

## **Bath and North East Somerset Holiday Food Grants – Final Report**

### **Background**

The Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Holiday Food Grants Programme was launched in June 2020, seeking applications from local organisations to deliver nutritious food, positive activities and wrap-around support during the summer holiday period for families with children under the age of 18. Funding of up to £3,000 per organisation was available, although applications were invited for projects being delivered by multiple organisations working in partnership.

The programme was devised as part of the B&NES Food Poverty Partnership (FPP), of which St John's and Feeding Britain are key members, with the two organisations providing £15,000 of funding each. Bath and North East Somerset Council provided coordination and liaised directly with potential applicants. Although the Covid-19 crisis was the impetus for launching the funding programme, the group also sought our applications for projects which would have some form of longevity beyond the summer holiday period.

A total of 18 applications were received, of which the following 12 were approved:

- Bath Rugby Foundation – Summer Break Out (£6,000)
- Brightstart Children's Centres – Brightstart Food Clubs (£2,000)
- Community at 67 - Keynsham South Takeaway Project (£374)
- Curo - Rainbow Summer Family Meals project at Dartmouth Avenue (£2,970)
- First Steps, Free healthy meals for young children from low income families (£476)
- Mercy in Action - Action Pantry Holiday Club (£3,000)
- Oasis Hub Bath - Food Parcel Project Extension (£2,586)
- Oldfield School - Oldfield School Food Box Project (£1,000)
- Southside Family Project - Family Food Hub Groups (£3,000)
- St Martin's Garden Primary School - Community Pantry (£3,000)
- SWALLOW - Food for Families (£1,226)
- Youth Connect - Supporting communities in Twerton and Whiteway (£6,500)

### **Reporting**

As part of the terms of the award, grantees were required to complete an online report about their experiences of delivering their projects.

In addition to key data about project beneficiaries and the provision of food, we asked grantees to reflect on;

- The general impact their project has made on their beneficiaries (including any case studies they might wish to share);
- Any significant challenges they or their beneficiaries faced during the delivery of their projects;
- Their experience of food opening the door to building stronger relationships of trust with the families they work with;
- How elements of the project would continue after the summer holidays.

At the time of writing, 11 of the 12 grantees had returned their reports. The organisation which had not returned its report, St Martin's Garden Primary School, had faced significant challenges around staffing due to the Coronavirus pandemic and so had not had capacity to complete the report in time for inclusion in this report.

### **Key data**

Across the 11 projects on which we have been provided data, a total of 1137 individuals or families have received support and a total of 7434 meals or food parcels have been distributed.

These figures break down across the projects as follow:

Organisation	Individuals or families supported	Meals or food parcels distributed
Bath Rugby Foundation	312	1262
Brightstart Children's Centre	234	468
Community at 67	70	148
Curo	25	276
First Steps	31	258
Mercy in Action	100	600
Oasis Hub	47	2444
Oldfield School	28	494
Southside	78	532
SWALLOW	40	240
Youth Connect	172	712
	<b>1137</b>	<b>7434</b>

Of the 11 respondents;

- 9 provided quotes from beneficiaries which they would be happy to be shared publicly. Some of these have been provided in the Testimonials section of this report.
- 5 had not used the entirety of their funding award at the time of completing their report. A full list of these organisations has been provided in the Unspent Funds section of this report.
- 10 felt the funding has allowed their organisation to access further funding or additional support from other sources, or facilitate closer collaboration with other local organisations

## Impact

The reports were overwhelmingly positive about the impact their projects had made. Some grantees reflected on the sense of ownership and pleasure their beneficiaries felt about the nutritious food they were receiving;

“Several parents told us that the children were excited each week to see what was in ‘their’ bag and many of them took responsibility for the food and what they were going to eat on each day.”

**Mercy in Action**

Others told us about their beneficiaries being able to the money they were saving on food in order to focus on other essential outgoings;

“One client was not able to move home or actively bid on a property due to owed rent arrears. Without the support of the Family Food Hub Groups through the summer she would not have been able to save £700 needed to clear her debt with Curo to enable her to start bidding on another property.”

**Southside Family Project**

An additional, perhaps unexpected, benefit has been on the wellbeing of people volunteering to support some of these projects;

“The project recruited many volunteers who have described the positive impact helping with the project has had on their lives by improving their mental health and wellbeing during lockdown and getting them out of the house.”

**Oasis Hub**

## Challenges

In almost all cases, challenges centred around the coordination of projects, largely due to the compressed timescales they were working to and the shifting picture of Covid-19 restrictions during the summer months;

“Many of the individuals and families we support were already socially isolated before lockdown and are significantly affected by food poverty, loss of income and jobs, pressures of home schooling and anxiety about Covid-19 and the impact of the pandemic, leading to growing mental health issues and concerns for the future.”

**Southside Family Project**

In some cases, the task of cooking meals from scratch proved challenging for beneficiaries, which meant the support of the organisations was key in enabling families to make the most of the food they were provided with;

“Some of our customers found the idea of making a meal from scratch quite challenging, they are used to microwaving a meal in 3 minutes and predominantly using a frying pan. They fed back that they found this challenging. To support the transition to cooking meals we purchased some kitchen cooking sets for families so that they had the basic equipment.”

**Curo**

## **Building trust**

Respondents were near-unanimous in saying they had been able to build trust with their beneficiaries through these projects. Several grantees felt that food acted as an important gateway for deeper conversations with their beneficiaries;

“Families have welcomed the local food clubs and we are seeing an increase in the number of families joining the clubs due to word of mouth. This is bringing in new families we haven't reached before and helps to open up important conversations.”

**Brightstart Children's Centres**

“Sharing food is a wonderful way to build bridges and gain trust. This project allowed us to give to vulnerable families locally and build strong links. Our members really enjoyed contributing in this way.”

**SWALLOW**

## **Continuation of projects**

Some of the funding was awarded specifically to allow projects to launch with a view towards providing longer-term, ongoing provision. However, not all of the funded projects will be able to continue, with funding and Covid-19 restrictions being key concerns.

However, a number of organisations have expressed a desire to build on the work delivered over the summer;

“We have now opened our weekly food pantry to ensure people can receive ongoing support, and we have referred families to local pantries/food clubs if ours is not their closest. We have also made plans to offer support in October half-term by doing food bag deliveries with recipe cards and games and activities.”

**Oasis Hub**

“All the families are still accessing Action Pantry and we hope the relationship built will continue to grow. We’d like to do the same at half term and look to see how we may do it during other holidays.”

**Mercy in Action**

Crucially, both St John’s and Feeding Britain are committed to supporting the work of the B&NES Public Health team in delivering on the goals of the Food Poverty Partnership. This will ensure that local organisations are well-supported and coordinated in the coming years.

## Unspent funds

Five organisations had not used all of the awarded funds at the time of the report:

- Brightstart Children’s Centres intend to purchase additional resources for the club such as emergency food. They intend to have used the remaining funds by the end of December.
- Southside Family Project’s remaining £246 was to be used to run the project through September.
- Mercy in Action saved £321 through discounts provided by one of their suppliers. They intend to use these funds to support their families during the October half term.
- Curo have £616 remaining which they intend to use to keep their Rainbow Food project storeroom stocked during the winter months.
- Community at 67 intend to use some of their funds to offer support during other holidays, with the intention of using all the funds by March 2021.

## Testimonials

“It has been extremely difficult especially as I am bedbound and have been for the last 10 weeks after breaking my foot then my breaking my ankle 4 weeks apart. Despite my children being a little confused about receiving the wonderful gift of food and sports equipment, I would like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart. It’s also the first time anyone has reached out during this whole pandemic. It’s lovely not to be forgotten.”

**Oldfield School**

“After being furloughed then being laid off due to Covid19, the meals through the summer has been a great support.”

**Southside Family Project**

“I am a single parent with a 12-year-old and a toddler to take care of. I am also 21 weeks pregnant. Being unwell on top has been a challenge, but one that was made manageable thanks to your brilliant team and the wonderful innovation that is Food Club. I have been moved by the kindness and generosity that has been shown to me.”

**Brightstart Children’s Centre**