



Foundation
Derbyshire



Food Insecurity.

Root Causes in Derbyshire.

Report by Arabella Stephenson.



Addressing the Root Causes of Food Insecurity in Derbyshire

Foundation Derbyshire is an independent charity established in 1996 with the objective of investing and distributing funds on behalf of its donors to voluntary and community groups throughout the county.

The foundation has links to over 2,000 community groups in Derbyshire and aims to help the most vulnerable in our society; in 2020/21 the Foundation distributed **£1.2 million** funds on behalf of the National Emergencies Trust to help vulnerable individuals throughout lockdown.

During the year of 2020/21 86 grants totalling **£465,412** were awarded to 45 food banks and access to food projects by Foundation Derbyshire.

The following report highlights the work carried out by such projects during the pandemic while also outlining how funding enables such projects to invest in new initiatives to address the root causes of food poverty.





St John's Church Long Eaton

Originally established to tackle holiday hunger, the WOW (Welcome on Wednesday) service is a social eating project which has been running from St John's Church for over four years.

Offering a sit-down meal for anyone who comes through their doors, **WOW** sees a diverse range of clients and encourages inter-generational conversation to tackle loneliness and to facilitate a sense of community in Long Eaton.

Serving meals which include gluten free and vegetarian options, the volunteers at WOW aim to provide hot nutritional meals like Shepherd's Pie and Apple Crumble to people experiencing food and fuel insecurity. With the commencement of lockdown in March 2020, St John's closed the WOW project briefly before swiftly adjusting their services with permission to reopen as a takeaway. At this time WOW catered predominately for struggling individuals and saw its services particularly demand during the cold winter lockdown in 2021 - providing food to over **175** clients a throughout January and February. Additionally, having always provided signposting to mental health and housing services, St John's became a point of access for those without internet and phones to contact external services or for help with Universal Credit online. Fortunately, with the relaxation of social distancing rules WOW has since been able to return to its round table lunches and saw up to 74 guests a week in October.

Manna food boxes, a joint project between Hope Long Eaton, St John's Church and The Parish of Sawley, is an affordable food box scheme designed to help people manage weekly shopping bills. The initiative provides a weekly box of food designed to feed entire an entire family at a reduced cost alongside guidance with budgeting and debt management. FareShare, a leading food redistribution charity provides the contents of each box which cost **£6** for each family to cover the cost of delivery. The cost of each box is designed to encourage dignity and independence away from food bank reliance and the project leaders are hoping this model will allow the scheme to become self-financing.

Foundation Derbyshire is pleased to have supported these astonishing initiatives led by Reverend Sam Tredwell and the team of volunteers in St John's Church and Long Eaton. The provision of grants to food projects like WOW and Manna food boxes supported the swift transition to takeaway services throughout the pandemic by covering the cost of food, purchase of new fridges and freezers alongside maintenance costs. Moreover, investment in start-up projects like Manna food boxes encourage a more innovative approach to helping individuals escape a cycle of food insecurity.



Clay Cross Food Bank .

The Clay Cross Food Bank is a secular project of the church 'Community of Christ Clay Cross' operating to Trussell Trust principles. The Trussell Trust is a nationwide network of 428 food banks originally established in 2004.

In 2020/21, The Trussell Trust's Food Bank Network provided 2,537,198 three-day emergency food supplies and support to UK people in crisis. The Trussell Trust is now working to end the need for food banks across the UK by investing in additional programmes to lift people out of food insecurity address the root causes of poverty.

The Clay Cross Food Bank was established in 2012 and in the year 2020/21 they fed those in need 2044 times. The food bank provides three day's nutritionally balanced emergency food and support to local people who are referred to them in crisis from registered care professionals such as social services, health visitors, probation officers and church pastoral workers. Their main referral partner is Citizens Advice. The highest reasons for food bank referrals during the year of 2020 were debt issues, benefit changes and delays and low income. The food bank relies predominantly on donations from schools, supermarkets and philanthropists.

Alongside the emergency food distributed at the Clay Cross food bank, staff also identify users who are becoming reliant on the food bank and encourage them to join the Everyday Food box scheme. This affordable food box scheme costs users £6 and is made up of FareShare redistributed food. Before the pandemic clients were invited onto the Eat Well Spend Less course which taught cooking skills alongside budgeting, shopping, planning and healthy eating. Since the pandemic the scheme has adjusted to demand, and clients now receive weekly phone calls in which the resilience officer provides advice and signposting. Currently there are 32

clients on the scheme who request boxes when they need one. Usually Clay Cross distributes between **15-21** boxes a week, with uptake being higher during the late December and early January periods.

The provision of grants were vital in supporting the continued operation of food banks throughout the pandemic. Grants awarded by Foundation Derbyshire to Clay Cross enabled the food bank to double their storage capacity, support the provision of stock and toiletries, and to fund the salaries staff members. Food banks like Clay Cross could not operate so efficiently if it weren't for the fundamental work of the staff and volunteers. The provision of a grant by Foundation Derbyshire to cover the salaries of the administration and resilience officers, enabled the food bank to become more financially resilient. The resilience officer Jennie Strong enabled Clay Cross to have **8000kg** more stock in hand by January 2021 than the year before, additionally she found **41** new volunteers to cover staff shortages after **95%** of volunteers were lost due to shielding. She was able to double the users of the Everyday Box Scheme to manage the food bank stock while approaching further organisations to fund the food bank.



Looking forward, the Trussell Trust has a vision for a UK without the need for Food Banks. In its recently published strategic plan, the Trussell Trust have prioritised three strategic goals:

1. Changing Communities

Working to reduce the need for food banks locally by assisting clients to access targeted support and address the underlying reasons for crisis.

2. Changing Policy

Working alongside food banks and partners to uncover the drivers of destitution and creating positive solutions to tackle these.

3. Changing Minds

Creating a compassionate society by increasing levels of understanding and empathy of food destitution amongst the general public.

The Clay Cross Food Bank is already working towards these goals, with the introduction of new inclusion officers to offer clients in-house financial advice and access to support services. The provision of grants to invest in such positions are a crucial step towards assisting the Trussell Trust in achieving their strategic goals and encouraging universal financial inclusion.

Additionally, recent findings reveal that over a million people fear they will be forced to skip meals and switch off their heating this winter in the UK. Following the **£20 cut** in Universal Credit, the Clay Cross Food Bank has indeed been witnessing a steady increase in clients - it is therefore imperative that food banks continue to access funds to meet the demand and ensure no one goes hungry throughout the coming months.





DF4TA

The Derby Food 4 Thought Alliance was initially established to coordinate the distribution of food in Derby throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

The DF4TA has since evolved as an organisation and is pioneering a holistic response to the issue of food poverty across all **17** wards in Derby.

The DF4TA facilitated a collective community response to the pandemic through the designation of 10 local food distribution hubs throughout the city supplied by a new Central Supply Unit.

Through a coordinated referral system, food distribution hubs are able to pool resources, share signposting and training services while preventing individuals from abusing the system. Moreover, the model developed by the DF4TA encourages sustainable funding prospects as it eliminates the need for competition over resources between community projects.

The regulation of food via the CSU further reduces the potential food waste across the city, and during the first year of the alliance **over 250,000** items were successfully distributed by the CSU. Furthermore, the DF4TA offers Halal food and also makes sure to cater for dietary and culturally related requirements.

The DF4TA has since launched a city-wide food charter to encourage organisations and businesses to become involved in the project.

Recognising that individuals experience different levels of food insecurity; the alliance has developed their project around four key themes:

1. **Emergency**

The provision of food and toiletries to individuals undergoing crisis situations – ranging from support for those in homeless hostels, domestic violence units to prison releases.

2. **Assistance**

A support package providing both signposting to relevant agencies, advice and access to food. Assistance is tailored to the individual after their needs have been assessed.

3. **Community**

Activities centred around food to provide fellowship, friendship and follow-up services. It included regular provision in the local community to tackle loneliness and isolation.

4. **Initiatives**

Focused initiatives to target wider needs. Initiatives ranging from nutritional advice, practical support and the chance to develop professionally and personally through learning, training and volunteering opportunities to gain qualifications.



The DF4TA is working on a proposal to introduce a network of community shops to allow individuals a dignified transition away from reliance on food banks, empowering them to choose and purchase their own food.

The alliance intends to introduce a range of community shop initiatives and is trialling different models - from pantries, membership groceries or shops which offer goods at a reduced rate. The alliance aims to launch six shops in 2021 and is supporting the launch of shops at Aspire, Pakistan Community Centre and Derby City Mission.

The agreed framework for shops will involve an allowance of individual credit until clients can begin to purchase of low-cost food with the ultimate aim of facilitating financial autonomy and responsibility for individuals to shop independently.

The DF4TA wants to invest in further innovative projects to encourage confidence surrounding the purchase and cooking of food – including plans to launch eco shops, collaborate with allotments to provide fruit and veg boxes with recipe cards and nutrition advice, and establish community cultural cooking events.

It is essential that ground-breaking organisations like the DF4TA continue to invest in such innovative and holistic approaches to preventing food poverty.

At the commencement of the pandemic, Foundation Derbyshire was one of the first organisations to respond to their funding requests, and provided 6 grants to the alliance; enabling the DF4TA to purchase food, support warehouse and van costs and to fund those not receiving free school meals. Fundamentally, the DF4TA recognises that the source of food poverty is about more than food; people experience food insecurity for a huge variety of reasons, including debt, benefit delays, errors and sanctions which have been exacerbated by the pandemic; according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, **4.4. million** individuals have had to take on new or increased borrowing through the pandemic.

Ultimately, the DF4TA aims to help people break out of this cycle of poverty by providing signposting, debt advice and investing in innovative projects which will involve city-wide collaboration.

Foundation Derbyshire is pleased to support the launch of such initiatives and looking forward would be delighted to continue to fund holistic approaches to tackling the root causes of food poverty.





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I would like to extend my thanks to Reverend Sam Tredwell of St Johns, Jennie Strong at Clay Cross and Paul Brookhouse at The DF4TA for so willingly offering their time and sharing the details about their fantastic projects to address food poverty in Derbyshire.

I would also like to thank Rachael Grime and Sarah Stainthorpe for supporting me throughout the production of this article and for sharing so many resources from Foundation Derbyshire.



Links and References

Foundation Derbyshire

<https://foundationderbyshire.org/>

Trussell Trust

Universal Credit:

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/2021/09/08/the-public-wants-us-to-keep-the-universal-credit-lifeline-the-prime-minister-and-the-chancellor-should-listen/>

Strategic Plan:

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/TogetherforChange-Summary-public-web.pdf>

Clay Cross

<https://claycross.foodbank.org.uk/>

FareShare

<https://fareshare.org.uk/>

DF4TA

<https://www.communityactionderby.org.uk/df4ta/about>
for further information or enquiries, please email: df4ta@communityactionderby.org.uk

St John's Church

<http://stjohnlongeaton.org.uk/about/our-community/>
<https://www.mannafoodboxes.com/>

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/dragged-down-debt-millions-low-income-households-pulled-under-arrears-while-living-costs-rise>

If you've been inspired, please contact Rachael Grime, our Chief Executive, to find out more about our work.



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