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Review of the Fair Food Transformation Fund



EQUALITY AND WELFARE



Rocket Science UK Ltd

Review of the Fair Food Transformation Fund for Scottish Government

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Executive Summary

The Scottish Government has committed to making Scotland “a country where everyone has access to healthy, nutritious food without needing emergency food aid”.¹ In 2015 Scottish Ministers established an Independent Short-life Working Group on Food Poverty. The group reported in 2016 that emergency food aid is not a long-term solution to food insecurity, defined as a person’s inability to: “secure enough food of sufficient quality and quantity...[to allow them to] stay healthy and participate in society”.² Their recommendation was that new ways to deliver food and support through more long-term, holistic, community based solutions ought to be explored. The group made clear that tackling food insecurity should be done in ways that enhance dignity and embody respect. As a result of this, the group suggested four service design principles that embody these values:³

- **involving people with direct experience of food insecurity**
- **recognising the social value of food**
- **providing opportunities for people to contribute**
- **providing participants with the power to choose**

In response to the group’s findings the Scottish Government set up the Fair Food Transformation Fund (FFTF). The purpose of the fund is to “support projects that give a more dignified response to food poverty and help to move away from emergency food aid as the first response.”⁴ The fund invests in projects that balance current demands for emergency food aid with community led, long-term solutions to food insecurity.

Between 2016 and 2018, two types of organisation received funding: (1) ‘food justice’ projects – community organisations who have historically embraced the social value of food; (2) ‘transition’ projects – food banks who wished to modify their current approach to emphasise the dignity of the service users.

Review aims and methodology

In May 2017, Rocket Science was commissioned by the Scottish Government to complete a review of the FFTF. The review sought to answer three questions:

- How are the supported projects impacting on individuals, households and communities associated with the project?

¹ Scottish Government. Topic, Food Poverty. Accessed at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/fairerscotland/tacklingpovertyinscotland/food-poverty> on February 2018

² Food Foundation. New Evidence of Child Food Insecurity in the UK. Accessed at <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/new-evidence-of-child-food-insecurity-in-the-uk/> on May 2018

³ Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland’, The Report of the Independent Working Group on Food Poverty. Accessed at Poverty <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/06/8020> on February 2018

⁴ Scottish Government. Topic, Food Poverty. Accessed at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/fairerscotland/tacklingpovertyinscotland/food-poverty> on February 2018

- What data is required to assess the impact of, and what are the critical success factors of, community led food insecurity projects in reducing demand on food banks?
- How could the design and implementation of the FFTF evolve to meet its overall aim of supporting emergency food providers to transition from traditional charitable approaches to support in more social community settings?

During the review, Rocket Science analysed available data on all FFTF projects and conducted field research with 19 case study projects.

Main findings

It was found that most case study projects were successfully integrating emergency food provision into a wider range of community based activities in order to move from charity to food justice models.

Progress against the Dignity Principles

Rocket Science assessed the extent to which the 19 case study projects had made progress in achieving the dignity principles. In summary, projects were:

- **Involving people with lived experience of food poverty in the design of services.** Examples of this involvement included: participants becoming volunteers, and participation in committees and the running of peer sessions.
- **Recognising the social value of food by focusing on social interaction and strengthening community ties.** Most projects used community meals as part of their service offer. This succeeded in re-framing their services as social rather than charitable.
- **Providing opportunities for people to contribute.** Projects encouraged an environment in which participants felt they were both contributing to and receiving from the broader community. An emphasis on peer learning across several projects was particularly successful in contributing to this.
- **Providing participants with the power to choose.** Most projects tended to provide choice to participants by offering flexibility in the way they were able to engage with different components of the project. Despite this, several projects struggled to provide choice in the food provided.

Most of the case study projects had embraced the social value of food effectively – using their services to reduce food insecurity and build community bonds. The most prevalent challenge was providing food choices for participants. This resulted from a continued reliance on donated food and constrained budgets for provisions.

Addressing the underlying causes of food insecurity

Social stigma is a major factor contributing to those who face food insecurity not accessing relevant food aid services. In using non-traditional models, projects were able to report a difference in how users viewed their services and how they viewed

more traditional food banks. This helped to remove the stigma associated with service use and, in turn, increase the number of people using the services.

The review findings suggest that projects can also play a role in reducing the need for emergency food provision by: helping participants in their food budgeting, facilitating support to increase income (e.g. benefits advice) and increasing awareness of other available services.

Food insecurity is commonly born out of economic circumstance. Several of the projects were able to move participants closer to work. This was achieved in two ways: increasing participants' confidence and range of skills, or using good relationships with participants to facilitate smooth referrals to other organisations. The projects were able to indirectly reduce food insecurity by changing the economic circumstance of participants through increasing their employability.

Relatedly, projects helped reduce social isolation for many participants. The result of this was twofold: it increased participant retention within the project and it created a layer of peer support. Both play a role in projects' ability to reduce food insecurity.

What works to engage people with services

The review found evidence that FFTF projects were effective at attracting and retaining participants. This included groups that often engage less frequently with support services such as: refugees, young people, ex-offenders and gypsy/travellers. The lessons learned by projects on how to engage participants are not only relevant for food insecurity but across a range of services including: health, care, employability and housing. The five project features that sustained and increased engagement were:

- Finding “hooks” into the project – these were ways that helped people find out about the project, such as community events and fun days.
- Allowing people to “test the waters” – with multiple activities happening at once, participants could pick and choose what they got involved with, often observing activities for several weeks before joining in themselves.
- Blurring the line between the “helpers” and the “helped” – this moved projects from a more traditional charity model to services that were both community focused and community led.
- Providing flexible support – projects avoided formal classes and courses. Instead many projects relied on semi-structured peer-to-peer learning. Staff made sure that activities appeared informal while instilling the lessons of a structured session.
- Providing “space” for participants – projects were accepting and made sure individuals did not feel pressure to take part or attend. Participants appreciated the ability to just to be there.

Creating sustainable services

A challenge faced by all projects is creating and maintaining a sustainable service. While these projects are likely to require ongoing funding in the future, they have

taken steps to reduce their dependency on funders. In creating a sense of community, participants were reinvesting their time and resources into the project as volunteers. Projects were better able to recruit volunteers if people in the community saw the project as being a local community cause as opposed to a charitable one. Some better established projects were identifying income generating opportunities through asset use and social enterprise. This was not common across all projects.

Data collection and Governance

Data collection was a challenge for the projects. This was driven by two factors: a lack of time and a concern that data collection might emphasise the charitable nature of the projects among participants. While most projects tended to record attendance numbers and services they delivered, few collected outcome data for participants. Most projects used staff observation to monitor outcomes but some used more formal methods, such as project staff group reflection sessions or the use of staff log books.

Recommendations

Based on the review findings we recommend that the Scottish Government:

- Promote the success of the FFTF projects to show others what more dignified services look like in practice and how to make a shift in service design and delivery. Projects' engagement with this promotion should be carefully managed considering ongoing resource pressures and increasing demand for their services.
- Set an expectation for data to be provided on attendance and outcomes achieved but ask projects to develop a methodology that combines direct collection of data and staff observations. These could be assessed against an outcomes framework to ensure data collection is appropriate in each context and that staff observations are targeted and guided.
- While none of the case study projects appeared to be at risk of financial or governance failure, a number expressed a need for further support with improving their governance arrangements.
- Allow for a longer lead in time for new services to get up and running. For example, several projects in the January 2017 round were trying to make large shifts in their services and were not fully up and running when they were approached in the summer of 2017. Larger scale shifts to services are likely to require a much longer lead in time than was originally provided for in the FFTF.
- Seek to extend the approach taken by projects to engage participants into other service areas such as housing, employability, health and social care. Food insecurity projects can provide valuable conduits for participants into services that address the underlying drivers of poverty. There is some good evidence of projects doing this already and effective practice could be exchanged.

1 Background and Context

The following chapter is divided into four sections: an overview of food insecurity in Scotland, the Scottish policy context surrounding food insecurity, the history of the FFTF and a summary of the methodology that underlies our review.

1.1 Food insecurity in Scotland

Food insecurity refers to an inability to access food in sufficient quantity or of adequate quality in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so.⁵ The severity of food insecurity can vary between: worrying about accessing food, reducing the quality and quantity of food consumed and experiencing hunger.⁶

Food banks have become part of a range of services and interventions to address food insecurity. Food bank usage statistics are commonly used as an indication of wider food insecurity. Since the recession, food bank usage in the UK has risen significantly. Trussell Trust, the largest food bank provider in the UK, reported that they provided 170,625 food parcels in Scotland in 2017/18.⁷

Evidence from Canada shows that most food insecure households do not use food banks⁸. This suggests that the 170,625 parcels provided by the Trussell Trust in Scotland do not accurately reflect the number of people facing food insecurity. This underestimation of people who experience food insecurity is further evidenced by a recent survey by the GoWell partnership that looked at the pattern of food bank use among people living in deprived areas of Glasgow. It found that 4% of respondents had used a food bank in the last year despite 18% of respondents reporting that they had difficulty paying for food. This research also highlighted social stigma and logistical challenges relating to food bank use – 4% of respondents stated that they did not use a food bank because they did not want to or could not access one.⁹

There is evidence to suggest that recent welfare reform has contributed to food bank usage. In April 2017, the Trussell Trust reported that areas where Universal Credit had been fully rolled out had a higher increase in food bank use than in the rest of the UK – 16.9% as opposed to 6.6%. This was partially attributed to the six

⁵ Dowler E. (2003) Food and Poverty in Britain: Rights and Responsibilities. In: Dowler E and Jones Finer C (Eds). *Welfare of Food: Rights and Responsibilities in a Changing World*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, p140-159.

⁶ Taylor, A. Loopstra, R. (2016) Too Poor To Eat Food insecurity in the UK. Food Foundation. Accessed at <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FoodInsecurityBriefing-May-2016-FINAL.pdf> on February 2018

⁷ Trussell Trust (2018) End of Year Stats 2018. Accessed at <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/end-year-stats/> on February 2018

⁸ Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF) (2018) Household food insecurity in Canada. Accessed at <https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/> on February 2018

⁹ GoWell (2016). Food bank use among residents of Glasgow's deprived neighbourhoods. Glasgow Community Health and Wellbeing Research and Learning Programme. Briefing Paper 28.

week wait for the first Universal Credit payment and the resultant accumulation of debt and bills.¹⁰

Following an 18-month study of people referred to their services, the Trussell Trust published a report in June 2017 that found nearly 40% of people surveyed were waiting for a benefit payment, 66% had an unexpected drop in their income or rise in expenses and 16% had no income during the prior three months. The average income of households in the month before they were surveyed was around £320.¹¹ An increase in the cost of living is also likely to have contributed to an increase in food insecurity. Living cost increases affect lower income households disproportionately.¹²

1.2 The policy context

In response to a growing need to address food insecurity, Scottish Ministers established an Independent Short-Life Working Group on Food Poverty. This group reported back to Scottish Government in 2016 with their report “Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland”. The report set out the Group’s view that emergency food aid is not a long-term solution to food insecurity and that action should be taken to improve the income of those facing food insecurity and explore new ways to deliver community based food support. The report identified four principles that represent a dignified approach to addressing food insecurity. These principles are described below.

1 Involving people with direct experience of food insecurity in decision making

By fulfilling this principle, services are able to understand the causes of poverty and the choices people living in food poverty make. As a result, “effective solutions and strategies” can be developed. Examples of how this could be achieved include getting people with direct experience of food poverty involved in:

- advising strategic working groups – for example, by becoming part of steering groups, committees or forums
- every day running of local food centres – for example, by volunteering or becoming staff members
- providing feedback about the project – for example, through boxes, informal chats, interviews, focus groups, or questionnaires

¹⁰ The Trussell Trust (2016). Early Warnings Universal Credit and Food banks. <https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/04/Early-Warnings-Universal-Credit-and-Foodbanks.pdf> Accessed at in February 2018

¹¹ Loopstra, R & Lalor, D (2017). Financial insecurity, food insecurity, and disability: The profile of people receiving emergency food assistance from The Trussell Trust Foodbank Network in Britain. <https://www.trusselltrust.org/what-we-do/research-advocacy/oxford-university-report/> Accessed at: in February 2018

¹² Adams, A & Levell, P (2014). Measuring poverty when inflation varies across households. Accessed at <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/measuring-poverty-when-inflation-varies-across-households> in February 2018

2 Recognising the social value of food

The Working Group's report states that "projects which aim to build community around food often help to create the feeling of a place where people choose to go rather than have to"¹³, and are therefore more dignified.

3 Providing opportunities to contribute

The Working Group states that a more dignified way of tackling food insecurity would be through providing "opportunities for individuals to volunteer in different roles, to share and learn new skills, to grow their own vegetables and to participate in local community life"¹⁴. They suggest this would provide a way of combating the stigma people can face around being perceived as a "scrounger" or "skiver"¹⁵.

Putting this principle into practice could involve:

- volunteering
- formal training with a qualification
- informal/formal skill learning and sharing

4 Leaving people with the power to choose

This principle was included by the Working Group as it was considered that those experiencing food poverty were often constrained in the extent to which they were able to choose the quality and type of food they ate. Examples of putting this principle into action could include:

- the choice to contribute to the price of food
- some degree of choice over what food is eaten
- choice to eat healthily (fresh and healthy options available)
- greater choice for people because their cooking/budgeting skills have improved

The Dignity Principles were accepted by Scottish Ministers as a guide for the projects and activities that the Scottish Government would support. It is within this context that the Fair Food Transformation Fund (FFTF) was established.

1.3 The Fair Food Transformation Fund

Between 2016 and 2018, the FFTF awarded grants to 34 community-based projects. These projects sought to "reduce reliance on emergency food aid by establishing more sustainable approaches to ensuring families can access healthy,

¹³ Independent Working Group on Food Poverty (2016). Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland. Accessed at <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502395.pdf> February 2018

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

nutritious food”.¹⁶ The fund sought to address food insecurity by looking at both short-term (emergency food provision) and long-term (addressing the underlying reasons for food insecurity) responses to food insecurity. Fundamental to the FFTF is its support for projects to modify their services in order to place more emphasis on the dignity of individual participants. Consequently, applications to the FFTF are assessed against the extent to which their proposed activities aligned with the dignity principles.

In September 2016, 20 projects were awarded funding by the FFTF. Nineteen of these projects were referred to as ‘food justice projects’ – community organisations who have historically embraced the social value of food. The remaining project was a grant to Nourish Scotland to complete research and develop a framework to further inform the meaning of dignified food provision, and share best practice.¹⁷

Thirty-two food banks applied to receive FFTF funding. Of these, only four were successful initially. The Scottish government then put specific support in place, through Nourish Scotland and the Poverty Truth Commission, to help these unsuccessful applications to better understand the dignity principles and, in light of this understanding, modify their service and application. Consequently, the Scottish government announced in January 2017 that 15 more projects would receive FFTF funding. These projects were ‘transition projects’ – traditional food banks who wished to change their services to be more receptive to concerns surrounding individual dignity.

1.4 Review Methodology

In May 2017, Rocket Science was commissioned to complete an analytical review of the FFTF through an exploration of the progress of a number of projects. The research specification highlighted that there were two distinct types of projects to be reviewed – ‘food justice’ projects and ‘transition projects’. The aims of the review for each project type were as follows:

Aim 1 – How are the projects impacting on individuals, households and communities associated with the project? Including:

- the extent to which projects are meeting the outcomes they outlined in their application, as well as the four dignity principles
- how projects had an impact on the actions, attitudes and behaviours of participants, including any changes in the use of food banks
- any wider economic or social impacts achieved by the projects

¹⁶ Scottish Government (2016). Funding to tackle food poverty. Newsroom. Accessed at <https://news.gov.scot/news/funding-to-tackle-food-poverty> on February 2018

¹⁷ <http://www.nourishscotland.org/projects/dignity/>

Aim 2 – What data is required to assess the impact of, and what are the critical success factors of, community led food insecurity projects in reducing demand on food banks? Including:

- the extent to which projects have been successful at capturing and using data to track their impact and, from this, what data is required to assess the impact of projects
- the implications of data requirements on any future projects
- what works well and what works less well in achieving impact - including administration structures and governance, alongside other factors that help or hinder success

Aim 3 – How could the design and implementation of the fund evolve to improve the ability of the FFTF to meet its overall aim of supporting emergency food providers to transition away from traditional charitable approaches to food insecurity and provide support in more social community settings? Including:

- how could the design and implementation of the fund change to better take advantage of the lessons learnt in this review, including evidence of the types of project that have proved effective in achieving the FFTF objectives and the extent to which they could be scaled up or rolled out?

1.4.1 Methodology

During the review Rocket Science completed desk-based analysis and 19 case studies. Field research was conducted with 13 projects between May and October 2017 and with another six projects between March and May 2018. This included:

- **Reviewing project applications and interim reports** provided to the Scottish Government by all projects. All projects completed an application detailing the design of their project. Most projects had also returned an interim report to the Scottish Government detailing the progress that their project had made both operationally and in achieving intended outcomes.
- **Interviewing FFTF staff in June 2017:** Rocket Science interviewed the four Scottish Government staff responsible for supporting projects through the delivery of FFTF funded activities. Each staff member was the Scottish Government contact for several FFTF projects and provided support to these projects. These interviews were used to gain a more detailed understanding of the FFTF and get some early ideas on the impact of projects from the perspective of Scottish Government staff.
- **Nineteen case studies:** Rocket Science visited 16 projects to speak to staff and service users between July and September 2017 and March to May 2018, and interviewed staff and service users over the phone for a further 3 projects in July and August 2017.

The selection of case study projects involved an initial analysis of each project to ensure that the chosen 19 organisations represented a broad spectrum of types of projects including a combination of:

- type of participant they were reaching including age, gender, socio-economic status and ethnicity
- type of services offered, for example: community meals, cooking classes, non-food related activities
- location of service, ensuring a wide spread of local authority areas in Scotland and a mix between rural and urban projects
- type of organisation, including a mix between larger well-established organisations and newer or smaller community groups
- 11 ‘food justice’ projects and 8 ‘transition’ projects

Fifteen projects were initially identified by Rocket Science and agreed with Scottish Government. A number of these had experienced delays in getting their project operating by the time the review was undertaken. Selected case studies were replaced by other projects with similar characteristics which were felt to provide a fair picture of the varied projects funded. This was supplemented by a second round of case studies between March and May 2018 in order to talk to projects that had not been ready to engage in field research during our initial research period.

The projects we engaged with during our field research were:

	Round / Type	Delivery location
Beith Community Development Trust	1 - Food Justice	North Ayrshire
Bridging the Gap	1 - Food Justice	Glasgow
Castlemilk Parish Church of Scotland	1 - Food Justice	Glasgow
Central and West Integration Network	1 - Food Justice	Glasgow
Kate’s Kitchen	1 - Food Justice	Dumfries & Galloway
Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust	1 - Food Justice	Highland
Pilmeny Development Project	1 - Food Justice	Edinburgh
Pilton Community Health Project	1 - Food Justice	Edinburgh
St. Paul’s Youth Forum	1 - Food Justice	Glasgow
Stepwell Consultancy Ltd	1 - Food Justice	Inverclyde
Yoker Parish Church	1 - Food Justice	Glasgow
Woodlands Community Development Trust	1 - Food Justice	Glasgow
Start-Up Stirling	1 - Transition	Stirling
Edinburgh Food Project	2 - Transition	Edinburgh
The First Base Agency	2 - Transition	Dumfries & Galloway
Food For Thought	2 - Transition	West Dunbartonshire
Midlothian Foodbank, Gorebridge Parish Church	2 - Transition	Midlothian
Moray Foodbank	2 - Transition	Moray
Sauchie Active 8	2 - Transition	Clackmannanshire

During project visits, the aim was to speak to at least four participants in each project, as well as staff and volunteers where appropriate. In practice, a more flexible approach was taken: 104 interviews were conducted across the 19 projects together with a range of more informal engagements not formally counted. These were a mix of interviews with staff, volunteers and participants, including:

- 23 project staff
- 37 project volunteers
- 42 project participants
- 4 staff from partnership organisations
- 6 trustees of project organisations.

Some of these interviews were in groups and some were one-on-one. Interviews varied in length from two minutes to 45 minutes.

In most cases when attending project activities, staff had arranged for a number of participants to speak with Rocket Science during the visit. Further conversations with other participants, volunteers and staff took place opportunistically during the course of visits. In a few cases, project staff secured a separate room in which to conduct interviews and participants attended during various interview slots. For three of the 19 projects, we conducted telephone interviews.

A topic guide was developed for interviews with participants. While the topic guide was followed wherever possible, it was discovered that attending and participating in the projects activities was the best way to gain useful information and insights from participants, volunteers and staff. Therefore, the topic guide was applied flexibly in practice and information was gathered through conversation. This information covered what participants felt comfortable discussing.

1.4.2 Our analysis

We undertook an initial analysis of all 33 FFTF projects to understand their size, structure, services and outcomes. We then assessed how the nineteen case study projects were progressing against the dignity principles (Chapter 2 supported by Appendices 1 and 2). Finally, we carried out a thematic analysis of the 19 case study projects to consider ‘what works’ to engage people services (Chapter 3), data collection and governance (Chapter 4) and the impact of projects on food bank use (Chapter 5).

1.4.3 Limitations of our analysis

The topic guide for interviews with participants was intended to gather evidence on whether participants had made progress against a range of outcomes sought by the FFTF aims and objectives. It was found that participant interviews needed be informal in order to encourage involvement. As discussed above, it was therefore felt that the topic guide should not be followed too closely. While this meant that specific answers to all the questions were not available, we were able to produce a

thematic analysis of the key messages – drawing on quotes and evidence from projects. This is supplemented by 19 detailed case studies telling the stories of a number of the FFTF projects.

It was difficult to collect information on the governance arrangements in projects. Many of those that were spoken to within the projects were individuals who had an operational focus and felt less able to discuss governance arrangements within the organisation or service. The conclusions that were able to be drawn on governance best practice from information collected are outlined in Chapter 4.

2 Fair Food Transformation Fund Outcomes

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first provides some general information regarding the FFTF, drawing on data from all projects. The latter four sections contain our findings relating to outcomes from FFTF projects, drawing on the 19 case studies. These sections explore: how projects modified their services to ensure the dignity of participants was paramount, how projects were able to provide emergency food aid in a way that preserved their participants' dignity, how projects tried to address food insecurity and the relationship projects built between communities and the services they provided.

2.1 About the Fair Food Transformation Fund Projects

The infographic on the next page outlines the key features of the FFTF across the two rounds covered by this review.

2.1.1 Participant numbers

The number of participants who accessed FFTF projects varied. Projects reported that there could be between 60 participants (e.g. regular users) or 2,500 participants (e.g. people engaging with the service for a one-off event). Some were additionally working indirectly with a larger number of people – FareShare partnerships were an example of this. Most projects reported a regular attendance (e.g. at weekly meetings or drop-in sessions) of between 10 and 200 people. Volunteer numbers increased with FFTF funding level, and were between five and 20 people for most projects. Projects reported that these volunteers were able to develop skills and receive training during the projects.

There were challenges in providing an overall estimate on participant numbers across all projects due to the various data collection methods being employed by different projects. With this proviso, we would estimate that the 33 projects were regularly working with around 2,000 participants and had engaged, in some capacity, with around 12,000 participants.

Demographic data describing participants was not available from most projects. Despite this, many described seeing a mix of demographics engaging in their services – for example, isolated older people, low income families. Some projects found themselves – by chance or design – working with specific groups.

FAIR FOOD TRANSFORMATION FUND

Project Analysis

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PROJECTS WERE AWARDED GRANTS FROM THE FUND BETWEEN **SEPTEMBER 2016** AND **JANUARY 2017**

19 "Food Justice" projects funded from September 2016

58%

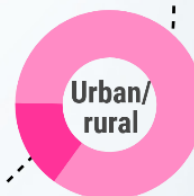
14 "Transition" projects funded from January 2017

42%



33 projects covering **14 of the 32** Scottish local authority areas, predominantly in **Edinburgh and Glasgow**

28 projects were in urban areas



5 projects were in small towns or rural areas

60% employed **one or two** staff

40% employed **3-10** staff



Projects most commonly had between **1 and 10** volunteers

21% of projects targeted a **particular group** e.g. ethnicity or age

The remaining projects were for the **broader community**

PROJECT ACTIVITY



2.1.2 Project activities

The projects ran a wide range of activities, including: food-related activities (lunches, breakfasts, evening meals and/or cafes); ways of accessing free or cheap groceries such as communities' larders; gardening workshops; food handling training; and one-off community events with food and entertainment. These were run alongside: English classes, budgeting skills, income maximisation clinics or music workshops, to name a few examples.

Project opening hours varied considerably depending on the sorts of activities projects provided. Not all projects provided information. Some cafés opened four days per week or provided meals four evenings a week, while others ran a community meal, drop-in sessions, or classes weekly or fortnightly.

2.2 Projects were developing more dignified approaches to addressing food insecurity

All FFTF projects adopted some of the dignity principles originally laid out by the Independent Working Group. Recognising the social value of food was the principle most commonly practiced by projects. Many projects struggled to provide participants with greater ability to make choices. This was largely driven by the limited foods the projects had access to, resulting from constrained resources for creating meals and food parcels. Where choice was provided, it was choice relating to how participants engaged with the project.

How case study projects progressed against each of the four dignity principles is described in more detail below.

2.2.1 Involving people in the design of services

Successful projects took the needs of the community to be foundational to the design and delivery of their service. Staff knowledge of the community and inclusion of the community in service design ensured services provided support that was relevant to their community. The involvement of local people in project design took many forms across the projects and did not seem to vary significantly between transition projects and food justice projects. One point of difference was that food justice models had more prior experience in involving participants in projects, whereas transition projects were more reliant on formal mechanics to increase involvement. Start Up Stirling was a particularly good example of staff and volunteers listening to what participants were saying in informal settings, and then modify service design accordingly. This stands in contrast to more traditional models that might formally survey participants about how they feel about a service.

Participants most commonly became involved in projects that encouraged service users to become volunteers within that same service, taking on responsibility for supporting or delivering particular elements of a project, or where committees of service users were established to discuss the development and improvement of the project.

St Pauls Youth Forum provides a good example of how prior participants can move into volunteer roles. One St Paul's volunteer, who had attended the service as a child, had worked with the project for eight years. This individual became important in structuring the FFTF project at St Pauls. They reflected on how the service numbers had increased, and how project work had transformed the surrounding derelict land into an impressive garden that provided food for the project.

“Now we've got the garden, a wood fired pizza oven we made ourselves from mud, and we've even got bee hives and that...got three polytunnels too. We had some hens, but the foxes got them, we are going to make the fence better and get some more. There's a performing space here too with speakers, and a projector.” -
Volunteer at St. Paul's Youth Forum

Similarly, the Everlasting Foodbank had a core group of volunteers who met with the development worker to discuss improvements. Importantly, many of the volunteers had been recruited from the food bank element of the project. This meant that those who helped at the community meals had direct experience of food poverty and understand the needs of others experiencing this better and what works.

“I know because I went to a food bank, to just keep it light-hearted, the students who volunteer at the food bank are great.... but they also don't really know, and it matters who does it...people need to have understanding, the more down to earth the better”

Talking about the food bank: “It's important they recruit from there, because that means they have experience and they actually understand”

Both volunteers and participants at the Everlasting Foodbank

Steering groups had mixed success across the surveyed projects. Yoker Parish Church were able to make a steering group, comprised of volunteers, participants and members of the church, work effectively to shape the future direction of the project. This success can be partly explained by the presence of community members on the steering group, and the resultant links between different communities in Yoker that the group established. The steering group had been carefully selected or, as a member of staff put it, “headhunted” for their local expertise and skills.

St. Paul's Youth Forum was also engaging its young people in the decision-making process. One aspect of this engagement was the youth committee, where young people were able to share ideas and have their say. This process had been made fun, meaning that the committee was well represented and attended. For those who were less vocal or confident, there was an anonymous suggestions box at the community meals.

Participants, staff and projects valued the bottom-up design and delivery of their services. For example, St Paul's Youth Forum carefully designed the location, hired the appropriate mix of staff (mostly men – their target demographic was young men in the area) and tailored the service around a male role model approach recognising the issue of violence in the area.

Ownership appears to be important for the dignity and sustainability of the project. A number of projects actively encouraged the community to take ownership of their services. In doing so, dignity was increased as the projects were something people felt part of rather than attending for help. It also encouraged the sustainability of the project as people took on more responsibility for the delivery and, in some cases, the expansion of the project.

Pilton Community Health Project (PCHP) was particularly successful in achieving this. Through a mixture of peer-led groups, alongside holistic support and good signposting, the project was able to empower participants. Two interviewees had gone on to create their own groups, contributing towards the sustainability of the project. The first participant-led group created was a single dad's group. As the interviewee was a single dad himself, he had both personal experience of the support needed and privileged access to local residents who might benefit. The second participant-led project was the creation of a community orchard on a disused piece of land. This was both creating an improved local environment and raising interest in the project as residents could see something happening. The ongoing support from PCHP was important to the success of both of these projects. PCHP's advice and expertise guided the project to sources of funding, equipment and assistance with any challenges.

Successful service design and delivery relied on nuanced understandings of the community where the project was embedded. Staff in a number of projects emphasised the importance of applying best practice to their specific contexts. In doing so, many recognised that a successful service model in one area may not be replicable in a different community.

Start-Up Stirling and Moray Foodbank are good examples of projects where staff have made an active effort to really understand the local context and what is needed. In both cases this has led to successful projects that have been able to expand. The desire to create something "Stirlingshire shaped" was the reason that this project chose not to become part of the Trussell Trust. Though they were careful not to "reinvent the wheel" they felt that by being independent they would find it easier to adapt to their community.

2.2.2 Recognising the social value of food

In many projects that emphasised social and community interaction, food became incidental and secondary. The emphasis on social and community interaction did not vary between food justice projects and transition projects. Transition projects did, however, present more options for people to receive food aid without any social element.

The most common ways that projects used the social value of food were through the use of community meals or by having food or a meal as part of a longer session involving other social activities - such as a knitting club or arts and crafts group. While food was still an important part of the projects, the focus on social interaction reduced the perception of the experience as 'food charity' for some of the interviewed participants. The social value of food was also important in "getting people through the door". Yoker Parish Church, for example, advertised their service as a "night out" and put effort into making the night special with tablecloths and candles to make it more like a restaurant.

Participants commented across projects that they valued the experience and the human contact that the services provided through food:

"I dinnae come for a tea, I come for a blether!" – Participant at Pilmenny Development Project

"We did a small evaluation a couple of weeks ago and realised that more than half the people are coming for the community not the soup. Because of our experience of emergency food aid, we know the amount of people who need emergency food, so the project was based on that. We knew there were lonely people too, but we didnae expect the amount of lonely people, and it's those same people that are coming back every week because now it's part of their social calendar." – Staff member at Food For Thought West Dunbartonshire

"It was not just learning about cooking but also a social thing because you're meeting other people who are not in the same situation but facing difficulties in their situation which they were coming here for." – Participant at PCHP

"Nowadays people just don't actually listen, it really helps to just have someone to talk to, to know that someone cares." – Participant at Start Up Stirling Food bank

2.2.3 Providing opportunities for people to contribute

It was found that a number of projects used opportunities for all participants to contribute as a way to blur the lines between the "helpers" and the "helped" – this concept is discussed further in section 3.3 of this report. In addition, a number of projects created more formal ways for people to contribute. At Food for Thought West Dunbartonshire, for example, many of those in need volunteer as part of the Christmas meal. Similarly, a volunteer interviewed at Kate's Kitchen had gone from not really cooking at home to teaching other participants at the community meals how to cook and even filling in for the chef on occasion.

These formal volunteering opportunities provided an important way for people to be involved and receive support without feeling like they were receiving charity, as illustrated in the box below.

“There are people that want to come for lunch but don’t wannae be seen as a client. They’ll come and volunteer and have lunch. We know that already because we run a Christmas dinner, this year will be our seventh. The first year we started we had 6 people, last year we had 98...the majority of 98 who came for Christmas day dinner last year, probably 40 of them were volunteers but they also ate Christmas lunch because they would have been at home on their own you know?... so, they come for their Christmas dinner under the guise of being a volunteer, it grows arms and legs on its own.” – **Volunteer at Food for Thought West Dunbartonshire**

“I help in the kitchen and sometimes folk... clients... will comment saying, oh I’ve never used sweet potato before, I says neither have I but I’ve had some grated it into a soup then blended it and had a pan of little cubes of sweet potato, just added it in with some ordinary potato and stuff, and it gives it a different taste, and she says oh I’ve never tasted it, and I says well do you wanna try it? I’ll bring a wee portion in for ya. Folk will say have you ever used a sweet potato or a parsnip? And I’ll say yeah, I have here, it’s good in soups, or you can put it in curries.” – **Volunteer at Kate’s Kitchen**

The Everlasting Foodbank exemplifies how FFTF projects created a community in which people gave and received goods. All participants at the food bank were encouraged to donate to a clothes bank. There were also examples of members of the community providing for each other – one participant had curtains bought for their new flat by another participant, for example.

Generally, food justice projects were able to more consistently blur the line between “helpers” and the “helped” than transition projects. Some transition projects retained tighter recruitment methods for volunteers to ensure that they felt confident in their ability to respond to the perceived high level of need of their participants. Projects that recruited more heavily from their current participants found services being taken-up more readily. The reciprocal nature of the relationship these volunteers had with the projects reduced negative feelings towards using the service – people felt less conscious about using the services as they had already given their time to them.

2.2.4 Providing participants with the power to choose

There were a number of ways in which projects provided choice to participants. Several projects provided greater choice in how participants could access emergency food provision. A number of services provided alternatives to the traditional food bank practice of turning up at a certain time and receiving a set food parcel to take home.

Choice was further created in how participants received food aid from transition projects. Some transition projects recognised that their participants may not want, or be able to, attend community meals or visit a food bank. In response to this concern, delivery services run by volunteers were provided. This service worked to

engage those who otherwise would not be able to travel to a food bank due to: responsibilities, limited mobility or lack of transport.

Another step away from the traditional model shown by transition projects was in providing greater flexibility in the times that food banks were open.

“I’ve been previously to food banks. This one is slightly different, they are usually at set times and you need to get a voucher. They are generally only open for one for an hour or two, and you just collect the food parcel and go. It’s fine if you live nearby but not if you don’t. This is the only one I have heard of to deliver food and be so flexible, it’s the flexibility that is really helpful.” – **Participant at The First Base Agency**

Projects sought to provide greater choice in the food provided in community meals and food parcels. Given their reliance on food donations and constrained budgets, most projects found it difficult to provide choice in this way. One successful approach being used by a few transition projects was a ‘community larder’ where there were a range of products on display that people could choose from, rather than a set food parcel.

Moray Foodbank took this one step further and set up a range of community larders in a number of community service locations – a supported accommodation service where the food is available in the shared kitchen facilities, as described below.

“...the difference that it has made to the people who use our services is huge. There is that bit more dignity in being able to do our larder there, so residents can come in and have a wee look at what we’ve got, and it doesn’t feel quite the same as getting food parcels.” - **Staff member at a partnership agency of Moray Foodbank**

“For the first time, we are asking people what they want and that’s something that we are not very good at doing overall you know is it? With a food parcel, we don’t ask the people who are using it how they want it to work and how it makes them feel to be reliant on it.” – **Staff member at Moray Foodbank**

Projects attempted to increase choice around food by providing cooking classes for participants. These classes were met with mixed success across projects. They varied from having high uptakes and positive outcomes to not having enough interest to run. Food justice programmes had great success with their cooking classes as they engaged a greater existing community base. Transition projects needed to build informal communities and participant’s trust before users felt comfortable attending classes:

“What we’ve found is there are cooking sessions and things going on but a lot of them don’t really want to go. They want to do it here, where they feel a bit safer.... that’s why we’ve identified that, if we are going to support you, we need to find ways of making it work here.” - **Staff member at Moray Foodbank**

A large number of the projects involved in the study provided a range of other activities as part of their project – such as games, knitting, quizzes and crafts. Multiple activities often ran at once, enabling participants to choose when and how they interacted with different parts of the service. Generally food justice projects had a wider variety of other activities as part of their project than transition projects.

2.3 A more dignified approach to emergency food aid

The FFTF recognised that the need for projects to provide emergency food aid in the short-term could not be avoided. Therefore, it asked projects to look at ways in which traditional food bank services could be delivered and used differently.

All 33 projects provided at least some direct provision of food, with 31 providing food parcels. Among the 19 case study projects, 13 still provided emergency food as part of their mix of activities.

“I would say our food banks are being used by more people in different ways now. We have a wider network of people because they’ll come for the meals, and then they ask for more because they don’t have anything at home. We’ve probably a greater sense of need than we did before where it was only the real desperate people that would come, whereas now we have the people who are not at the extreme level of desperation.” – **Staff member at Castlemilk Parish Church**

Transition projects more frequently provided food bank services than food justice projects did, and were often more ‘traditional’ in their approach. Most projects had given careful thought about how to transition away from a traditional food bank model and increase the dignity of their provision. For transition projects, this was primarily done through the introduction of community meals.

Having a strong understanding and buy in by the project staff and volunteers to the principles of dignified food provision was vital to enabling projects to transition well. The one organisation that had not made as much progress as others was still working on achieving buy in from staff and volunteers about the importance of changing their approach, and staff and volunteers did not yet have the needed understanding of dignified food provision or the four dignity principles. Instead, the Fair Food Transformation Fund income was going to a partner organisation that the food bank saw as a separate and distinct service ‘over there’ that had little to do with their core business of providing food.

Projects that drew on visitors to food banks as a source of volunteers were able to accelerate this buy in as their experience of visiting food banks could help inform newer and more dignified ways of helping others in similar situations.

Transition projects, such as The Everlasting Foodbank and Moray Foodbank, tended to emphasise food quality and choice as critical to dignity in food provision, often as food provision was still the central focus of this type of project. This commitment was illustrated by a development worker at The Everlasting Foodbank, who emphasised the importance of tasting and eating the food, ensuring high quality by measuring the food against their own personal standards.

Kate's Kitchen and Central and West Integration Network improved the dignity of their food parcel provision by placing these in discrete locations within the project.

“It should be good enough for you. It makes me so angry when people are willing to give someone else food they wouldn't eat themselves, it sends a message...A lot of people don't have the money to go out for meals. I want to be able to compete with other cafes, be able to give people the restaurant experience without the price tag.” – **Staff member at The Everlasting Foodbank**

The Everlasting Foodbank had a card system which entitled holders to free meals. This offered discrete access to free food as the card looked like commonly held loyalty cards.

Start Up Stirling helped participants make better use of the food provided by handing out high quality recipe cards. While other projects also did this, Start Up Sterling had particular success. This might be explained by Start Up Stirling's supplementation of donated food with food they had purchased wholesale, as this increased their recipe's appeal.

As a result of these shifts away from the traditional model, several projects reported that the way that people engaged with food parcels was changing. Participants at Woodlands Community Development Trust reported feeling pleasantly surprised that the café was not like a traditional food bank. For example, one interviewee described the importance of having both the social benefits of a meal combined with food aid provision. This was deemed important for the dignity of participants. The Woodland's project shifted from a more traditional food bank model by providing a choice in what food the participants were able to take home.

2.4 Addressing the underlying causes of food insecurity

The models used by the FFTF projects can reduce the need for emergency food provision indirectly. The case study projects did this in three main ways. These ways are outlined below.

2.4.1 Improving people's ability to afford food by showing them how to cook cheap and nutritious meals

Many of the case study projects were doing this, with food justice projects especially adept at providing this service. This was achieved by demonstrating how participants could reduce waste in cooking by introducing users to new (cheaper and nutritious) foods and teaching them how to use these in their cooking, as well as helping them make food go further through bulk cooking.

For example, Beith Trust provided cookery classes for local parents. Participants were shown what can and cannot be frozen. Parents felt this reduced the amount of food they waste and helped them to make use of supermarket deals on products. Similarly Stepwell ran a 6-week cookery course for those experiencing food insecurity. This course taught participants how to use ingredients commonly found in food parcels to cook different meals. This reduced food bank demand by teaching participants how use food parcels more effectively.

It was found that transition projects that added a cooking element were less successful in gaining participants than food justice projects. Lower attendance was more acute when the cooking element was more formal. A partner organisation of Moray Foodbank explained that this was partly because many of their clients had chaotic lives and thus regular events could be difficult to attend, but also because 'formal' teaching classes had negative connotations for some people.

2.4.2 Increasing people's awareness of other support and services

Several projects sought to act as a conduit for their participants to access other support and services. A number of these projects were seeking to connect their project directly with these services, for example, by having Citizens' Advice attend or participate in their project. While some projects struggled to get direct engagement from external organisations, other projects managed to find ways to work with them and provide advice and signposting to participants through this. Signposting and direct engagement of other organisation proved equally effective in both food justice and transition projects.

"I've been getting to know the other agencies through this place, means I've got a foot through the door in other places, coz I know other addiction places and things like social workers, job centre, you get to know them face to face or through the phone, they know my voice. They always phone us, I get to know their voice too." – **Volunteer at Food for Thought West Dunbartonshire**

Involvement from external organisations ranged from formal sessions run by other organisations to (more commonly) informal support. This more informal support tended to consist of staff from other organisations participating in activities, such as community meals and being available to speak with participants throughout these. There were many examples of participants feeling more informed about what support they could access and how to access it. This primarily included: education

and training, benefits advice, or other community engagement groups and activities they could belong to.

2.4.3 Helping people to increase their income to improve affordability

A smaller number of projects were doing this. These activities included help to access training, benefits advice and job search. A number of the participants had been able to find employment, progress into training or increase their benefits as a result of the projects. In transition projects this more often took the form of income maximisation through benefit support, rather than progress into employment.

“Often people don’t understand things like smart meters. One of the biggest things is identifying the potential services someone can apply for, the grants they can get. Income maximisation is the thing that makes the difference. I act as a conduit to these services, and a rapid response.” –
Drop in Citizens’ Advice Bureau Advisor at Start-Up Stirling

2.4.4 Impact on uptake of emergency food provision

The three activities described above seemed to be leading to an increase in uptake of emergency food provision by those who would not previously have considered using a traditional food bank, as they were changing the perception of receiving emergency food provision. This was either through the food banks that several projects were running within their organisation, or through FFTF project activity.

A sustained reduction in the numbers of people who require emergency food aid must include long-term measures designed for moving people out of poverty. This was done throughout some of the projects, with examples of people being helped to move closer to employment, make better use of their money, and access welfare rights advice. The success these projects had at engaging those most in need provided an opportunity to address the underlying causes of their food insecurity.

For example, a volunteer at Woodlands Community Development Trust had managed to find paid employment as a result of the support they received at this project. Similarly, Castlemilk Parish Church offered very flexible employment opportunities for training and support, enabling a single parent facing multiple barriers to work to gain employment and new skills. One volunteer we spoke to at Food For Thought West Dunbartonshire suggested that the “people skills” and the connections they made through this project would help them to become a social worker in the near future.

Projects are unlikely to have the resources and expertise to tackle issues such as employment, education and training, health or social care barriers to employment or to provide detailed benefits advice. They can, however, establish a trusted relationship with their participants and an ability to help participants access other

help and support. In terms of the Employability and Skills 5 Stage Pathway¹⁸, for example, these projects fulfil roles in Stage 1 (reaching out to individuals, supporting people into regular activity and positive routines, and helping them to connect with others) and could help participants make progress to Stage 2 (providing information, encouragement and help to overcome barriers to employment).¹⁹ This is true of both transition and food justice projects, as both were effective in reaching out to individuals, supporting them, connecting them with others, and getting them to do regular activities.

2.5 The link between community development and food insecurity

The social value of food has had obvious impacts on the social isolation felt by participants. Social inclusion appeared to be a highly appreciated product of using the social value of food as a way into addressing food insecurity among participants, volunteers and staff. All projects sought to improve the dignity in accessing food insecurity by more closely linking provision with community engagement. All projects established some degree of a two-way relationship between community engagement and food provision. This link was particularly important for projects as a way to find new and effective ways of engaging people in need.

“The nutrition side is really important...but yes I also feel less isolated. I have more security knowing that I have someone there who will help me.” – **Participant at First Base Agency**

2.5.1 Creating a community

Across most projects, harnessing the social value of food helped participants to feel more part of a community that cared about them.

Coming together to share food through community meals, and participating in the other activities that projects had started, allowed participants to socialise in a way that improved their sense of belonging. Community meals were a particular important feature of transition projects, acting as a gateway between attending a food bank and becoming more involved in local community.

A number of projects succeeded in bringing together different groups within an area, increasing the sense of community between them. This was felt to be unlikely to have happened otherwise. Examples of this include the integration of refugees into the broader community and bringing younger people together with older generations. Participants discussed how they were learning more about people from different backgrounds and how this had reduced divisions within their neighbourhood.

“Quite a lot of retired people come as well and it’s maybe the only time of the day that they come out... It’s really important for communities to have a kind of focal point that they can come to.” –

Participant at Woodlands Community Development

Other projects were able to make use of the shared experiences of their participants to help

Employability Pipeline. Accessed at <https://www.employability-pipeline.org.uk/employability-pipeline/> on February 2018

vulnerable groups feel like they belonged to a community that understood them, their experiences and their challenges. For example, several projects used volunteers with similar backgrounds and experiences to participants. This seemed particularly strong in some transition projects, where the food bank element had been used as a supply of volunteers with experiences of food poverty.

Projects found that events and activities around food were an effective way to build their community. Communities became closer - discussing local issues and how best to tackle them. A range of other activities and projects were developed as a result.

Through community meals and drop-ins at the Barn, users met and formed new groups relating to specific needs. Several of these groups were not food-related. One example was weekly woman-only exercise class at the Barn. This class improved the attendee's physical health, but also acted a safe space in which to socialise. Such non-food related groups were more common as part of food justice projects.

"I'm just on my own now, I'm divorced. I was used to a big family of eight brothers, and it's just nice to have that homely family feeling again. That's because of the meals... wasn't anywhere to go otherwise, not like this." – **Participant at Kyle of Sutherland**

2.5.2 Using this community to achieve food security outcomes

Community engagement activities appeared to be an effective way of attracting people facing food insecurity into services that could help them address this issue. This section provides examples of community measures that were used in order to increase FFTF programme usage.

The Central and West Integration Network timed their community meals to start as their English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes ended. The ESOL classes acted as a way into the project's services and participants became aware of, and comfortable with participating in, the community meal.

Performances and entertainment at community meals helped people to engage with food-related activities. Participants at Woodlands Community Development Trust remarked on the ability of communal music to bring people together, breaking down barriers that were otherwise hard to remove. It was felt that music fostered a positive and friendly environment, acting as a "focal point" for the community. This both increased uptake of community meals but also contributed to the integration of different cultures as they were able to share their music with one another. This cultural integration was reducing barriers between different cultures in the neighbourhood, and in doing so building a stronger sense of community.

Arts and crafts classes were one of the most common ways that projects encouraged engagement in food-related activities. These types of groups existed at many of the projects visited, including Pilmeny Development Project, Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust, Kate's

"It's amazing the amount of other cultures that actually come...music definitely brings them out of their shell." – **Participant at Woodlands Community Development Trust**

Kitchen, Bridging the Gap and Beith Community Development Trust, among others. Several participants had become involved in community meals and food-related activities through initial engagement with arts and crafts groups. For example, at Kate's Kitchen one participant mentioned that they had become part of the healthy eating class through initially being involved in the sewing group.

Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust had a range of projects wrapping around its community meals. Outreach work with elderly people in the community, such as the "cosy homes" winter project, acted to promote their community meals through word of mouth. Staff from Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust carried out home surveys for elderly residents, helping to ensure they had warmth in the winter:

"It was excellent for older people, they checked the houses for insulation and gave advice on draft exclusion, heavier curtains, craft group for knitting blankets, super idea." – **Participant at Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust**

Positive initial experiences, as above, increased people's interest in the project and in finding out what other services they were providing. People were more likely to attend community meals after being involved in these wider community projects as they already had familiarity with, and therefore trust in, Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust.

At Kate's Kitchen and Stepwell Consultancy Ltd, relationships formed first within the projects extended beyond this, thus building the local community. This can be exemplified by a participant at Stepwell. The participant developed a friendship with a homeless participant while attending a cooking class. This friendship reduced both of their social isolation and resulted in stronger community ties.

"I started helping one girl who is homeless. She keeps calling and we meet up sometimes. She gets along with my daughter as well, which is important because she is quite isolated due to illness." – **Participant at Stepwell Consultancy Ltd**

"People are sharing and supporting one another within the cook school and I see that continuing beyond the cook school." – **Staff Member at Stepwell Consultancy Ltd**

St. Paul's Youth Forum used community engagement activities to identify the barriers its participants faced in increasing their income to move out of food insecurity. The combination of informal conversations with participants at community meals, points raised from its youth committee and input from local volunteers and staff, led to a recognition that local transport links were poor and that this was being compounded by a lack of access to private vehicles among residents. These factors restricted local people's ability to travel, and so the opportunities they could access. As a response to this they provided participants with access to bicycles.

For at least one participant this enabled them to sustain a job they would otherwise not have been able to. Others felt that the lack of reliable transport impeded their access to social events. Another participant had previously lost a job due to punctuality problems brought about by unreliable public transport.

3 What works to engage people with services

All projects identified user engagement as a barrier to addressing food insecurity. Many projects managed to engage users who they felt would have otherwise remained outside of their services. Consequently, the measures employed by FFTF projects to successfully engage users are applicable not just to future food insecurity reduction, but to public services more broadly

From this analysis it appears that five things tried by these projects worked particularly well at increasing engagement in services:

- Finding “hooks” into the project
- Allowing people to “test the waters”
- Blurring the line between the “helpers” and the “helped”
- Providing flexible ways for people to engage with the support
- Providing “space” for participants.

Each of these are discussed in more detail in this chapter.

3.1 Finding “hooks” into the project

Several of the projects spoke of the benefits of finding “hooks” into their services – measures that raised awareness of the fun and benefits of participating in a project. Beith Community Development Trust and Castlemilk Parish Church are both projects that have successfully used one-off events to attract participants who went on to use the FFTF project regularly. Having such hooks appeared slightly more feasible in food justice projects than in transition projects - perhaps because these projects were more accustomed to running one-off or less food-related events.

As part of its broader non FFTF-related activity, Beith Trust runs an annual festival for the whole community, providing food, as well as music from local young people. When talking to staff, there was a feeling that this event was integral to the Trust’s success. Staff mentioned that community projects often overlooked the most effective ways to engage people. It was remarked that normal activities, such as eating and drinking, were sometimes the best way of people who would otherwise not be engaged, especially when part of a local festival or similar event. The festival was very popular with local residents and had encouraged participation in other Beith Trust activities. Castlemilk Parish Church also successfully used a one-off event as a hook.

“We had a fun day at Castlemilk, they asked if we would do a community meal. The fun day is in loads of places, it was everywhere, we wanted everybody to come here after it and have a meal, and it was so successful, think we fed about 180...I think out of that 180 that came through the door, it was only 30 that were regulars here, some of them also came back.” – **Staff member at Castlemilk Parish Church**

The popularity of Beith Trust's event's shows the potential that such hooks have to engage with the wider community and to engage people effectively in support activity.

3.2 Allowing people to “test the waters”

Projects felt that many people were less likely to engage in services they were not familiar with. Therefore, providing ways for participants to gain knowledge of, and grow comfortable with, the project before participating was important. Several different projects - including Pilmey Development Project, Kate's Kitchen, The Barn at Bridging the Gap and Castlemilk Parish Church - increased awareness of their projects by having a range of activities running at the same time within their project. This exposed potential participants to the projects. Castlemilk Parish Church and Kate's Kitchen ran activities such as community meals at the same time as a more traditional food bank service to encourage food bank users to engage in their FFTF project. This strategy was employed by both

“I would just sit in the corner and do nothing. Then I progressed...I started the wee crafts course...but I still sat in the corner...started helping out in the kitchen, doing teas and coffees... and then the healthy eating and the garden.” – **Participant and Volunteer at Kate's Kitchen**

transition and food justice projects.

“He brought me a couple of times you know, until I got used to coming. I started off in the other room, just a face and that sort of thing, but then I got into the gardening... I've really enjoyed it so far.” - **Participant and Volunteer at Kate's Kitchen**

“Some might come to get food...at a time they know is a community meal time, and part of that is about testing the water...Is it safe? What goes on here? Who comes? What's the food like?” – **Participant at Castlemilk Parish Church**

Kate's Kitchen had been very successful in counteracting participants' initial hesitation. The majority of those interviewed had initially come believing that they would never participate fully in any activities. The project gave them the space to do things at their own pace and test out activities without being overwhelmed.

Castlemilk Parish Church adopted a similar approach. As shown in the box, a participant described how “testing the waters” enables participants to become familiar with how the project operates and who attends. This reduces the anxiety participants feel when engaging and allows them to make a more informed decision about whether they wish to participate, increasing their autonomy.

The junior youth group, part of Bridging the Gap, also had several activities occurring at once. Young people could play football, Xbox, board games or pool, get support with homework and do arts and crafts alongside taking part in the community meal.

3.3 Blurring the line between the “helpers” and the “helped”

One of the many reasons why people do not use food banks is that they feel stigma or a sense of shame associated with attending. They do not want to be seen as needing charity.²⁰

Many projects attempted to reduce the hesitancy surrounding food aid by removing the traditional dynamic of “helper” and “helped”.

Projects achieved this in a number

of ways, including: recognising that everyone has something of value to offer, not setting eligibility criteria, welcoming everyone upon arrival and employing volunteers with personal experience of food insecurity or adversity.

Many projects were implicitly using an asset-based approach to their project. An asset-based approach recognises that everyone has something to offer - skills, knowledge or experience. This approach is intended to make all participants in a service feel as if they can contribute to it. Castlemilk Parish Church consciously used an asset-based approach. The importance of this approach had been explicitly recognised, and effort was made by staff to treat everyone as a “giver”, as well as “receiver”. In practice, this meant talking to participants, identifying their

personal strengths and emphasising these whether that was the ability to give a donation, chat to someone over a meal or provide entertainment.

“A lot of the youngsters now recycle, they’ve been learning [from us] that when you are sewing and knitting you don’t throw away the end bits... Nothing is set in stone, no classes as such, all informal, all sharing experiences. In a way it makes us all equal...nobody feels inferior.”

“More and more I’ve learnt things from young people. Didn’t realise how useful the internet could be!... nothing formal about it, it’s just coming together... Excellent improvement in the community.”

- **Participants at Kyle of Sutherland**

Several other projects were using a similar approach but had not identified this as being asset-based. This was the case across food justice and transition projects. Within such projects, giving often took the form of a focus on learning from one another. Rather than people learning through formal classes with a teacher, participants shared experience and knowledge with one other.

As part of the Kyle of Sutherland project, participants could attend an arts and crafts group. Though this had no formal structure, there was evidence of

²⁰ Go Well (2016) Food bank use among residents of Glasgow’s deprived neighbourhoods. Briefing Paper 28. Glasgow Community Health and Wellbeing Research and Learning Programme.

mutual learning from different groups within this group. Older members of the group taught younger members to crochet. In return, older members were able to learn about technology.

This sentiment was echoed in the Pilmény Development Project, where younger and older generations were learning skills from one another. For many of the older participants, this project gave them the opportunity to pass on skills and share their experiences, and the chance to get out of the house several times a week. Younger and older participants were building trusting relationships with one another, which improved the confidence and wellbeing of both, and gave many of the older volunteers a sense of purpose. Some of the older users reported that these interactions gave them a new lease of life, even lifting them out of depression.

“It’s like watching your own grow up.”

“I was going through a period where it was like depression, coz I was waitin’ for an operation eh, and this worked wonders for me.”

– **Volunteers at Pilmény Development Project.**

“It’s for everybody, doesn’t matter your faith, your circumstances, the welcome is the exact same for everyone...people go home to all different homes, different situations, but for those few hours, they’ve had wonderful company, a wonderful meal, a lotta laughter, and just feel, yeah I belong.” - **Participant at Castlemilk Parish Church.**

In order to blur this line between donor/volunteer and recipient, projects set no eligibility criteria. As projects were usually established in areas of deprivation, it was common for their participants to be experiencing some degree of food insecurity. Woodlands Community Development Trust had originally targeted people but had found that labelling people as “vulnerable” or “disadvantaged” made the project unattractive. They felt that they were able to target people more effectively once these labels were removed. Foundational to establishing this inclusion was all participants receiving the same welcome upon arrival to the programme.

Having volunteers with experience of food insecurity, or other experiences of adversity, was an effective way of providing informal support for participants facing other issues. There was evidence of this from interviews at Pilton Community Health Project, Kate’s Kitchen, The Everlasting Foodbank and Castlemilk Parish Church, but it was most evident when speaking to volunteers at Food For Thought West Dunbartonshire and Woodlands Community Development Trust. For one participant who had recently been in jail, talking to volunteers who also had this experience had helped them to feel that their life could improve.

“Everybody who volunteers is recovering from something, d’ya know? Drugs and things.” – **Volunteer at Food for Thought West Dunbartonshire**

A participant at Woodlands Community Development Trust explained that recovery from severe mental health problems was being supported by the social elements of

the project. Similarly, their participation allowed others who suffered from mental health problems to feel more comfortable. This again exemplifies how volunteers and participants were made to feel equal.

3.4 Providing flexible ways for people to engage with the support

Some projects felt that for some participants formal services and authority figures may have negative connotations, resulting from school, work or social services. It was felt that this would, in turn, put some participants off projects that used formal structures or classes.

Several projects, such as Bridging The Gap, St. Paul's Youth Forum, Castlemilk Parish Church, Beith Community Development Trust and Woodlands Community Development Trust had come up with ways to address the needs of their participants without structure or authority. Key to this was to have support on offer, but to also emphasise the optional nature of this support.

“What we did do was change our approach with our youth work. We had more or less a curriculum drawn up with sessions... what happened was that the young people stopped coming in. We had a kind of amnesty evening where we asked the guys back in, had a bit of a pizza night and asked: So why are you not coming in? They said they don't wannae do that, don't want the structure to the youth work.” –

Staff member at The Barn

The Barn provided flexibility by discounting their initial workshops and instead providing “really informal learning”, as described in the box. This entailed restricting cooking workshops to informal help with cooking community meals, and renaming sessions so they were not called “classes” or “workshops”. Moreover, young participants would take turns cooking each week instead of participating in a weekly class. This meant that the young people had autonomy over what they chose to cook. Incorporating learning was still

of paramount importance to the staff, and lessons were being learnt by the young people – food safety and hygiene, cooking meals on a large scale – without these lessons being explicit aims of the session. Staff felt this made for a “really free flowing” session.

Despite the informal nature of the learning, the administration of the project was formal – much time and work was put into ensuring that the learning was there. Regular staff meetings and development sessions meant that everyone understood what they were trying to achieve. The informal approach allowed for staff outcomes to be met and lessons to be learnt by participants. Maintaining participant interest was, however, more complicated.

Castlemilk Parish Church recognised that formal talks by services would detract from the feeling that its community meals were a social event, instead giving the impression that they were providing a charitable service. To avoid this, the project invited frontline staff from various services to join the community meals.

Similarly, Woodlands Community Development Trust invited welfare advisors to the café who were able to give advice informally. One participant mentioned that this was a great way of accessing other services as participants did not need to make an appointment.

St. Paul's Youth Forum were balancing respect and boundaries, without the negative connotations of other authority figures.

“You can just relax here, you don't have teachers shouting at you and all that, they don't shout here...here they will push you, but they'll make it seem as if they're not pushing you.” –

Participant at St. Paul's Youth Forum

3.5 Providing “space” for participants

Most projects allowed participants to choose how much they engaged in the activities. At Kate's Kitchen and Pilton Community Health Project, volunteering was not regimented. Participants appreciated this as they were not expected to volunteer if they did not feel able to. This was particularly important for those with physical and learning disabilities, mental health issues or uncertain situations.

At Pilmeny Development Project, activities changed from one week to the next and there were usually several occurring simultaneously. Some would be more interactive than others. This enabled participants to engage as much or as little as they wanted. Activities, to date, have included computer games relating to food, many different arts and crafts sessions, blind food tasting, cooking, nature walks and trips out. There was always a community meal at the end of the session.

3.6 Common challenges and lessons learned

3.6.1 Sustaining momentum

The projects involved in the study were enthusiastic for change but felt constrained by funding. If projects were stretched then food provision, including food parcels, would be more limited. This led to participants feeling less freedom and choice within the service. While there are many paid staff across the FFTF projects, it appeared to be regular practice for staff to work much longer than contracted. This was alluded to in interviews with project staff.

Several projects mentioned that while they wished to develop new ways of delivering services and to embrace the dignity principles, staff were concerned that they may not be able to sustain their projects beyond the FFTF funding. This appeared to act as a deterrent to change, with some projects feeling that it was hard to invest wholeheartedly in innovation and change given that the project may not be continued.

Some projects mentioned that they were worried about being overwhelmed by referrals from partners, including statutory agencies, and concerned that they would not be able to keep up with demand. Successful projects are valued by statutory services as part of the network of services available in their community. This success, however, meant increasing demands from these referring services without a financial contribution from them.

“Half the battle is doing all the work... [There’s] not enough funding to do proper data analysis, we can’t employ people to do evaluations when we have targets and outcomes, so this is extra stuff on top of what I am actually paid for.”

“The biggest challenge I have is funding really. I work 35 hours a week, well I get paid for 35 hours a week...I’m here from half past 8 till stupid o’clock Monday to Friday and I’m here on a Sunday...I can get called out at 2 o’clock in the morning, we get referrals from the police, so if for instance a family had moved into temporary accommodation because of domestic violence, they’d phone me. I do way more hours than reasonable.”

“I think if we got more than 60... financially, it wouldnae work. Scottish Government give us 35 pound per session, to feed between 6 and 10, we’re now feeding 40.”

Food For Thought West Dunbartonshire found that increasing demand restricted the quantity of food it could provide, and reported that donations from Marks and Spencer’s were going some way to addressing this increased demand. Castlemilk Parish Church had to review their portion sizes in response to the popularity of their community meal.

3.6.2 Reputation

For smaller or new organisations and services, building reputation was mentioned as a barrier to delivery. Projects felt that they needed time to build awareness and trust within their community in order to encourage participation. They found that word of mouth from those attending was a vital, but slow moving, part of bringing new participants into the service. Larger and more well-established services and organisations appeared to benefit from their existing reputation in attracting new participants into their projects.

3.6.3 Access to space and facilities

Transition projects in particular often felt constrained by the facilities available. Often the space they used was set up for the purpose of a food bank and finding ways to operate community activities within this could be difficult. Taking further steps into services that build communities around food requires upfront capital costs that are not realistically affordable for all projects in the near term.

In addition, participants in a number of services were interested in starting spin-off groups or additional services. However, they found it difficult to gain access to spaces suitable for these – for example, kitchens in schools for cooking classes. This reflects a difficulty found by many community-run services, where spaces are owned by a range of organisations, such as local authorities, churches or private owners. Consequently, enthusiastic participants who wish to set up other groups and services are faced with the often prohibitively difficult task of assessing spaces. In turn, this reduced the FFTF projects ability to empower communities.

4 Creating sustainable services

With FFTF providing short term funding, the main challenge identified by all the projects was finding a way to carry the service on when their FFTF funding finished. Almost all projects will need continued support from funders in some way. However, projects were taking a range of actions to reduce their need for cash from funders in the future.

These actions are relevant to increasing the scope and ability of communities to continue to support food insecurity. More broadly, they are also relevant in helping community projects support vulnerable groups.

4.1 Creating a community means that people reinvest their time and resources

Projects found it much easier to get volunteers and resources if people saw it as a part of being a community rather than contributing to a charitable cause. Moreover, if everyone plays the role of contributor and beneficiary, then many of the functions traditionally done by staff members or formal volunteer roles can be done by the community²¹ - for example, teaching cooking classes and organising donated food.

Several spin-off projects from FFTF projects had been initiated. A number of participants from a range of FFTF projects identified needs in the community and took steps to respond to them. It appears that FFTF projects had given participants the confidence to address problems in their own community and the knowledge to identify needs and set-up projects to address them. Two examples of this are illustrated next.

“We have a walking group...set up by a local...people are supporting each other outwith the group as well, started going to aqua-aerobics and things together. The two who started doing that together, the change in them from when they started has been incredible, they were so quiet and shy before whereas now they’re all pals.” – **Staff member at Link Up (Bridging the Gap)**

Pilton Community Health Project (PCHP) and Bridging the Gap had been particularly successful in helping participants to address community needs themselves. Two volunteers from PCHP had gone on to create spin-off groups of their own. At Bridging the Gap, several new groups had been set-up by community members, including a walking group started by a participant. This participant was already a member of a pre-existing walking group, but this was at “the other end of Gorbals”. They recognised that setting up a similar group in their local area had the potential to engage new people and would be of benefit to them. Initially Link Up staff supported the formation of this group by producing and distributing flyers. However, the group now had “arms and legs of its own”, requiring little assistance.

²¹ Note: we did not find evidence to suggest that all functions played by staff can be replaced by volunteered time.

The perception of Link Up staff was that the group had generated a range of benefits for its participants, including a local support network.

At Beith Trust, parents supported one another through socialising at the cooking classes and crochet mornings. One parent felt empowered to set up another crochet group at their nursery as they saw how much opportunities like this could benefit parents in their community.

4.2 Finding ways to generate income and reduce costs

A number of projects were finding creative ways to generate income from their activities and reduce the costs of delivering activities in order to do more with FTF funding.

Beith Trust used their Beith Beer Festival to generate income from people purchasing tickets, food and drink. They had rental income from hiring out the land they own for local sports, including their football pitches and tennis courts. More recently, Beith Trust had also begun to build and furnish flats within its grounds. These were providing employment opportunities to local residents and, when finished, will provide another source of income. The Barn's arts and crafts group had begun to sell what its members were making at local stalls. This sustained the group as more materials could be purchased with the money being made.

Many projects were seeking to reduce the cost of delivery through growing their own food. Using ingredients from community gardens reduced the quantity of shop bought food required, and so the cost of each community meal. This was a popular approach being pioneered by several projects. These included: St. Paul's Youth Forum, Kate's Kitchen, Woodlands Community Development Trust, Start-Up Stirling, Kyle of Sutherland, West Dunbartonshire Community Foodshare, Granton Community Gardeners, The First Base Agency, Community Renewal Trust, Midlothian Foodbank, Sauchie Active8, Penicuik Community Alliance Ltd and The Edinburgh Food Project. Several of these projects were successfully using garden grown vegetables for meals and food parcels.

Woodlands Community Development Trust provided a three-course vegetarian meal once a week at their pop-up community café using ingredients solely from their community garden and from donations (e.g. Tesco). When interviewed, one staff member explained that this was allowing them to only buy items such as oil and herbs with money from funders, freeing up money for other activities.

Transition projects sometimes struggled with costs, which could hinder their ability to expand into other non-food-related activities. It was explained that this was because existing infrastructure was set up for the specific purpose of a traditional food bank and changing this had costly overheads.

5 Data Collection and Governance

The following chapter considers the data collection methods employed by FFTF funded projects. It will outline and evaluate these methods. How these projects were governed, including an evaluation of that governance, will be discussed.

5.1 Data Collection

This section outlines the techniques used by projects for data collection, the challenges projects faced in collecting data, the extent to which they were successful at tracking impact and considers what worked for projects. There were no noticeable differences between food justice and transition projects in terms of their approaches to data collection.

5.1.1 Were projects successful in tracking their impact?

Projects recognised that having information on participants was helpful in the provision of adequate support. Collecting this data helped projects to provide context for participants' behaviour, feelings and actions.

Most projects collected data on attendance numbers and outputs such, as courses delivered and community meals run. Some projects collected exact attendance numbers or asked participants to fill in forms when they first attended. Others estimated rough numbers. Some asked participants for their initials, others for their names and others asked for no information from participants. Few projects collected data on the profile of participants. Instead, they relied on staff observation of participants to gain an understanding of the age, ethnicity and needs of participants.

Few projects collected outcome data directly from participants. Most used staff observations to gather views on the outcomes achieved. This was usually well structured and required staff to keep log books and/or have formal discussions where staff reflected on the activities and their impact. The Barn (part of the Bridging The Gap's FFTF project working with young people) reflected as a staff team after each session, using the eight principles of the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach.

“We build up a picture of how young people are doing and issues that arise for them. We are going to develop this further so that we can identify more easily common themes that crop up during sessions which should enable us to tailor sessions.” –
Staff member at The Barn

Some projects, such as Castlemilk Parish Church and St Paul's Youth Forum, used suggestion boxes to seek feedback on the service. In both projects, this took the form of a box into which participants could drop anonymous written suggestions. The location of the suggestion box was important; this needed to be obvious enough for participants to give feedback, but discrete enough for participants not to feel embarrassed about contributing.

From these approaches, projects appeared to have a good understanding of the nature and extent of their impact. Within the resources available for the project and what they were trying to achieve, we suggest that this mix of data and staff observations was an appropriate and practical solution. Funders need to recognise that more detailed and direct data collection will require further resources.

5.1.2 Data challenges faced by projects

While most projects recognised the utility of the data requested by the Scottish Government, some felt that the data collection was “very time consuming to do on top of the work itself” (staff member at one of the projects).

Small organisations were especially affected by this. Having few staff, often only one person employed, meant that allocating time to data collection was not always possible. Bigger and more established organisations were less affected by this. They were more likely to have practices, procedures and staff in place to effectively collect data.

Many projects were concerned that data collection could be intrusive. The potential for data collection to recreate the “helped” and “helpers” separation that they had fought so hard to remove was an issue. A number of projects also mentioned that gathering data was a challenge for them due to the complex needs of their participants.

“As the only worker in the organisation it would be nearly impossible to write a case note for the 70+ folk who use Community Soup each week.”

“It is difficult to collect personal information about mental health and wellbeing/depression/social isolation, income/finance/poverty levels of individuals, health conditions, levels of hunger - especially when we are working with over 30 individuals in the group.”

- **Project Staff at two different organisations**

“We started collecting more in-depth information about the needs and social and emotional development of the young people ...Some young people seemed quite shell-shocked and emotionally drained after completing them with staff.”

“I feel that the building of relationships...are much more in line with what we strive for than stats. ...for us to be as friendly as possible we only collect the bare minimum.”

“We have people who have learning difficulties, early onset dementia, severe depression/social isolation, autism, ADHD and English as a second language – which adds another level of complexity to how we can get detailed information from them.”

- **Project Staff at three different organisations**

Projects also discussed the difficulty of measuring some of the most valuable outcomes to them. Projects were confident about gathering data on their outputs - numbers attending community meals, numbers receiving training. But softer and indirect outcomes, such as reducing social isolation or building social skills and confidence, were seen by projects as the most important reason for their services to exist. However, these outcomes were much more difficult and intrusive to provide evidence for.

5.2 Project Governance

5.2.1 Governance structures

Thirty of the 33 FFTF projects were registered charities, many of which were Trusts. The three without charitable status were an unincorporated society (Granton Community Gardeners), a voluntary group (Sauchie Active8) and a community benefit society (Penicuik Community Alliance Ltd). Five of the 33 projects identified themselves as a company, four of which had charitable status (the fifth was the unincorporated society). Six were identified as church organisations, all of which were registered charities.

Case study projects generally reported to committees within their organisations. The type of committees varied across organisations, including a council of church elders, a community board, and a board of directors. These committees were generally responsible for making decisions regarding the direction of the organisation, funding opportunities and the type of projects to operate. Responsibilities were then delegated further down the organisation, sometimes to a manager or team of managers and sometimes directly to delivery staff. The extent of this delegation varied across projects - some project staff had responsibility for designing projects, while others retained programme decisions at committee or manager level.

Criteria for being appointed to these committees were generally:

- **Contributing a community view** – many of the committees were made up of community members. A number of projects involved current or ex-service users or people from the project's target population (e.g. young people) on their committees
- **Contributing an expertise** – for example management, fundraising or social work. A number of projects mentioned that it could be difficult attracting and retaining committee members in unpaid positions.

Following decisions made by the committees, many would then conduct public consultation to seek the community's views on their plans.

In most of the projects we spoke to project staff felt comfortable with the governance structures in place and felt that they understood their role within the organisation. They also knew where to go for help and what the escalation process looked like for conflict or issues. It was noted that some projects said that making fast operational decisions could be difficult if their committee members were very

hands-off. It was also observed that governance structures appeared to be clearer and more formal for the more established organisations, with newer or small organisations more likely to rely on a more ad hoc arrangement.

5.2.2 Governance success

Projects that felt confident in their governance structures and delivery usually had some combination of the following:

- A hands-on board with relevant skills.
- a united front as an organisation
- a great understanding and passion among the board, staff, volunteers and participants about what the organisation was trying to achieve, and the methods and motivations behind these goals
- a process for ensuring that staff and volunteers had the skills they were looking for and investing in these – with a focus on being relatable, approachable and from within the community
- active management of volunteers – which involved balancing being open to anyone contributing to the project, while ensuring that appropriate people were in volunteer roles
- spending time building relationships with partners to avoid mistrust and competition between organisations working in the same communities

“I think it makes a huge difference if you go along and really explain what you are trying to do and achieve and what the benefits are” - **Staff member at Moray Foodbank**

Projects largely fell into two categories: (1) offshoots of well-established projects or (2) completely new services. The researchers initially hypothesised that offshoots of well-established projects would succeed more easily because they would have access to the previous project’s reputation and infrastructure. However, both types of project appeared to be doing well. Two examples of each type of project are discussed next.

The Barn has been operating in Gorbals for fifty years and is well-established in the local community. Part of its success has been due to its ability to adapt and evolve to changing circumstances. Some groups are longstanding, with new activities being incorporated into them. Other groups were new or in their infancy. For example, both the junior and senior youth groups at The Barn had only just begun to have community meals as a feature. The project decided to include this element because it recognised a need for free food provision within the local community. As the group already existed, attracting clients did not present a problem and infrastructure was in place to allow quick delivery.

For comparison, Pilmeny Development Project was a new, small project which effectively delivered the FFTF outcomes with its New Spin project. New Spin is an intergenerational project in which older volunteers work with young people across a range of activities, including cooking, arts and crafts. Despite the Pilmeny Development project only having one member of staff (due to funding restrictions), the project was a success. Similarly, Food For Thought West Dunbartonshire was well attended and received despite one member of staff.

6 Implications for the Scottish Government and the Fair Food Transformation Fund

This chapter draws out the implications and recommendations based on this research.

6.1 The FFTF projects are providing an effective, value for money response to food insecurity

Most of the 19 of the FFTF case study projects appeared to be providing highly valued services for their local communities and demonstrated various models of addressing food insecurity in a more dignified way. Key ways that they were achieving both of these were:

- Their use of community engagement interventions to address food insecurity.
- Blurring the lines between those being “helped” and those “helping” to create a service where everyone benefits, and everyone has something to offer.
- Flexibility in service provision to enable participants to test the water where they were uncertain, and to choose how and when they engaged with various parts of their projects. This flexibility also meant that projects were able to provide for a wide variety of participants with a wide variety of needs.

These projects were delivering a range of services, often for a large number of participants, with a small budget. They appeared to represent value for money as they were seeking to improve their sustainability through:

- creating an environment where participants want to reinvest in their community
- increasing their income through identifying ways to generate income from the project’s activities
- reducing the cost of service delivery through growing their own food and forming partnerships with food donors

6.2 We recommend the following considerations and requirements are part any future funding round

In order to help more food banks make use of the FFTF and make progress similar to the current FFTF projects, we recommend that:

- best practice and lessons learned from the current FFTF projects are promoted to prospective applicants
- data collection should focus on key data needed to demonstrate progress against outcomes in a way that minimises administrative burdens on staff and minimises any risk of participant disengagement

- support to develop appropriate governance arrangements is targeted to organisations' needs as many organisations already have formal structures that appear to be working overall
- realistic timeframes are set for delivery and achieving outcomes

Each of these issues is discussed in more detail below.

6.2.1 Promotion of success and what works is key to motivating change

There are some important lessons that can be learnt from the current FFTF projects:

- What more dignified services look like – often projects are willing to change, but do not know how best to do this. The examples in this review act reflect effective practice and, furthermore, provide a guide for future services.
- How to modify service design while facing resource pressures and service demand. Services may struggle to know how best to invest their time and resources to modify their practice. Sharing lessons can give examples of how to do this.

The Scottish Government has a role to play in raising awareness among other emergency food providers about what works, and how to invest in change when time and resources are already stretched with ongoing service delivery.

We would recommend that all prospective applicants have access to case studies and information on what has worked well for FFTF recipients. This could include a visit to other projects to gain inspiration and insight.

6.2.2 Requirements around data collection

The FFTF projects studied have largely collected data on attendance numbers, outputs and staff observations to gain insight into the profile of participants and the impacts the project is achieving. This approach provided projects with insights into the nature and extent of their impact and was used to drive service improvements. Projects settled on this approach due to:

- limitations in resources available for detailed data collection
- concern that more intrusive data collection methods undermine the one-community environment they have created

We consider this approach to be appropriate and recommend that future FFTF funding encourages projects to structure their data collection around two approaches:

- Using a combination of data collected (e.g. on number of participants) and staff observations to ensure that data collection is proportionate (in terms of the resource required) and non-intrusive.

- Developing an outcomes framework or Theory of Change²² that is suitable for their service and outcomes. For example, the Barn uses the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) outcome framework to structure staff reflections on whether they are achieving their desired outcomes. This would ensure that staff reflections are robustly structured around the project's objectives and align with the Scottish Government's focus.

It is important for projects to collect the following data for reporting purposes and internal use in service delivery:

(1) at **application** stage -

- outcomes that projects want to achieve – within a relevant framework or Theory of Change
- outputs and activities – linked to the outcomes
- estimated participant numbers and profile

As outlined above, many projects were able to reach their desired groups without explicitly targeting them. A project can, for example, advertise a community meal as being open to all but understand that the attendees will still largely be from groups in need.

(2) for **ongoing** collection and reporting –

- core statistics on activities delivered and participant number and profile
- impact – as measured against their chosen Theory of Change framework

This information is likely to be gathered through a combination of staff observations and information from participants.

6.2.3 Requirements around project governance

On the whole, projects were part of an organisation with a clear governance structure. However, it is considered that there will be a subgroup of current and future fund recipients who will need support to build their governance capacity.

In recognition of the need to support organisations with project management and governance, the Scottish Government sought to provide support to projects by way of a mentor within the FFTF staff team. We understand that FFTF staff provided support to a range of projects. Several projects explicitly reported that they found their Scottish Government contact responsive and clear. We also understand that,

²² A theory of change is an approach used in the planning and evaluation of services. It defines the long-term goals of a service and works backwards to identify the processes through which this change will occur. It helps projects to more explicitly understand the link between what they do and the outcomes they achieve. It also helps services to understand the various intermediate steps along the way – such as increasing participants' confidence leading to other outcomes.

due to resourcing issues, the support available was less intensive than originally envisaged by the Scottish Government and a number of the projects.

We recommend that at application stage, information on the governance structure that will support the project is sought from applying projects. This information can be used to identify projects at risk of failure due to governance capacity and infrastructure. For those projects, we consider there to be value in offering projects a mentor who is able to:

- Provide an ongoing listening ear and advice around various issues or concerns project staff want to discuss
- Improve projects' understanding around what governance is and how to identify the appropriate governance arrangements for their project.

It is important that this mentor role is not seen to be combined with the role of the funder. Projects are less likely to raise potential issues and risks if they fear repercussions from funders – such as claw back. Therefore, the Scottish Government should consider whether it is best placed to provide this support directly. There are a number of third sector and community mentoring services that could be drawn on to provide support to projects in need.

To support this mentoring role, we recommend that the Scottish Government draw from available guidance on identifying and implementing appropriate governance arrangements. Guidance on governance is available from the Scottish Charity Regulator,²³ and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations.²⁴

6.2.4 Requirements around lead in time for projects

Funders must give careful consideration to environments that they create to allow small and new community efforts to thrive. Core to this is the lead-in time allowed as part of the funding agreement. Newer services, those who are not part of an organisation or brand, need time to build awareness, develop their reputation, and undertake the practical challenge of setting up a service.

Many of the 33 FFTF projects did not meet their originally planned delivery timeframes due to the aforementioned issues associated with new services. New projects had, for example, to build commercial-sized kitchens. Without attention being given to these problems, funders risk helping only established organisations and prohibiting the growth of bottom-up community development funds.

Many projects reported challenges in getting their project up and running. They also reported that it took time for the project to grow in participant numbers and start

²³ Scottish Charity Regulator. Managing a Charity, Good Governance. Accessed at <https://www.oscr.org.uk/managing-a-charity/good-governance> on February 2018

²⁴ Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. Running your organisation, Governance. Accessed at <https://scvo.org.uk/running-your-organisation/governance> on February 2018

achieving outcomes. This is particularly true for new or smaller organisations. This was driven by:

- A need to build awareness and trust in the community
- The practical elements associated with setting up a new service – for example, building a suitable kitchen and hiring staff. Projects that need to hire staff need time to adequately define the role needed, advertise, recruit and have the person available. Projects that need to acquire, rent or adapt physical spaces will need time to arrange this.

The timeframes set in the FFTF for project delivery and the delivery of results proved to be too short for most projects. We recommend that this be lengthened and some flexibility provided to projects to discuss realistic timeframes given the specifics of their programmes. We consider it reasonable to provide 6 months between the awarding of the funding and the time the service is expected to begin, and a further 6 months before they need to be achieving their promised outcomes. This may mean providing funding for a two year project, rather than single year funding blocks.

6.3 Contribution to reducing poverty and reliance on emergency food provision

The innovations undertaken by the projects are applicable to areas of poverty beyond food inequality. The success that projects had in creating and utilising community as a way to meaningfully engage participants in services that they had previously been hesitant to attend can provide lessons for: services in employability, social housing and homelessness, criminal justice, health issues such as mental health and addictions and financial literacy.

For services who struggle to make meaningful and positive engagement with communities, the lessons provided by the FFTF projects will be of interest to those designing such services. Employability services, for example, are commissioned using the Employability Skills Pipeline. This is a five stage pipeline that helps commissioners ensure that they have services that support all elements of an individual's journey to employment. Pertinently, Stage 1 of the Employability Skills Pipeline relates to the identification and engagement of job seekers and those who are economically inactive. The success the FFTF projects had with community engagement could consequently act as a guide for commissioners who are seeking to innovate their Stage 1 provision.

Appendix 1 Fair Food Transformation Fund Projects

In total, 34 projects received funding from FFTF. There were two funding rounds; the first round received funding between September 2016 and March 2018 and the second round received funding between January 2017 and March 2018. Three organisations that were successful in applying to the FFTF (Befriend a Child, Dr Bell's Family Centre and Basics Food bank) did not proceed with their projects. Beith Community Development Trust's project funding concluded in March 2017 before this review took place. The full list of funded projects, and the descriptions that they presented, are outlined in the tables below.

Projects funded during September 2016 – March 2018

Organisation	Project Description	Delivery location
Kate's Kitchen	Kate's Kitchen was created by Annan Churches Together, a group of five churches in Annan. It began as a soup kitchen open one day a week, but quickly expanded. Currently the project is open four days a week. Kate's Kitchen has three groups: arts and crafts, gardening and healthy eating. Community meals are provided, as well as cheap breakfasts and hot drinks. One-to-one support work is available and access to a food bank.	Dumfries & Galloway (Annandale & Eskdale)
Cyrenians	Extension of the successful Good Food Programme to include: community cook clubs connecting and collaborating with community problems in problem SIMD areas; a community eating space with regular breakfast, lunch and dinner events; and enhanced access to support, education and volunteering opportunities.	Edinburgh (Various surrounding areas)
Granton Community Gardeners	Creation of a community pop-up café at which people can share a meal, volunteer and hosting 6 large community meals to share locally produced produce in order to provide an alternative to the two local food banks.	Edinburgh (Granton)
Pilmeny Development Project (PDP)	New Spin is an intergenerational project within Pilmeny Development Project. Young people are referred into the programme by various agencies and take part in community meals and activities, including learning to cook. Volunteers are older members of the local community. Food parcels are available to take home. PDP also organises events and trips for its participants.	Edinburgh (Leith)
Pilton Community Health Project	The project works closely with local activists, grassroots movements and emergency food providers to deliver a range of activities including community meals, cooking and food sessions and workshops, developing local food volunteers and specialised food-related skills training. Activities are often peer-led empowering participants to create projects of their own.	Edinburgh (North Edinburgh)

Organisation	Project Description	Delivery location
Bridging the Gap	This project is an extension of existing high impact community provision. It is a partnership between The Barn, Link Up, TASK and The High Rise Bakers. Activities include monthly 'Come Dine with Me' community meals, weekly community drop-ins, a breakfast club, youth groups and a social enterprise – 'The High Rise Bakers' (which allows participants to produce and sell artisan bread).	Glasgow (Gorbals)
Castlemilk Parish Church of Scotland	This project provides fortnightly community evening meals with activities such as quizzes and bingo, as well as performances by local residents. A crèche is available, access to food parcels, opportunities to volunteer and receive training and paid employment opportunities. People are able to donate what they can afford through a donations box.	Glasgow (Castlemilk)
Central and West Integration Network (CWIN)	CWIN begun as a food distribution programme in 2012 with ESOL classes added later. In late 2016, CWIN began weekly community meals with funding from the Fair Food Transformation Fund. Opportunities to volunteer, participate in steering group meetings and receive training are provided. Access to free clothes is available at community meals.	Glasgow (Central and West Glasgow)
Community Renewal Trust	This project has established Govanhill Community Canteen as an alternative to the local food bank. The canteen offers 3 evening and 2 lunch-time shared meals per week, at communal tables for 400 people. The suggested donation is £1 per meal. Shopping, cooking and serving is done by groups of local volunteers using locally purchased, donated or grown food.	Glasgow (Govanhill)
Crookston Community Group	This project began as a food bank. It has expanded to include sit down meals cooked by participants. Participants are encouraged to come together to share multi-cultural recipes, learn how to plan meals, budget and shop smart (multi-buys, 'Sell by' dates, vouchers, coupons, loyalty cards, food labels).	Glasgow (Crookston, Pollok)
St. Paul's Youth Forum	This project started as a food bank but has expanded to provide more dignified approaches to food provision. Activities currently include weekly community meals with opportunities for participants to cook, growing groups, trips away, volunteering and training opportunities and paid employment positions. Facilities include a bike rental service, a handmade pizza oven, bee hives, radio station equipment and a chicken coop.	Glasgow (Blackhill, Provanmill)
Woodlands Community Development Trust	This project runs a free Pop-Up Community Café, with free 3-course vegetarian meals and a programme of cookery workshops. The café incorporates music and performances and uses ingredients grown in the community garden. Volunteering and training opportunities are provided, including employability support. The project provides access to welfare advisors at each community meal. The project has a community garden and a lunch club for families.	Glasgow (Woodlands)
Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust	This project has established a community café and shop, with provision of lunchtime and evening meals, alongside local gardening initiatives and healthy cooking on a budget demonstrations. Non-food-related activities include an arts and crafts group. Volunteering opportunities and training are available. The project distributes food, with home delivery for those unable to attend community meals.	Highland (Kyle of Sutherland)

Organisation	Project Description	Delivery location
Stepwell Consultancy Ltd	The project supports households facing hardship in Inverclyde by improving their access to, and ability to cook, healthy and nutritious food. A cook school aimed at increasing confidence and skills to cook affordable, tasty meals from scratch is supported by financial capability work and opportunities to access additional support including employability, financial assistance and social activities.	Inverclyde (Greenock)
Penicuik Community Alliance	This project has developed a community food hub consisting of a drop-in-café; community foodstore and training suite at 'The Storehouse' in Penicuik Town Centre. The project has been working with providers and users of the local food bank and hostel for temporarily homeless people.	Midlothian (Penicuik)
Start-Up Stirling	This project has been developing its food bank services into 'Beyond the Food bank' sessions, a place where people can come to share a meal on a 'pay as you feel' basis, learn new life skills (such as cookery courses and a 'Shopping on a Budget' project), volunteer and provide peer support to others affected by food poverty.	Stirling (All Stirling)
Nourish Scotland	This project is being delivered in association with the Poverty Truth Commission. It has been developing an evidence base and building capacity for moving towards dignified, long-term food provision in communities. It has done this through working with people with lived experience of food poverty to develop a 'dignity framework' for the alternative / community food sector. The framework will be used to pilot a series of lay person inspections ('dignity reviews') of services conducted by people with lived experience of food insecurity and to inform peer-evaluation and support among service providers themselves.	National
Beith Community Development Trust	This project runs a number of groups including: a Soup Group, an arts and crafts group and a gardening group. The project also runs an annual festival with local food and musical performances from participants. Volunteering and training opportunities are available. Facilities include football and tennis pitches, as well as a sensory garden. Beith Trust is flexible in delivery, providing cookery classes at a local school. With help from volunteers, the project is currently renovating one of its on-site buildings and constructing flats to rent.	North Ayrshire (Beith)
Calderwood Baptist Church	This project was a pre-existing food bank that sought to transition to a community café model. Each community café has bags of emergency food available free of charge, but a selection of good quality, low cost fresh food for purchase is also available, and several user-led social activities including a monthly meal.	South Lanarkshire (East Kilbride)

Projects funded during January 2017 – March 2018

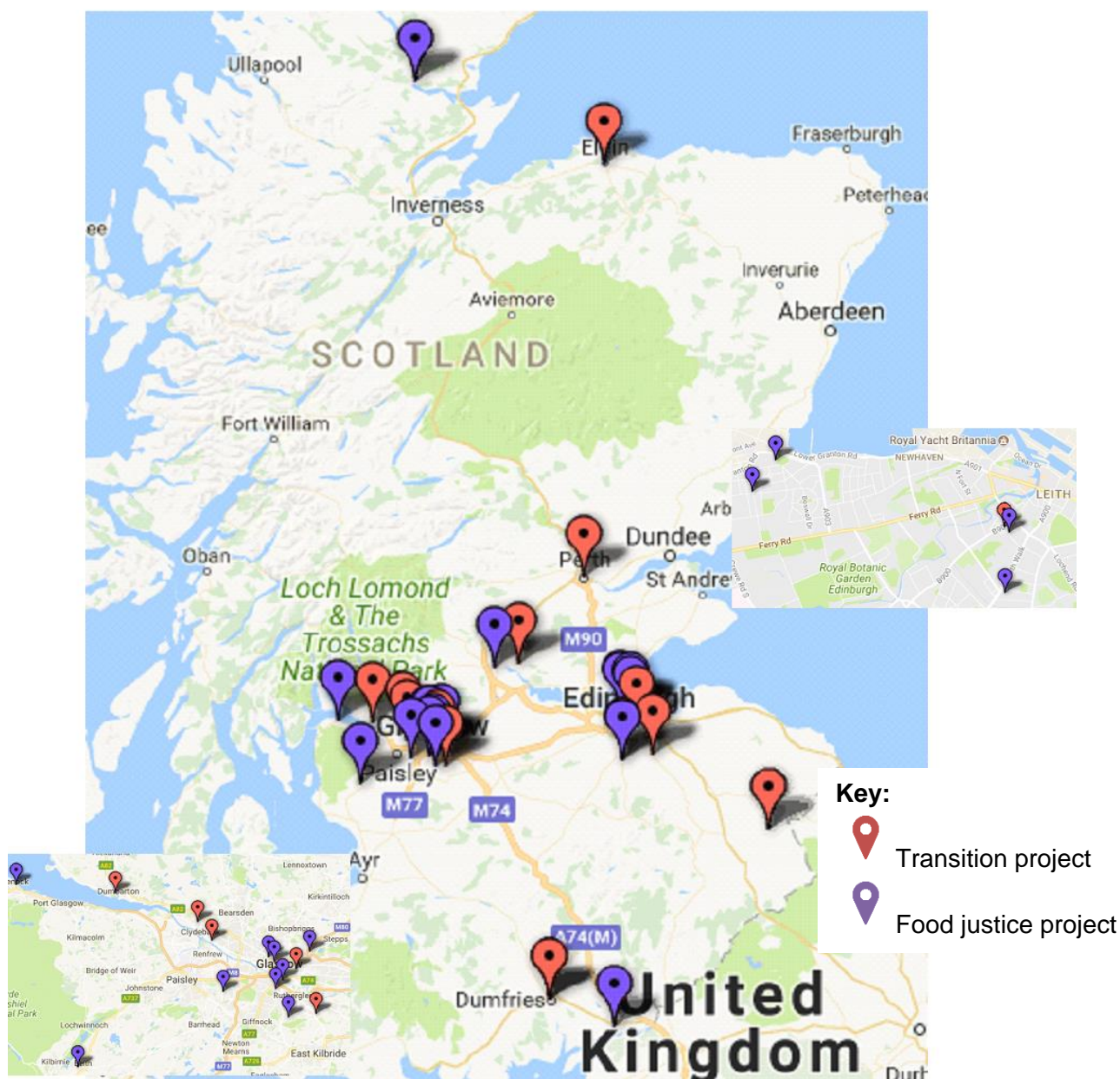
Organisation	Project description	Delivery location
The First Base Agency	This project provides food parcels to local residents, including home delivery. Activities includes a “Meal of the week” programme which consists of recipe cards, support and provision of ingredients. This is to encourage clients to cook nutritious meals for themselves. There is also a walled garden project allowing clients to grow vegetables in a 2.5 acre plot of land.	Dumfries and Galloway (regional coverage)
Apex Scotland	This project delivers weekly sessions teaching practical cooking and budgeting skills across the region to the most disadvantaged and isolated within the community. It has expanded its weekly hot food drop-in centre (currently operating in Stranraer) to Dumfries.	Dumfries and Galloway (regional coverage)
Cheviot Youth	This project consists of a café and Community Food Hub, offering members of the community the opportunity to be involved in the running and direction of the Café. Workshop courses covering Diet & Nutrition, Budget, Shop, Store & Cook and Baking are available for community members, especially those with lived experience of food poverty.	Scottish Borders (Kelso)
Oasis Food Bank (Redeemed Christian Church of God)	Cookery classes and community meals promoting the social value of food are delivered by volunteers. The project has plans to develop a community garden, growing fresh produce to be used in the preparation of the community meals.	Edinburgh (Gorgie)
Midlothian Foodbank, Gorebridge Parish Church	This pre-existing food bank, in partnership with the church Community Recycling Project, is developing community meal provision for those at risk of food poverty and social isolation. It is seeking to expand the availability of its emergency food provision, in conjunction with Tesco and their existing ‘Toot for Fruit’ project.	Midlothian (Gorbridge)
Edinburgh Food Project	This project aims to provide a broader solution to food poverty via a four-week cooking programme for food bank clients, bi-monthly cookery demonstrations and a growing space for clients to learn new skills. The project also offers starter packs of household goods and cooking appliances.	Edinburgh (City)
The Everlasting Foodbank	This project has been developing a multi-cultural café preparing community meals and offering members of the community the opportunity to be involved in the running and direction of these. The project includes cooking classes which aim to promote the social value of food and provide practical skills development for community members.	Glasgow (Denniston)

Organisation	Project description	Delivery location
Bethany Christian Trust	This project hosts community meals for rough sleepers over the winter months, as well as providing breakfasts in the Bethany Winter Care Shelter.	Edinburgh (City)
Yoker Parish Church	This project provides community meals and organises cookery workshops.	Glasgow (Yoker)
Whitlawburn Community and Resource Centre	This project provides affordable fresh produce and basic foodstuffs to the community two days per week. It works in partnership with the local housing co-operative and food bank, to support those experiencing food poverty.	South Lanarkshire (Cambuslang and Rutherglen)
Sauchie Active 8	This project is aimed at the whole community, promoting healthy eating. It has been working closely with partners at Clackmannanshire Alliance and Clackmannanshire Healthier Lives to create opportunities for participants to learn how to cook with few ingredients and on a small budget. It has been showing participants how to grow their own produce using the Sauchie allotments and operates a soup kitchen for those in need.	Clackmannanshire
Perth and Kinross Foodbank	This pre-existing food bank has begun to provide cookery classes and community meals.	Perth & Kinross
Moray Foodbank	This food bank has been developing a Community food hub, creating links with local retailers and redistributing food to community cafes, youth clubs etc. within the area. Funding is facilitating the purchase of large freezers, increasing the capacity to take fresh food. Community larders, where users can make their own choices on what to take and cook, are provided.	Moray
Food For Thought West Dunbartonshire	This project provides community meals weekly. Food parcels are available at the meals. Volunteering and training opportunities are provided. One-to-one support is on offer.	West Dunbartonshire
West Dunbartonshire Community Foodshare	WCDF has been an emergency food provider for the last 3.5 years. This project is looking to transition away from this model by providing learning sessions to improve skills and knowledge around growing produce, reducing food bills and cooking healthy, nutritious food using low power and on a budget. Food parcels will continue to be provided. Coffee mornings with a “pay as you feel” approach will be provided.	West Dunbartonshire

Appendix 2 Profile of Fair Food Transformation Fund Projects

This appendix outlines the profile of the 33 projects²⁵ that were awarded funding in the first two rounds of Fair Food Transformation Fund (first round September 2016 and second round January 2017). It also analyses the impacts achieved by the 13 case study projects that were the subject of our field research.

Figure 1 Map of the 33 project locations split by food justice and transition projects [Source: Created from Scottish Government data using Google Fusion Tables]



²⁵ This analysis excludes the research project conducted by Nourish Scotland funded by the Fair Food Transformation Fund round 1 in September 2016.

There were 33 projects that received funding from the FFTF to deliver services – 18 were ‘Food Justice’ projects funded in September 2016 and 15 were ‘Transition’ projects funded in January 2017. These 33 projects covered 14 out of the 32 Scottish local authorities, though some spanned multiple authorities. Projects were not evenly distributed across these authorities, with clustering around Edinburgh, Glasgow, Midlothian and Dumfries and Galloway. West Dunbartonshire and South Lanarkshire had two projects each.

Figure 1 overleaf shows the geographical spread of projects across Scotland. There is an obvious correlation with population, with most clustered across the central belt of Scotland, with particularly high densities in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Figure 2, shows that around half of all projects were in large urban areas (125,000 or more people). This was followed closely by other urban areas (10,000 to 124,999 people).

Two out of 33 projects were in rural areas. Five projects were located in accessible small towns or smaller. Accessible small towns are classified as “settlements of 3,000 and 9,999 people and within 30 minutes’ drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more”.²⁶ While this is not remote, for people with mobility issues or without access to a car, location could still present an issue.

Figure 2 Distribution of projects by settlement type [Source: Analysis of Scottish Government data using the 6-fold Rural/Urban classification]

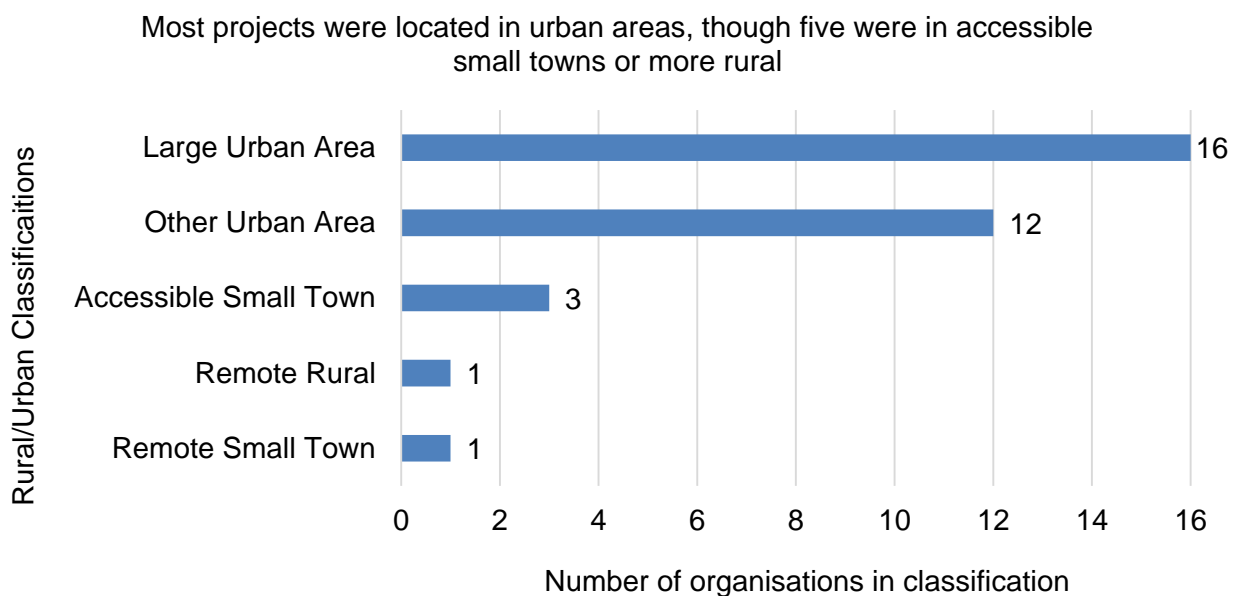
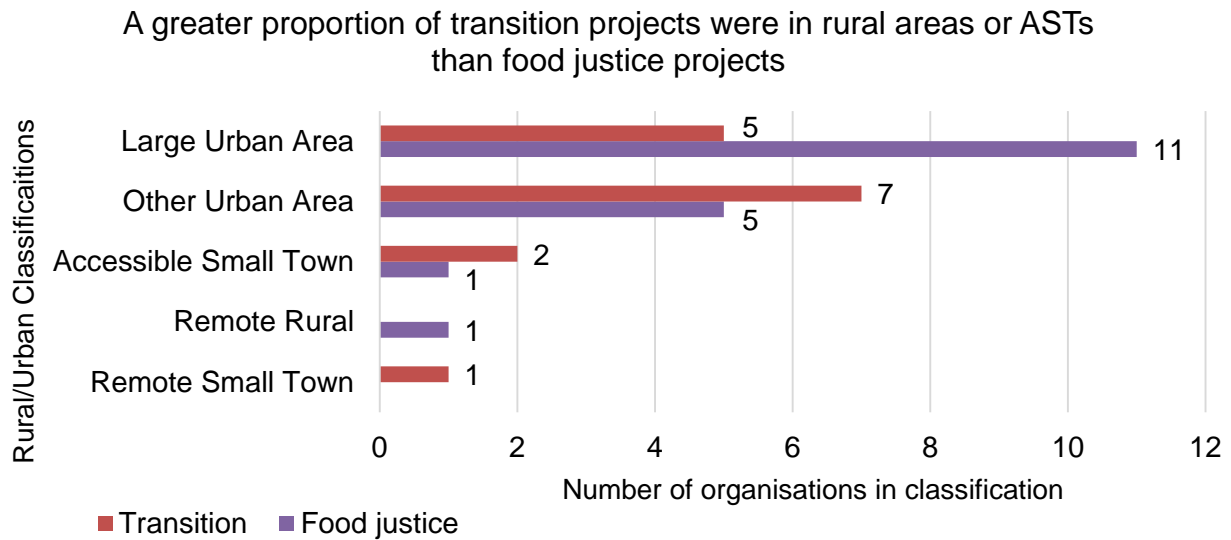


Figure 3 shows the majority of both food justice and transition projects to be in large or other urban areas. However, a greater proportion of food justice projects were situated in large urban areas than transition projects, and a greater proportion of

²⁶ Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification. Accessed at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification> on February 2018

transition projects were in accessible small towns or more rural than food justice projects.

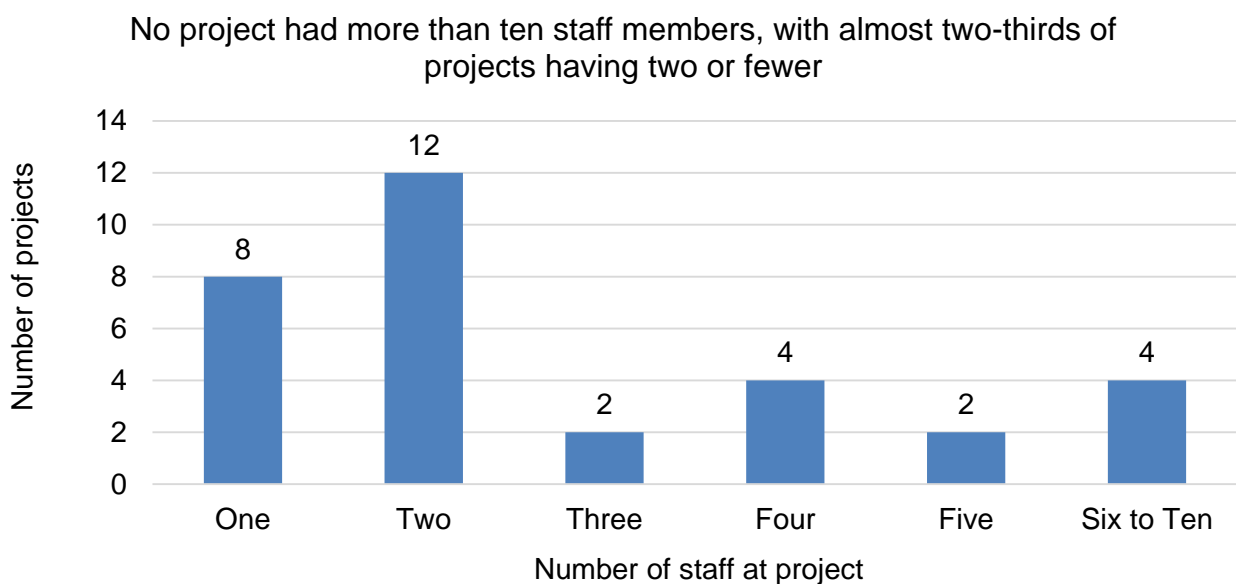
Figure 3 Distribution of food justice and transition projects by settlement type [Source: Analysis of Scottish Government data using the 6-fold Rural/Urban classification]



Project staff and volunteers

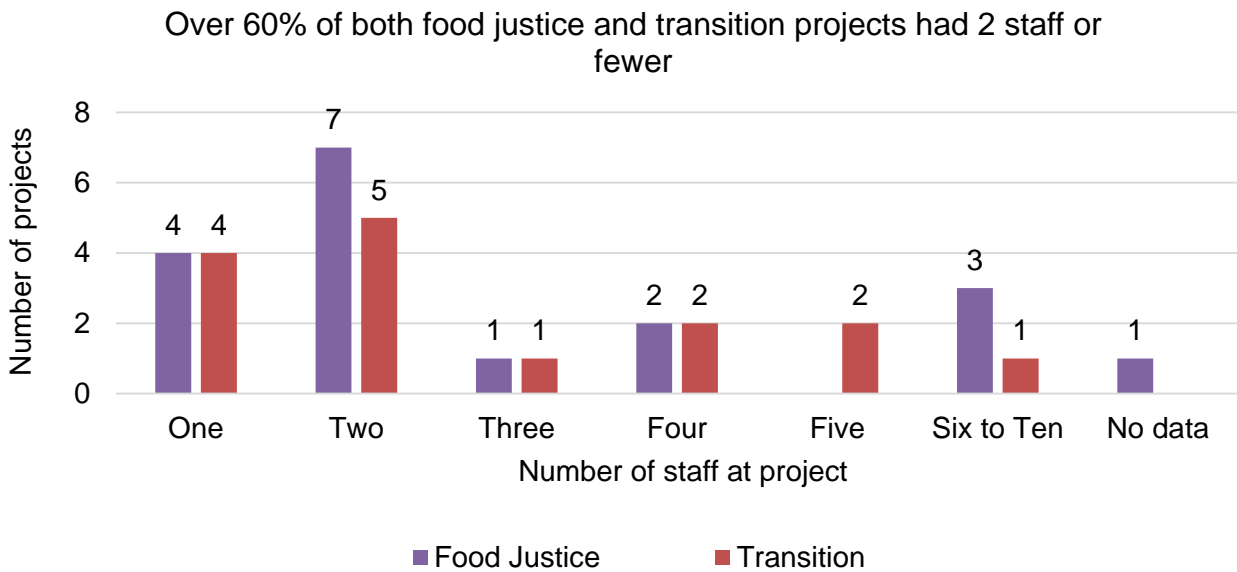
Staff numbers were fairly consistent -36% of projects employed two staff members (either full or part-time) and 24% employed one. This is likely to have implications for the capacity of projects to change governance arrangements and implement changes.

Figure 4 Breakdown of number of staff per project [Source: Analysis of project data]



Food justice and transition projects had similar distributions in terms of numbers of staff, with projects most commonly having 2 staff or fewer.

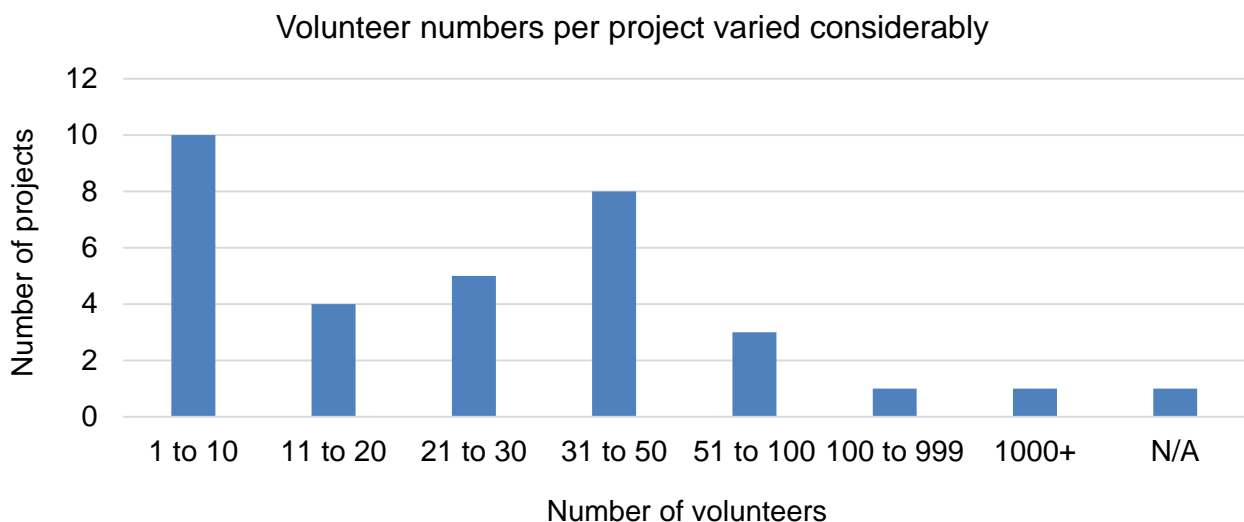
Figure 5 Breakdown of number of staff per project split by food justice and transition projects [Source: Analysis of project data]



While staff numbers were generally similar, projects varied considerably in the number of volunteers they had. More than half of the projects had between 1 and 30 volunteers, with 42% having 20 or fewer, but others had far more, with one project stating that they had 250 volunteers, and another, more than 1000.

This variation is likely to depend upon how projects classified volunteers, and the intensity of volunteering in different projects. As staff numbers at most projects were low, some relied heavily on a core group of volunteers who had a high level of involvement in the running and organisation of the project. Other projects, particularly those running community meals, had a great number of volunteers as any participant who helped out was seen as fulfilling this role.

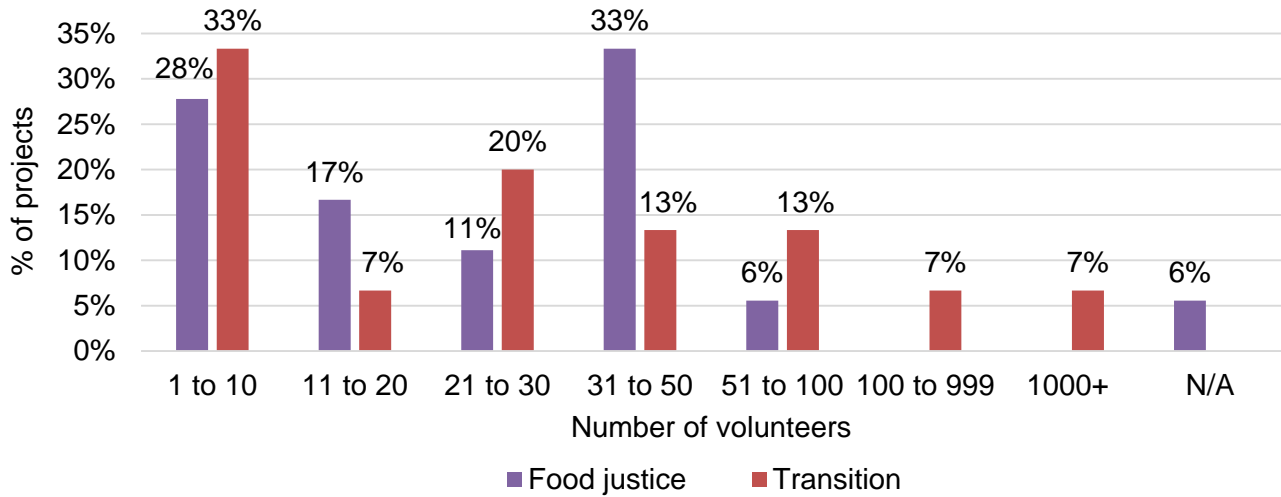
Figure 6 Number of volunteers per project [Source: Analysis of project data]



There was a wide range of volunteer numbers at both food justice and transition projects.

Figure 7 Comparison of the number of volunteers at food justice and transition projects [Source: Analysis of project data]

It was most common for transition projects to have between 1 and 10 volunteers, whereas the most frequent volunteer range for food justice projects was 31-50

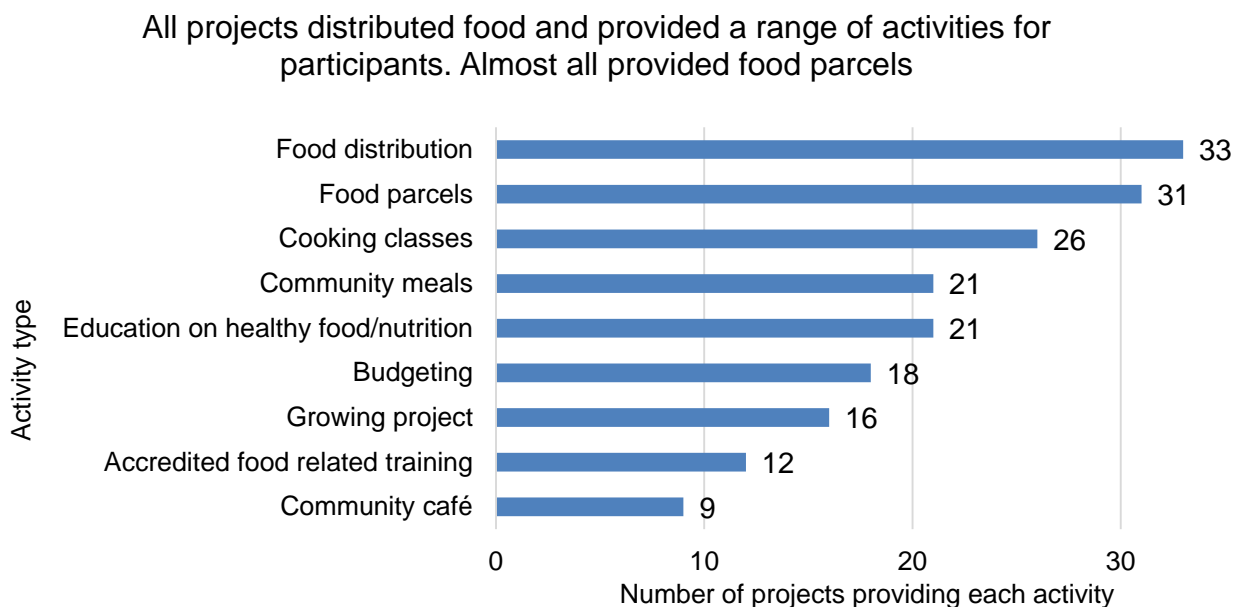


Project analysis by activity type

Projects sought to provide dignified approaches to food through a range of activities. These have been categorised into nine distinct groups:

1. Food distribution
2. Food parcels
3. Cooking classes
4. Education on healthy food/nutrition
5. Budgeting
6. Community meals
7. Growing project
8. Accredited food related training
9. Community café

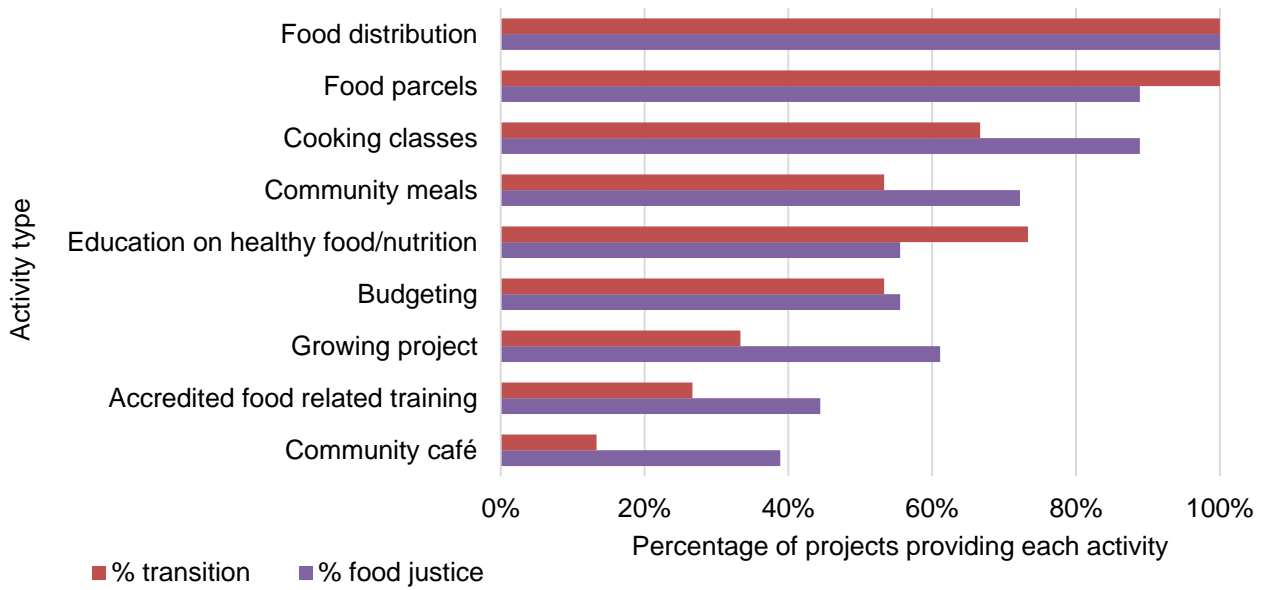
Figure 8 Breakdown of activities each project undertakes [Source: Analysis of project data]



All food justice and transition projects distributed food, and most distributed food parcels. A greater proportion of transition projects provided food parcels and delivered education on healthy food/nutrition. Across all other categories a greater proportion of food justice projects provided each type of activity.

Figure 9 Breakdown of activities each project undertakes, split by food justice and transition projects [Source: Analysis of project data]

Food justice projects tended to provide a wider range of activities than transition projects



Appendix 3 FFTF Case Studies

The following appendix details the purpose, strengths, issues and impacts of each of the case study projects. All following observations were made in the period during which data collection took place.

Name:	Kate's Kitchen
Location:	Annan, Dumfries and Galloway
Amount of FFTF funding:	£44,160

What the project did

Kate's Kitchen was created by Annan Churches Together, a group of five churches in Annan. It began as a soup kitchen open one day a week but quickly expanded. Currently the project is open four days a week and provides a range of activities, groups and opportunities to participants.

Activities/events/groups

- Community meals
- Gardening group
- Arts and crafts group
- Social events e.g. Burns Night, Christmas meal, Bingo
- Food parcels
- One-to-one support work
- Healthy Eating group
- Cooking classes
- Certified training e.g. food safety,
- One-off projects e.g. mosaic making
- Team meetings (incl. volunteers)

Facilities

- Outdoor space including polytunnel, raised beds and a potting shed
- Kitchen
- Seating area for community meals and café
- Second room recently opened as alternative sitting space
- Private room for support worker sessions
- Private room for food bank

Project strengths and achievements

Through use of local knowledge and a bottom up approach, Kate's Kitchen targeted unmet need, providing support that works for its participants. The project expanded as need was recognised, ensuring service delivery and activities are tailored to local context. When the project first began, the focus was on providing a weekly community meal. Staff quickly decided this was insufficient, and that people were in need of other, more holistic support. In response to this, they provided a food bank in addition to the meals, one-to-one sessions with a support worker, and meaningful opportunities to contribute. Regular team meetings ensure that the voice of those with direct experience of food poverty is being heard.

Kate's Kitchen was successful in involving people with severe and complex needs in meaningful activities. Activities were split into many smaller tasks, allowing each volunteer a role, regardless of barriers, such as physical disabilities. Kate's Kitchen enabled their participation by offering less physically demanding tasks, such as "slug watching" or finding answers to gardening questions using the reference library. All volunteers interviewed felt that they were contributing to something worthwhile, and that they had their own role to play.

Issues and challenges

Volunteers and participants made considerable, but gradual, individual progress. Some still required support from staff throughout the programme. Kate's Kitchen is combatting this challenge by fostering relationships between volunteers and encouraging ownership and peer-led education. The project created an atmosphere of 'help and be helped'. For example, within the gardening group, volunteers were paired up according to strength – more confident volunteers are matched with less confident volunteers. This enabled teaching between volunteers leading to faster progress for participants and a reduction in the pressure on staff. The relationships formed through partnering are contributing to the sustainability of the project as they are creating new links in the community, for example, one volunteer said that, in exchange for them making a roast dinner, a volunteer has been assisting them with digging and planting in their garden.

While staff still encounter negative attitudes towards the project, they helped local people change their attitudes towards through outreach work and promotion. It was acknowledged that some members of the community thought Kate's Kitchen was for "scroungers", and that stigma around attending still existed. The creation of "Friends of Kate's Kitchen" was successful in changing this perception. Members donated £5 annually to the project and attended meetings where they were informed about its progress. Testimonials from participants were found to be most effective in changing people's attitudes, as they made their experiences more relatable and equipped people with stories with which they could defend Kate's Kitchen to others. Staff were making Kate's Kitchen relevant to people not directly involved in the project through an emphasis on how benefits to participants had a positive impact on the whole community.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** - More people are growing their own food at home. Fresh vegetables are available free from the garden. Community meals and food parcels are free. Participants are learning to cook using new ingredients, increasing their choice of what they buy, which increases affordability.
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** - Participants are forming relationships in the project that continue outside it. Participants with mental health conditions and learning disabilities are reporting reduced isolation. Community meals are felt to be social events.

Name	Central and West Integration Network (CWIN)
Location	Glasgow
Amount of FFTF funding	£48,482.75

What the project did

CWIN began as a food distribution programme in 2012 with English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes added later. In late 2016, CWIN began weekly community meals with funding from the Fair Food Transformation Fund. Most clients attending CWIN are refugees or asylum seekers

Activities/events/groups

- Community meals
- Volunteering
- ESOL classes
- Volunteer training
- Food parcels
- Steering group

Facilities

- Food bank
- Office space
- Dining area
- Kitchen
- Space for ESOL classes upstairs
- Donated clothes stall

Project strengths and achievements

CWIN was successful in achieving its planned social outcomes, creating a more social atmosphere, uniting people of different nationalities and providing a space where refugees and asylum seekers are able to share their experiences with one another. Many participants felt an increased sense of community and gained confidence through community meals and ESOL classes. Several interviewees were refugees and asylum seekers who had moved to Glasgow with no family or friends. They saw CWIN as a space in which they could feel they were not alone in their experiences.

Wraparound services, such as ESOL classes, had been successful at CWIN because they were relevant and tailored to client need. They were also acting as effective hooks to participation in community meals. Those attending CWIN tend to be proficient in cooking. For them, it is not lack of knowledge around food, but lack of resources to apply that knowledge, that is the issue. Support outwith cooking is therefore more important to this client group. ESOL classes are timed at CWIN so as to end as the community meal begins. This is encouraging a flow of clients from ESOL classes to community meals and vice versa.

Issues and challenges

CWIN recognised that for their specific client group, emergency food provision is essential, and tried to improve the dignity associated with this.

Many asylum seekers attending CWIN are unable to receive benefits or to work in the UK as their residency status has not yet been confirmed, meaning they are wholly reliant on CWIN food provision. As a consequence of this, food parcels will remain a necessary aspect of service delivery. This, in turn, presented a barrier for CWIN in transitioning to a more dignified model.

To overcome this, CWIN placed the collection point in a more discreet location within the broader project. Some participants still reported embarrassment around the use of this service and are keen to see greater sensitivity in the way documentation is checked by CWIN and greater choice in the food parcels.

CWIN have taken steps to formalise their use of volunteers by creating a volunteer rota. This was in response to concerns that volunteers faced uncertainty about when they were needed and had felt ignored in the past when CWIN had sufficient volunteers for particular activities.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** - As noted above, many attending CWIN have no form of income. Community meals and food parcels are the only means of affording food for some participants

Reduced social isolation/building community - As noted above, there is a strong sense of community at CWIN. The project has enabled people who may not have otherwise met anyone, to make local friendships. Sharing experiences at CWIN means people feel less alone. Community meals are felt to be social events.

Name	Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust
Location	Bonar Bridge (East Sutherland and Edderton, Highland)
Amount of FFTF funding	£59,832

What the project did

Kyle of Sutherland established a community café and shop, with provision of lunchtime and evening meals, alongside a combination of other food and non-food-related activities. Outreach was a key feature of this project with staff on the ground engaging with the local community.

Activities/events/groups

- Growing groups
- ‘Healthy cooking on a budget’ demonstrations
- Volunteering
- Volunteer training
- Tenants group (with drop-in sessions)
- Community meals
- Food parcels
- Musical performances
- Arts and crafts group
- Food distribution

Facilities

- Community hall with shop, kitchen, dining area, lounge and food storage area
- Office
- Community cafe

Project strengths and achievements

Kyle of Sutherland’s main strength was a focus on the social value of food. For many participants, food was secondary to the social aspect of the project. Several interviewees mentioned that there were few activities in their locality. Community meals and events provided by Kyle of Sutherland were uniquely filling this gap. It was felt that living in a small, rural town could be very isolating, and that Kyle of Sutherland had been successful in reducing this as an issue. The opportunity to eat in company

was highly valued by several interviewees and was even improving mental health for some.

The high quality of meals is integral to the project's success. Several respondents remarked on the high standard of food at Kyle of Sutherland. Some noted that this was their main reason for attending and why they continued to return after their initial visit. Others noted that the quality of the food made them feel provision was dignified. The high standard of meals was also making the project more sustainable. People felt that the meals were value for money and thus donated more if they could afford to.

Issues and challenges

By providing greater flexibility in food distribution, Kyle of Sutherland had been successfully responding to the issue of poor transport links in the local area. The rural location of Kyle of Sutherland and the lack of public transport prevented some people with mobility issues, or without access to a private vehicle, from accessing community meals and other activities. To resolve this, the project began to deliver food direct to people's homes. This means that those experiencing food insecurity, but who are unable to get to the project, are not excluded.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** - Those donating towards community meal costs feel that the food provides value for money. Community meals were free, reducing food costs for participants.
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** - Many participants report that "company" is the main reason for attending. Interviewees who were retired, divorced or widowed felt that they had lost their network of support, and that Kyle of Sutherland had become a surrogate for this. There is a stronger sense of community locally, as people are recognising one another from the community meals.

Name	The First Base Agency
Location	Dumfries and Galloway
Amount of FFTF funding	£22,650

What the project does

Activities/events/groups

- Cooking and non-cooking food parcels
- Recipe sharing (“meal of the week”)
- Walled Garden Project for Veterans (growing vegetables)
- Food distribution through collection points
- CAB support

Facilities

- Carnsalloch Walled Garden
- Main base
- 20 satellite collection points

Project strengths and achievements

The First Base Agency was successful in reducing the stigma around food banks. This meant more people experiencing food insecurity are accessing support. The negative image of food banks locally had been acting as a barrier to their use. This had led some people experiencing extreme food poverty to go hungry. The First Base Agency was helping to change such negative perceptions of food banks. In doing so, the project lessened perceived barriers to accessing food. The First Base Agency is considered “non-judgemental” and as a “sympathetic ear”. Whereas another local food bank was believed to be for “for ex-offenders” only, First Base was seen as being for the whole community.

Flexibility in delivery and opening hours has made the project more accessible and extended its reach. While most food banks are only open for a few hours each week, The First Base Agency had more extended opening times. This enabled those living more remotely to access the service. The project offered delivery of food parcels direct to peoples’ homes, increasing access to provision. Home delivery added the benefit of being more discreet, increasing the dignity felt around food provision.

Issues and challenges

The availability of both cooking and non-cooking parcels offered greater choice and caters to a greater range of people and needs, but more choice was still desired. The option of non-cooking parcels means those without access to a cooker could still utilise the service. While this is a diversion away from the “typical food bank” offer, some felt this could be taken further. For example, some participants valued products, such as coffee and sugar, over food such as meat. The lack of choice was leading some to waste the food provided, which made them feel guilty. It is important to participants that more flexibility is offered as to what goes into food parcels in the future.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** - Cooking and non-cooking food parcels were available for free, enabling participants both with and without access to a cooker to make use of these.
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** - Home delivery engaged those most socially isolated in the community. Staff and volunteers were felt to be friendly and sympathetic, meaning participants feel looked after. All interviewees mentioned feeling less alone.

Name	Woodlands Community Development Trust (WCDDT)
Location	Glasgow
Amount of FFTF funding	£33,895

What the project did

WCDDT runs a free Pop-Up Community Café, with free vegetarian meals and a programme of cookery workshops. The café incorporated music and performances and used ingredients grown in the community garden. Volunteering and training opportunities were provided, including employability support. The project provided access to welfare advisors at each community meal.

Activities/events/groups

- Volunteer training
- Volunteering
- Cookery workshops
- Community meals
- CAB and employment support
- Music workshops and performances
- Support for older people
- Lunch club for families
- Community events e.g. Refugee Welcome event

Facilities

- Community café
- Community garden
- Social space with pool and tennis tables and a piano
- Well equipped kitchen

Project strengths and achievements

WCDDT was successful in creating a welcoming and friendly atmosphere for participants by establishing a long-term community of volunteers. It was common for volunteers at WCDDT to stay for more than a year. This enabled them to build relationships with participants, who felt valued and safe as a result. Volunteers stayed because of the great opportunities available and the strength of the volunteer support programme. Through WCDDT, volunteers can improve their employability, increase their confidence, gain new skills and feel looked after. Some

volunteers moved into paid employment because of their engagement with WCDT.

This project demonstrated that food projects can be a good access point to other services. WCDT refers participants and volunteers into other organisations, giving them more holistic support and closing gaps in provision. Someone from CAB was present at every community meal, allowing participants to engage with this service.

Issues and challenges

Staff and volunteers overcame an initial resistance to healthy, vegetarian food by presenting it as positive and exciting, opening new possibilities for participants. WCDT provided healthy, vegetarian meals, regularly using foods that few participants have tried before. This is inspiring participants to extend their cooking repertoire, so increasing their eating choices. High quality, interesting meals also created excitement around healthy eating. Participants did not feel pressure to eat healthily or that they are being targeted for not, but rather that they had the choice to enjoy healthy foods if they wish to.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** - WCDT decreased waste and increased choice for participants, contributing to greater food affordability. This was achieved in three main ways: food parcels are free, and participants can pick and choose their contents; participants are being shown what they can make with ingredients they receive; WCDT are introducing new foods to participants, increasing the foods they can use and the meals they can make
- **Awareness of other support and services** - WCDT provided links to other support services, including employability help

Reduced social isolation/building community - Participants felt that the social aspect of WCDT is crucial. Participants explained that the welcoming, friendly atmosphere at WCDT makes people more likely to return. This enables **participants to get to know one another.**

Name	Pilmeny Development Project (PDP)
Location	Leith, Edinburgh
Amount of FFTF funding	£10,630

What the project did

New Spin was an intergenerational project within Pilmeny Development Project. Young people were referred into the programme by various agencies and took part in community meals and activities, including learning to cook. Volunteers are older members of the local community.

Activities/events/groups

- Intergenerational group including arts and crafts activities and cooking
- Community meal (at the end of the intergenerational group session)
- Trips
- Food parcels
- Food distribution
- Nature walks

Facilities

- Kitchen
- Social space
- Offices
- Rooms for other activities
- Café facilities

Project strengths and achievements

New Spin was impacting positively on the local neighbourhood, creating a closer-knit community by reducing the hostility and fear felt between generations. Participants reported an initial shared lack of understanding between younger and older community members, which was rooted in a lack of opportunities to engage with one another. PDP provided a space in which different generations can interact, with both the younger and older people involved in the project now feeling more positive about each other.

PDP enabled those with multiple barriers to volunteer, including people who would otherwise be restricted by physical or mental health conditions. Many of the older volunteers have physical disabilities or mental health issues and the project allows them to engage as much or as little with the young people as they feel comfortable and capable doing. Tolerance and acceptance are emphasised, with each person having a different role to play. This meant that everyone could contribute in some

way, becoming more involved at their own pace. Interviewees report positive changes in participants and volunteers with both mental and physical health conditions.

PDP provided a viable alternative to generic youth groups for young people with multiple disadvantages, who lacked the confidence to be part of these. Several of the young people attending PDP felt intimidated by their peer group. The project acts as a transitional service, allowing young people to practice socialising in a space where they felt safer and more relaxed. Young people developed strong bonds with volunteers, viewing certain older people in the project as role models or mentors. For some, the volunteers are the only people to whom they open up.

PDP has been successful in providing food with dignity and in improving the diets of both younger and older members of the project. All members of New Spin, both young and old, were encouraged to take leftovers home after the meal. As this was universally provided, those who were experiencing food insecurity were not highlighted or singled out, removing the stigma attached to free provision. PDP ensures that all participants have a fresh, healthy meal at least once a week, and encouraged older people to begin cooking again out with the project.

Issues and challenges

Additional complex needs meant collecting personal information about participants, especially in a group setting, is challenging. Staff felt that the capacity and time to collect participant data is the main issue the project encountered.

Impacts:

- **Greater food affordability** - Young people learnt how to make more food from scratch. Community meals were free, and participants/ volunteers could take any leftovers home
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** - Older people in the community felt less isolated because of volunteering at PDP. Young people excluded from many mainstream activities could be involved in social activities at PDP.

Name	Pilton Community Health Project (PCHP)
Location	Granton, Edinburgh
Amount of FFTF funding	£76,842

What the project did

PCHP was set up in 1984 to address health inequalities. The organisation had a social approach to food, incorporating food provision into other activities and forms of support. PCHP had a focus on partnership, with strong links to other organisations and movements in the local area.

Activities/events/groups

- Cooking and food sessions and workshops
- Specialised training
- Counselling and one-to-one support
- Developing and organising community meals
- Supporting new projects
- Volunteering
- Steering group meetings
- “Women helping women” group

Facilities

- Kitchen facilities
- Private rooms for counselling

Project strengths and achievements

PCHP provided personalised, holistic support to its participants, which is enabled dramatic improvements in everyone’s progress. A wide range of groups were on offer and these are built on community need. This enabled PCHP to cater to many different people. Groups included a “women helping women” and “cooking for single dads”. Having different groups allowed people to share experiences in an environment in which they feel comfortable. For example, it was remarked that single dads were generally reluctant to access support such as cooking classes, but that a group specifically for them had been encouraging participation. Other services sat alongside these groups, such as one-to-one counselling, providing multiple forms of support.

PCHP acted as a facilitator, giving local people a voice and empowering them to create their own projects. PCHP was felt to be responsive to local need and to have a strong commitment to its community. It was seen as a “hands-on” organisation, with a focus on outreach work. Its activities were often peer-led. This, combined with holistic personalised support, enabled participants to develop their skills and increase their confidence enough to create spin-offs. PCHP provided ongoing support to spin-off programmes, helping to sustain these long-term.

PCHP acted as an entry point and interface to other services and support. This helped create a sense of a community food movement in Granton. PCHP achieved this through its involvement and connections to other local grassroots movements, and effective dissemination of its knowledge of local services - for example, their link with Granton Community Gardeners

Issues and challenges

While the PCHP kitchen was well-equipped and could be used by the public, participants/volunteers struggled to find venues outwith PCHP where they could provide cookery classes and other activities. Community spaces, for example, schools, can be hard for the public to access. This lack of access impeded the success of a new cooking group set up by a volunteer. They felt that the PCHP kitchen was too small for their purposes, as only demonstrations were possible in the space, and wanted to host the class in a bigger community kitchen. This proved challenging.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** - Participants facing food insecurity learnt to cook on a budget. Therefore, they experienced less difficulty affording food
- **Awareness of other support and services** - As noted above, PCHP acted as an interface with other local services. The project demonstrated strong partnership working and good knowledge of local support and activities available, with effective dissemination to participants
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** - Participants and volunteers were meeting people through PCHP activities. Participants felt more connected as they are sharing experiences with people facing similar challenges. PCHP is building community through the creation of spin-off projects.

Name	Bridging the Gap
Location	Glasgow
Amount of FFTF funding	£73,758

What the project did

This project was an extension of existing high impact community provision. It was comprised of a partnership between The Barn, Link Up, TASK and The High-Rise Bakers. Activities included monthly 'Come Dine with Me' community meals, weekly community drop-ins, a breakfast club, youth groups and a social enterprise – 'The High-Rise Bakers' (which allows participants to produce and sell artisan bread). This case study is based on interviews at The Barn and Link Up.

Activities/events/groups

- Community meals
- Youth groups
- Exercise classes
- Arts and crafts groups
- Drop-in sessions
- One-to-one support
- Walking groups
- Family breakfast club
- Bread making classes
- Growing groups

Facilities

- Kitchen
- Pool and air hockey tables
- Arts room
- Purpose built youth centre with dining area with lounge
- Outside sports pitches
- Offices
- Gym

Project strengths and achievements

Bridging the Gap demonstrated the power of close partnership working in creating a relevant, personalised and multifaceted project, with the ability to work effectively for many and varied community members. In joining together, the small specialised services that comprised Bridging the Gap were able to transcend the limitations faced by smaller organisations. Participants could take part in a range of activities through its network, and learning was shared between organisations, ensuring many different subgroups in the community are looked after. By working as a partnership, trust and reputation could be spread rapidly

throughout the local area, allowing newer groups to become well-established more quickly.

Through attentiveness, flexibility and careful governance, Bridging the Gap became able to develop highly effective data collection methods and to incorporate learning into its sessions, while keeping them attractive to participants. The Barn, part of Bridging the Gap, used end of session staff meetings to track the progress of participants and of the project itself. Staff reflected on what has and has not been working, and voiced any concerns they may have. These meetings also ensured that all staff are aiming for the same outcomes, enabling a shared ethos. Staff listened to participants, involving them in the project's design and direction. By doing so, the project adapted with changing needs, and adjusted approaches that are not working well.

Issues and challenges

Bridging the Gap recognised a challenge in balancing increasing demand with maintaining high-quality support for all participants. The junior and senior youth groups provided by the Barn were impeded by their own success, with each averaging 50-60 young people per session. Staff explained that were numbers to grow more, they would exceed the organisation's capacity, both in terms of staff resource and space. With a new housing development being built nearby, staff were concerned that it will become harder to keep track of individual participants.

Staff combatted the ever-present difficulties in sustaining momentum through their hands-on outreach work. Although Bridging the Gap had a strong and long-standing reputation, staff feel that the constant influx of new residents into the neighbourhood means there will never be security in the popularity of the project. For this reason, it was believed that ongoing promotion of the project's activities was essential, with door knocking being felt the most effective way of doing this, as flyers and leaflets were impersonal and easy to ignore. Staff noted that in the face of stringent cuts it was becoming very difficult to find the manpower for this street work.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** - Community meals and drop-in sessions provide free food, reducing costs for participants
- **Awareness of other support and services** - As noted above, Bridging the Gap demonstrated strong partnership working.
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** - Bridging the Gap fostered cultural and racial integration. The range of tailored activities available engage people who would otherwise be isolated.

Name:	Stepwell Consultancy Ltd
Location:	Greenock, Inverclyde
Amount of FFTF funding:	£58,278

What the project did

Stepwell supported households facing hardship in Inverclyde by improving their access to, and ability to cook, healthy and nutritious food. A cook school aimed at increasing confidence and skills to cook affordable, tasty meals from scratch, was supplemented by financial capability work and opportunities to access additional support, including employability, financial assistance and social activities.

Activities/events/groups

- Food parcels
- Hands on cook schools
- Monthly “Connect” Hub
- Provision of “Fresh” soup and coffee vouchers
- Community meals

Facilities

- Social enterprise café “Fresh”
- Kitchen facilities

Project strengths and achievements

Through its Cook-Eat-Connect programme, Stepwell enabled greater choice for people experiencing food poverty and changing peoples’ relationships with food and food banks. Stepwell ran 6-week cookery courses for people experiencing food poverty. All ingredients used within the programme are those commonly provided in food parcels. Participants were shown a range of ways these can be used to make different meals. This enabled participants to use their food parcels more effectively and to make food they enjoy. Some participants felt happier accessing food banks now that they have more autonomy over how they use the food they receive.

Stepwell’s modern, professional facilities and focus on creating a welcoming, sociable atmosphere made participants feel comfortable and dignified, improving their mood and mental health. All interviewees mentioned the high quality of Stepwell’s facilities and restaurant. This made participants want to return each week, as they viewed it as a cookery class rather than a charitable event. Staff emphasised the need to treat people “as people”, an approach that was encouraging participants to feel confident in their cookery skills and themselves.

Interviewees provided strong evidence that Stepwell was having a major effect on the physical health of its participants, with many reporting weight losses as a direct result of the cookery school. Participants felt that Cook-Eat-Connect fostered a communal drive to eat more healthily, and that they were better able to do this after undertaking classes.

Issues and challenges

Stepwell's cookery school had become an important part of many of its participant's lives, and several people thus wished it to continue for longer than its six-week duration. Stepwell's classes had sparked the interest of a number of participants, who wanted to learn even more about cooking but were unsure how to do so after the course had ended.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** - Cooking classes that specifically use ingredients found in food parcels enable participants to get more out of these, increasing food affordability. Classes show people how to bulk cook on a budget, helping large families afford food
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** - Participants ate together after cooking classes, forming relationships that continue outwith the project.

Name	Castlemilk Parish Church of Scotland
Location	Castlemilk, Glasgow
Amount of FFTF funding	£29,122

What the project did

This project provided fortnightly community evening meals with activities such as quizzes and bingo, as well as performances by residents. The project additionally provided: a crèche, access to food parcels, opportunities to volunteer and receive training, and paid employment opportunities. People could donate what they could afford through a donations box.

Activities/events/groups

- Food parcels
- Community meals
- Volunteering
- Volunteer training
- Paid positions
- Performances and entertainment
- Self-reliance group
- Carpentry group

Facilities

- Church hall for community meals
- Overflow space for meals
- Quiet room
- Training room
- Crèche
- Kitchen facilities
- Offices

Project strengths and achievements

Castlemilk Parish Church had been successful in achieving a feeling of ownership of the project by the community. The range of volunteering available, from very informal to formal, meant that the distinction between “client” and “volunteer” was often fluid. This enabled those who otherwise would not to get involved in the project. Many who felt they actively gave back to the project started by helping in informal ways without explicitly being a volunteer. From this, several participants went on to have more formal volunteer roles such as setting up tables or ushering people in at the beginning of meals. This helped to create an environment where everyone attending is seen as an equal, as those formally volunteering were not seen as distinct from those participating in the meals.

The asset-based approach being championed by Castlemilk Parish Church had been effective in creating a positive and welcoming environment. People

felt they wanted to be part of meals as they are adding value, rather than that they are having to go because they are in food poverty. Individual strengths and abilities are the focus, rather than deficits. Participants were made to feel needed, as they were explicitly told by staff that everyone contributes by being part of the meal, whether this is just by being there, being someone to talk to, providing a donation or clearing after meals.

The project made in-roads towards being sustainable. At the time of data collection, donations were covering the costs of food. By having a dedicated member of staff purchase ingredients, the project was managing to serve good quality, three course meals for a pound a head. This has been achieved through taking advantage of bulk-buying and offers online.

Issues and challenges

Staff were successful in maintaining community cohesion, overcoming tensions between the parish and local community. Staff were overcoming this challenge through gentle encouragement and reminders that the project belongs to everyone.

Impacts:

- **Greater food affordability** - Community meals are free and produced cheaply. Volunteers and paid staff report being better able to budget through learning to cook from scratch
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** - Many participants feel less isolated because of taking part in community meals.

Name	Beith Community Development Trust
Location	Beith, North Ayrshire
Amount of FFTF funding	£19,250

What the project did

This project ran several groups including: A Soup Group, an arts and crafts group and a gardening group. The project also ran an annual festival with local food and musical performances from participants. Volunteering and training opportunities were available. Facilities included football and tennis pitches, as well as a sensory garden. Beith Trust was flexible in delivery, providing cookery classes at a local school. With help from volunteers, the project renovated one of its on-site buildings and constructed flats to rent.

Activities/events/groups

- Community meals
- Volunteering
- Volunteer training
- Paid positions
- Cookery classes
- Beith Beer Festival
- Music lessons
- Growing groups
- Arts and crafts group
- Soup group

Facilities

- Community centre
- Kitchen facilities
- Offices
- Outdoor sports pitches
- Sensory garden
- Workshop
- Growing spaces
- Flats (in construction)

Project strengths and achievements

Beith Trust generated a network of peer-to-peer parent education and support through its cooking classes; where parents had the space and time to socialise and share experiences. Participants commented on the loose structure and relaxed feel of the cooking classes. As many parents had part-time jobs and childcare duties, they appreciated being able to drop in and out of classes as and when it suited them. One parent mentioned that they had been unable to attend more rigid classes as their children had disrupted these, and they had been made

to feel embarrassed. They explained that Beith Trust sessions were different, that at these sessions children were collectively looked after by the group, with no one made to feel alienated.

Beith Trust had been one of the most successful projects in engaging the whole community. The Beith Beer Festival had become a cornerstone of the Beith community, providing food and refreshments as well as music from local young people. Staff believed this festival to be integral to the Trust's success. They mentioned that community projects often overlooked the most effective ways to engage people. It was remarked that normal activities, such as eating and drinking, were sometimes the best way of engaging people who otherwise would not, especially when part of a local festival or something similar. The festival was very popular with residents and had encouraged participation in other Beith Trust activities through normalising it.

Beith Trust is increasing its sustainability through several income-generating activities. These include the Beith Beer Festival, rental income from hiring out the land they own for local sports, and most recently the building and furnishing of flats to let within its grounds.

Issues and challenges

Beith Trust hosted events at several locations, increasing accessibility for those living remotely or without a car. Beith Trust is one of the more rural FFTF projects and, as a result, participants encountered difficulties in accessing its activities, relying on others for lifts to and from them. The Trust have been tackling this issue by reaching out into the community, approaching venues such as local schools to host activities, rather than making participants come to their community hub. This has also helped promote the Trust to a wider selection of people.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** - Parents participating in the cooking classes experiencing food insecurity report reduced waste as they have learnt how to make meals from leftovers, and what can and cannot be frozen
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** - Participants made new friends through the cookery classes and were less intimidated by other parents as they now recognise many of them in the playground

Name	St. Paul's Youth Forum
Location	Blackhill, Glasgow
Amount of FFTF funding	£46,438

What the project did

This project started as a food bank but expanded to provide more dignified approaches to food provision. Activities weekly community meals with opportunities for participants to cook, growing groups, trips away, volunteering and training opportunities and paid employment positions. Facilities included a bike rental service, a handmade pizza oven, bee hives, radio station equipment and a chicken coop.

Activities/events/groups

- Community meals
- Volunteering
- Volunteer training
- Paid positions
- Radio station
- Growing
- Trips away
- Sleepovers
- Youth committee

Facilities

- Community centre
- Kitchen facilities
- Garden with polytunnels
- Homemade pizza oven
- Bee hives
- Chicken coop
- Radio equipment
- Bike shed

Project strengths and achievements

The most important and successful aspect of St. Paul's Youth Forum was that it grew out of community need, using innovative approaches to tackle local issues. Staff and volunteers were from the area and thus possessed an intimate understanding of the context in which they were working. This understanding allowed the project to target its efforts where it matters. For example, several years ago staff recognised that gang violence was one of the biggest problems in Blackhill. In response, the project hired a greater number of male staff and used them to act as role models for boys in the area. This approach proved highly effective, reducing local gang violence significantly.

St. Paul's Youth Forum is managing to engage its young people in the decision-making process. One aspect of this is the youth committee, where

young people can share ideas and have their say. This process was made fun, resulting in the committee becoming well represented and attended. For those who were less vocal or confident, there was an anonymous suggestions box at the community meals.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** – St. Paul's was growing its own food, reducing the cost of community meals. Young people and volunteers were learning to grow their own food and cook meals from scratch, increasing food affordability
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** – Most participants came to St. Paul's for the social aspect of the meals.

Name	Food for Thought West Dunbartonshire
Location	West Dunbartonshire
Amount of FFTF funding	£20,000

What the project did

This project provided community meals twice weekly. Food parcels were available at the meals. Volunteering and training opportunities were provided. One-to-one support was on offer.

Activities/events/groups

- Community soup
- Volunteering
- Volunteer training including formal certificates
- One-to-one support
- Christmas meal
- Performances

Facilities

- Community hall
- Kitchen facilities
- Amplifiers, microphones and stage for performances

Project strengths and achievements

Food for Thought was a safe space for people facing many forms of disadvantage. Participants felt part of an “extended family”, as opposed to clients. Integral to this feeling were its approachable and friendly volunteers, who had themselves been supported, and its experienced staff member, who prioritised what works for participants. Volunteers at Food for Thought came through its support network and Community Soup Group. This meant that they have encountered similar experiences to attendees, something considered important by participants we spoke to in being comfortable to open up to them. Its sole member of staff had a wide breadth of experience, having previously worked with many vulnerable groups. Support tended to be through informal chats, meaning participants receive high quality help, without feeling assessed by an authority figure.

Food for Thought had several successful partnerships with local organisations and was an important part of the “free food network” in Dumbarton. By working closely with other local church groups and independent charities, people were able to receive a free meal five days a week in Dumbarton.

Interviewees knew where and when each meal was held and had a good knowledge of services available in the area through Food for Thought.

Issues and challenges

Staff built up a relationship with Marks and Spencer, adding to the donations they receive each week, but still struggled to adequately fund emergency food provision. As Food for Thought was not primarily a food bank, staff encountered difficulties in providing emergency food with no pre-existing ties to big supermarkets. While Marks and Spencer had recently become a donor, the amount given varied from week to week. This meant it was hard to anticipate how many people could be provided for.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** – Community meals were free and 3-day food parcels are available to everyone. Donations from local supermarkets helped reduce the costs of meals. Volunteers were learning to cook on a budget
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** – Several interviewees saw company as the main reason for attending Food for Thought, stating that this was why they returned each week and that it had become part of their “social calendar”
- **Awareness of other support and services** – As previously noted, Food for Thought had strong links to other similar projects in the area, as well as other groups within the building. The project also worked closely with agencies that can refer into and out of the service, and participants appeared to have a good awareness of what is available to them.

Name	The Everlasting Foodbank
Location	Dennistoun, Glasgow
Amount of FFTF funding	£43,000

What the project does

The Everlasting Foodbank was founded in 2014 by the Everlasting Arms Ministries Church. With funding from the Scottish Government, it was able to expand its activities and was hosting ‘pay as you feel’ three-course meals every two weeks, alongside drop-in support and a clothes bank, as well as the original food bank provision.

Activities/events/groups

- Community meals
- Food bank
- Food distribution
- Volunteering
- Council worker drop-in sessions
- Clothes bank
- Accredited food qualifications

Facilities

- Church hall
- Food bank storage space
- Kitchen
- Van
- Clothes and household goods

Project strengths and achievements

The Everlasting Foodbank was providing dignity in its approach to food, ensuring high quality three course meals at its community lunches. At its core, this project had the aim that participants enjoy the food they are given, coming to the lunches out of choice rather than necessity. This agenda had translated well into practice, with several positive comments from interviewees about the quality of food, including one description that it was of “Gordon Ramsey” standard. Key to this success were that the head chef, while a volunteer, is highly trained, and that all tasks are carefully delegated out.

The Everlasting Foodbank had been one of the most successful projects in engaging those with experience of food poverty in its design and day-to-day running. Many food bank users had become volunteers at the community meals. Their experience and understanding of the issues facing people had created a non-judgemental and empathetic environment, one in which people can share their stories and feel less alone in their individual circumstances. It was felt that being

served by people with experience of a food bank removed the “awkwardness” that can sometimes be apparent at such projects for participants. Food bank users appreciated the ability to contribute, explaining that they feel part of a community where everyone gives what they can and takes what they need. Close involvement of volunteers also enabled the organisation to rapidly respond when things are not working well.

Issues and challenges

Both staff and volunteers felt expansion of the project is limited by costly overheads. Several interviewees were keen to see the project grow, and to have a service on more days, but felt this could not happen within the current budget. It was mentioned that partnering with other agencies that could contribute to electricity costs might enable this hurdle to be overcome.

The diversity and extent of different needs of participants could sometimes be difficult to manage. Participants at the community meals often have substance dependencies and mental health issues. On occasion, this led to tense situations, though these tend to be deescalated by other participants and volunteers.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** - Community meals were pay as you feel and free food to take away is available both at the food bank and at the meals
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** – Participants recognised the social value of food and built their own support networks through attending the community meals. Participants helped one another out, giving what they can to one another

Name	Yoker Parish Church
Location	Yoker
Amount of FFTF funding	£31,750

What the project did

The “New Yoker Diners” was a bi-monthly community meal run by Yoker Parish Church. Entertainment such as quizzes and craft-making occurred after the meal. Both the meal and entertainment were open to anyone.

Activities/events/groups

- Community meals
- Food distribution
- Volunteering
- Entertainment (quizzes, crafts etc.)

Facilities

- Church hall
- Kitchen

Project strengths and achievements

Yoker Parish Church provided a space in which members of the local community could come together to enjoy a “fun extended family meal”. Staff and volunteers showed a good understanding of what makes food provision dignified. They were very conscious of the environment they create, deliberately engineering a community meal which resembles “more of a night out” than a charity event. Small touches like tablecloths were important to this, as were the after-dinner activities which include quizzes, bingo and crafts. The layout of tables had been carefully designed to ensure that the meals are a sociable occasion.

This project involved the local community in its direction and progress. Its steering group consisted of staff and volunteer/participants who had equal input into the project’s future.

This project was successfully using social media to create community links and grow its reputation in Yoker. Staff were using Twitter to improve the visibility of the project. Through engagement with headteachers and schools, the project was able to reach a wide audience, to target families, and young people facing disadvantage.

Issues and challenges

As the cooking of the community meals was volunteer-led, providing variety in the meals could be a challenge. Staff were hoping to overcome this issue by partnering with a student cooking school in the future.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** – The community meals were pay as you feel, and leftover food was informally given out to participants experiencing food insecurity
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** – Interviewees felt that it was “the people” that meant most to them at the community meals

Name	Midlothian Foodbank
Location	Gorebridge, Midlothian
Amount of FFTF funding	£16,000

What the project did

This project began as a food bank but expanded to provide weekly community meals and a car boot style event every Tuesday, both of which are universal services.

Activities/events/groups

- Community meals
- Food parcels
- Food distribution
- Volunteering
- Car boot sale style event

Facilities

- Food bank storage space
- Community hall
- Raised beds

Project strengths and achievements

Midlothian Foodbank reduced the loneliness and isolation of many members of its community, improving the mental health of some individuals considerably. Several interviewees at the community meals mentioned living alone and struggling with the lack of a local community. Since attending the meals they had made new friends, some of which had continued beyond the project. For one person with severe anxiety issues, it was the only place they felt comfortable attending, and it was thus vital in getting them “out of the house”. There is some evidence of informal mentoring through intergenerational contact of veterans with one another. This has been partly enabled through staff actively reaching out to local veteran groups.

Participants felt able to open up to volunteers and value their down-to-earth and friendly nature. Volunteers were carefully managed at Midlothian Foodbank, and had been selected based on their particular personalities and skills. This was integral to the creation of a welcoming environment for participants, and a smooth running operation, both at the food bank and community meals.

Issues and challenges

Although some individuals overlap between the food bank and community meals, integration was not common. Staff and volunteers found it difficult to encourage people receiving food parcels to join the community meals. However, they also recognised that not everyone receiving food parcels was interested in the sociable side of the project and vice versa, and that having the choice to opt out was part of the dignity approach.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** – The community meals are pay as you feel, and leftover food was informally distributed among participants experiencing food insecurity, as well as supermarket donations. Food parcels were given out to those in crisis through the food bank
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** – Participants formed friendships through the community meals, with older community members acting as role models for some younger members

Name	Start-Up Stirling
Location	Stirlingshire (multiple locations)
Amount of FFTF funding	£47,485

What the project does

Start-Up Stirling began in 1994 by giving starter packs to young people facing disadvantage. Six years ago, it expanded to provide a food bank service for the community of Stirling with 15 volunteers. Since then, it has expanded, and at the time of data collection provided food banks in three fixed location with over 90 volunteers. Start-Up Stirling also provided three rural deliveries per week for those who were unable to make it to its food banks. Most recently, the project had started offering a support service and free lunch in two locations across Stirlingshire.

Activities/events/groups

- Food banks
- Support services
- Community lunches
- Food distribution
- Fuel advice and signposting
- One-to-one support
- Volunteering
- Recipe cards

Facilities

- Warehouse (for food storage)
- Van
- Community halls
- Church halls
- Kitchens

Project strengths and achievements

Start-Up Stirling was one of the only projects to have successfully changed the food bank *itself* to a more dignified model of food provision. A number of developments had contributed to this. Start-Up Stirling was providing fresh fruit, vegetables, dairy and meat as part of its offer to food bank clients. It had been able to do so by partnering with local butchers and shops, purchasing these goods at less than wholesale prices. The food bank also had an explicit “café ethos”. People attending were given tea and coffee, and were able to have a chat with a volunteer trained in “active listening”. Interviewees valued this highly, feeling cared for and respected. Recipe cards were given out to participants, but only if and when they wanted them, and were taken through the recipes with a volunteer first.

By offering tiered support, Start-Up Stirling catered to a diverse range of people. Start-Up Stirling offered both low-level, short-term support and very high-level, long-term support. Participants were able to choose how much they wish to engage with the project. The existence of longer term food provision reduced the pressure felt by participants, enabling them to tackle other barriers such as mental health issues or difficult circumstances.

Issues and challenges

Staff found volunteer management a challenging part of their job. Start-Up Stirling recognised that with such a large-scale project, volunteer dynamics were important. This made for hard decisions as sometimes a volunteer did not fit within a team and had to be let go.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability** – Participants received free food parcels, which they are able to use more efficiently through recipe cards. Support from a fuel expert helped participants maximise their income
- **Reduced social isolation/building community** – participants met new people through the support service, and felt less alone from talking to volunteers at the food bank
- **Awareness of other support and services** – participants were more aware of other services such as CAB as a result of Start-Up Stirling, and of other local opportunities

Name	Moray Foodbank
Location	Elgin, Moray
Amount of FFTF funding	£27,977

What the project did

Moray Foodbank started as a traditional food bank, with a fixed location in Elgin. It transitioned to a food distribution model, partnering with both local food suppliers and other support services to provide community larders for people experiencing food poverty across Moray.

Activities/events/groups

- Volunteering
- Food distribution
- Food bank
- Partnership and advice/outreach

Facilities

- Food bank storage space
- Offices
- Refrigerated van
- Community larders

Project strengths and achievements

Moray Foodbank achieved considerable progress away from the traditional food bank model through its partnership and outreach approach. This project made an active and concerted effort to transition to a more dignified model of food provision. The food bank had a member of staff dedicated to finding and talking to organisations across Moray that may benefit from the addition of an element of food provision. This built a strong network of organisations, working together to distribute food to people experiencing food poverty, at their convenience and in their locality.

Community larders provided greater choice and dignity in food provision, along with the opportunity for fresh produce including fruit, vegetables, meat and milk. Participants could choose from a range of food products, rather than receiving a standard food parcel. As a result, less food was going to waste. The presence of community larders at a range of locations, and within different organisations, meant people experiencing food poverty no longer need come to a food bank and can receive support with far more discretion.

Volunteering at Moray Foodbank was benefitting a range of different people, including those with physical or mental health issues. Volunteers felt valued and understood their specific role. Staff recognised the importance of listening to volunteers, what they want and how to play to their strengths. The project had a clear focus on finding somewhere for everyone to fit, working around whatever

barriers volunteers may have to ensure they feel useful and involved in meaningful activities.

Issues and challenges

Short term funding was working contrary to the longer term project aims of achieving and maintaining a food network across Moray. Staff were concerned that having worked hard to build relationships with partners across Moray, funding could be cut and the network could disappear. Long-term funding was desired to be able to develop the project, to have time to innovate and to reflect.

It was felt that being a rural project presented unique challenges. Moray Foodbank was keen to share its experiences and to learn from others. However, staff found most networks and conferences took place in urban areas of the central belt, restricting their ability to be involved.

Impacts

- **Greater food affordability**
- **Reduced social isolation/building community**
- **Awareness of other support and service**

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

- are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- are available via an alternative route
- may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors.
- cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.



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