Feeding Bradford food snapshot
Data collection week: 19th to 25th March 2018

Introduction
To try and get a better picture of food provision across the Bradford and Keighley District, Feeding Bradford undertook a data collection exercise for the week commencing 19th March 2018 (7 days).

Methodology and limitations
Two questionnaires were devised, piloted in three projects and then amended for the final exercise.

- One questionnaire was sent to organisations to complete about their provision and their assessment of their service users.
- One questionnaire was to gather information about service users directly. These were completed by a representative from the organisation, or in four locations by the Feeding Bradford worker, in either case sitting alongside the service user. The questionnaires were optional, participants were invited only to answer with information they felt happy providing. In many cases a box of cereal bars or fruit bars was given as a thank you.

Although data was collected from some organisations for a whole year, and for some for the whole month of March, the only data gathered consistently was for the week beginning 19th March 2018.

38 organisations agreed to take part in advance, and a further 5 returned organisational questionnaires following a subsequent request after the data collection week. In total, 26 organisations returned just the organisational questionnaire, 17 also returned questionnaires completed alongside service users giving us 178 completed service user questionnaires. 8 organisations did not return questionnaires.

The response rate for different questions varied widely. In the results that follow the response rate for each question is indicated by the numbers in circles - pink for responses from organisations and green for responses from individuals.

Although we checked with each individual that they had not already completed the service user questionnaire, we were not able to distinguish in the organisational data where individual service users were counted multiple times, meaning that there will be double-counting of individuals in the organisational data.

Service user questionnaires were completed by a self-selecting group willing to take the time in centres who agreed to support the filling in of forms. In particular, those whose English was poor or who had the appearance of having mental health or substance abuse problems were less likely to complete the survey.

Organisational data was provided by representatives from the organisation and where this applies to service users, was often based on their opinion. To get as full a picture as possible, we encouraged organisations to make an educated guess if exact data was not available. Therefore it is clear that some of our data is estimated or subjective.

We are aware of a number of organisations working to alleviate food poverty which did not return any information to us, despite several requests.

The information presented here is therefore only a partial snapshot. We hope that it will form a baseline on which we can build in subsequent data collection.
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Sources of food

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Staffing

Three projects were mostly staffed by paid workers, the rest mostly or entirely by volunteers. Churches were a major source of volunteers for 14, other faith groups for 1. Local people, word of mouth, social media, local colleges, Incommunities, the Job Centre and friends of other volunteers were also mentioned. 19 (70%) had enough volunteers, 8 needed more.
About the individuals

Individuals accessing services (reported by projects): 2164
Projects returning service user questionnaires: 17 | Service users responding: 178

Some projects highlighted the issue of ‘single’ men having children only at weekends and needing to access food provision.

* The service user questionnaires included a more granular list of ethnicities.
** A large Roma group were included in ‘Other’ by the projects reporting, but in ‘White European’ by users.
Projects also listed many of these as contributory factors, as well as highlighting relationship breakdown or other changes in family circumstances, social isolation and loneliness or needing a listening ear.

Although 21 people said they struggled all or most of the time, others said that some times were harder than others. In particular, 22 struggled in winter, 24 just before payday or benefits day, and 9 at birthdays or other festivities. Most wanting to make changes to their diet (73%) wanted more fresh, healthy food.
Unsurprisingly perhaps, service users felt that help with the immediate issues would be most beneficial, whilst projects focused more on addressing the root causes. Addressing ‘chaotic lifestyle issues’ was mentioned by a number of projects, as was reducing the availability of drugs and alcohol. A number of projects mentioned that simply giving people more money would help, whether through benefit or wage increases, but also focused on money education and budgeting. One project highlighted the need for better landlords, and several commented on the need for ongoing support, friendship, and TLC.

Concerns for future provision, other comments

Final comments from service users included recurring themes of a lack of money, and the inflexibility, unsuitability or impenetrability of benefit arrangements - with the move to universal credit a particular issue for several. Having to spend 35 hours per week looking for work to qualify for UC was impossible for some, particularly those without full-time computer access. Several made comments about being stuck in the system or forever waiting. Some reported a lack of consistency in service provision, but many others wanted to say a big thank you for the support they had received from numerous projects.

Of the 27 projects who responded to the question about the ability of their service to continue to meet demand, only 3 felt secure. Many talked about a rise in demand (even in ‘affluent’ areas), an increase in destitution and homelessness and more complex needs being harder to address.

Particular concerns highlighted by 6 projects included funding cuts, an inability to get the ‘next’ grant, and reduced donations. The 4 Children’s Centres who responded cited a current restructure which could mean an effective reduction in the number of families they could support. Benefit problems or cuts in statutory services were mentioned by 5 projects.

Two food banks talked about problems with the seasonality of food donations (with particular problems in the spring and summer as Harvest Festival and Christmas donations run out). Two projects talked about a struggle to provide healthy and fresh food based on the donated food they received (often low in nutrition) and their low budgets. Two projects mentioned the difficulties of long-term users of crisis food, and needing to find ways to break the cycle: one project has recently put a limit on the number of times users can access the service, most food banks already have a limit in place.

Three projects reported problems with tensions between users, or a marked increase in disruptive, violent or aggressive behaviour. There was a suggestion that an over-provision of food services made addressing bad behaviour with bans ineffective as users could just go elsewhere. Two projects wanted to highlight that their service users are amazing and that they felt blessed to serve our local community.
Appendix 1: the organisations

Organisations marked (SU) returned service users questionnaires in addition to their organisational questionnaires.

Open access meal providers
(crisis meals and food for the destitute, mini markets)
- Baraka Soup Kitchen, Keighley (SU)
- Bradford Soup Run
- Curry Circle (SU)
- Curry Project
- Homeless Aid Action
- Homes 4 Living (SU)
- Immanuel Project
- Inn Churches Winter Shelter
- In Touch Foundation, Keighley
- Light of the World Community Centre
- Open Doors (St Pio Friary)
- Salvation Army Day Shelter - The Orchard (SU)
- Salvation Army Keighley Meal
- Sharakat Project (St Paul’s, Manningham)
- Stafford Project (Westgate Baptists) (SU)
- Streetwise (Life Church)
- Welcome Project, Keighley

Community centres
(low cost food ranging from pay-as-you-feel cafés and mini markets to food parcels)
- Communityworks
- Gateway (Ravenscliffe Community Association) (SU)
- Red Letter Project (St John’s Great Horton) (SU)
- Sandale Community Development Trust (SU)
- Shine West Bowling (SU)
- St Christopher’s Family Centre
- Windhill Community Centre
- Wyke Drop-in Meal

Food banks (food parcels)
- Bingley (SU)
- Bradford Central (SU)
- Bradford Metropolitan
- Bradford North (SU - 3 locations)
- Ilkley CTI
- Salvation Army Keighley (SU)
- Thornton
- Wibsey
- Wyke

Children’s Centres (food parcels)
- Action for Children
- Lister Park Children’s Centre Cluster Services (SU)
- Midland Road Nursery School and lead for Lister Park Children’s Centre Cluster Services (SU)
- South Bradford Children’s Centre Cluster
- West Bradford Children’s Centre Cluster

Advice Centres (food parcels)
- CHAS @ St Vincent’s (SU)
  (Advice services and food parcels)
- Citizens Advice Bradford and Airedale

Asylum seekers and refugees (food parcels, mini markets)
- Abigail Housing
- BIASAN (SU)