



Children's food insecurity in Shropshire

Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance, final report, May 2021

Developing a toolkit for food projects

Historically there has been very little research into food insecurity in rural areas. As an alliance based in one of the most rural counties in England, and with it becoming increasingly obvious that the Covid-19 pandemic was having a big impact on children, we launched a process of community consultation to better understand the levels of children's food insecurity in Shropshire and to identify local actions which could be taken.

As part of this process, we produced [9 cases studies](#) of successful projects across Shropshire supporting children with food. They covered a wide variety of projects, from established organisations to new initiatives that have sprung up in response to Covid-19. Learning from these case studies helped us to produce a [toolkit for food projects](#). We hope that these resources will help to showcase some of the fantastic, creative work happening across Shropshire, as well as offer practical guidance and inspiration for new projects.

“ Our work is always walking a double path. On the one hand we have the longer- term goal of a world in which food banks aren't needed, on the other, we want to ensure we are buoyant enough to provide the emergency support that is still currently needed.

Oswestry Food Bank reflect on their project which supports children and their families during the school holidays


Shropshire case studies

The case studies below bring together a range of projects throughout Shropshire working to improve children's access to food. These are small scale initiatives, powered by people and full of lots of rich learnings which we have compiled to create a toolkit for food projects. We would like to thank all the people involved in these projects who kindly gave their time to us and share what they have learnt through their work.

Schools	Partnerships
Shrewsbury Academy's Something 4 Tea project Food support to help families cook something nutritious for tea	Wickin View Primary School's community cafe and fridge A primary school exploring new ways to support families with food
Shrewsbury Food Hub Using surplus to build community	Football Farm and Market Drayton Food Bank's partnership project Encouraging families to make the most of a fantastic community asset
The Packed Lunch Club A group which sprung into action to support children in their community	Whitchurch Food Bank's holiday support A thoughtful approach to supporting families through times when budgets become strained
The New Saints FC Foundation's holiday club Bringing holiday activities with food to small rural villages	The Bearded Chef community meals A chef who turned his hand to supporting families during lockdown
	Oswestry Food Bank's holiday support Building wrap around support into holiday food provision

Toolkit for food projects

Food projects help us go beyond food crisis response, supporting people over longer time frames and often have broader aims such as, providing a safe space for children to interact with their peers, promoting healthy food choices, preventing food waste and building food skills. These projects cannot carry the burden for food insecurity and wider systemic issues within the food system, but they are well placed to respond to the current crisis in a dignified way at a local level. Through our research and work as an alliance we have learnt from many inventive and successful projects from all areas of Shropshire and have used these learnings to create a toolkit for food projects.



Collaborative and empowering	Projects should be co-designed with the local community and built from the grassroots rather than the top down
	Work with other organisations to share knowledge, maximise impact and to ensure you are building on what already exists rather than displacing it
	Have clear mechanisms for communication and feedback to ensure everybody's voice is heard
Sustainable and resilient	Build from your existing resources and capacity: start small and grow sustainably and safely
	Understand your income streams and how you will source funding
	Staff and volunteers with a relevant skill set who feel valued for their contributions
Local and relevant	Responsive to the changing needs of your community
	Especially within a rural context, projects need to be hyper local so additional access barriers aren't introduced
	Projects and their activities must be relevant to the local community and the individual

Our key achievements and impact

- Increased understanding of levels of children's food insecurity in Shropshire and identified points for local interventions
- Resources to share the learning and inspiration from this project
- Increased links with organisations from many different sectors to allow us to start working across the system to tackle the issue of children's food insecurity in Shropshire

Challenges and learning and next steps

These projects are the result of the blood, sweat and tears of dedicated people, often with limited resources. When producing these case studies, we had to be mindful to not add unnecessarily to the pressure many people are already under, especially given the context of a global pandemic. We plan to produce a comprehensive communications plan to share these resources widely. We would also like to find a way to capture lived experience in Shropshire and make it central to the discussions around children's access to food.

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www.foodpower.org.uk

