



# Establishing the East Kent Food Alliance

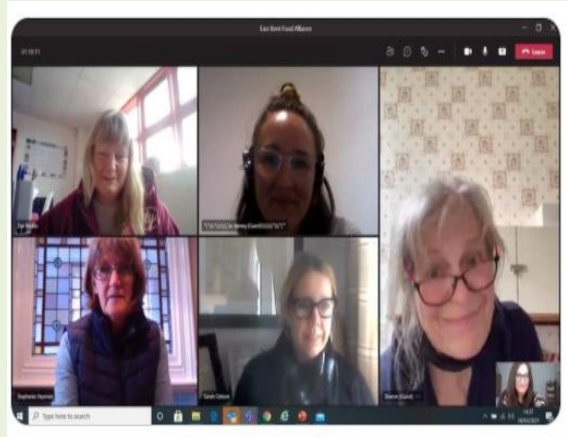
## East Kent Food Alliance, May 2021

### Building local food resilience in East Kent

The pandemic had made it increasingly clear that to manage and tackle the root causes of food poverty, more effective collaboration was needed. We therefore set out to develop the East Kent Food Alliance to bring together key food poverty organisations across four districts in the area to make sustainable long-term changes on a wider scale within the county relating to food poverty.

We did this by inviting key local food poverty organisations to join meetings and to develop a food poverty action plan that outlines a set of key aims to give our alliance direction. Our overarching aim is to achieve one clear vision to end food poverty in East Kent through achieving the following:

- Mapping and identifying local needs
- Sharing best practice and knowledge
- Developing sustainable community access to healthy balanced food.
- Including the voice of the community and identifying opportunities for further development.



### Challenges and learning

Capturing the voice of the community was an agreed priority for the Alliance, but with lockdown restrictions we found engagement has been more challenging than anticipated. However, a survey was set up for all services to share with members to identify the key needs of those impacted by food poverty. This information has assisted with the development of the East Kent Food Alliance Action Plan. We plan to carry out further engagement with experts by experience as the Alliance continues to grow and restrictions ease further.

Through the Alliance it was clear that a co-ordinator role was essential for future development and to ensure that there are clear aims and objectives going forward. Food Power funding has enabled us to clearly identify these next steps so a coordinator can be recruited to deliver them.

### Next steps

One local authority was so pleased to hear about the alliance that they have asked us to take over their food poverty forum to ensure there are clear goals to end food poverty within the district. As a result of this warm reception, we plan to continue building relationships with local authority led food forums and Kent County Council. This work will start by supporting two districts in East Kent to develop a clear vision for the local response to food poverty and the communities needs.

***“ The Alliance has given us a joint focus and enabled us to contribute meaningfully. We have all learnt from each other and I believe this will give our work extra significance and impact.” Sharon Goodyer – Our Kitchen on the Isle of Thanet.***