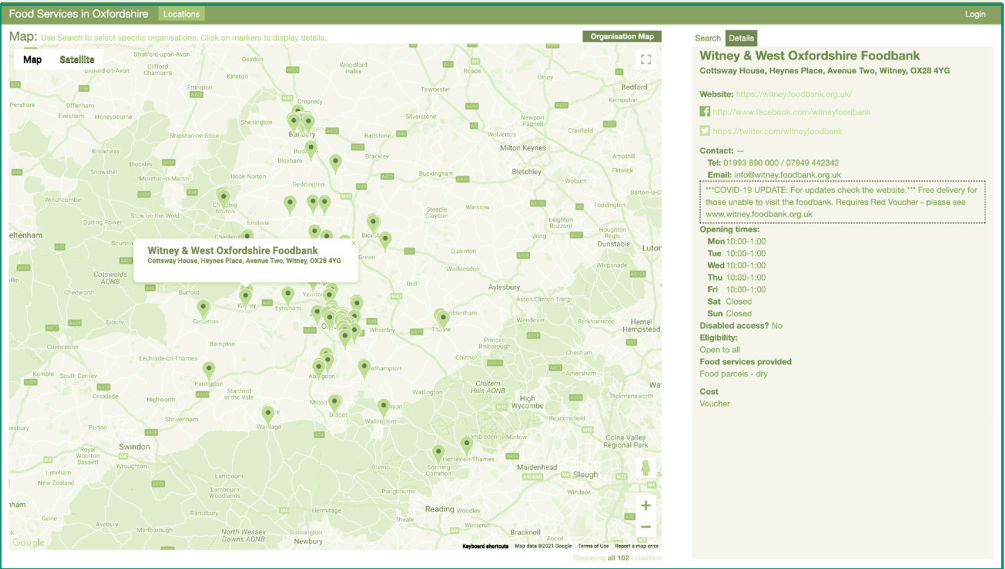## Community Food Services Map

The Community Food Services Map is a valuable resource for members of the public, volunteers and frontline workers, signposting people to services near them. It includes summary information about the type of service offered, eligibility criteria, opening times, etc.

You can find the Community Food Services Map at **goodfoodoxford.org/foodmap** or by scanning the QR code below.

Food poverty is a complex and multi-faceted problem. Working in partnership is key to building strong and resilient communities that can support those vulnerable to it. There are many people and organisations in Oxfordshire working to alleviate its symptoms and tackle the underlying causes. But there is more to be done. If you or your organisation would like to find out more and get involved, please get in touch at **mail@goodfoodoxford.org** and follow us: **@GoodFoodOxford**

References available in the full report: **https://bit.ly/OxonFPAP-Report**

Extent and causes

Food insecurity ranges from worrying about the ability to obtain food, to hunger and skipping meals (FAO, 2021).

We estimate that **8-10% of households in Oxfordshire experience food insecurity**, that is between 55,000-69,000 people.

Groups with higher levels of food insecurity include those with **health problems or disability** (5x more likely to experience food insecurity), those **severely clinically vulnerable** (2x), **food sector workers** (1.5x) and **BAME residents** (2x) (Food Foundation, 2021).

Average incomes in Oxfordshire are higher than national averages, but this masks severe inequalities. Five of the 86 Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOA) in Oxfordshire are **among the nation's 20% most deprived** and seven MSOAs have higher than national benchmarks for child poverty (JSNA, 2021b).

The high cost of living in Oxford City, particularly housing, means that **in order to "eat well"** in line with government healthy eating guidance, **a minimum income of £19,911 is required** – exceeding the minimum wage, the real living wage and the Oxford living wage. **Even on £19,911, a single person would have to compromise on some items** considered in minimum living standards such as socialising or fitness activities (Green, 2019).

"The root cause of food poverty is poverty."

– Sustain

Eight MSOAs in Oxfordshire have a shorter life expectancy than the England benchmark (JSNA, 2021b). **In Oxfordshire, health inequalities persist.** There is a 15-year gap in male life expectancy between North Oxford and Northfield Brook.

Existing work

Oxfordshire has a **long history of community food support** and COVID-19 drove a surge in activity to support those experiencing food insecurity. **Over 100 community food services,** including foodbanks, community larders and fridges and prepared meal delivery services provided **support to over 6,000 people countywide** (GFO, 2020). Over 15,000 volunteers have supported neighbours and local communities.

Community food services have worked tirelessly, enabling people to **access the support, advice, knowledge and skills** that they need to alleviate their struggles and feel a sense of community.

Councils also provided emergency support via community hubs and cash-first solutions via a range of light-touch grants programmes, targeting it where most needed **through extensive work with the community and voluntary sector.**

Organisations and people across Oxfordshire are keen to support a **planned and sustained response to tackle food insecurity,** through the pandemic and beyond.

A Food Poverty Action Plan
for Oxfordshire

Report Summary   August 2021

This summary of Good Food Oxfordshire's report on food poverty briefly outlines its extent and impact on the county. We touch upon some of the fantastic work already happening locally to support people experiencing food insecurity, and offer a glimpse of the collective action proposed through pledges.

We offer key recommendations for councils, local decision-makers, institutions, communities and individuals about ways in which they can join the fight against food insecurity in Oxfordshire. For more detail, please refer to our full report: **https://bit.ly/OxonFPAP-Report**

Collective action

Over 40 organisations and individuals have made nearly **70 pledges** to tackle food insecurity in Oxfordshire. These focus on three key areas: **emergency provision, building resilience and preventing food poverty.**

We are grateful for these commitments to collective action. We will continue to celebrate and promote the work already being done to tackle issues around food and **to highlight the gaps that the pledges have identified.**

Pledges can be read in full at **goodfoodoxford.org/oxfordshire-food-research** and at **goodfoodoxford.org/food-poverty-pledges**

Some of the pledges we have received:

Emergency provision

Whilst we began in response to the pandemic, OMA recognises that food poverty in Oxford existed before Covid-19 and that there is an ongoing need for emergency parcel and meal support. We also recognise that multiple barriers exist to accessing support and that statutory provisions may not meet every need. We therefore pledge to continue our emergency food response and to ensure that our service is always free, accessible and non-means tested. We also pledge to build this into a longer term, sustainable model. To ensure that we can be a long-term source of sustainable and inclusive support, we aim to improve our fundraising strategy by applying for more grant funding opportunities as well as working to increase our individual monthly donations.

Oxford Mutual Aid

Building resilience

We are committed to building food resilience in the local community by offering free cooking for health and wellbeing courses for a variety of groups. We will ensure our courses are adapted to the unique needs of certain groups unique needs (e.g. parents or vulnerably housed) to ensure increased autonomy and dignity throughout.

OX4 Food Crew

Preventing food poverty

We pledge to set up a Community Larder in Wantage to increase access to affordable food, making this an open offer and a sustainability choice rather than 'charity'. We will measure effectiveness by gathering number of larder members and having conversations with / feedback from larder members.

Sustainable Wantage (Community Benefit Society)

To make your own Food Poverty Pledge scan the QR code or visit: **goodfoodoxford.org/food-poverty-action-plan-oxfordshire**

Key recommendations to improve food poverty responses:

What can councils, local decision-makers and institutions do?

- **Commit to adopt a standardised approach to measuring food poverty in the county.** Measure, monitor and report uptake of support services.
- **Support the development of the Community Food Networks** and other informal collaborations and partnerships that promote systems and networks to share data, knowledge and experience.
- **Continue to fund emergency food services**, acknowledging that ongoing requirements to self-isolate and a complex web of individual situations, including poverty, mean that healthy food retail options are not accessible to all.
- **Support the development of affordable community food retail options.** Support the development of larders, planning and growth agendas that back affordable, sustainable food businesses that are accessible to all.
- **Provide access to more growing spaces** and provide resources and training to help residents and communities to grow their own food.
- **Support and invest in community hubs** that are community-led, where people can come together to access food, wrap-around services and advice, share cultural experiences and engage in enriching community activities.
- **Support the expansion of community-led cooking skills training programmes** through access to spaces, support to get projects started and funding for coordinators to

provide residents with the opportunity to learn and share skills in their locality.
- **Continue to invest in tools and systems to support access to food** and support services e.g., maps, directories, leaflets. Offer support in a variety of formats to ensure inclusivity and reduce discrimination.
- **Expand the roll-out of food poverty training** to ensure support is delivered in a non-stigmatising and dignified way, providing choice and upholding autonomy, ensuring culturally appropriate food, ways to access services and communications.
- **Promote and adopt a living wage** that reflects the real living costs in Oxfordshire and enables people to both live with dignity and buy healthy food.
- **Promote 'cash-first solutions'** (cash-grants) as the preferred route for emergency aid, acknowledging that food poverty is just poverty, and when treated with dignity and given appropriate support, people make the best decisions for themselves. This promotes dignity and empowerment, reduces food waste and supports the local economy.
- **Lobby central government to measure food insecurity nationally and to end discriminatory practices**, polices and legislation such as No Recourse to Public Funds, benefit cuts, caps and sanctions and elevated thresholds for services.

What can organisations and individuals do?

- **Pledge an action**
You can make a pledge of action to reduce food poverty in Oxfordshire that will be featured on the Good Food Oxford website. To see actions already pledged or to make a pledge visit **goodfoodoxford.org/ food-poverty-action-plan-oxfordshire**

- **Join the Good Food Movement**
If you are an organisation, join by signing the Oxfordshire Good Food Charter at **goodfoodoxford.org/network**
If you are an individual sign up to the mailing list to receive the Good Food Oxfordshire newsletter: **goodfoodoxford.org/get-involved**

- **Join the Community Food Network**
Organisations and community groups can join the network in their district to connect with other people working and volunteering in community food projects. Email: **mail@goodfoodoxford.org**

- **Participate in growing schemes**
You could start a neighbourhood growing scheme or support one that already exists in your area. For example the Cherwell Collective's Harvest @ Home would welcome your support:
visit **www.cherwellcollective.com**
email **cherwellcollective@gmail.com**
or call **01865 817676**
To find a community garden near you where you can grow food and meet like-minded people visit the Good to Grow map at **goodtogrowuk.org/map**

- **Donate surplus food**
Share any allotment or garden surplus with your local community food suppliers. Visit: **goodfoodoxford.org/foodmap**

- **Support community larders and foodbanks**
Support your local community larder or foodbank with donations of surplus food, money, or through volunteering. You can also make a cash donation whilst shopping online at most supermarkets. To get involved with Fareshare visit: **fareshare.org.uk/get-involved**

- **Go to community cafés, lunch and breakfast clubs**
Get involved with or start your own community café. One community café that that could use your knowledge, time or financial support is Flo's Café: **flosoxford.org.uk/volunteers**
You could also support or set up a lunch or breakfast club at your local school, community centre, or day centre.

- **Help with cooking and nutrition programmes/courses**
Do you have good cooking skills and/ or knowledge of nutrition? Good Food Oxfordshire are looking to recruit volunteers to teach cooking classes based on the Good Food Cooking Toolkit. If you want to become a cookery tutor, visit **goodfoodoxford.org/get-involved/volunteer**

- **Campaign for change and sign petitions**
Sign up to support local and national campaigns to reduce food insecurity such as **#ENDCHILDFOODPOVERTY, the Trussell Trust's HUNGER FREE FUTURE, #5WeeksTooLong, Bite Back 2030, Children's Food Campaign, Oxford Living Wage Campaign, Older People's Food Campaign, Feeding Britain: A Hunger Free UK.** Sign petitions on websites such as **change.org** and **38degrees** relating to fair access to food and income security.

- **Organise fundraising and/or awareness raising events**
This could be a small neighbourhood gathering, a community group coffee morning or a city or town centre event such as a foodless feast, abundance distribution drive, or live cooking sessions. Find out more about support and funding via **foodforlife.org.uk/get-togethers**

- **Read & share the food insecurity toolkit**
If you would like to know how best to support people who are facing food insecurity, please visit **goodfoodoxford.org/ good-food-for-everyone/#Food-equity**

Understanding food insecurity in Oxfordshire:

Over 5,000 people regularly access community food services **across 76 locations** in Oxfordshire. This includes foodbanks, community larders and community fridges (GFO, 2020).

We conservatively estimate that **8-10% of households, or 55,000-69,000 people** in Oxfordshire are experiencing food insecurity.

5 MSOAs in Oxfordshire are in the nation's **20% most income deprived areas.**

6.3% of workers in the South East earn below the national minimum wage.

8% of households experienced fuel poverty in 2018 (LG Inform, 2021) forcing some residents to choose between heating or eating.

An estimated **15.3% of all adults** find meeting monthly bills/ commitments a heavy burden or are regularly in arrears with bills (LG Inform, 2018). This equates to **85,725 people** (JSNA, 2021)

In Oxfordshire **the average house price is almost 26x** that of the National Living Wage and most rentals exceed monthly income of the National Living Wage.

Oxford is the least affordable city in the UK with regards to housing (Oxford City Council, 2020)

7 MSOAs in Oxfordshire have higher rates of child poverty than the national benchmark (JSNA, 2021b)

From January 2020 **10,127 children** in the county were eligible for Free School Meals (JSNA, 2021a)

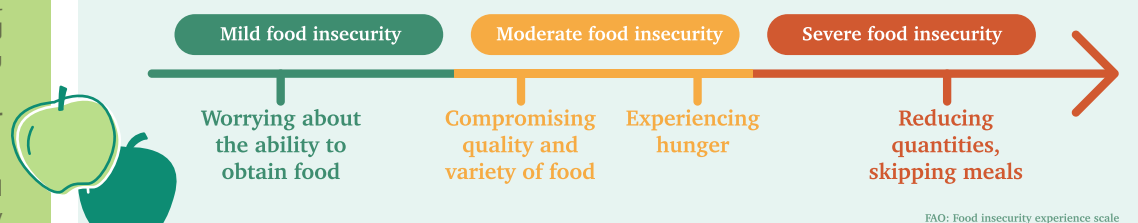After housing costs **21% of children live in poverty** (JSNA, 2021a)

In 2019 there were an estimated **131,400 people living with disability or long-term illness** who are significantly likely to experience food insecurity and **61,100 unpaid carers** (JSNA, 2021)

Groups with higher levels of food insecurity nationally:

Limited a lot by health problems/disability	**x5**	compared to those with no health problems/disabilities
Severely clinically vulnerable	**x2**	compared to average
Food sector workers	**x1.5**	compared to non-food sector workers
BAME	**x2**	compared to white British (Food Foundation, 2021)

Food insecurity:

In the UK, hunger isn't about food supply, which is plentiful. It's about the significant national and local income inequality (Loopstra & Lalor, 2017, Sustain 2021). Food insecurity is anything from 'worrying about the ability to obtain food' to 'reducing quality and quantity of food and skipping meals entirely' (FAO, 2021).

Mild food insecurity	Moderate food insecurity		Severe food insecurity
Worrying about the ability to obtain food	Compromising quality and variety of food	Experiencing hunger	Reducing quantities, skipping meals

FAO: Food insecurity experience scale

At present food insecurity is not tracked or measured consistently across the UK. This makes it hard to understand, discuss and alleviate.

Causes and impacts of food insecurity:

FOOD INSECURITY

Struggling in school & work
- Absences
- Concetration and focus

Economic
- Job losses/insecurity
- Low wages
- Debts

Hard choices
- Heat or eat
- Bills or food

Poor nutrition
- Quantity over quality
- Skipping meals
- Reduce fresh food to avoid waste

Health problems
- Mental and physical health