



# Tackling Food Poverty A Guide For Councils

## At a glance

Community and town councils can play a vital role in alleviating food poverty by using their local knowledge, networks, and resources to address the causes and immediate needs of food insecurity in their communities

**Stigma** can **deter people** from accessing food support services.

Transform your food banks into **welcoming community hubs** with inviting spaces where people feel respected.

Offer **grocery-style pantry models** where people can select the items they need, **reducing feelings of dependence**.

**Promote your food project** using **empowering** language that emphasises **community, support, and access to all**.

Use **social media and local press** to frame food projects as an integral and **celebrated part of community life**.

**Involve local residents** in the planning, running, and promotion of food projects

Circular Communities Cymru provide support for developing Community Fridge projects

**Local Places for Nature** have free garden packages and support for councils to create a community hub and help people to grow their own fruit and vegetables. Contact Rachel Carter for more information  
rcarter@onevoicewales.wales

## Challenges

Food poverty in Wales is a growing concern, with many households struggling to access sufficient, affordable, and nutritious food. Rising living costs, low wages, and reliance on food banks highlight the extent of the issue, particularly in areas of high deprivation. Community initiatives aim to address the crisis, but challenges persist in ensuring food security for all.

## Food Initiatives



**Community Fridges** support food security by reducing waste and providing free access to nutritious food. It redirects edible surplus food from going to waste.



**Community Pantries** are effectively a subsidised membership-only supermarket. A member pays a fixed cost for a number of pantry items. The pantry provides good value for money.



**Community Cafes** often offer reduced-price or free meals and are spaces designed to promote inclusivity and support for those facing food insecurity.



**Community food markets**, often called farmers' markets connect local producers selling fresh, locally-sourced produce and handmade goods with their communities. They foster sustainable economies, reduce the environmental impact of long-distance transportation, and promote healthy eating



**Lunch Clubs**, for older people provide a vital space for social interaction, combating loneliness while offering affordable meals amid rising living costs.



**Meals on Wheels** is a service that delivers nutritious meals to individuals, primarily older adults or those with limited mobility, who are unable to prepare food for themselves; it supports independence by enabling recipients to stay in their homes while ensuring they receive regular, healthy meals



**Food banks** collect, store and distribute food to individuals and families in need. They provides essential food items to help alleviate food insecurity.



**Cooking projects** promoting low-cost meals and the use of energy efficient methods such as slow cookers help combat food poverty by teaching affordable, nutritious meal preparation.



**Community Gardens & Allotments** provide space for people to grow their own fruits and vegetables, fostering food self-sufficiency and reducing costs. They also promote healthy eating, community engagement, and environmental sustainability while helping to alleviate food insecurity.

**Food hygiene and allergen awareness** training are essential in community food projects to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants.

Proper food hygiene practices **help prevent foodborne illnesses**, protecting the health of vulnerable individuals who may rely on these services.

Allergen awareness is equally crucial to **avoid accidental exposure to allergens**, which can lead to severe or even life-threatening reactions.

By prioritising training community food projects build trust, **meet regulatory standards**, and foster an inclusive environment that prioritises public health and safety.

## Powers & Legislation

Power to provide premises for the use of clubs or societies having athletic, social or recreational objectives – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s 19

Power to Provide Markets (Food Act 1984)

Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, Section 23

Food Act 1984 s13 Regulations as to Food Hygiene

**Powers & justifications can differ, councils should consider their specific circumstances.**

**For advice & guidance, councils may wish to contact their One Voice Wales Development Officer.**

[admin@onevoicewales.wales](mailto:admin@onevoicewales.wales)

## VOLUNTEERS

**Food projects** often rely heavily on **volunteers**, but recruiting and retaining them can be challenging.

- Create clear, **flexible volunteer roles** to attract a wide range of people.
- Provide **training, recognition** (e.g., certificates), and **incentives** like **travel reimbursement**.
- **Partner** with local schools, colleges, and businesses to offer volunteer programs.
- **Promote opportunities** through social media, community centres, and faith-based organisations.
- Get support and advice from your local **County Voluntary Council**.

## Existing Services & Projects

**Cwmaman Town Council** provide food parcels to struggling families in January to support them post Christmas

**Bangor City Council** partner with Bangor University student union to provide free hot meals to residents every Saturday

**Gorseinon Town Council** were successful in securing a grant to run an educational community cooking programme to produce low cost nutritional meals

**Llannon Community Council** host a Lunch and Chat Club for their residents age 50+. Community transport is provided and attended by 60 people each week

**Coedpoeth Community Council** provide a community food cupboard to provide free food for all. This project is supported by local supermarkets.

**Pembrey & Burry Port Town Council** provide a meals on wheels scheme. They employ a chef and delivery is undertaken by volunteers

**Welshpool Town Council** host a stall for donations of surplus fruit and vegetables which people are free to take; they have a partnership with the probation service where they help to grow vegetables in an allotment and this goes towards the stall.



[Watch our video of Cwmaman Food Pantry.](#)



[Watch our Meals that Matter: Empowering Councils to Address Food Poverty Webinar.](#)

## Potential Funding Opportunities

[The Waterloo Foundation](#)

[National Lottery Awards for All](#)

[Lloyds Bank Foundation](#)

**One Voice Wales offer a training module on 'Making effective grant applications'**



**Big Bocs Bwyd** projects run in many Welsh Schools providing children and families with food at 'pay as you feel' prices. The BBB hubs comprise of an attractive Pay As You Feel shop in a modified shipping container while providing many educational opportunities for pupils.

**Fareshare** redistribute surplus food to organisations that turn it into meals for vulnerable people. Community pantries, lunch clubs, afterschool clubs and food banks all benefit from the support. Last year Fareshare redistributed enough food for over 2 million meals.

Councils can support their local foodbanks by providing direct funding or encourage local businesses and residents to donate food and essentials. Food banks in the **Trussell Trust** network in Wales distributed 187,400 emergency food parcels in 2023/24.

**Empty Plates and Cold Homes:** What it's like to grow up in poverty in 2024. The Barnardo' report focusses specifically on how poverty affects families' ability to afford food and fuel. 1 in 4 parents (25%) struggle to provide sufficient food

[Your Local Pantry Social Impact Report](#)

[Community Food Strategy](#)

[Community Food Wales Food Hub Toolkit](#)

[Food Matters: Wales](#)

## Partnership Working



**By building partnerships councils can enhance their capacity, improve resource efficiency, and deliver more sustainable food poverty projects.**

Many **supermarkets and local shops** support food redistribution and provide food to community groups

Partner with **family centres, schools and universities** to provide free meals or distribute food packages to students and families.

Co-host regular **food collection events** with partners and local food banks

**Share information** on local food initiatives, community cafes and support that is available in your area.

Members of a **food co-operative** can benefit from purchasing locally sourced produce. Work with local food producers, farms, and wholesalers to access affordable fresh food

Collaborate with **local housing providers** and link your food initiatives to resident wellbeing programmes

Your local **Community Connectors** link vulnerable people to essential services.

**Local Health Board** Dieticians can provide support and training opportunities around healthy eating

[The Government Healthy Start Scheme provides young families with help to buy food and milk.](#)

[Poverty and deprivation \(National Survey for Wales\): April 2021 to March 2022](#)

2 % of people said their household used a foodbank in the past 12 months. Of those who had used a food bank, 71% used them between 1 and 5 times, 12% between 6 and 10 times, and 17% more than 10 times in the last 12 months.

8% of people skipped meals or had smaller meals in the previous fortnight. 22% of those who skipped meals said it was because they couldn't afford them. 4% of people had at least one day in the last fortnight where they did not have a substantial meal, and 35% of this group said they had not had a substantial meal because they couldn't afford it.



[Watch our Case study with Llannon Community Council Over 50s Luncheon Club](#)

## Want to Find Out More?

**For more information on the One Voice Wales Cost-of-Living Crisis project contact the team at:**



[CoLC@onevoicewales.wales](mailto:CoLC@onevoicewales.wales)



<https://bit.ly/3KYHftK>