



# Improving Children's Access to Food

## Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance: Interim report, October 2020

### The impact of covid-19 on children's nutrition and wellbeing

2020 has been a challenging time for children with schools closed and confusion around free school meal provision. This meant we were unable to deliver our project as hoped. However, we were able to pivot our plans to deliver impact where needed.

Firstly, to better understand the impact of school closures on children's health, we partnered with Leeds University and Shropshire council to develop a questionnaire. This was sent to every child in Shropshire (aged 7-18) and will be repeated by the council bi-annually. The results will help build a clearer picture of the issues around food insecurity and provide evidence for action to improve diets and health outcomes.

Secondly, over October half term, when free school meals were unavailable, we publicised business and community support for children eligible for FSM on our website and social media. This has opened opportunities to work with businesses who, up until then, were not familiar with the issues facing children and families living in food poverty.

### Challenges and learning

The pandemic highlighted the need for a coordinated, flexible approach. This led us to our partnership with Shropshire council and Leeds University and our coordination role for all the offers made available by businesses and community groups in October half term.

### Next steps

We will continue to work with Shropshire Council and Leeds University to circulate it bi-annually and use the results to ensure we are delivering effective support. We also plan to host a roundtable event with local businesses and community groups to discuss how they can support those living in food insecurity in the future.



**“ Working in partnership with public health, the education team and academics from Leeds University we have been able to develop a survey which has far more reach than previous alliance surveys.” Emily Fay (Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance Co-ordinator)**

### Outcomes

- Developed a survey in partnership with the council which will improve our understanding of food insecurity across the country so we can better support those in need
- Publicised businesses and community support for children eligible for FSM in Shropshire which reached over 48,000 people on Facebook