

Press Release

Leicester Foodbank Plus lifts city's poorest residents out of hunger

For Immediate Release

Reaching People's Foodbank Plus project is making a significant inroad in reducing the long-term need for the city's food banks, by increasing the incomes of some of Leicester's poorest residents.

A report published today shows that, during its first year, Food Bank Plus provided professional advice and advocacy to 236 people who were reliant on food banks and social eating groups. Over half of those who responded to a survey reported that the project had increased their income. Other people have benefited from a wide range of support impacting on their health and wellbeing.

The project is tackling poverty in a holistic way by helping people access their full benefit entitlement and appeal incorrect benefit decisions, as well as acquire more suitable housing, school places for their children, property adaptations, and Blue Badges. A total of £78,727 in increased income has been gained for 24 of the people supported by the project.

The project has continued to offer specialist support for vulnerable households during the COVID-19 pandemic, with ongoing funding from The National Lottery Community Fund.

Food Bank Plus is one of several projects supported through the Feeding Leicester partnership which was established to address food poverty in Leicester City. Liz Kendall MP, who chairs Feeding Leicester, and is also a trustee of national anti-hunger charity Feeding Britain, comments: "This first year's record represents a milestone in Feeding Leicester's fight against poverty and destitution in the city. By clearly identifying the underlying causes of hardship, it also shows the steps the Government needs to take to reduce the appalling levels of need for food banks in the first place.". No family should have to go without basic essentials, yet all too many in our city are doing so. The findings from this project show what needs to be done to prevent this nightmare scenario afflicting yet more families in future."

Councillor Russell Deputy City Mayor, who is also a key member of Feeding Leicester said "Food banks are a sad necessity in many of our communities. It is rare that food is the only issue people are facing and the positive impact Food Bank Plus has had on improving the quality of life of some of our most financially vulnerable is a real achievement for Feeding Leicester and its aim of reducing poverty across the city."

Mary Collier, from Reaching People, who is the project manager and adviser, adds: "Addressing poverty is critical to people in so many ways. Food Bank Plus demonstrates how important this model of local advice provision is to maximise people's incomes, increase their independence, improve their health and wellbeing and to enable them to move forward without such reliance on foodbanks."

Andrew Forsey, director of Feeding Britain, says: “Food Bank Plus is becoming a vital weapon in Feeding Leicester’s armoury to eliminate hunger and its root causes from the city. That this project has been able to continue supporting people through the coronavirus pandemic is a credit to the team at Reaching People who deliver it on a day-to-day basis.”

On the back of these findings, Reaching People is working with Feeding Leicester and Feeding Britain on plans to extend Food Bank Plus to a larger number of settings across the city, and to extend its duration until March 2022. Supported by Feeding Britain this model is also being rolled out through local partnership for Feeding Bradford and Feeding Derbyshire.

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For further information please contact...

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Reaching People is a consortia of local charities in Leicester and Leicestershire working together to reduce poverty and make lasting change for people in most need. Leicester Foodbank Plus is one of our projects. We also work across organisations to deliver moneywise plus and have a new project to deliver leadership training in the voluntary and community sector locally and will deliver training for community champions in July.