



Building an Oxford Food Access Alliance

Oxford Food Poverty Alliance: Interim report, November 2018

Involving experts by experience

We set out with a clear ambition of involving experts by experience as central to our alliance. Crucially, we recruited this group before we invited additional people to join the alliance, including representatives from the city council, county council, and social enterprise and community development sectors. We have also recruited an external evaluator to ensure the alliance is effective in achieving its aims.

Meetings involving both experts by experience and professionals have gone well; there appeared to be a good balance of power. It helped that the experts by experience had been involved for a few months already and could speak from a position of experience. Alongside meetings, we have a programme of visits to projects in Oxfordshire and beyond to prompt our thinking and discussion as we develop our plan. Alliance members are [sharing reflections on visits](#).

Challenges and learning

In terms of finding experts by experience who might like to join the alliance, we contacted and met with a number of relevant organisations who helped to identify people. We have found it helpful to meet with people face-to-face, use Plain English and inclusive images. We provide food and cover childcare and travel expenses. Experts can attend with a buddy and/or in pairs.

Our meetings focus on sharing power; we have ground rules about letting others talk and explore different formats and alternative ways to record discussions. Our conversations are shaped by the participants and are focused on food rather than food poverty. We work to ensure that the Alliance is more than a 'talking shop' and to ensure engagement of those with power locally.

Next steps

The alliance has worked together to select five other projects to visit around the UK. All of these visits will act as inspiration for alliance work in Oxford.



"I couldn't help but reflect on this impressive, yet simultaneously horrifying situation. Here we were, in 21st century Britain witnessing the development of new phenomenon, not unique to Didcot but a nationwide strategy."

Christine McDermott, Relish, on a visit to a local surplus food redistribution organisation

Outcomes

- Through visiting different services alliance members are getting a first-hand insight into existing projects set up to provide a downstream response to food poverty.
- The learning that comes from these experiences will shape the Food Access Action Plan that we will create with the aim of benefiting local people with experience, or at risk of, food poverty.

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www.foodpower.org.uk

