

# Oxfordshire's Community Food Services: Summary of Research Findings



May 2020

## Overview of Research Process

- Good Food Oxford and Oxfordshire County Council, working with City and District Councils, have partnered to gain a deeper understanding of Oxfordshire's Community Food Services.
- Good Food Oxford conducted a comprehensive questionnaire of all Community Food Services during May 2020.
- Responses were received from 69% of those surveyed, allowing a comprehensive view of the provider and service users landscape, including the impact of COVID-19.

# GFO have identified 100 community food services across Oxfordshire, operated by 74 organisations\*



	Definition	West	Cherwell	South	Vale	City	Total no. of services*
<b>Emergency Foodbank</b>	Access limited to particular communities of need. May require referral from another organisation	7	9	6	6	11	<b>39</b>
<b>Community Larder</b>	Typically a membership scheme. Members receive regular food supplies for minimal cost - food is donated, fees cover operational costs	3	3	3	1	4	<b>14</b>
<b>Community Fridge or Cupboard</b>	Typically no charges, open to all to take or donate food, helps those in need and reduces food waste	2	3	2	3	3	<b>13</b>
<b>Community Kitchen/ Prepared Meal Service</b>	Typically provide meals for communities with identified needs	0	2	0	0	25	<b>27</b>
<b>Other</b>	May include community shop and other settings where food is shared e.g. growing projects	1	0	0	0	6	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

\* 69 of these 74 organisations, are listed on the Food Service Access Map

## Key Findings – Service Provision, Usage and Supply



- There are 100 community food services operated by 74 organisations across Oxfordshire\*
- Since the start of COVID-19, there has been a 3-fold increase in the number of users of Community Food Services. We estimate this is between 5,140 and 5,560 users.
- 60% of services report that more than 50% of their users are 'new' users since COVID-19
- 58% of services reported a significant increase in usage from families with children.
- 89% of respondents cite financial difficulties as the most common reason for accessing services.
- We estimate that SOFEA supply 50% of all food to community food services and Oxford Food Bank supply 22%\*.
- COVID-19 restrictions have hampered services' ability to meet nutritional needs and preferences. Where suppliers were dependent on a single source, needs were less likely to be met.

## Key Findings –Funding and Support



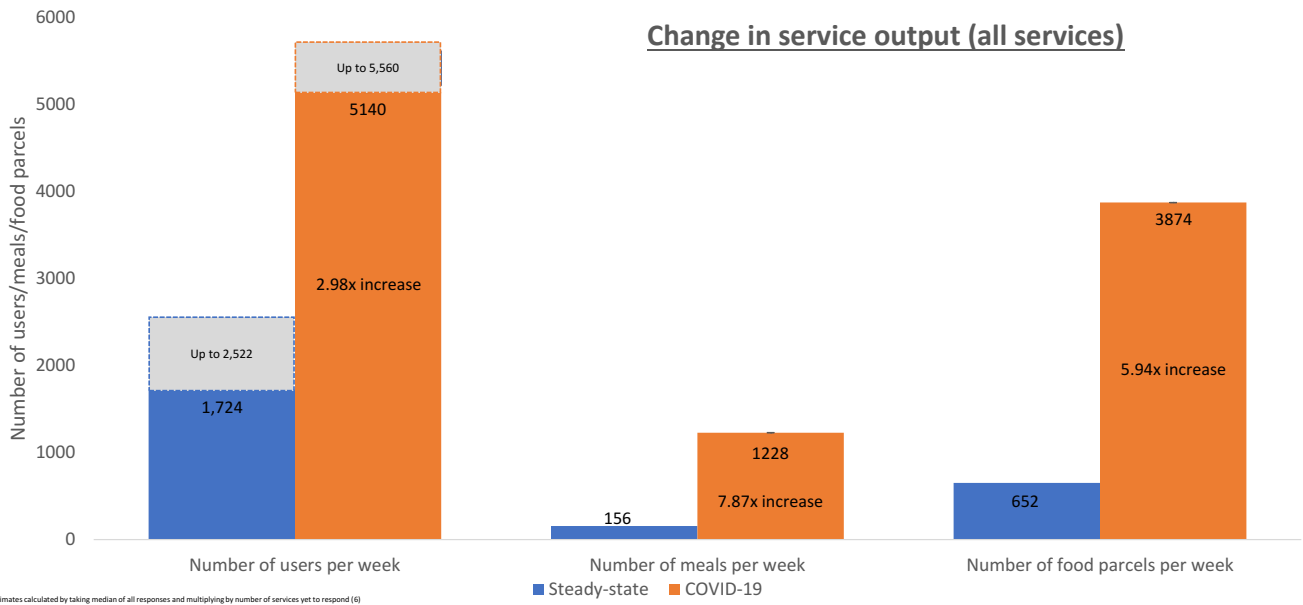
- 46% of services identified a need for funding support, 38% would like training in food poverty issues and 24% need support with premises. Services would like to be able to offer more fresh food including meat, dairy, fruit and vegetables.
- 43% of services recognised the potential for collaboration over sharing of food supplies.
- Services regret the loss of opportunities for providing wider support mechanisms and social contact to service users beyond the provision of food. As operating models return to normal services are hopeful this may improve.
- As lock-down restrictions relax, most services do not envisage a reduction in demand for services, particularly as increased COVID-19 related financial pressures on residents may remain.
- Services are concerned about how to manage ongoing operations as volunteers return to work, and loss of delivery vehicles and drivers that have been repurposed to support them during COVID-19.

\*We estimate that Oxford Foodbank supply 22% of food in steady state however during COVID-19 this has been less than 10%

# Services have experienced an increase in users (x3), meals (x8), and food parcels (x6) since the start of COVID-19.



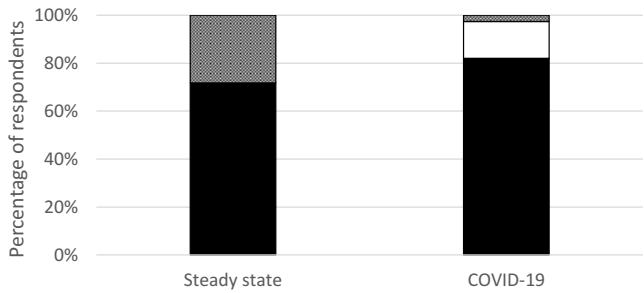
### Change in service output (all services)



For users/week: estimates calculated by taking median of all responses and multiplying by number of services yet to respond (6)  
SS: median = 133; 133\*6 = 798  
C19: median = 70; 70\*6 = 420

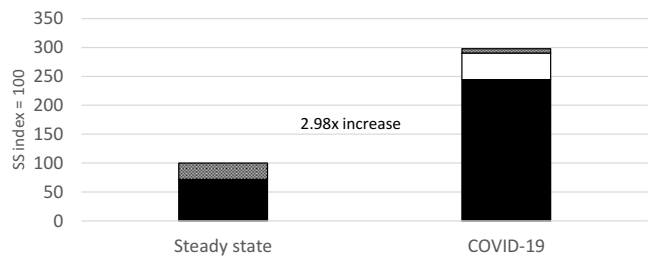
During COVID-19 the most common reason for accessing food services is financial difficulties, with 89% of respondents citing this as the most significant reason. This is a slight increase on steady-state reports.

Reasons for using food services



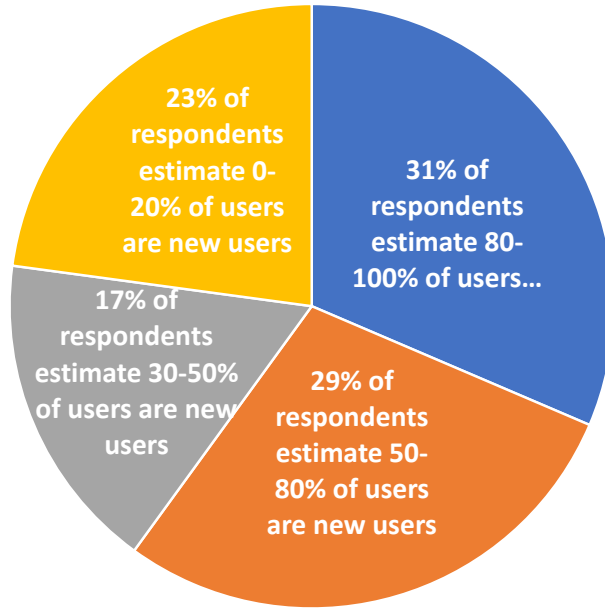
- Other reasons (e.g. No/limited access to other food, circumstantial/family reasons, social reasons, use of specific services/support)
- Non-financial COVID-related difficulties (e.g. self-isolating, food stock shortages)
- Financial difficulties

Reasons for using food services, adjusted for increase in overall number of users



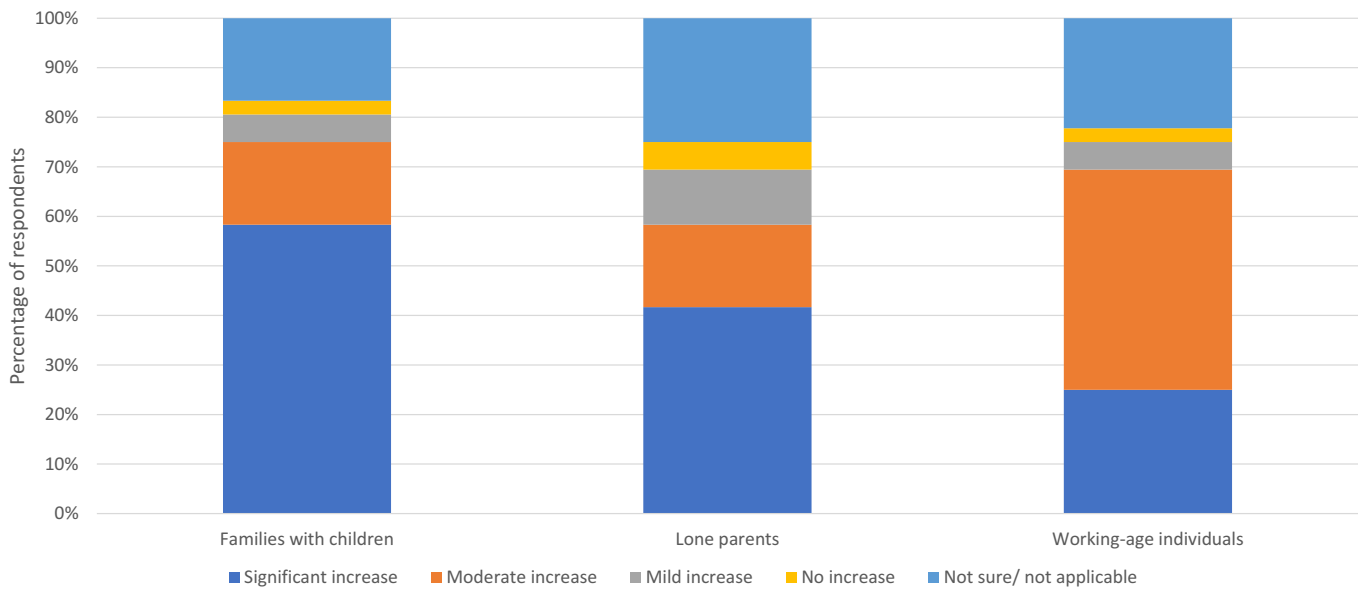
- Other reasons (e.g. No/limited access to other food, circumstantial/family reasons, social reasons, use of specific services/support)
- Non-financial COVID-related difficulties (e.g. self-isolating, food stock shortages)
- Financial difficulties

Since the start of COVID-19, 60% of services report that more than half of their users are entirely new.

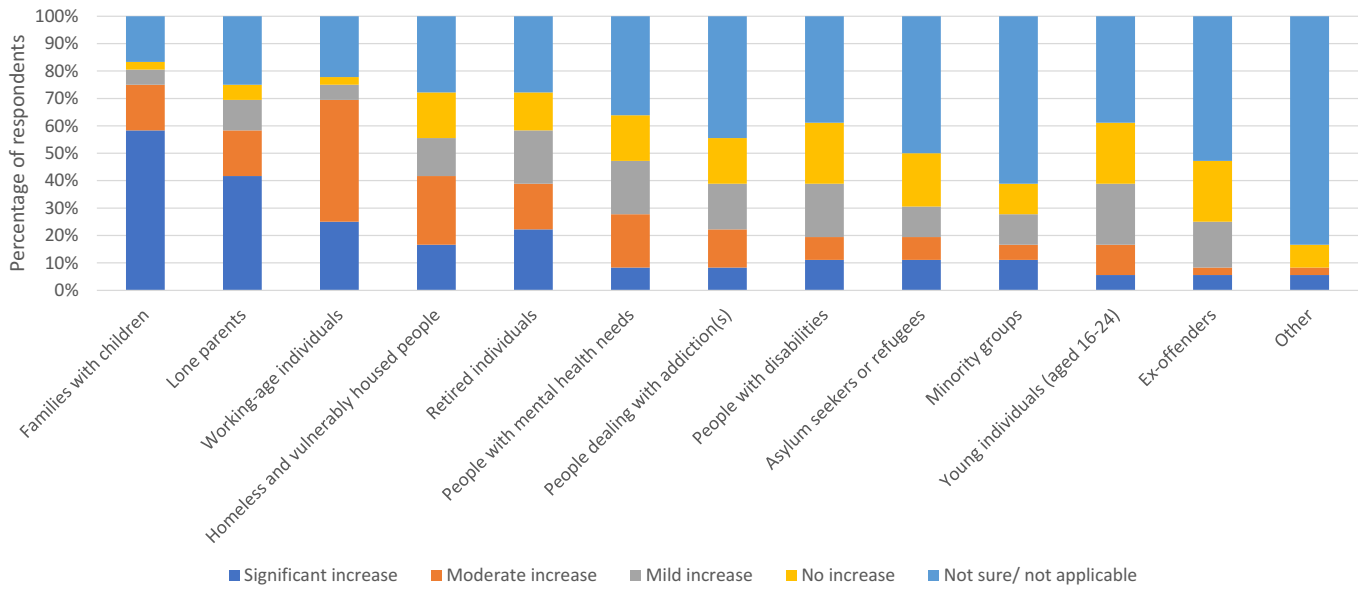




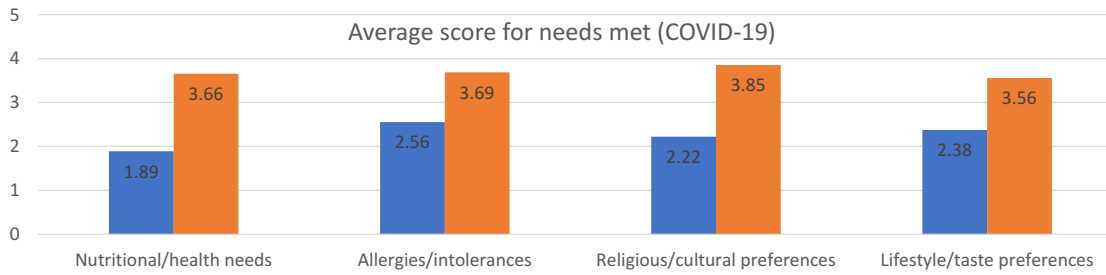
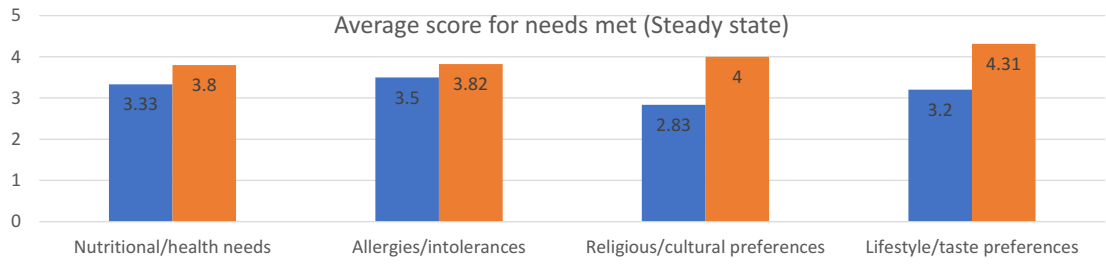
58% of services reported a significant increase in usage from families with children. Other significant increases include lone parents (42% of services) and working-age individuals (25% of services).



# Changes in use among different user groups continued.



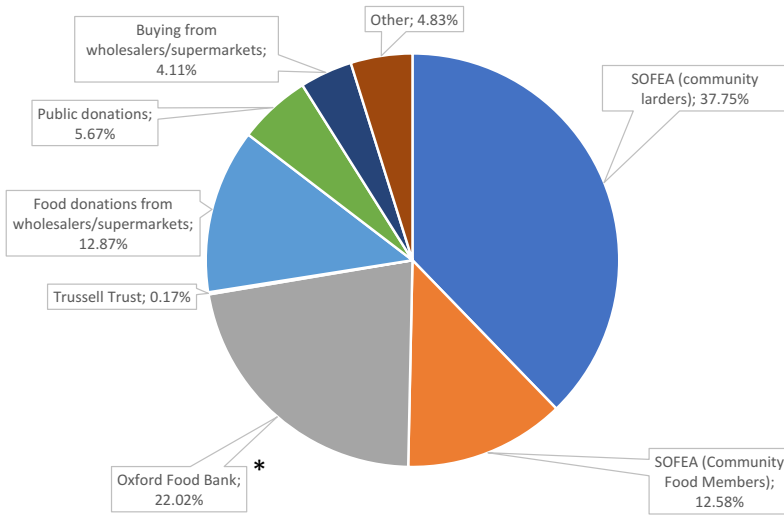
# COVID-19 restrictions have hampered services' ability to meet nutritional needs. This is more difficult where services are dependent on a single supplier.



Key:  
1 = Needs not met  
5 = Needs completely met

■ One Supplier  
■ Multiple Suppliers

We estimate that SOFEA supply approximately half of all food to Community Food Services. Oxford Food Bank are another significant source (22%).



- During COVID-19 OFB proportion of supply is lower than 22% (estimated less than 10%) as many of the services they normally supply are closed and OFB is operating only 4 days/ week.

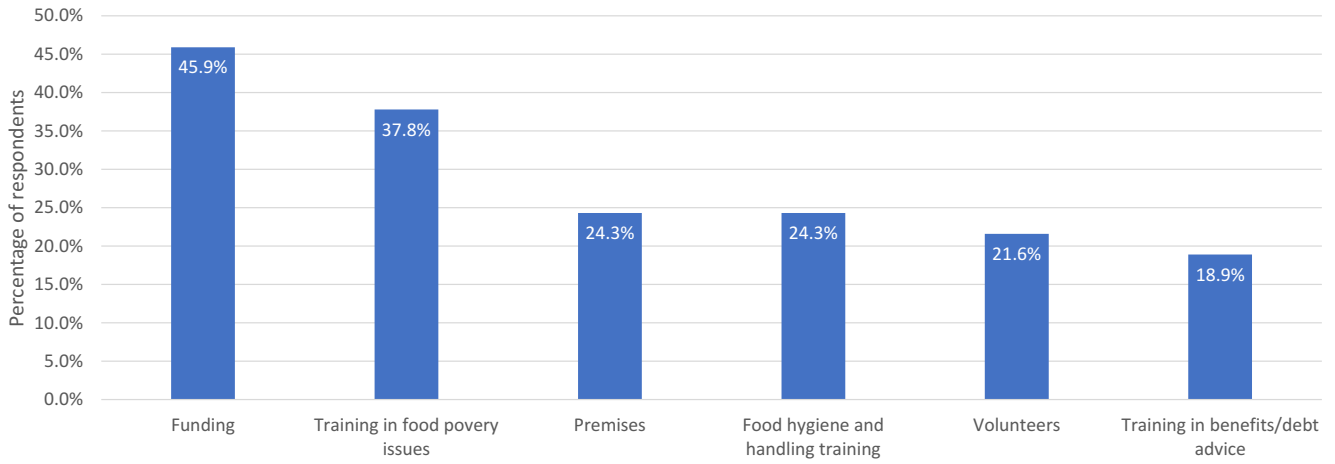
**Methodology explanation:**

- Estimates are based on reported number of food parcels per week \* respondent estimate of the % of food from each supplier \* estimated weight of food parcel @ 5 kg (source SOFEA).
- For SOFEA and OFB supplied food we calculated a food parcel equivalent based on reported weight of food/ estimated weight of food parcel @ 5kg (source SOFEA).
- We cross-referenced respondent estimates for SOFEA % of their supply with SOFEA data received on weight of food supplied to triangulate accuracy of responses. Discrepancy of respondent reported data vs SOFEA supply data is 4.97%.

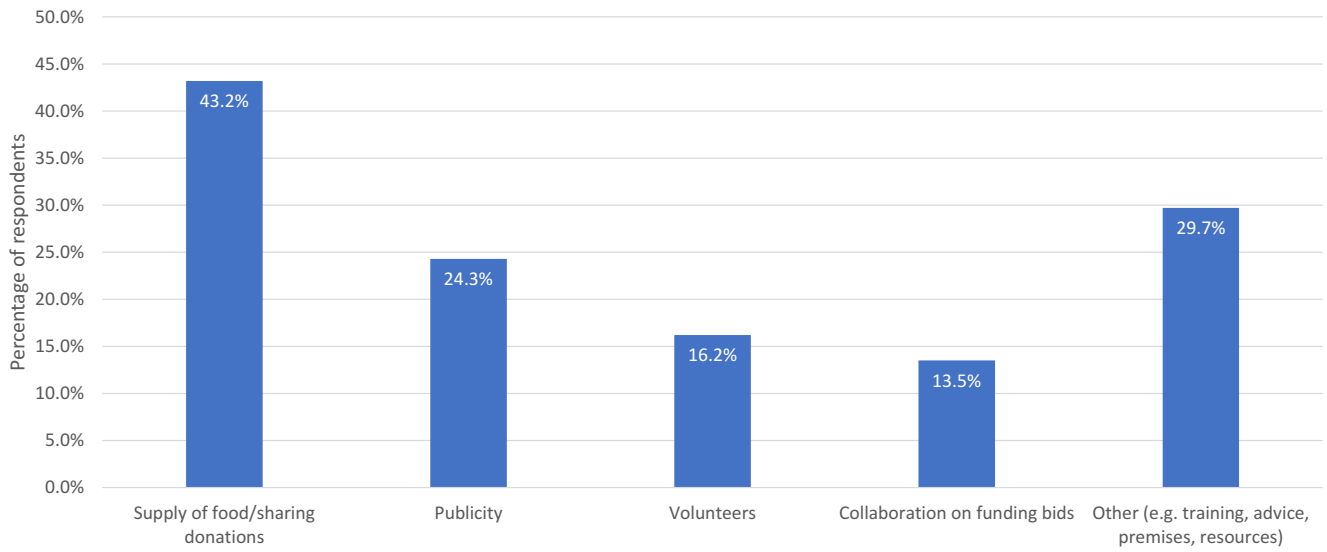
46% of services identified a need for funding support, 38% would like training in food poverty issues and 24% need support with premises.



Number of services reporting the forms of additional support they could benefit from (multiple selections per service)



# 43% of services identified sharing food supplies as a potential area for collaboration.



## During COVID-19 services have benefited from public donations of cash and supplies however this is unsustainable in the long term.

Comments from Community Food Service respondents:

“we normally spend £200-300/ month and now we are spending £1,500”

“we have been overwhelmed by the generosity of public donations and we could not operate without this – not sure how long this good will can continue ”

“in steady state we spend £1,500/ month on food and during COVID £8,000

“we anticipate some people will become more food insecure as amnesties on evictions and mortgage payments are lifted as more redundancies occur”

Maybe 75% of our users will be able to afford the larder membership fee once we return to that model but some just cannot

“since COVID we have had monthly donations of over £2,000 in supplies and over £1,500 in cash from the public”

As lockdown eases a common view is that demand will remain high but the challenges of service delivery may increase as younger volunteers return to work and older/ regular volunteers need to continue to isolate:



Comments from Community Food Service respondents:

"we are seeing volunteer fatigue and loss of volunteers as they return to work – we are losing 3-4 drivers/ week"

"distancing restrictions have limited the number of volunteers we can use but this places greater demands on a smaller number of individuals"

"previously we had a massive waitlist of volunteers but we are down to 2-3 now"

"We are hoping to return to 'normal' operations with a mixed model of collection and delivery"



- Consider how to build networks of community food services at the District Level to establish a shared understanding of local need, collaborate on resources, funding and training and share best practice –Community Food Forums?
- Consider how to share learnings and best practice across Districts and how to link this into Countywide initiatives and governance mechanisms
- Consider how to link Community Food Forums into a wider agenda of a resilient and sustainable food system.

*Oxfordshire is on the pathway to achieve a Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award by end of 2021. As part of this GFO are establishing an Oxfordshire Steering Group that will include representatives from all District Councils, County Council, local food related sectors – farming, producers, retailers, restaurants, voluntary and community sector, and relevant NGO. This Steering Group could support managing the system network.*

# Proposed Next Steps: Integrating Community Food Services as part of a Whole Systems Approach



**Phase 2: Building the Local Picture**

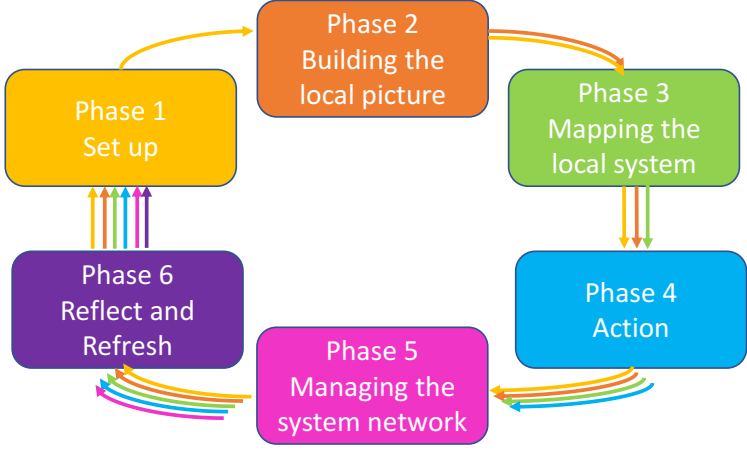
- CFFs start to build an in depth understanding of local food insecurity at the District level.
  - Consistent structure, tools and best practice implemented across CFFs.
    - Feedback into council and other relevant bodies.

**Phase 1: Set up:**

- Set-up of local **Community Food Forums (CFFs)**, facilitated by GFO?
- Establish governance mechanisms and links to council and other bodies

**Phase 6: Reflect and Refresh**

- Annual report
- Reflection and learnings feed into system



**Phase 3: Mapping the Local System**

- Continue to expand and embed the Food Services Access Map
- Map becomes part of local language and practice

**Phase 4: Action**

**District Level Action:** CFFs prioritise areas in need of change or support and propose collaborative and aligned actions

**County Level Action:** Align and integrate with other services and initiatives.

**Phase 5: Managing the System Network**

- Manage relationships, communications and best practice sharing across the Districts.
  - Monitor feedback loops to identify unintentional negative outcomes.
- Link to wider food system to understand wider implications on local food systems



# Services listed by type by District – West (x13)



## Emergency Foodbanks (x7):

- Carterton Community Foodbank
- North Oxfordshire Community Foodbank (x2)\*
- Witney and West Oxfordshire Foodbank (*Trussell Trust*)
- Carterton Community Assistance Foodbank
- Besom\*
- The Witney Land Army\*

### Notes:

*\*The North Oxfordshire Community Foodbank usually operates from 3 venues in the West – Charlbury, Chipping Norton and Woodstock. Currently it is not operating from Charlbury, and is now also operating a service in Kidlington (Cherwell), so 2 of the 3 listed services are on this West District slide, and 1 is on the Cherwell District slide.*

*\*Besom are not listed on the GFO map, at their request.*

*\*The Witney Land Army are not currently listed on the GFO map.*

## Community Larders (x3):

- The Chippy Larder\*
- Witney Community Larder
- Eynsham Community Larder

### Notes:

*\*The Chippy Larder is categorised as a 'Community Larder' and linked to SOFEA, but has overview of/organise delivery of food parcels/meals for both The Chippy Larder and Mary's Meals.*

## Community Fridges/Cupboards (x2):

- Witney Community Fridge
- Mary's Meals, Chipping Norton\*

### Notes:

*\*St. Mary's Church is categorised as a 'Community Fridge or Cupboard' as we don't have a separate listing for 'Community Freezer'. (St. Mary's run their Community Freezer scheme, called 'Mary's Meals' in collaboration with the Chippy Larder – not independently.)*

## Community Kitchen/ Prepared Meal Service (x0):

## Other (x1):

- Charlbury Give & Take

# Services listed by type by District – Cherwell (x17)



## Emergency Foodbanks (x9):

- Banbury Madni Mosque Foodbank
- Banbury Foodbank (*Trussell Trust*) (x4)
- Salvation Army Banbury
- Bicester Foodbank (*Trussell Trust*)
- BYHP\*
- North Oxfordshire Community Foodbank (x1)\*

### Notes:

\*BYHP is categorised as an 'Emergency Foodbank', based on information on their website - no survey response received therefore unable to clarify.

\*The North Oxfordshire Community Foodbank usually operates from 3 venues in the West – Charlbury, Chipping Norton and Woodstock. Currently it is not operating from Charlbury, and is now also operating a service in Kidlington (Cherwell), so 2 of the 3 listed services are on the West District slide, and 1 is on this Cherwell District slide.

## Community Larders (x3):

- Volunteer Driver Service North Oxfordshire\*
- Banbury Sunshine Centre Community Larder
- Cherwell Community Larder

### Notes:

\*This is same as the Banbury CAB Community Larder (as called by SOFEA). Driver Volunteer Service North Oxfordshire run this service as a CAB project.

## Community Fridges/Cupboards (x3):

- Banbury Madni Mosque Community Fridge
- Banbury Madni Mosque Neithrop Community Fridge
- Bicester Community Fridge

## Community Kitchen/ Prepared Meal Service (x2):

- Salvation Army Banbury
- Salvation Army Bicester

## Other (x0):

# Services listed by type by District – South (x11)



## Emergency Foodbanks (x6):

- Didcot Emergency Foodbank
- Light House Foodbank
- Sharing Life Trust Foodbank Thame
- Wallingford Emergency Food Bank
- Springwater Church Foodbank
- Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre - Food Bank

## Community Larders (x3):

- Sharing Life Trust Community Larder
- SOFEA - Didcot Community Larder\*
- Berinsfield Community Larder

**Notes:**

*\*This SOFEA larder apparently cover these areas: 'MC, GWP, SOFEA staff, Cavendish, Hanover'. The SOFEA Didcot NNCC Community Larder has not been included as is not currently running. All Didcot activity seems to be linked to the Didcot Community Larder, but have been unable to clarify this in more detail with SOFEA.*

## Community Kitchen/ Prepared Meal Service (x0):

## Community Fridges/Cupboards (x2):

- Wallingford Emergency Food Bank
- Wallingford Community Fridge

## Other (x0):

# Services listed by type by District – Vale (x10)



## Emergency Foodbanks (x6):

- Abingdon Foodbank (*Trussell Trust*) (x2)
- Faringdon Food Bank
- Wantage and Grove Foodbank
- Kingston Bagpuize & Southmoor Community Response: Corona – Foodbank\*
- Shrivenham Emergency Food Bank\*

### Notes:

\*The Kingston Bagpuize & Southmoor Community Response: Corona – Foodbank is not currently on the GFO map, but will they will add themselves on soon.

\*The Shrivenham Emergency Food Bank will stop operating mid-July, but will consider starting up again if the need arises in the future (and could then be added to the GFO map).

## Community Larders (x1):

- SOFEA - Abingdon South Community Larder

### Notes:

(West Oxford Community Larder is not listed as a larder here, as is self-categorised as a Fridge in survey response, and is called The Botley Community Fridge – see below.)

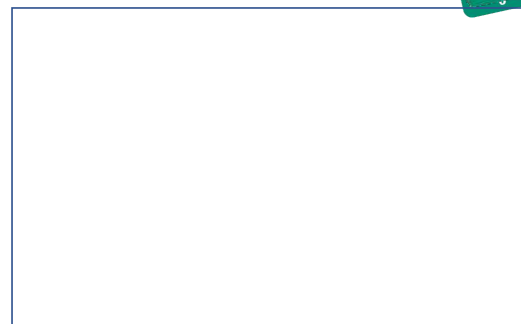
## Community Fridges/Cupboards (x3):

- Abingdon Community Fridge
- Botley Community Fridge (Food for Charities)\*
- The Mix Community Fridge (Sustainable Wantage)

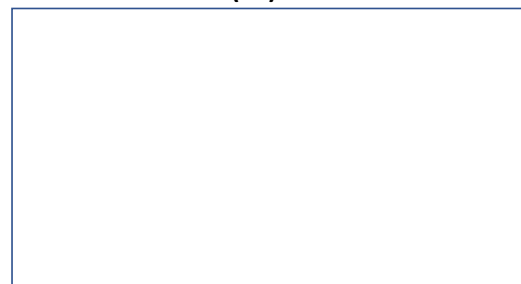
### Notes:

\*The Botley Community Fridge identifies itself as a Fridge, so is listed as a 'Community Fridge or Cupboard', not as a Community Larder.

## Community Kitchen/ Prepared Meal Service (x0):



## Other (x0):



# Services listed by type by District – City (x49)



## Emergency Foodbanks (x11):

- Rose Hill Regen (Rose Hill Community Centre)
- Barton Community Association\*
- Oxford Homeless Project
- The Community Emergency Foodbank (x3)
- Asylum Welcome
- Rose Hill Community Cupboard
- Oxford Mutual Aid
- Oxford Food Bank\*
- **Oxford Community Action\***

### Notes:

*\*Oxford Food Bank has been listed as an Emergency Foodbank, but it is actually a foodbank which is NOT open to the public but supplies other organisations.*

*\*Oxford Community Action are not listed on the GFO map, at their request.*

## Other (x6):

- The Garden Cafe, Restore
- St Matthew's Church
- Florence Park Community Centre
- OxGrow Community Garden
- Rose Hill Primary School
- Waste2Taste

## Community Larders (x4):

- Barton Community Larder (Barton Community Association)\*
- Leys Community Larder
- Rose Hill Community Larder
- Cowley Community Larder

### Notes:

*\*The Barton Community Larder is run by the by the Barton Community Association who also provide other food services – they have been listed elsewhere in 3 other categories on this slide as the 'Barton Community Association'.*

## Community Fridges/Cupboards (x3):

- Barton Community Association\*
- South Oxford Adventure Playground
- Leys Community Fridge

## Community Kitchen/ Prepared Meal Service (x25)

- Barton Community Association\*
- Oxford Homeless Project
- St Matthew's Church
- Cutteslowe Community Centre
- Donnington Doorstep
- Florence Park Community Centre
- Icolyn Smith Foundation - Oxford Community Soup Kitchen
- The Oxford Food Surplus Cafe
- Sandford Food Surplus Cafe
- The Porch Day Centre
- Rose Hill Community Cupboard
- Open Door
- St. Aldates Church
- ACT (Aldates Community Transformation Initiatives)
- Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground
- Trax
- Aspire Oxford
- Oxford Homeless Pathways
- The Gatehouse
- Nishkam SWAT (Sikh Welfare and Awareness Team) Oxford
- Waste2Taste
- OX4 Free Food Crew (x2) \*
- Oxford Mutual Aid
- **Oxford Community Action\***

### Notes:

*\*OX4 Free Food Crew distribute prepared meals produced by Flo's Café and Waste2Taste/Ark-T.*



# Closed Larders/CFMs



The total no. of closed larders/CFMs stated on a previous slide is based on SOFEA's data, but 13 have been removed from their list of 56, as are already independently listed on the Food Access Service Map, so actual total is 43.

**Table showing SOFEA v. GFO nos. of closed larders/CFMs:**

	West	Cherwell	South	Vale	City	Total no. closed larders /CFMs:
<b>SOFEA list of 56:</b>	8	3	17	4	24	56
<b>GFO list of 43:</b>	6	2	15	4	16	43
<b>(with 13 removed):</b>	(-2)	(-1)	(-2)	(-0)	(-8)	(-13)

**The 13 closed larders/CFMs we have removed, as already included, are:**

- Aspire Oxford – City
- Banbury Mosque - Cherwell
- Barton Community Association - City
- Didcot Foodbank – South
- Oxford Food Bank – City
- OXHOP - O'Hanlan House – City
- People, Place and Participation Ltd (Flo's) – City
- Restore - The Garden Café – City
- The Porch - City
- Trax – City
- Wallingford Community Fridge – South
- Witney and West Oxon Foodbank - West
- Witney Community Fridge - West

Based on the 88 Oxfordshire community food services identified in April 2020\*, 61 community food services (69%) responded to our Community Food Services Questionnaire



	Total no. of listed services <i>(not including additional 43 closed larders/CFMs)</i>	Number of survey responses received – from total of 88 listed services	Response rate for each service type
Emergency Foodbank	30	27	90%
Community Larder	13	9	69%
Community Fridge or Cupboard	12	11	92%
Community Kitchen/ Prepared Meal Service	23	9	39%
Other	10	5	50%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>69%</b>

We also received responses from 9 other organisations, who were not on the Food Service Access Map, running services from 12 additional venues – including 4 CFMs.

No responses were received from 27 of the 76 community food venues on the Food Service Access Map, which accounts for the 27 listed services (of 88) that we did not receive information about.

Of these 27 venues, 9 are currently closed, have staff furloughed, or we know of other reasons why they could not respond.

\* run by 65 organisations listed on the Food Access Map, from 76 community food venues