



AFFORDABLE FOOD CLUBS

*Improving access to affordable
nutritious food and specialist support*



FEEDING BRITAIN

Feeding Britain works with a national network of regional and local partnerships, combining practical action with research and advocacy, to eliminate hunger and its root causes. Our vision is for every household in the UK to be able to afford, access, and prepare the food they require for a healthy life, with nobody left hungry or exposed to periods of acute or chronic food insecurity.

AFFORDABLE FOOD CLUBS

The provision of low-cost, nutritious food and wraparound support through Affordable Food Clubs is central to Feeding Britain's work to prevent hunger. Affordable Food Clubs can include social supermarkets, pantries, larders, food buses, and other community-led initiatives which provide access to nutritious food for a fraction of what these items would cost in a regular supermarket. They enable people on low incomes to stretch their budgets further each week, helping to prevent crisis situations from arising in household finances which can bring the need for food banks into play. They also offer wraparound support to address the wider issues that people may be facing. The network of 280 Affordable Food Clubs supported by Feeding Britain has a collective membership of 46,000 households. Staff and volunteers cautiously estimate that millions of pounds each year is being saved on food by households accessing these clubs.



THE BENEFITS

We recognise that Affordable Food Clubs are not a panacea for the prevention of food insecurity. However, our experience has shown that they can offer a sustainable and dignified model of community food provision, whilst boosting resilience and preventing at least some of the need for food banks. For people on low incomes, the ability to choose the items that they and their family both can and want to eat, to make a financial contribution, and to acquire goods in a setting as similar to a regular shop as possible, has been found to create a more positive and less stigmatised experience. The funds raised from membership fees also enable each Affordable Food Club to reinvest in food supplies of sufficient quality and variety, and to pursue greater financial sustainability for the project, thereby reducing the need to rely heavily on grant funding.

This document outlines some different models of Affordable Food Clubs from across the Feeding Britain network. These are:

- **Number Seven Citizens' Supermarket and Café, Birkenhead**
- **Kennishead Larder, Glasgow**
- **The FoodSavers Network**
- **The Bassetlaw Mobile Community Shop, Nottinghamshire**
- **The Feltwell Pantry, Norfolk**
- **The Sheppey Support Bus, Kent**
- **Feeding Devon Affordable Food Hubs, Devon**

Feeding Britain has additional resources available, including a toolkit for anyone setting up an Affordable Food Club. Please email info@feedingbritain.org for more information about how Feeding Britain can support your work.



NUMBER SEVEN CITIZENS' SUPERMARKET AND CAFÉ, BIRKENHEAD

The first Affordable Food Club in the Feeding Britain network, Number Seven is a large-scale supermarket and café. The supermarket offers a broad range of ambient, chilled, frozen and fresh foods as well as toiletries and household essentials. The supermarket uses a points-based system, where each item costs a number of points, and the points equate to a certain amount of money; customers fill their basket as they please and then pay at the tills at the end. The experience is very similar to shopping in a regular supermarket. Membership is open to any households on a low income (single person household income under £1,066 per month and couple/family household income under £1,666 per month).

- 1 No membership fee
- 2 Points-based pricing system which equates to money
- 3 Can choose from a broad range of ambient, chilled, frozen and fresh foods as well as toiletries and household essentials
- 4 Access to wraparound support and discounts at café



The café is an additional income stream for the project and is very popular, particularly for breakfast. It has a low-cost menu, and members of the supermarket are offered half price in the café before 11.30am.

Expert advice is available through Involve Northwest, with a Welfare Advisor on-site once a week. The Advisor can help people with benefits checks and applications, debt and money management concerns, and other issues they may be facing. Members can also access Credit Union services on-site, with safe saving and borrowing options.



Number Seven is part of the Feeding Birkenhead, Supporting Wirral local food network. This helps them to share good practice, work collaboratively with local food projects to ensure services are joined up, share and access food supplies, and identify common issues and policy priorities to escalate through Feeding Britain.



KENNISHEAD LARDER, GLASGOW

One of a network of Affordable Larders across Glasgow, the Kennishead Larder is based on the ground floor of a multi-storey Wheatley Homes housing block. The larder is open twice a week for three hours at a time and anyone is welcome to shop there. Members pay a £1 monthly fee and there is a points-based pricing system, with each item costing a number of points which equate to money. Customers can pay by cash or card, and can purchase as much or as little as they wish; the average spend per customer is just over £10. The Kennishead Larder has 400 members, with around 75 to 100 members shopping each week.

The larder offers a broad range of fresh, ambient, chilled and frozen foods as well as pet food, household cleaning products and toiletries. Much of the food, such as meat and dairy, is purchased at discounted or wholesale rates from local suppliers; this enables the larder to offer a consistent, reliable supply of high quality produce. Other items, such as bread and fruit and vegetables, are donated by supportive businesses or collected as surplus. The larder uses the principles of a co-operative, with much of the food being bulk purchased at low cost and the savings being passed directly on to members. The income from members covers the cost of the food as well as a contribution towards the running costs.



"I shop at the larder here, everyone is welcome at the larder. Friendship brings me here. If you've only got a couple of pounds, it will make a few meals. People who don't have things: come down. People will help you here. And that's what it's all about. It's one of the best things that's ever happened in Kennishead. People come here who are worried about how they're going to feed their kids. And now they can. That's a godsend."

As well as affordable food from the larder, members can access wider support on-site. This includes access to the Credit Union, fuel vouchers, drop-ins with the local MP and Councillors, and access to housing officers.

Kennishead Larder is part of the broader Good Food Scotland larder network. The larders work together to offer a consistent service across the network, purchase and share food, arrange surplus collections, apply for grant funding, and engage local stakeholders.

1 Monthly membership fee of £1

2 Points-based pricing system which equates to money

3 Membership fee covers fresh, ambient, chilled and frozen foods as well as pet food, household cleaning products and toiletries

4 Access to wraparound support



FOODSAVERS NETWORK

FoodSavers members pay a membership fee each week they attend their local pantry or social supermarket, typically £5-6, which allows them to take home a food shop as well as other benefits. Members can choose for £1 of their membership fee to be invested into their Credit Union savings account at no extra cost to them. As well as providing affordable food, FoodSavers aims to build budgeting skills and a savings mentality so that individuals can become more financially resilient and better able to face future crises.

Members can choose from a broad range of nutritious fresh, ambient, chilled and frozen food, as well as household supplies and toiletries. Much of the food is unwanted or surplus food, intercepted from being wasted. There are also activities such as cookery classes, volunteering opportunities, and access to advice and support services to address wider issues that members may be facing.



I came in feeling suicidal and I am leaving feeling I have hope.

1 Membership fee for each week attending; typically £5-6

2 Option to invest £1 of membership fee into a Credit Union savings account

3 Membership fee covers nutritious fresh, ambient, chilled and frozen food, as well as household supplies and toiletries

4 Access to wraparound support



This is one of the most interesting and humane things to come across my desk in a long time.

The programme is run by Inn Churches, in partnership with local Credit Unions and community food projects, having been introduced first throughout the Feeding Bradford & Keighley network.



BASSETLAW MOBILE COMMUNITY SHOP

Set up by Bassetlaw Food Bank in response to increasing demand, the Bassetlaw Mobile Community Shop provides better access to affordable food for rural communities. The shop is in an ex-DHL delivery van, fitted out with shelving, lighting and access steps. The van stops at villages across Bassetlaw on a weekly basis. Members come aboard and choose their shopping from a broad selection of fresh, ambient and chilled items.

It is £4 for 10 ambient items and 50p per portion for fresh items, and members can choose to purchase as many items as they wish. Membership is open to all residents of Bassetlaw and the Mobile Community Shop has around 500 members, with around half of those shopping each week. The average spend per member is £6.90. The Food Bank has noticed a significant reduction in demand from the villages now served by the Mobile Community Shop.



Thank you so much for this little shop; it has helped our family so much.



1

No membership fee

2

Pricing is £4 for 10 items & 50p per portion for fresh items

3

Can choose from a broad selection of fresh, ambient and chilled items

The project is part of the Bassetlaw Food Insecurity Network.



THE FOOD PANTRY, FELTWELL

Operating from a church porch, the Feltwell Pantry is run by a group of community volunteers who have made amazing use of the small space. The pantry serves households in Feltwell, Norfolk, along with six nearby rural communities. It offers a range of fruit and vegetables as well as ambient, chilled and frozen foods, pet food, household items and toiletries. The pantry also offers free crisis packs for people in urgent need.

Members pay a one-off fee of £3.50 to join. There is then a points-based system, where each item is worth a set number of points, which equates to money (1 point = 10p). Members can choose as much or as little as they like each time they shop. The pantry buys in some food and receives surplus food and donated items from individuals and businesses. They have few overheads and running costs, so income from members helps to offset the cost of food and make the project sustainable.

The pantry is open to anyone who is on a low income or struggling to make ends meet, and they also offer affordable clothes.

1

One-off membership fee of £3.50

2

Points-based system equating to money

3

Can choose from fresh, ambient, chilled and frozen food as well as household items and toiletries

4

Affordable clothes available too



“The need for the service is increasing; we are seeing more "working poor" and pensioners. The cost of living crisis is really starting to bite hard across society.

The Feltwell Pantry is part of the Nourishing Norfolk Network which is facilitated by Norfolk Community Foundation.



THE SHEPPEY SUPPORT BUS, KENT

The Sheppey Support Bus is a converted double decker bus with a social supermarket on the lower deck where members can choose from a range of low-cost food and household items. Members pay a set monthly fee of £29 for 20 items (or £14.50 for 10 items) to take home a basket of shopping each week. Upstairs, there are rooms for community advice, workshops, and support with issues such as debt, budgeting, fuel, literacy, domestic abuse, and mental health. Medway and Swale Health and Care Partnership Team are working in partnership with the Sheppey Support Bus to tackle health inequalities in the highest areas of need, with One You Kent offering regular health checks from the bus. This has been recognised by NHS England who recently commissioned a short film on the success of the partnership approach.

Each week, the bus visits the same stops on a set timetable, serving areas that did not previously have good access to affordable or nutritious food. The team use a refrigerated van, as well as the bus, to maintain stocks of fresh and chilled foods whilst the bus is out on its route. The bus has been on the road every week for the past 18 months with the eastern end of the island benefitting from its visits in particular.



This place helps so much; it just takes that little bit of pressure off. I don't think I would be coping very well without it.

1 Membership fee of £29 for 20 items (or £14.50 for 10 items)

2 Weekly timetable of stops in rural community

3 Membership covers a weekly shop of nutritious fresh and chilled food

4 Access to wraparound support



It's amazing! The savings I make here on food, I put towards my gas; that way I can take the chill off in the morning before my son goes to school. I think it's a wonderful idea.

The Sheppey Support Bus was developed by the Sheppey Community Development Forum in response to the high demand on food banks.



AFFORDABLE FOOD HUBS, DEVON

Feeding Devon run a network of Affordable Food Hubs across rural Devon. Using a former supermarket delivery vehicle, they are able to offer a range of fresh, chilled, frozen and ambient items from community buildings, which act as Food Hubs, at set times each week. Using trestle tables, they 'pop up' a Food Hub at each venue.

Membership is open to anyone in the local community who would benefit. Members can fill a bag with produce and this will cost them £5, or £10 for two bags, saving around 60% compared to supermarket prices. They also have pre-made food boxes for a separate set fee. The network of five hubs have a collective membership of around 550 households, with around 130 members shopping each week.

Members are offered a cup of tea and an opportunity to chat, as well as signposting to local advice and welfare support services.

- 1 No membership fee
- 2 Members can fill a bag with produce for £5
- 3 Can choose from a selection of fresh, ambient, chilled and frozen produce
- 4 Opportunity to chat and be signposted to welfare support services



A really friendly and welcoming, nice place to catch up with others from the village over a free tea or coffee.

This network of Affordable Food Hubs is run by Feeding Devon.



SETTING UP AN AFFORDABLE FOOD CLUB

Feeding Britain can offer resources and advice to support the establishment and running of Affordable Food Clubs.

Please email info@feedingbritain.org to find out more about joining our network and how we can support your work.

Our resources include:

- Affordable Food Club Toolkit; for anyone interested in setting up an Affordable Food Club or Pantry
 - Mobile Affordable Food Club Toolkit; for anyone looking to set up a Mobile Affordable Food Project
 - List of food suppliers currently used across the Feeding Britain network
 - Best Practice Guide: Co-locating Advice Services within Food Projects
 - Best Practice Guide: Offering Credit Union Services alongside Affordable Food
- all quotes in this booklet relate directly to Affordable Food Clubs within the Feeding Britain network but not necessarily to the specific examples used here.