



West Cheshire Foodbank
Unit 3/4 Stanney Mill Industrial Estate
Dutton Green
Chester
Cheshire
CH2 4SA
T 0151 355 7730
E info@westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk
W www.westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk
B www.westcheshire.blogspot.co.uk

March, 2017

Trustees Statement

Staff and volunteers have gained valuable experience which equips Foodbank to work towards food justice in West Cheshire. We have worked with local partners and sought expert advice to understand how best to transition from a dependence on referrals to a more sustainable, relational way of working. The Board of Trustees values local relationships which keep food poverty high on the agenda and, whilst the operation has continued to provide emergency food for increasing numbers of people, Foodbank has also been a catalyst for strategic initiatives. West Cheshire Poverty Truth Commission and the Welcome Network are now critical forums which inform and resource people who struggle through poverty to access safe and healthy food. It is therefore imperative that we invest in solutions that go beyond the provision of emergency food aid.

In the belief that our community is actively bringing about food justice, West Cheshire Foodbank will focus on developing places where people can meet, share both food and experiences so the burden of food poverty is shared in local communities. Foodbank will always seek to support people in crisis but needs to invite wider participation so that Meeting Places can emerge. The Trustees at West Cheshire Foodbank invite churches, specialist agencies, charitable foundations and local businesses who share our vision to collaborate with us to establish Meeting Places which transform situations of poverty.



Martin Dick



Andrew Herbert



Diane Jenkins



Christine Jones



Ron Reid



Rose Uitterdijk

Outline Development Plan 2017

West Cheshire Foodbank

November 2016 marked four years of operation for West Cheshire Foodbank. It set out with a commitment to provide food in crisis situations and to speak out against the injustice of food poverty. Sustaining and developing the provision has only been possible through the consistent generosity of local people, businesses and organisations. This Development Plan is shaped by what is lived and learned by staff and volunteers from this community of needs and response.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Vision and Values:

- Hospitality: to offer unconditional welcome and a willingness to listen
- Relationship Building: to care in ways which develop relationships between staff, volunteers and the people who visit Foodbank and its partner agencies
- Empowerment: to ensure people struggling in poverty are in the driving seat - *'anything about us without us is not for us'*
- Expert Inputs: work collaboratively with expert partners to develop shared understanding and a sustainable provision
- Collaboration: to make decisions which provide for immediate crisis and facilitate transitional opportunities in local communities

1.2 Purposes:

- to provide relief to individuals and families in crisis in West Cheshire, through the provision of emergency food supplies
- to provide practical, mental and spiritual support either directly or by referral to approved partner agencies to enable individuals and families to avoid future crises
- to raise awareness of the causes of food poverty and encourage both policymakers and local people to take action
- to provide emergency food, develop Meeting Places and campaign for food justice

1.3 Governance & Policy

The trustees are committed to good governance:

- to ensure that all existing trustees are not only aware of but also have been trained in their legal responsibilities in discharging their duties
- to ensure that there is a clear process for recruiting and inducting new trustees
- to ensure that at least every six months the Trustee body sets aside time in one of its monthly meetings to review its charitable purpose and confirm compliance with its legal obligations
- to ensure compliance with its legal obligations as an employer
- to ensure obligations to external bodies are met
- to ensure that key policies on safeguarding, health and safety, risk management and data protection and etc are kept current and clearly communicated
- to ensure decisions and discussions from Trustee meetings are communicated to staff and volunteers

1.4 Finance/Resourcing

The Trustees are committed to ensure that Foodbank is funded for the short, medium and long term:

- to bring forward a finance strategy that supports the development plan
- to ensure that the core operations are funded
- to ensure that Meeting Places develop as self-sustaining in a partnership model with minimal resources employed by Foodbank

Outline Development Plan 2017

1.5 Foodbank Operations in 2016

1.5.1 Food Collection

West Cheshire Foodbank handles food that is donated through:

- community **collection boxes** located in 100+ places
- **supermarket** collections which are planned at particular times throughout the year
- organisations arranging specific collections, often at times such as Christmas and Harvest
- individual members of the public.

The **warehouse** team sorts, weighs, records and stores all donated food. Food is dispatched from the warehouse to the **distribution centres**.

1.5.2 Referring people to Foodbank - partner agencies refer people to Foodbank. West Cheshire Foodbank works with 90+ Partner Agencies including schools, charities, churches and medical centres. Those agencies are professional organisations with specialist understanding and issue a Foodbank voucher to a person/people when a particular need is assessed.

1.5.3 Food Distribution - the chart below identifies when and where emergency food is distributed:



Full details of locations and opening times are available here:
<https://westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk/locations/>

1.5.4 Workforce

1.5.4.1 Volunteers – 100+ people offer time in teams working in the warehouse, distribution centres, as Trustees, driving and delivering food, supporting administration and developing a communication network.

1.5.4.2 Employed - 3 part-time employees each work 20 hours a week in the following roles:

- Development Officer
- Operations Co-ordinator
- Administrator and Warehouse Co-ordinator

1.5.5 Monitoring, Accountability and Campaigning

West Cheshire Foodbank records and monitors every donation that is given and distributed and that information relating to the people helped it:

- a) to be accountable as a registered charity*
- b) to draw on accurate data which tells the local story**

West Cheshire Foodbank set out with a commitment to speak out about the injustice of food poverty:

- in 2013, a **Question Time** event was arranged where questions were raised and debated and local people shared their stories
- in 2014, the ****CheshireHunger** report sought to understand why people came to Foodbank and was produced in collaboration with academic experts, then published nationally
- in 2015, West Cheshire Foodbank worked with cross-party representatives from Cheshire West and Chester Council to establish **West Cheshire Poverty Truth Commission** that will launch its detailed work in February 2017
- in 2016, the ****StillHungry Report** was produced to shed light on who faces hunger, why and for how long, then published nationally as a follow-up to the 2014 study
- in 2016, Frank Field MP, initiated a conversation with West Cheshire Foodbank that has led to a Welcome Network being established in Cheshire West and Chester with the intention to develop Meeting Places

“ the commitment to speak out has placed West Cheshire Foodbank in a position where the voice of people struggling with food poverty can be heard through the actions we engage in” (Quality Assurance Report 2016)

* Find report to Charity Commission @ <http://beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=1150934&subid=0>

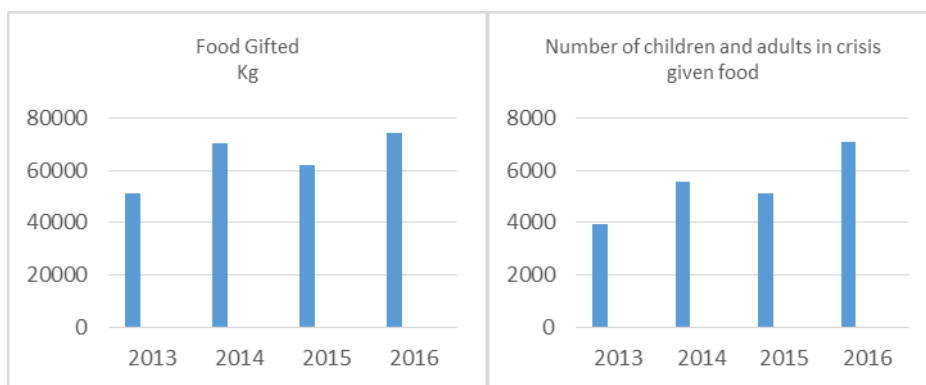
**Find ‘CheshireHunger’ and ‘StillHungry’ reports @ <https://westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk/about/ourresearch>

Outline Development Plan 2017

2. DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Reflection and Learning:

West Cheshire Foodbank acknowledge the spirit of giving from our community. The people of West Cheshire have given willingly and generously without fail. Many supporters have been giving regularly since 2013 and, because we explain our needs as clearly and widely as possible and give feedback on how it is being used, we have added to their numbers every year. We are in a network of Foodbanks and like-minded organisations and have been able to share and exchange surpluses. The challenge for all Foodbanks is to achieve a balance in the donations given to match the full range of foods we need. The growing need has been matched by growth in regular giving and enabled the Foodbank to rely less on large-scale collections.



Behind the charts:

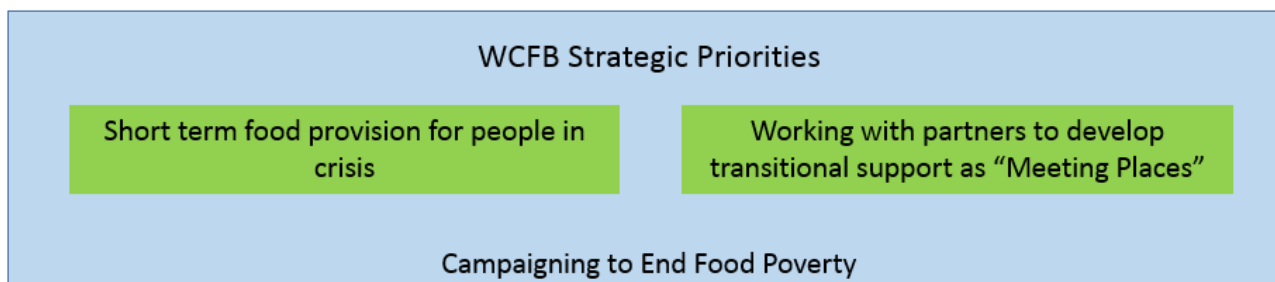
- during 4 years of operation, numbers of people needing emergency food continues to indicate an upward trend and the public has always responded to meet the need
- there are increasing numbers of people who need support beyond 3 vouchers:
 - the **41% referred to Foodbank through sanctions or benefit delays
 - people whose needs are complex and enduring
- extending the referral system to accommodate those situations has become unsustainable and it became clear that hand-outs were keeping some people in a cycle of dependency of returning to Foodbank as if in a revolving door
- as a consequence, staff and volunteers from West Cheshire Foodbank sought external support and advice from:
 - Chester Diocesan 'Food Matters' working group
 - Edge Hill University Institute for Public Policy and Professional Practice (IP4)
 - Through a period of and reflection during 2016, staff and volunteers endeavoured to identify a sustainable vision

****Find 'CheshireHunger' and 'StillHungry' reports @ <https://westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk/about/ourresearch>**

2.2 Direction and Priorities since September 2016

What we have learned in 2016 will further shape developments and direction:

- a. **Crisis provision** through referrals for up to three emergency food vouchers will be maintained. Wherever and whenever possible, expert financial advice will be provided alongside the process of distributing emergency food.
- b. **Transitional support** will be developed as a priority in the form of **Meeting Places** for anyone needing help beyond 3 crisis vouchers.
- c. **Campaigning to end food poverty** is at the core everything we do.



West Cheshire Foodbank understands **Meeting Places**:

- are places where people feel safe, are valued as equals and can engage in collective activity
- are accessible and welcoming to target groups. Referral is not required for participation
- are delivered collaboratively with expert partners (welfare rights, financial advice, mental health, cooking skills)
- encourage the approach: *'anything about us without us is not for us'*
- encourage lasting relationships to be built through active participation, typically involving growing, cooking or eating food
- will provide food for people transitioning from initial crisis where that reduces dependency

This diagram visualises **Meeting Places** that will be the prime focus for West Cheshire Foodbank:



Outline Development Plan 2017

2.3 Priorities into actions

It is essential that a food collection and distribution network is sustained to meet the growing needs of the voucher-based Foodbank operations. It remains a priority, together with developing volunteer, staff and Trustee roles for the 3-year period until transitional support is fully developed alongside crisis provision.

In the period since **September 2016 until March 2017** these activities are in focus under the sponsorship of Trustees:

Activity	Trustee Sponsors
Engage in creative conversation with a range of community partners and our own volunteers, with a view to developing Meeting Places in each locality	Christine Jones Andrew Herbert
Build a Development Team to ensure that foodbank is an active partner in the growing network of Meeting Places	Christine Jones
Develop the already identified Meeting Places in partnership with like-minded organisations so that each can operate under its own resources	Christine Jones Andrew Herbert
Manage the boundaries of the Extended Vouchers scheme and talk with Partner Agencies and Volunteers with regard to phasing out Extended Vouchers without failing people in crisis	Andrew Herbert
Develop and implement communications policy	Martin Dick
Challenge ourselves as to why our internal communications are not effective by dedicating time to understand each issue, solving problems by collaboration	Diane Jenkins
Ensure Trustee roles are clear	Ron Reid

In the period until **December 2017**, the following activities will be pursued so that the transitional support concept is fully established:

Activity	Trustee Sponsor
Develop a business plan by the end April in collaboration with expert partners to implement the outline the development plan	Chris Williams Christine Jones
Develop our agencies network and volunteer skills base to meet future need	Andrew Herbert
Build up intelligence about patterns of need and repeat use of Foodbank	Andrew Herbert
Develop interactive resources to enable effective signposting to be used by session volunteers to signpost people coming to Foodbank towards supportive agencies, people and networks	Martin Dick
Shift language from Foodbank to Food Justice	Martin Dick
Developing and redefining the criteria for issuing emergency food through the development of Meeting Places and the voucher model	Diane Jenkins Andrew Herbert
Act as catalysts to establish Meeting Places with partners	Christine Jones
Seek a Trustee who is active in the churches networks of Cheshire West & Chester to support the development plan	Martin Dick

2.4 Finance & Resources Planning

Recognising that significant resources above those in existence will be required. Trustees will sponsor projects to develop the operations and relationships needed to deliver for the communities we serve.

Core Operations

Aim: To support crisis provision and the developing needs of the transitional support at the lowest possible cost

Concept: In 2016 the total running costs of the core operations was £35k

Targets are to reduce the overall running costs to £30k without reducing the excellent service that is provided

Trustee Sponsor – Diane Jenkins

Churches Friendship Network

Aim: To engage all churches to be advocates of food justice by their congregations providing prayers, voices, time and money

Concept: Churches will be encouraged to be active in their support, registering the areas that they commit to in support of food justice and the role of Foodbank

Target is that £8k is secured in 2017. £12k per year is the future annual target

Trustee Sponsors – Andrew Herbert & Christine Jones

Corporate Network

Aim: To engage locally based businesses to provide time and money as part of their corporate social responsibility

Concept: Corporations engaged in longer term relationships providing employee time and company/employee donations of food and finance. Year-long commitments will be typical

Targets are 1000 employee-hours of company-sponsored volunteering and £20k per year in total

Trustee Sponsor – Martin Dick

Grant Funding the 3-year Vision

Aim: To secure funding for staffing and the assets required to develop Meeting Places

Concept: Two development regions supported by a core operation. Organic growth such that local co-ordinators spend 50% of their time sustaining what is developed and 50% supporting new development. Funding applications will be aligned to the development plan and credibility through sponsorship from Trussell Trust and Community Leaders/Activists with grant-making bodies.

Targets are that staffing changes are in place by September 2017 with funding for 2 staff with the appropriate number of contract hours secured until 2020.

West Cheshire Foodbank. Registered charity no.1150934 (England & Wales)

Outline Development Plan 2017

Trustee Sponsor – Diane Jenkins & Andrew Herbert

From 2017 - 2020, Foodbank will develop collaborative ways of working to reduce the need for a crisis provision as Meeting Places are established whilst always campaigning for food justice.

2.5 Example Developments

Practical workings-out of what Foodbank understands as Meeting Places:	Distinct Characteristics
<p>School Holiday Scheme - during school holidays, Foodbank worked collaboratively with a local Councillor and expert partners to support families in particular neighbourhoods. Community bases, churches or community centres, became the gathering places where church and community volunteers worked with staff from the Childrens Centre, an allotment association and 'Farm to Fork' staff from Tesco's. Donated foods were prepared into either packed lunches or hot cooked meals. After-lunch activities were provided by the Childrens Centre staff, Tescos and the Library. Between 40-60 people took part on each occasion and there was an atmosphere of a neighbourhood working together, best articulated by the observation 'this is the real thing'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship Building Empowerment Collaboration Expert Input Hospitality
<p>Cook and Eat - a city centre initiative developed in response to the large number of single men with enduring and complex needs. The project is collaborative with Citizens Advice Bureau and Foodbank. The aim is to provide a weekly tea-time gathering place where fresh soup and bread can be made and eaten together. By taking time to cook and eat together, it is anticipated that relationships emerge which allow for expert support from CAB to address longer term needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration Empowerment Relationship Building Hospitality Expert Inputs

Practical workings-out of what Foodbank understands as Meeting Places:	Distinct Characteristics
<p>Welcome Network - a network of experts working collaboratively to provide resources for Meeting Places in particular areas. Two full-time staff will be appointed to facilitate and coordinate the Welcome Network across West Cheshire.</p> <p>The Network will include:</p> <p>Foodbank, Councillors, Skills, Employment and Benefits Officers from Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire West Poverty Truth Commission, CAB, HealthBox, Plus Dane Housing, Chester Voluntary Action. Church communities should be part of an area network to provide gathering places and an open welcome. Further, groups such as Mother's Union, Age UK and WI could support with volunteers who can cook or garden.</p>	<p>Collaboration</p> <p>Expert Inputs</p> <p>Empowerment</p>