer, heated aarer, halogen heater) and more. All the encouragement and opportunities I have been given also helps my children and our family as I am a better, more capable and present mum. I have never experienced such a supportive group, always available and compassionate. It's very emotional for me to have been sustained in such a way, especially after such a crisis in my life. I have no end of gratitude to the team that makes this happen."

Sustainability

We are hoping that our not-for-profit cafe will develop into a service that will sustain us into the future. At the moment we are breaking even.

Salvation Army - Winton

Funded activities

Provided free food for families once a month, free food for our holiday youth clubs catering for disadvantaged young people, free childrens meals throughout the school holidays, free food for vulnerable people who are referred to us for support through our in house employment service, and provided the catering for our weekly meal for those in temporary accommodation.

Outcomes

The grant has enabled us to tackle the problem of food poverty in our local community. We have seen a large increase in this is a problem for all generations - not just families. A married couple attended. They were both retired and due to financial strains could not buy any food or eat until their pension came through. They were distraught, riddled with shame that they had to ask for help. We were able to offer them a hot meal, refreshments and food to take home.

Story of change

Lee attended our centre - he was homeless and aged 19. He was sleeping in a stairwell away from other people for his own safety. We were able to offer him 3 meals a day and link him in with our partners to offer housing advice. Lee volunteered in our community centre every day and became part of our family. We were able to provide a packed 'tea' every day for him to take away when we closed. Lee was linked in with a homeless project in Winchester and they offered him a place to stay and work. He wrote to us saying that his life had changed and he had a future thanks to Winton Salvation Army.

Sustainability

We will look for further funding from foundations and trusts.

Somerford ARC Community Centre

Funded activities

Lunch club, Christmas dinner, Breakfast hub (re-opened in March), contribution to new cooker and new chairs.

Outcomes

Breakfast hub has been extremely challenging for us this year due to obstacles faced in recruiting/maintaining volunteers, leading to dropping from weekly provision to monthly. One of the most valuable lessons we learnt through this grant period was how vital the weekly provision was. Citizen's advice and Sovereign Housing who run weekly drop-ins throughout the duration of breakfast hub, said the number of people who accessed help with them dramatically dropped after the provision went monthly. Parents were struggling as they relied heavily on the group not only for the provision of food, but it as part of an affordable social activity that brought them out of isolation, we were inundated with requests to bring breakfast back weekly. Since we returned community support has been amazing, residents stepping in helping with tasks when we have had volunteers off sick, they are determined to help us keep their group open.

Lunch club through this grant period is still continuing to grow, we have new people arriving weekly and we have a waiting list for the bus of people desperately wanting to access our group. This grant has ensured we can continue our menus of lunch club and breakfast hub offering nutritious cooked meals. We have been able to continue breakfast free to the community and keep our lunch club meals at a low cost- we are the lowest price lunch club in the area which also has the benefit of transportation. It is vital we continue to access food for these groups and provision is never lost.

Stories of change

A lunch club member at Christmas had a car accident and was in hospital for a long period of time before being moved to a nursing home for recovery. She only has one sibling and relies heavily on lunch club for socialising. She has formed many friendships through lunch club meaning she got lots of visitors and didn't feel isolated. Once well, other service users rallied round picking her up so she could return to lunch club. This evidences the importance of these sort of clubs for the elderly especially the residents who may otherwise be isolated and alone.

We have one parent who recently joined Breakfast club who is unable to work. She is going through the universal change over and hasn't had any income since the end of January due to complications in the system. She says we have provided her a vital resource for her and her 4 children to access food during this difficult time as well as face to face advice from citizens advice. We have also been able to provide her with food vouchers.

Sustainability

We will continue to go out for funding to ensure these food provisions groups continue.

Somerford youth & Community Centre

Funded activities

We have been able to run regular community sessions for people to access a warm space. During this time we have provided them with food and energy advice. This funding has also allowed us to give out more food and household essentials to families who have been experiencing food poverty.

Outcomes

Families have had useful advice and suggestions about how to conserve energy and keep warm during the winter months. Our warm space enabled different families to come together and socialize, which for those living on their own reduced isolation. The food provision has supported families who have been struggling to provide food and we have been able to respond to families contacting us in crisis who needed food immediately as they had run out and had no means of getting any food.

Stories of change

A is homeless. He comes and visits the Pantry every week where we provide him with a range of food items that he is able to have. He also attends our community sessions where he gets to be in a warm space and is provided with a warm meal and hot drinks.

KG is struggling with her accommodation. She has 4 children and has been renting privately. Her landlord has put up the rent beyond what can be afforded. He has now taken the route to put the property on the market. K has been using all her money to fight the landlord to keep a roof over the head of her children, which has meant she has not had money to provide food. We have been doing regular food parcels for the family and dropping to her.

Sustainability

Constant searching for funders and applying for grants.

Southbourne Food Bank

Funded activities

We offered meal in a bag, cooking equipment and café vouchers. We requested to spend funds intended for heated blankets towards kitchen equipment as we found that the milder weather meant that people didn't require the extra warmth.

Outcomes

This grant has enabled us to start building community and getting to know those who visit us better. We have seen tears of relief and joy and have shared hugs with those most grateful. I also believe that we have seen the confidence of our clients grow. They no longer feel shame about coming to us for help and often walk in with large smiles. A lady who had just secured permanent accommodation after street homelessness received a microwave. The next time I saw her she had a beaming smile and was so happy to have been able to eat a warm meal of lasagna.

Stories of change

We handed out 2 pieces of equipment to a family of 3 who had no recourse to public funds and had absolutely nothing apart from a few personal items. On this occasion they were given a slow cooker and a halogen air fryer so that they were able to be able to cook most things.

Dear Community Pantry Staff,

Thank you from me and my loved ones who enjoyed junking with me.

Your efforts all year running the community Pantry is really appreciated but especially this Christmas. Your Christmas Hamper made me feel really special. I work so hard being a Mummy, working and supporting others but your gift really lifted me and made my Mummy jobs feeding everyone a pleasure not a worry.

January is such a long blue month after Christmas I hope this note will help keep you positive and motivated for the difference you make to Christchurch. Keep going please.

Best Wishes

A lady had escaped domestic violence with her young daughter and was understandably nervous. We gifted her a soup kettle so that she was able to make something delicious from the vegetables she was getting from the community fridge and reduced section of supermarkets. She was extremely grateful for the help and cried and hugged me. It was a joy to watch her confidence grow.

An elderly lady suffering from poor mental health told me how she had lost the desire to cook something healthy for herself. We offered her a soup kettle which she felt would make it easier for her to easily whip something good up for herself to eat.

Sustainability

Approx 20% of our running costs are met through regular giving (standing order) and our goal is to grow this by about 10%. For the remainder of core costs and specific projects we will continue to apply for grants.

The Friendly Food Club

Funded activities

We have delivered 12 community events (ranging from events for young children and families, community events, events for older people living in social housing and an event for a disability charity) & 17 workshops across BCP with to 11 different community groups, many of which we had not collaborated with before. We engaged with 571 people, including older people, low income families, lone parents, adults with disabilities, students, asylum seekers and addiction recovery. All of our events distributed food for a minimum one small meal. An estimated total of 863 meals were given away. We covered a mix of topics from budget cooking, cooking using less energy and energy efficient cooking equipment, improving skills and confidence, introducing aspects healthy eating and increased fruit and vegetable intake and improving social interaction.

Notable partnerships include Bournemouth University Nutrition department who have worked in collaboration with a project for improving access to food and healthy eating for those in addiction recovery. We have also developed relationships to develop a number of events with students through the students union, looking at accessing food, improving skills, money management and eating for wellbeing.



Outcomes

The project has enabled us to reach a wider number of individuals to highlight: the benefit of cooking, how to cook in a cost conscious manner, some simple cooking and food preparation skills, the positive effect on health of cooking and eating vegetables. All beneficiaries benefitted from a free meal that they wouldn't have otherwise been able to access. We also distributed 146 cookboxes (recipes in a bag with ingredients) that provided a minimum of an additional 2 meals for the recipient to cook at home.

We worked with HACT (Housing Associations Charitable Trust) to access a number of different social housing groups, working alongside other support organisations such as Ridgewater, Skills & Learning, banks and social prescribers. This has had a really positive effect in raising our profile and the opportunities that our other projects can offer their service users.

Our outreach to disability groups has been especially well received by beneficiaries. We have learned that many severely struggle with access to healthy and home cooked food because of their disability.

We have been able to approach organisations, such as We are With You, Chatterbox and ICN who wouldn't normally have funding for our activities, and be able to demonstrate the value of cooking activities to their beneficiaries. I believe that we will deliver more projects with all of these partnerships in the future.



Story of change

'The Smith family' attended with their 6 year daughter and new born baby. The daughter has separation anxiety issues and difficulty adjusting to their newborn. She had refused to eat for several days, eating only white bread. 'Elsie' was clingy to start with, but after a few minutes started to investigate the ingredients on the table. Once the activity started Elsie was engaged and left her father's side. We talked through the different vegetables that we had and offered each one to the attendees to smell, then touch and then taste. Elise tried all of them.

"She's tried so many new foods that she would normally refuse at home. I think talking more about the smells and colours has helped".

We spoke with the parents about their concerns and worries and provide positive approaches to try with Elise to help guide her back to eating more foods. In the follow-up to this session we discovered Elsie had started eating raw vegetables, the same ones that we had tried at the session.

"We are so pleased that we came in the end. We were at our wits end about Elise not eating. The supportive advice from the Friendly Food Club ladies took so much pressure off our shoulders and we felt we could relax and create mealtimes more enjoyable for us all. We are so thankful!"

Sustainability

We have been lucky enough to secure a 3 year grant for strategic development from National Lottery. Part of this is looking at fundraising skills.

Townsend Community Association

Funded activities

- 'Waste Not Want Not' cooking workshop every Tuesday - FFC tutor & volunteers cook approx. 40 meals.
- 2 air fryer & x 2 slow cooker workshops, working in partnership with the FFC & distributing appliances
- Warm Space in the Community Centre hall over the winter with free refreshments
- Paid for the additional 'paid for food' from Farehsare every fortnight.
- 3 children's cooking workshops in partnership with FFC during school holidays.
- 2 adult cooking workshops in partnership with FFC.



Outcomes

Building community cohesion and a sense of belonging. Providing inspiration on how to cook ingredients that people can get from the Fridge project and replicate. Encouraging people to try new foods for the first time or experiment with new ingredients / cooking methods. Provided access to affordable food. Offered meals and food that help support a healthier and more varied diet. Provided a warm, comfortable space for people to relax and connect with neighbours and friends as well as access to extra support needed.

Story of change

A is a single parent to 3 children and uses the Fridge project each week to help with budgeting. A and her toddler samples the weekly 'Waste Not Want Not' dish each week, trying new foods and being inquisitive with her child, they are both pushing their boundaries a bit more. A is shy by nature but has pushed herself to stay for a few of the cooking workshop and demos so she can cook better meals for her family. A has now built up a good relationship with us and will ask for support and guidance. For example, A came to tell us she couldn't use her washing machine because it had been broken for months. We were able to get in touch with Ridgwater Energy and organised an appointment for an advisor to visit her property the same week.

Sustainability

Future funding applications

Water Lily Project (2 grants)

Funded activities

We delivered an 8 week Cooking on a Budget Course three times to groups of 6 women at a time. This was a cook-a-long course where each attendee was given a gas burner and all the pots/pans/knives and, ingredients needed to cook the recipe for the week. Each session included an introduction to each week's topic and then a practical time of cooking. The course covered Introduction, Food Hygiene, Kitchen Safety (Recipe Pasta Carbonara), Batch Cooking (Chicken Masala), How to Shop on a Budget (Easy Chicken and Chorizo Risotto), Cooking with a Slow Cooker (Slow Cooker Beef Goulash), Cooking with an Air Fryer (Air Fryer Roast Chicken), Fake Away Night (Doner Kebab), Vegetarian Cooking (Vegan Chilli), Freezing Food (Spaghetti Bolognese).

With the second grant, we successfully established a free community lunch program to support individuals impacted by the cost of living crisis. Through 1:1 support sessions, we identified beneficiaries who were struggling financially and finding it hard to afford food. We delivered meals to 12 women per week, and we also provided a traditional Christmas meal to 24 women.

Outcomes

Through this initiative, it is hoped that the participants, including those with mental health conditions and those escaping domestic violence, have been empowered to make healthier food choices, manage their households more effectively, and build confidence in their abilities. The aim was to address not only immediate nutritional needs but also broader issues related to financial stability and personal well-being. Additionally, the course sought to foster a sense of



camaraderie and mutual support among participants, creating a safe space where women could connect, share experiences, and learn from one another. Ultimately, the impact of this project extends beyond the individual participants to their families and has helped to contribute to a healthier, more resilient life for those who attended.

Community lunches had a profound impact on the lives of those supported. It alleviated a significant source of stress and worry. Many of these individuals were struggling to make ends meet, often having to choose between paying bills or buying food. By receiving regular meals through our programme, they have been able to ensure that they and their families have access to healthy, sustaining food, reducing the need to skip meals or rely on low-cost, unhealthy options. Additionally, the programme fostered a sense of belonging and support among the beneficiaries. Many of them were facing personal crises, such as domestic abuse or mental health issues, and felt isolated in their struggles. Through shared meals and interactions with others facing similar challenges, they have found a supportive network where they can share experiences, offer encouragement, and receive emotional support.

Stories of change

NM, a mother with limited cooking skills, solely relied on microwaved food for herself and her daughter. With minimal knowledge about food, she wasn't even aware that peppers could be eaten raw. Joining the course broadened her understanding, equipping her with essential cooking skills. She now tries to cook regularly for herself and her daughter. *"Attending the course has transformed how I approach meals. Now, I can provide healthier options for my daughter, and I am helping her to gain healthier eating habits and to learn to cook as well."*

S, a single mother of two, struggled to afford meals after leaving an abusive partner. She often skipped meals to ensure her children had enough to eat. Being referred to the lunch programme was a turning point. Not only did S receive meals each week, but she also found a supportive community where she could share her struggles without fear of judgment. Through the friendships S has been regaining her confidence and found the strength to pursue a better future for herself and her children and signed up to the Pattern Changing Course. With the support received S's family found life a little easier and did not have to skip as many meals, and she felt empowered to take control of her life once again.

Sustainability

The success of community lunches has enhanced our organisation's reputation and credibility within the community. By demonstrating the positive impact of our programmes and services, we have garnered increased support from donors, volunteers, and other stakeholders.

We Are Humans

Funded activities

We ran a free children's breakfast club every school day - eat in or packed take away breakfast. A free Pensioners Lunch every Tuesday. A free WAH Pantry every Thursday morning. A free Warm Space on Tuesdays & Saturdays, starting at the beginning of December. This has been so successful that it will continue throughout the year as "Community Café". 3 weekly street distributions to homeless persons. We have also used the grant to fund our sleeping bag exchange service. Homeless persons with a wet or dirty sleeping bag can exchange it for a dry laundered one.



Outcomes

Our services have made a very big difference to the lives of the beneficiaries. Homeless persons arrive at Sea Road. We offer hot meals and often the meals served are the best meals that they get each week. Our contact with homeless persons through the food distributions allows us to offer our other services including tents, sleeping bags, clothing plus signposting advice to other services to help them get off the streets. It means that we have to heat the premises on an additional evening but the grant gave us the funds to do this.

The weekly Tuesday Pensioner's Lunch and the warm space community café, have become increasingly popular. Many of the people attending live on their own and feel isolated. As well as providing a good hot meal these events are developing a sense of community. Friendships are being made and social activity being undertaken. Both are important for elderly persons. We are particularly pleased with the Breakfast Club held every school term day. Many children were going to school either without a breakfast or without an adequate breakfast.



Story of change

"Last year Logan (26 years old) was released from prison and was homeless. After a couple of months Logan came into contact with WAH at our Monday evening food distribution for homeless persons. As well as serving Logan a hot meal WAH also gave him a tent and clothes. He was also given advice on where else to seek help and on how to go about getting his own accommodation. Logan was successful in getting accommodation. Logan believes WAH was the decisive factor in him getting off the streets. So, since getting housed Logan has joined WAH as a volunteer.

Mr McHugh and his partner have two school aged children plus a baby, and are regular users of our Breakfast Club. They usually eat inside where they sit at a table and are served by our volunteer staff. The children chat with their parents and with our volunteers. Mr McHugh says that the children look forward to their breakfast, not least because they enjoy chatting to the volunteers with whom they have built up a good relationship. He says this makes it easier for him and his partner to get the children out of the house in the morning. He also says that another big advantage for him and his partner is the cost saving. They spend the money saved, on nappies and formula for their baby.

Sustainability

From general donations and further grants.

West Howe Community Enterprises

Funded activities

19 sessions were run by the Friendly Food Club. Bi-weekly lunch clubs running from Sept - March 24. Social events including a Fish and chip supper and Quiz night, Sunday lunch and Cinema sessions, and a Curry night. We have supplied 100 wash bags and 100 recipe bags to families, given out through our community fridge. We have also subsidised children's lunch boxes in the café.



Outcomes

The family cooking has enabled families to come together and learn how to cook healthy and affordable meals in a friendly and welcoming environment. The bi-weekly lunch clubs have created a community spirited atmosphere in the Centre with regulars and new people coming, especially during the cold months to socialise and share a meal together. We have also had partnership agencies calling to 'refer' or send their clients. Our volunteer Fridge Coordinator has been able to distribute food and wash bags when needed to compliment the free food given out at the Community Fridge. Knowing some of the regulars and building up a good rapport has enabled residents to ask for help and for the staff and volunteers at WHCE to 'know' who needs help.

Story of change

Following on from the Quiz and fish and Chip Night, a group of residents were keen to repeat this. With the help of staff, they got a group together and arranged their next social event and put on a quiz night. They were given the help to bring their ideas, discuss how it might work, what resources they needed and assisted them with the advertising and marketing. They had a great night and it has set a precedence for the way WHCE would like to support the Community in the future. It has provided the residents with skills, such as active listening, participation, planning, budgeting, general organisation skills and the knowledge that they are able to achieve some things on their own strengths.

Sustainability

Lunch Clubs have proved popular and we will include this in our review and future planning to see if we can budget for free or reduced cost meals. As the FFC sessions were so well attended, WHCE are sending our Community Cook on training run by the FFC to deliver the family community cooking in house.

Westbourne Rotary Club Trust Fund

Funded activities

The Project enabled £26,6000 Surplus foods to be donated to food providers addressing food insecurity. This included 2,031 x two-course meals, 1,310 items of other baked goods and £10,000 of repacked staples (flour, sugar etc). The project set up 4 emergency food access points: 2 in schools (Pokesdown and St Clements & St John's) and 2 in the community (Townsend and Southbourne Community Fridges) and supplied them with frozen ready meals. They are proving very valuable in getting food to the most vulnerable families. Staff at the schools are delighted to have this facility. We also organised 6 x monthly lunch clubs

Outcomes

The ultimate beneficiaries of this project were individuals and families who are having difficulty providing food during the cost of living crisis. 5 asylum seekers volunteered at community lunches and we also recruited 4 Settled migrants who helped with the packing.

Story of change

A single mum with 3 young children was relatively new to our school, having been evicted from a property in the Hamworthy area. They was staying in B&B accommodation and really struggling financially - spending over £20 a week on bus fares to school and on laundry facilities. Mum came to see me as Parent Support Worker to see if she could have any support as she was struggling to afford food for the children. Even with foodbank parcels she was struggling to make nutritious meals given her limited cooking facilities. She has been very grateful that I have been able to send her daughters home from school with ready portioned nutritional meals that she is able to take home and warm up in the microwave.

S family who have not long resided in the UK were unable to access benefit support and in low paid jobs. A referral was made to Children's Social Care and during a home visit the Social Worker noted that whilst there was food in the house it was quite minimal and not really all the ingredients required to cook wholesome meals. Having access to ready prepared frozen meals in the community freezer has meant that we have been able to support the family with balanced meals that we are able to send home with the children that the family can eat.

Sustainability

To continue this work will require grant funding however we believe we can increase income from lunch clubs and income from providing commercial catering.

Wimborne Minster Folk Festival

Funded activities

We fed the hungry and those in need - including the homeless, those recently out of hospital or prison, those with addiction problems and also shockingly young families who really cannot afford to make ends meet.

Outcomes

It gives those that receive help an ongoing sense of purpose, acceptance and the vision to keep going.