



Empowering Experts by Experience

Luton Food Poverty Alliance: Interim report

October 2018

The experts head to Westminster

In October 2018 the experts were invited to share their stories at the End Hunger Conference UK in Westminster. Tryphine, Sekai and Reuben from the Pioneer gardening group in Luton felt both nervous and honoured to be asked to share their insights of what it is like to live with food poverty and offer some solutions that have helped them.

At the conference the Pioneers spoke on a panel about how coming together in the community garden, learning to grow and cook food, as well as developing friendships in the community has been a lifeline of support for them through difficult times.

They spoke about how being able to continue learning, sharing knowledge and contributing to society was so important to them; especially with the restrictions to work and study whilst they await decisions about their asylum in the UK – with some waiting over 15 years!

The Pioneers felt a sense of solidarity with the other expert panellists from Blackburn with Darwen, as well as with many of the other conference attendees including food aid providers, local authorities, researchers and faith leaders, over the indifference the government shows as so many people struggle to access nutritious food.

Challenges and learning

It is one thing to discuss topics that may feel personal and raw in a place that is comfortable, and quite another to discuss them in a formal meeting or conference. Sharing the panel with another group of experts from Blackburn with Darwen helped with nerves.

Next steps

Groundwork will continue to develop our existing Community Food Hubs in high deprivation wards, including three more in Luton and Bedfordshire over the next three years. Our hubs will be used to further provide suitable venues for the delivery of training and engagement activities with the experts.



Top Tip

It's been beneficial to discuss the matter of food poverty from a perspective of how we can help others who may be facing the issue. The process of empowering the group through growing their own food, increasing their knowledge and giving them the opportunity to share their produce/cooking and skills to support others, has allowed for a deeper engagement with the topic.

Outcomes

By working with the experts they are teaching us and helping us to better understand the needs of people living with food poverty and how we can best put this understanding into practice.

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