

A Food Poverty Action Plan

2025 Progress Report



Executive Summary

Since the launch of the Food Poverty Action Plan in August 2021, Oxfordshire's food support network has begun to evolve from emergency response to a more holistic, resilient system addressing the root causes of food insecurity. Organisations across the county have made significant progress on their collective pledges, with particular achievements in nutritional education, community building and partnership development.

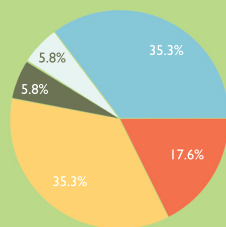
At a glance

Of the 17 responses to the most recent progress survey, all organisations that had made a pledge in 2021 reported having fully met their targets, or reported having made some/significant progress to tackling food insecurity. A further 7 organisations hadn't signed the original pledge, but have now made impressive new commitments to addressing food poverty in Oxfordshire.

If you previously signed the Food Poverty Action Plan pledge, how would you describe your organisation's progress in tackling food insecurity?



- I didn't sign the original pledge
- Some progress
- Significant progress
- Fully met/succeeded
- I don't know



Key Achievements

- 500+ refugees and vulnerable people now receive weekly food parcels and cooking sessions through targeted programmes.
- Multiple organisations have expanded fresh produce provision, with some committing to deliver 100+ pieces of fruit and vegetables weekly.
- Cooking and healthy eating workshops are reaching 100+ households, building long-term food skills and nutritional awareness.
- Community larders and food hubs have strengthened volunteer bases and expanded storage capacity to accommodate increased demand.
- Oxford Food Hub support over 200 charities, with individual organisations such as Banbury Food for Charities providing 16+ charities with regular surplus food collection and redistribution.



Progress on Collective Action Themes

Back in 2021, pledges were organised into three key areas of collective action, including emergency provision, building resilience and preventing food poverty. Significant progress across all three of these themes has been made.

1. Emergency Provision

The emergency food support landscape has developed significantly since 2021, with organisations moving beyond basic provision to creating more dignified and accessible services.

Case Study

Since making the pledge, **the Banbury Larder** has provided **weekly food distributions**, partnering with local businesses to **reduce food waste**, and **expanded their storage capacity** to accommodate more donations. They also offer **well-being sessions**, refer individuals for **financial, employment and mental health support**, and host community meals to **foster connections and reduce isolation**.

2. Building Resilience

Organisations and individuals across the county recognise that sustainable and long-term change requires building skills, capacity and community connections that extend far beyond emergency food distribution.

Case Study

Rose Hill Community Larder operates on a membership basis staffed by volunteers from Magdalen College School, **creating intergenerational connections and learning opportunities**. This format strengthens community networks through extending the Larder's role from simply providing emergency food services to **offering wraparound, holistic support in a care-oriented setting**.

3. Preventing Food Poverty

While emergency provision remains necessary, organisations increasingly recognise the importance of addressing root causes and building long-term food security.

Case Study

Barton Park Primary School

are taking steps to **proactively identify those in need of food support**, ensuring that families are accessing the school's universal free breakfast club, free school meals, Holiday Activities and Food support, food vouchers in the holidays and links with wider local community services.





What's new since 2021?

As well as significant progress being made on many of the collective action themes identified in 2021, previously-involved and new organisations have made a second round of pledges, touching on a number of new themes.

1. Emergency Provision

Organisations continue to provide critical emergency support while improving dignity and nutritional quality. Emergency provision has widened to include an increasing number of organisations offering community meals, prioritising fresh food, and working within a larger redistribution network to reduce food waste.



FOOD FOR CHARITIES

We pledge to provide fresh, healthy food to people experiencing homelessness and vulnerable housing. We aim to deliver **100 pieces of fruit/veg** per week, **50 pots of salad** per week, **50 pints of milk** per week, and **100 hard-boiled eggs** per month.

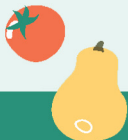


2. Building Resilience

The most significant evolution is happening here; organisations are shifting from emergency handouts to empowerment, from transactions to relationships, and from isolated services to coordinated food systems.

We pledge to expand Cooking and Healthy Eating workshops over the next six months, prioritising accessible, budget-friendly meals. **By Dec 2025** we aim to reach **100 households** improving nutritional awareness and reducing food insecurity.

BANBURY MOSQUE
COMMUNITY FRIDGE



3. Preventing Food Poverty

Organisations aspire to focus more energy here, moving upstream to prevent crisis rather than perpetually managing consequences. This includes action such as proactive identification and early intervention, implementing sustainable access models and promoting nutritional education and healthy habits.

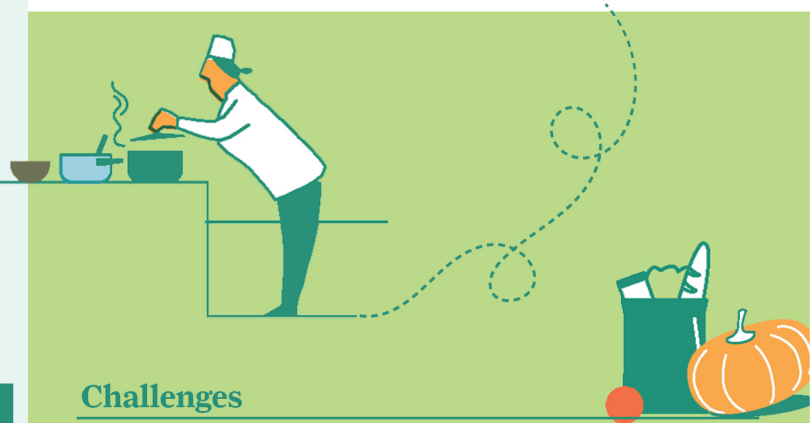


BICESTER
FOOD BANK

We pledge to introduce healthy food swaps (e.g. peanut butter in place of jam, wholewheat pasta options, wholewheat bread). We will also produce a recipe book based on food bank staples, providing nutritional information and meal plans.

Moving forward...

Moving from charity to justice, themes that have emerged from the new pledges include: **prioritising skills over dependency**; **community connection as a core outcome**; **prioritisation of fresh food and nutrition**; **wider systems-thinking and coordination**.



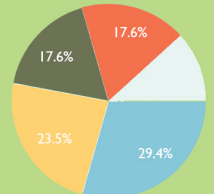
Challenges

Despite significant progress and successes, many organisations report providing 'short-term relief but no impact on longer-term change'. Funding constraints and an increased demand for services were both noted as the biggest barriers to organisations meeting their pledge commitments, with lack of food supply and the cost of living also noteworthy.



What are the biggest barriers your organisation faces in meeting your pledge commitments/tackling food poverty?

- Funding constraints
- Wider economic environment
- Increased demand for services
- Lack of food supply
- Something else/other



Short-term relief

Many organisations candidly acknowledge that services provide 'short-term relief but do not have any impact on longer term change'. While emergency provision remains necessary, the sector recognises that **tackling food poverty requires addressing root causes** such as low wages and insecure employment, benefit inadequacy, and the rising cost of living.

Sustainable funding

An over-reliance on volunteers and short-term grants creates uncertainty and limits strategic development for organisations.

Reaching hidden need

Many people experiencing food insecurity don't access support due to stigma, lack of awareness, or practical barriers including transport, opening hours or eligibility criteria.

Capacity constraints

Increasingly complex wraparound services require more professional expertise, rather than solely relying on unpaid volunteers.

Coordination gaps

While partnerships are growing, coordination across the sector remains challenging, and organisations may duplicate efforts or miss opportunities for efficient resource sharing.

The strength of Oxfordshire's response to food poverty lies in its **diversity**. From school breakfast clubs to refugee support services, community larders to food redistribution networks, this rich and growing system must be supported, coordinated and adequately resourced to fulfill its potential.

