**Feeding Salford Workshop**

**CVS Conference 14th September 2022**

**Facilitator**  Jeremy Engineer

**Panel Members** Jonny Wineberg

Lewey Hellewell

Kat Purcell

Tom Togher

**Note Taker**  Jane Williams

**Tom Togher**

Chief Officer of CAB and Chair of Food Share Network (FSN for the notes)

Tom introduced himself to the room and explained the background of the FSN. Part of the FSN in Salford are both food banks and food clubs which are not to be confused with pantries as these are a different set up (with exception, for example, Lucy’s Pantry, as this is their name).

Discussed that the food crisis is now a much more permanent situation rather than being a temporary, off- off as it was a few years ago. The FSN originally had the strategic ambition that people would receive food from the food bank when they were in need but then as their financial situation became more stable and was sorted out they were then moved through to a food club which would then help them improve their situation. They would also work on the food clubs during the holidays as this is a particularly difficult time for many people.

During Covid the FSN focussed on keeping things in place. They also looked at the highlighted need and emerging priorities for cultural and different dietary requirements.

They are now re-writing the strategic plan to ensure that it is fit for purpose and would like input into it especially around the priorities and the great demand and need for food provision in Salford.

**Jonny Wineberg**

Community Futures Trust and Jewish Action on Mental Health

Johnny introduced himself and gave a background to his work with the emphasis on

* Going beyond just giving people food, for example, helping them find employment so that they will, hopefully, not need to use a food bank in the future
* Helping with other issues that they may be affecting them e.g. mental health
* Working with people using a holistic approach

**Lewey Hellewell**

Founder of Humans Manchester

Lewey introduced himself to the group and explained about Humans, which was set up with a view to provide people with dignity and respect when using food banks. They are Manchester based but 1/3 of their work is in Salford.

They are open Monday – Friday and they deliver. Referrals are welcome.

They help people who are in food crisis and need to use a food bank and then help them migrate to the Community grocers when they have managed to improve or balance their finances. Worryingly though, they have now started to see this process happening in reverse within the last 6-8 weeks.

**Kat Purcell**

10 GM

Kat introduced herself to the room and discussed Healthy Start. This started 18 months ago as a voucher scheme but this has now moved online (\*not all who were on the vouchers will have migrated online so it is important to check and make a new application if needed). Since March 22 it has been an online application and cards are now issued. This is for pregnant women and families with children under four to get items such as milk, fresh fruit and vegetables and vitamins etc.

They key point is to maximise income to ensure people have the money to buy healthy food and not have to buy food that is bad/junk food because it is cheap.

It would be good to weave this scheme into the foodbanks.

**Questions**

1. **Janice Drew – Salford Loaves and Fishes**

SLF have skills for life and holistic programme but find that a particular challenge is with employability. It is difficult to engage with people which maybe because of their benefits or the fear of the loss of benefits, bringing people into the centre is very difficult. Does anyone have advice that may help?

Jonny – they were successful at receiving funding for an employability worker just before Covid who was going to work from their centres, but with Covid this moved online but unfortunately did not translate well. However, they did manage to help people set up businesses/become self-employed/set up CICs. The key is the holistic approach to the person you are working with.

Tom – could look at Lucy’s Pantry at Emmaus as a model. This can be looked on like a skills exchange as it sees volunteers learning new skills that can be used in the workplace not just as a “place to get food”.

1. **Jennifer Smith – Salford Loaves and Fishes**

The food that has been in the food parcels has not been fit for purpose e.g. food that has been out of date, unusable or needing specific utensils or cooking equipment that people do not have at home; or they may not have the utilities to cook. The way we look at what goes into the food parcels needs to be changed for example, taking the point above, how would someone cook a meal with the ingredients or how much would it cost to cook the meal.

SLF are already seeing people who are coming to the centre needing help with their energy bills. The fuel crisis is a massive concern as well.

Also a point of concern is food waste especially with fruit and vegetables. SLF are looking at different ways they can prevent waste and people also get a nutritious meal.

Tom – Encouraging people to talk about new foods and how to cook them is one thing that food clubs could help people with.

Tom, Jennifer and Jonny - discussed different cooking methods that may help save money e.g. slow cookers, microwave, air-fryer.

Lewey – they are bulking up stock of microwave meals. They are not entirely happy with this but it is an emergency solution to an emergency problem.

Jennifer – agreed with the microwave meals as it can help get nutrition into meals at a low cost of cooking

Tom – there is some nervousness about microwaves and health

ALL – agreed that there is some issues around microwaving however “starving is much worse”.

1. **Hoon Seong – Green Teach Community Farm**

Hoon made the point that often bad food is cheaper than healthy food. This is a particular problem for the “working poor” who are struggling with finances but are not at the point of accessing a food bank.

The group discussed the above making the following points

* Food waste and surplus food is a huge cost as is trying to get this out to the people who need it, especially fruit and vegetables
* Carbon cost of collecting “bad” food as this has an effect on our planet but for no nutritional value to a person

Martyn Willcock – Groups can link in with other VCSE groups to help manage waste and distribution

1. **Paul Harris – Volunteer Salford CVS**

Paul asked whether links had been established with supermarkets to pick up surplus food.

The group discussed the above question with the following points made-

* VCSE groups have paid a price for meeting corporate needs of the supermarkets in terms of their food waste
* VCSE sector has been “doing the job of the supermarket” in getting rid of their food waste which has been expensive for many charities
* Some re-distribution works but most of the food is either a) poor quality b)past it’s use by date
* The groups involved in this discussion were in agreement that they did not want to distribute food as mentioned in the above point and could not afford to keep meeting corporate need. They are being much more selective on what they accept or reject.