



Developing a Food Poverty Action Plan

Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance: Interim report, August 2018

Understanding food poverty in Shropshire

In Shropshire many families are struggling to access a sufficient and healthy diet, have been hit by the impact of benefit reforms and 1 in 5 children in our county are in poverty. As a rural county, Shropshire faces a different range of challenges to more urban areas. We brought together a strong alliance of organisations including Shropshire Council, University Centre Shrewsbury, Citizens Advice Shropshire and food banks.

We have conducted a wide of participatory research, consulting with stakeholders across the county to understand the issues and develop solutions. Our online surveys of local people and organisations had over 100 responses. A set of one-to-one interviews with experts by experience enabled us to better understand the issues they face in accessing a sufficient and healthy diet on low incomes. A wide range of organisations attended our participatory workshops held in three different parts of the county. Attendees responding to food poverty in different ways, but who would not normally come together, were able to fairly quickly develop robust proposals for action. Using available indicator data, we have mapped the risk of food poverty across the county.

Challenges and learning

Developing a county wide action plan is challenging as there are so many organisations involved who only work at a very local level; creating and maintaining good relationships to develop our network is key.

Understanding what is happening in very rural areas is difficult, as very few organisations focus on these areas; we have tried to build the evidence base where possible, but expect this to be an ongoing challenge.

Next steps

We are going to start engaging specifically with decision makers to ensure that food poverty is considered in all relevant future strategies. This includes presenting our findings to key partnerships and public sector boards.



"Endeavour to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, and if possible bring them together to discuss food poverty face to face. Small changes can make a big difference. Many organisations work with clients in food poverty. Aim to get the issue onto their agenda."

Emily Fay, Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance

Outcomes

- We have raised awareness of food poverty across the county. Our work has been covered by the local newspaper and regional TV news.
- We now have a robust research and evidence base on which includes the voice of those with direct experience of food poverty. This will allow us to develop a food poverty action plan which encourages long term projects to benefit people in food poverty.

This activity was assisted by financial support and other advice from Food Power.

www.foodpower.org.uk

