

# Food Poverty Action Plan for Hammersmith & Fulham



## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Too many people are suffering poverty and social exclusion in Hammersmith and Fulham. The Council is bringing together the third sector, businesses and other public sector partners to agree a cross-cutting strategy to tackle social exclusion. A Social Inclusion Forum is being established to oversee the development and delivery of this strategy.
- 1.2 Hammersmith & Fulham Council is committed to supporting the establishment and development of local food banks and other initiatives which seek to avoid and alleviate food poverty for local residents. Addressing food poverty is an important strand of the Council's work on alleviating poverty and delivering social inclusion and this Food Poverty Action Plan forms part of the broader and developing Social Inclusion Strategy.
- 1.3 In October 2014, the Health, Adult Social Care & Social Inclusion Policy & Accountability Committee considered the issue of food poverty in Hammersmith & Fulham and heard the views of the H&F Food Bank and the local Citizens Advice Bureau. The recommendations from the Health, Adult Social Care & Social Inclusion PAC are incorporated within this action plan.

## **2. The Causes of Food Poverty**

- 2.1 According to the Trussell Trust, the top three reasons why people are using food banks in London are: benefit delay (24%); low income (21%), and unemployment (10%)<sup>1</sup>. In Hammersmith & Fulham, the predominant reason that residents give for experiencing food poverty is low income, frequently due to changes in DWP benefits and delays in benefit payments. This is particularly the case where DWP changes are being appealed – with residents often having to wait far longer than the stated 6 weeks for DWP to consider the individual's appeal of a benefit change.
- 2.2 Food poverty is likely to increase in London as the economic downturn persists and inflation continues to depress living standards. The Bank of England's February 2013 Inflation Report highlights the risk of higher domestic energy prices and higher commodity prices over the medium term.

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<sup>1</sup> London Assembly: A Zero Hunger City (March 2013)

### **3. The H&F Food Bank**

- 3.1 Food banks operate by collecting donated food and distributing food packs, which provide a supply of food for 2-3 days to individuals or households in need. The Hammersmith & Fulham Food Bank (HFFB) is an independent charity and member of the Trussell Trust Food Bank Network, opened in June 2010, since when it has provided food for over 100,000 meals for local people in crisis. Individuals considered eligible are given HFBB Vouchers by HFFB Voucher Partners. The individual then takes this voucher to a Food Bank Distribution Centre to exchange for a food pack.
- 3.2 The HFFB Distribution Centre is open in a cafe-style setting three times per week:
- Tuesdays 10.30am till 1pm in Fulham
  - Thursdays 1pm till 3pm in Shepherds Bush
  - Fridays 2pm till 4.30pm in Fulham.
- HFFB also see clients for emergency appointments outside of these opening hours. HFFB is very keen to launch a third distribution centre, operating in a cafe-style setting, in the north of the borough where need is anticipated to be highest.
- 3.3 Most of the food distributed by Food Bank is donated by the public via:
- supermarket food collections; where Food Bank volunteers hand out shopping lists and ask shoppers to purchase items from the list before depositing them with the volunteers when leaving the store;
  - permanent collection points in supermarkets and libraries;
  - collections hosted by schools, churches and local businesses, and;
  - individual donations.
- 3.4 In 2013/14 a total of 4,213 Hammersmith & Fulham residents (1,146 of which were children) received food packages from the Hammersmith and Fulham Food Bank, a significant increase on 2012/13, when 2,619 received food from HFFB. In the first six months of 2014/15, residents accessed H&F Food Bank more than 1,600 times. Although the local service cannot as yet confirm how many of these visits were repeat customers, the Trussell Trust estimates that the majority of users (60%) use the service only once.
- 3.5 Access to HF Food Bank is by referral only. 150 local services/organisations are currently HFFB Voucher Partners and keep a supply of Food Bank vouchers in-house to allocate to eligible clients in order for them to access the Food Bank service. Voucher Partners include the Citizen's Advice Bureau, Children's Services, Adult Social Care, GPs, Schools, MIND, the JobCentre Plus and Victim Support.
- 3.6 Vouchers allow the referring partner to indicate the primary 'nature of crisis'. These include: benefit changes, benefit delays, delayed wages, debt, homelessness, low income, unemployment, domestic violence, sickness and refused short term benefit advance.

3.7 The largest number of referrers to the Hammersmith & Fulham Food Bank during this current financial year are:

- JobCentre Plus with 84 fulfilled vouchers (118 people fed). JCP is not currently able to provide H&F Food Bank with data on clients to whom it has issued vouchers;
- Citizens Advice Bureau with 42 fulfilled vouchers (72 fed). 47.6% of referrals are due to benefit delays, 'other' reason was selected for 19% of referrals, and 14.3% were due to 'low income';
- Local Support Payments team with 60 fulfilled vouchers (95 fed), with 38.3% reporting benefit delays, 18.3% reporting benefit changes and 28.3% 'other';
- London Probation Services with 39 fulfilled vouchers (50 fed), with 35.9% reporting benefit delays, 25.6% benefit changes, and 12.8% reporting low income.

A significant number of referrals are also made by Children's Services - Family Services & Child Protection team, the Asylum and Family Team at LBHF, the Community Drug & Alcohol Service, MIND, the Treatment & Recover Team (south) and River House Trust.

#### **4. The H&F Action Plan**

4.1 The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham is committed to supporting organisations which are providing services to alleviate and address food poverty for local residents. We are particularly keen to develop sustainable, preventative measures that will enable and support residents to avoid food poverty and food poverty crisis in the future. We will undertake the following actions:

1. ***Require all LBHF frontline services to be HFFB Voucher Partners***  
Frontline services across Adult Social Care, Children's and Housing Services (including schools) will be required to become HFFB Voucher Partners, including compliance with required reporting on vouchers given to HFFB. HFFB will be invited to report on referrals made by council services in order to identify where an improvement in referral rates might be achieved.
2. ***Encourage and support appropriate commissioned services to become HFFB Voucher Partners***  
Children's Services (including schools and nurseries), Day Care and Home Care providers to be encouraged to become HFFB Voucher Partners.
3. ***Encourage external agencies to support the delivery of Food Banks***  
Local services and organisations will be encouraged to support our efforts to address low income and food poverty through increased awareness of services to tackle these and/or by becoming HFFB Voucher Partners or signposting individuals to HF Food Bank Voucher Partners in the borough. These initiatives will include working with health providers to enhance and encourage signposting to services addressing food poverty in acknowledgement of the potential impact of food poverty on health and

wellbeing. We will also support organisations delivering services which address food poverty to build stronger relationships with other businesses in the borough.

- 4. *Support the broader provision of support to address low income and food poverty***  
We will support the provision of local advice, financial capability and strengthening related skills to tackle the causes of food poverty and enable local residents to avoid food poverty crisis, targeting these services at HFFB Distribution Centres and other appropriate locations.
- 5. *Promote HF Food Bank to local residents***  
The Council's website and appropriate external communication channels will be utilised to promote Food Bank services to local residents, together with information on broader advice and support for residents on managing on low incomes. Information will be targeted at areas of high deprivation.
- 6. *Increase Food Bank collection points***  
The Council will invite HFFB to install collection points for food donations in Hammersmith Town Hall, Park View Health Centre, 145 King Street and all area housing offices. The Council will promote the existence of the new collection points and encourage staff and residents to donate food items.
- 7. *Support the continued expansion of HF Food Bank***  
The Council will support HFFB to identify and secure appropriate premises in the north of the borough for the expanded delivery of the service to meet need in areas of highest deprivation.
- 8. *Support the evidence base for Food Bank and other services which address and mitigate low income and food poverty***  
We will provide data analysis support in order for HFFB and broader services, addressing low income and resultant food poverty, to better understand the impact of their services, where services could or should be targeted better and the impact on broader socio economic measures.

## Delivery Plan

Action	Comments	Lead officer/department	Timescale
1. All LBHF front line services to be HFFB Voucher Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HFFB will be invited to report on referrals made by council services in order to identify where an improvement in referral rates might be achieved.</li> <li>HFFB to be offered the opportunity to attend team/divisional meetings where appropriate to inform/train teams on HFFB Voucher process and requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASC: Liz Bruce, Mike Potter,</li> <li>ChS: Andrew Christie</li> <li>ELRS: Sue Harris</li> <li>HRD: Mike England, Paul Rosenberg</li> <li>HF Food Bank</li> </ul>	Details of team managers to be provided by end March 2015.
2. Encourage and support appropriate commissioned services to become HFFB Voucher Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's Services (including schools and nurseries), Day Care and Home Care providers to be encouraged to become HFFB Voucher Partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASC: Mike Potter, Paul Rackham</li> <li>ChS, Paul Williamson, Terry Clarke</li> <li>ELRS: Sue Harris</li> <li>HRD, tbc</li> <li>3<sup>rd</sup> Sector: Sue Spiller</li> <li>HF Food Bank</li> </ul>	Details of external service provider contacts to be provided to HFFB by April 2015
3. Encourage external agencies to support the delivery of Food Banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External agencies to be approached with a view to becoming HFFB Voucher Partners and/or raise awareness of the need to signpost individuals to HF Voucher Partners in the borough.</li> <li>Work with health providers to enhance and encourage signposting to services addressing food poverty and food poverty crisis.</li> <li>Support organisations delivering services which address food poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3<sup>rd</sup> sector: Sue Spiller</li> <li>HF Food Bank</li> <li>Health Services: tbc</li> <li>Public Health: Pete Westmore</li> <li>HRD: Kim Dero/Antonia Hollingsworth</li> <li>ELRS: David Page</li> </ul>	<p>Information distributed to 3<sup>rd</sup> sector orgs via Sobus by end of March 2015</p> <p>Publicity to GP forum/CCG by March 2015</p> <p>Info to business contacts by March 2015</p>

	to build relationships with other businesses in the borough, including facilitating introductions to other potential supporters, including local football clubs, emergency services etc.		
4. Support the broader provision of support to address low income and food poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Member to consider project proposal and funding request to deliver additional advice and support to those facing food poverty crisis, i.e. an advice and support worker placed at the Food Bank.</li> </ul>	Sue Spiller	CM Decision report by April 2015
5. Promote HF Food Bank to local residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information to be posted on the Council's website and circulated via other external communications to promote Food Bank services to local residents and H&amp;F staff.</li> <li>• Information will be targeted at areas with high levels of deprivation.</li> </ul>	HF Food Bank Louise Raisey, Communications	Information on Food Bank on the Council's website by end of February 2015.
6. Leading by example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HFFB collection points to be offered in Hammersmith Town Hall, Park View Health Centre, 145 King Street and all area housing offices.</li> <li>• The Council will promote and encourage staff and residents to donate food items to HFFB via these collection points.</li> </ul>	HF Food Bank – collection containers  Louise Raisey – info on Council's website  TTS to identify points for Food Bank collection containers	April 2015
7. Support the continued development of HF Food Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support HFFB to identify and secure appropriate storage premises in the north of the borough.</li> <li>• Identify additional support towards HFFB transport needs.</li> <li>• Support targeted information to local</li> </ul>	TTS: Marcus Perry HF Food Bank 3SIF/FCS: Sue Spiller Communications: Louise Raisey	Premises identified at 75 Bloemfontein Rd. Negotiating with HRD, re. length of rent free period. Likely HFFB will

	residents particularly in areas of highest deprivation in the borough, and consider financial support in times of high need when HFFB food supplies may not meet demand.		require grant funding for premises refit and redecoration. Decision report to be submitted once costs provided by HFFB.
8. Support the evidence base for Food Bank and other services which address and mitigate low income and food poverty:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dependent on what info can be provided by HF Food Bank/Trussell Trust, LBHF to provide data analysis support in order for HFFB and broader services, addressing low income and resultant food poverty, to better understand the impact of their services, where services could or should be targeted better and the impact on broader socio economic measures.</li> </ul>	FCS: Lee Fitzjohn H&F Food Bank	