

North Yorkshire County Council

Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee

24 October 2022

An introductory report on the use of food banks.

Report of Assistant Director Policy, Partnerships and Communities

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the use of food banks and food support services across the county.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Members raised concerns about 'the growing need for, and dependence on, foodbanks across the county and suggested it be considered as a topic for a more in depth scrutiny review' at the meeting of the committee on 6th June 2022. It was resolved that an introductory report on the use of food banks be brought to this meeting for consideration.

3.0 Introduction

- 3.1 In addition to the conventional food bank provision in the county, during the pandemic the county saw a number of other food support projects set up to support people who were experiencing some form of food insecurity. This included people who were on reduced incomes and people who had difficulties accessing food, due to the pandemic restrictions.
- 3.2 The range of food support projects include conventional food banks, meal delivery services, community pantries and fridges, social supermarkets and direct food deliveries. A full list of the typologies of support is attached as Annex A.
- 3.3 During the pandemic, funding was provided from Defra to the Council in order to support these projects in order to ensure that people had access to food during national restrictions. Over the pandemic, 30 organisations received support. Most of the projects have continued following the lifting of restrictions and continue to provide support to people in their communities experiencing food insecurity. Some, although not all, also have the reduction of food waste as their primary purpose.

4.0 Post-pandemic support for food insecurity

- 4.1 On 30 September 2021, the government announced that vulnerable households across the country would be able to access a new Household Support Fund (HSF) to help them with essentials of food, household essentials and utilities. To date the Council has distributed two rounds of HSF grant. The majority of the funding has been used for direct support to eligible households. The Council also used some of that funding to offer grants to food projects under the Food Bank Support Fund (FBSF) grant programme.
- 4.2 The Food Bank Support Fund has supported 14 food projects in North Yorkshire.
- 4.3 Grants in the total of £445,000 have been offered (£285k in Phase 1 and £160k in Phase 2).

4.4 Monitoring information from the funded organisations has been collected between October 2021 and June 2022.

4.5 **Summary of Data**

The table below shows the summary data of individuals and households supported by the 14 organisations between October 2021 and June 2022.

The data shows the highest usage took place during the winter months of January to March 2022. The data received to date does not show a full calendar year and as this programme started in October 2022, there is no annual comparative data available.

Period	Time Period	Number of beneficiaries	Number of Households
1	Oct - Dec 21	4,324	2,133
2	Jan - Mar 22	7,160	3,928
3	Apr - Jun 22	6,831	2,530
	Total	18,315	8,591

4.6 A full breakdown of the data follows including data relating to households with children and those without children. In the second round of HSF funding, data was also collected on those households with people in receipt of pension as they had been added to the HSF eligibility criteria (Period 3 table below).

4.7 **Period 1 (October 2021 – December 2021)**

Reference	Beneficiaries	Total No. Households	With children	Without children
FBWS-001	90	90	80	10
FBWS-002	680	200	177	23
FBWS-003	515	186	94	92
FBWS-004	24	12	4	8
FBWS-005	274	113	53	60
FBWS-006	197	98	42	56
FBWS-007	689	557	321	236
FBWS-008	85	35	15	20
FBWS-009	152	50	31	19
FBWS-010	731	329	127	202
FBWS-011	62	43	28	15
FBWS-012		88	31	57
FBWS-013	720	301	252	49
FBWS-014	105	31	16	15
Totals	4324	2133	1271	862

4.8 **Period 2 (January 2022 – March 2022)**

Reference	Beneficiaries	Total Households	With children	Without children
FBWS-001	45	45	1	44
FBWS-002	220	150	123	27
FBWS-003	162	20	13	7
FBWS-004	356	136	64	72
FBWS-005	892	79	52	27
FBWS-006	753	71	28	43
FBWS-007	1034	1034	310	724
FBWS-008	1278	582	208	374
FBWS-009	39	11	5	6
FBWS-010	583	273	138	135
FBWS-011	18	23	12	11
FBWS-012		159	48	111
FBWS-013	260	64	50	14
FBWS-014	1520	1281	85	1196
Totals	7,160	3,928	1,137	2,791

4.9 **Period 3 (April 2022 – June 2022)**

Reference	Beneficiaries	Total Households	With children	With Pension	Other
FBS-001	75	45	20	10	15
FBS-002	471	471	7	464	0
FBS-003	190	82	58	9	15
FBS-004	1055	380	201	12	167
FBS-005	282	42	23	1	18
FBS-006	650	288	89	44	155
FBS-007	63	63	30	33	0
FBS-008	1100	226	121	54	51
FBS-009	1750	501	390	68	43
FBS-010	201	93	38	13	42
FBS-011	980	325	260	32	33
FBS-012	14	14	0	0	14
FBS-013	awaiting data return				
FBS-014	18	18	0	14	4
Totals	6831	2530	1237	740	553

4.10 **Qualitative feedback from projects**

In addition to the quantitative measures above, qualitative feedback has also been collected from the organisations. Issues highlighted include:

- The cost-of-living crisis has compounded the issues that were already prevalent because of Covid-19. People who would not traditionally seek help are coming forwards and asking for help.
- The impact of the increased cost of living and in particular fuel costs (transport and heating) in a rural area is a primary concern for people and is driving more demand
- Increases in people coming to project who are experiencing increasing debt (e.g. rent arrears accrued during the pandemic) and seeking advice on budget management
- Information / support to cook healthy meals
- Increasing numbers of families who are experiencing financial instability for the first time
- People presenting with a range of challenges and needs such as those on low incomes both families and individuals, people with addiction issues, people experiencing isolation
- Particular issues in budgeting for bulk purchases of oil where there are no options to spread payments through the year

5.0 **Other Support Available**

5.1 In addition to support from food banks and other food support providers, people experiencing food or fuel insecurity are also able to access other services such as the North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF), support from the Council funded 'Warm and Well' service, free school meals for eligible families and Household Support Fund direct awards.

5.2 NYLAF has seen an increase in applications over the past three years. There are steady increases across each District.

5.3 Comparative figures for Quarter 1 (April – June) for past three years:

	Q1 2020/21	Q1 2021/22	Q1 2022/23
Craven	60	91	150
Hambleton	172	109	193
Harrogate	249	366	473
Richmondshire	78	78	108
Ryedale	113	131	244
Scarborough	707	717	1,111
Selby	107	117	244

6.0 Food Insecurity Research and Insight

- 6.1 Following the transition from the pandemic emergency *response* phase to the *recovery* phase, the Council jointly commissioned a piece of work with City of York Council to better understand the role and effectiveness of the various types of food support programmes operating across the region.
- 6.2 This piece of work includes both a review of the national research being undertaken on these issues and carrying out primary research with local food support organisations and people experiencing food insecurity. The research is due to report initial findings in October 2022.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the introductory report and to consider whether they wish to undertake a further in depth scrutiny review.

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31 August 2022

Food Support - Typology of Providers

Category	Examples
Free for users and often with food waste as the driver	Food Banks e.g. Trussel Trust
	Community Fridges (various across county)
	Community Pantries (various across county)
Subsidised food provision	Social Supermarkets
	Community Kitchens
	Community Cafes
	Community Shops
Hot and ready made meals	Meals on Wheels - hot food delivery
	Pre-made meals for heating at home
Food Shopping and delivery	Food Parcels / Food Share
	Supermarket donations for local charities
	Supermarket vouchers - Household Support Fund/NYLAF
	Food Hampers - local VCSE deliveries to families
	Personal shopping - as provided by CSOs during covid but based on full cost recovery
Food as part of wider support services	Integrated support by a 'key worker' that may include information, advice and signposting provided by some food projects e.g. NYLAF agents, cookery classes, debt counselling
Public sector interventions	Free school meals
	Breakfast clubs etc.
Food Infrastructure support	Grants for storage, premises, equipment (eg freezers), transport, volunteer expenses
Collective community measures	Local place based food alliances
	Food networks
	Community Fridges
Preventative / Education <i>(some linked to other issues)</i>	Cooking on a budget courses
	Phunky Foods cooking courses
	School Improvement - healthy eating measures/recipe cards
	Lunch Clubs - various across county
	Community growing/gardening/allotments
	Community Cafes