



Achievements from our 3-year food poverty action plan, and what next?

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, March 2019

Building on our 2015-18 action plan – learning and next steps

Our first step was to [report](#) on what our 2015-18 Food Poverty Action Plan achieved. We were delighted to see progress in 78 out of 84 actions (93%). Just as importantly, the conversation in the city shifted, with food poverty moving right up the agenda.

But what next? For our follow-up plan we have integrated food poverty back into our wider food strategy approach. As well as a specific section on food poverty, we mainstreamed food poverty into the whole plan - we called this putting on our 'food poverty goggles' – so in effect food poverty and the wider [food strategy approach](#) have become the same thing.

To develop the new five-year plan, we spent a year consulting, including via focus groups with people at risk of food poverty whose voices are not often heard - [rough sleepers](#), [migrants without recourse to funds](#), [BME people](#) and older people at risk of malnutrition.

The [new plan](#) has 200 actions, 100 partners (including 26 separate council departments) and represents an ambitious whole-city approach to food poverty which underpins our bid to become the first UK Gold Sustainable Food City.

Comments on 3-year food poverty action plan:

“What a lot of work has gone into it! An amazing achievement.”

Whitehawk Food Bank

“Happy to see the positive contributions of school meals and free school meals and a timely reminder for me about what we have achieved as a city.”

School Meals Manager



This activity was assisted by financial support and other advice from Food Power.
www.foodpower.org.uk

Our challenges and learning

(1) Our capacity is always an issue and we have had challenges securing funding both for the actions in our plan and the coordination around it. Likewise, the capacity of partner organisations is very stretched, particularly the local authority where restructures and redundancies have also meant champions and partners have left. Partnership working takes time and we and our partners seem to have less each year. We feel our 'pop up' approach to steering the 2015-18 plan was really helpful in allowing stakeholders and partners to engage at the half way through and end stages rather having a regular alliance steering group. This has meant the limited time of partners felt respected and was focussed on the specific actions and 'asks' in the food poverty action plan.

(2) We have learned that patience pays. Structural changes in the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and what initially felt like a reluctance to engage were frustrating. But it turned out that behind the scenes there was actually a lot of progress. Similarly, Adult Social Care seemed to be making frustratingly little progress, but actually a lot was done, it just took longer and was behind the scenes.

(3) We have learned a graphic goes a long way. Following feedback on the 2015-18 Food Poverty Action Plan, we again budgeted to work with a designer to ensure a creative and professional look to our [2018-2023 plan](#). Whilst this does take up a precious financial resource, it makes people want to engage, which is doubly important when we don't have an ongoing alliance mechanism to maintain momentum.

"Why shouldn't we have a say over what goes into our bodies?"

Participant in March 2018 focus group for rough sleepers.

The rough sleepers identified a need for more and healthier food choices in homeless provision, which providers then agreed to address, creating an action in the plan going forward.

Learning visit to Southampton: preventing under-nutrition

We carried out a [joint visit](#) to the [Wessex Academic Health Science Network](#) to find out about their inspiring research, and to preview their new tool to help a much broader range of people to understand and spot malnutrition, and to know what to do when they come across people who are at risk. The visit involved partners from Public Health, Adult Social Care and the Clinical Commissioning Group all taking time out from our busy weeks to reflect and be inspired together; indeed the train carriage there and back was an important part of the visit! We are looking forward to seeing a similar tool implemented in our city.

Our key achievements and impact

- Our progress report shows the 2015-18 plan led to astounding range of collective achievements and generated new and unexpected partnerships (see [report](#) or [case study](#)).
- This has directly benefited people who are at risk. Our local measurement of household food insecurity shows levels holding steady. Given the challenging external environment which included price rises and further welfare reform including the introduction of Universal Credit, we believe this represents a success for the plan. We were never going to be able to 'fix' this completely on our own as a city, but small changes on several fronts at once do seem to have kept levels stable when we may have expected them to rise.
- Our partnership approach and high-profile action plan has raised the issue and made food poverty 'a thing' in our city, making it part of many different people's agendas and working practices.
- Looking ahead, we have focussed our energy on including some of the voices of those most vulnerable to food poverty from whom we hear the least. We held a series of focus groups in order to understand the picture. We then took the findings and suggestions to service providers to agree actions in the new plan which would respond to these.
- Our new five-year plan, with food poverty and, increasingly, food inequalities integrated at the heart of our wider food strategy approach, is our most ambitious plan yet, and we believe the most ambitious in the UK.