



Confronting food poverty head-on in York

York Food Poverty Alliance: Interim update, December 2018

Building an alliance from the ground up

York has a strong historical association with poverty research, most famously that of Joseph Rowntree. It has also been known as a chocolate city, and has, in recent times, become a 'foodie' destination. Despite such a past and present, however, it is not a city with a long history of food poverty action and research. The financial support and impetus from Food Power has been fundamental to the development of a concerted and effective alliance tackling food poverty in York.

The York Food Poverty Alliance brings together the City of York Council, the University of York, York City Football Club Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Good Food York, as well as over 20 voluntary and community groups. We have launched a [website](#), appeared multiple times on BBC Radio York to raise awareness about the reality of food poverty in York, organised and coordinated a programme of food and activity clubs for people in the school holidays, launched a survey in primary schools across the city to assess the level and character of food poverty and food bank use, and trained those with lived experience to document food poverty using smartphone journalism.

Challenges and learning

Many of the organisations in the alliance lack the time and resources to assist additional projects, rendering progress slow. Differing approaches to tackling food poverty and contrasting forms of language and expression have sometimes led to disagreement. We are, nevertheless, committed to airing different perspectives and working through disagreements. There are many political and ethical dilemmas associated with work on food poverty; we believe open – albeit uncritical – dialogue is part of resolving such dilemmas.

Next steps

We are undertaking research and trialling interventions that will contribute to our food poverty action plan to be launched in April 2019. In the meantime, we continue to post developments and findings on our website.



"Schools have been very interested in food poverty within their schools and supportive of the project, putting time and resources into distributing the survey to parents and setting up safe and secure methods for survey collection. There has also been considerable interest from parents, many of whom have contacted the alliance offering support in addition to contributing to the survey."

Maddy Power, Chair, York Food Poverty Alliance

Outcomes

- We have developed a strong basis for joint and coordinated work going forward, including our food poverty action plan. In particular we have strong working relationships with schools across the city.
- We have cemented old and established new networks of experts by experience, providing an impetus to talk about experiences and encourage others to do so.

This activity was assisted by financial support and other advice from Food Power.
www.foodpower.org.uk

