



FEEDING BRADFORD DATA COLLECTION WEEK

A FEEDING BRITAIN CASE STUDY



Conducting a data collection week exercise to provide a snapshot on food aid.

A data collection week was conducted in Bradford to provide a snapshot of the extent and causes of hunger, and to determine what kind of emergency food aid and wider support is available. The exercise was commissioned by Bradford Council and coordinated by the Feeding Bradford development worker Cathy Henwood.

METHOD

Two questionnaires were developed- one to be filled out by the organisation and one for service users. Both questionnaires sought to provide a more complete picture of hunger and food aid in the community, with the service user questionnaires providing further insight around why individuals need to access food aid and what further support they require.

A short survey was sent around to Feeding Bradford network members two months before the collection week to gauge participation numbers and determine what sort of support organisations might need to conduct the exercise. Organisations were given the option to collect just basic figures, fill out organisation questionnaires, and/or conduct service user questionnaires. For organisations conducting service user questionnaires cereal bars were provided to hand out to participants as a thank you.

Prior to the collection week participating organisations were given questionnaire forms to be filled out on site, and four organisations were directly supported to conduct service user questionnaires.

OUTCOMES

43 organisations participated in the data collection week. These included all of Bradford's main food banks, as well as a range of food parcel distributors, meal providers, community food stalls, and pay as you feel cafes. A further 171 surveys were completed anonymously by services users.

While steps were taken to ensure quality of data and to avoid double counting it was clear that some of the organisational numbers were estimates and that in a number of cases they reached a few of the same individuals. Additionally, it is important to note that while there was a high participation rate there were still many organisations providing food aid who did not participate. The information gathered therefore can only be considered a snapshot of the level of need and provision in Bradford.

KEY FINDINGS

43 organisations helped 2275 people during the week (some of these were the same people more than once at different providers).

Types of provision	Number of organisations	Number of people accessing
Crisis/ destitute hot meals near town centre	17	1214
Community-based provision meals and food stalls	8	209
food banks	9	494
Children's centre clusters giving food bags	5	86
Advice centres giving food bags	2	6
Asylum seekers and refugees	2	155

Key Demographics

Age	69% were 25-64 years old and 23.5% were 0-16 years old
Gender	64% men, 36% women
Ethnicity	72% White British or European; 11% Asian or British Asian; 5% Black or Black British; 5% Mixed heritage

The Need

The three main reasons given for why people needed to access food aid were: Low income, benefit changes, and benefit delays.

The study also produced rich qualitative data. Service users were asked to provide any further information they would like to around their experience of food aid provision, how it might be improved, and what is contributing to their need to access food aid. Some of the themes that came up included:

- Need for emotional support
- Support in to employment
- Issues around housing
- Mental health difficulties
- Consistent serious health issues and inadequate benefits
- Domestic violence and other family issues
- Need for help gaining asylum and citizenship
- Suggestions for improving nutrition and range of food available

KEY LEARNING

1. To encourage participation organisations should be notified as far in advance as possible. Be sure to follow up with phone calls.
2. Conduct in person visits to organisations to offer help administering the client surveys and collecting organisational data. This was particularly useful in increasing participation.
3. Some organisations struggled to return questionnaires and organisational surveys. Consider training volunteers in advance and hosting workshops to provide organisations with background detail on the exercise and to communicate why it is so important and how the data will be used.
4. It was observed that people who may have difficulties with the English language or who appeared to be suffering from ill mental health or drug/ alcohol abuse were unlikely to take part in client questionnaires. Measures should be taken to reduce self-selection bias by having volunteers or staff approach people considered likely to opt out of completing a survey and offering assistance.

Future Plans

Data gathered from the collection week will be analysed and included in a report for Bradford council. Findings will inform future Feeding Bradford activities, and assist food aid projects to better meet the needs of their service users. Information will also be used to support policy reform campaigns at the national level. Feeding Bradford aim to conduct the data collection week twice yearly to monitor any changes in both the extent or causes of hunger.

Feeding Britain is also working in partnership with academics to replicate the exercise across Feeding Britain pilot areas. While the exercise will not be an exhaustive analysis of food poverty in the UK it will provide a useful snapshot of what need and provision look like at a given time.

For more information or support conducting a Data Collection week in your own area please contact:

Annie Olivier, Feeding Britain Programme Coordinator
E: annie.olivier@feedingbritain.org

or

Cathy Henwood, Feeding Bradford Development worker
E: cathy.henwood@wellspringstogetherbradford.org.uk