

1. Introduction

Wansbeck Valley Food Bank was established in October 2012 with the aim of providing food aid to people in need in the local area. There are many reasons for the need for emergency help, ranging from the long-term unemployed, people whose benefits have changed and there is a gap in payments, to an increasing number of people who are employed but are struggling to feed their families due to a combination of rising inflation and a reduction in wages/hours. Recent research indicates that 7 per cent of the UK's adult population – or 3.7 million people – have used a food bank to receive a mealⁱ. Food poverty is defined as the inability to afford, or not to have access to food to make up a healthy diet. We feel unable to stand by when mothers admit to regularly going without food in order to feed their children and when families are forced to choose between paying the bills or buying food.

During 2018 Wansbeck Valley Food Bank provided 14,877 days of food, ie 44,631 meals, worth circa £90,000 to clients referred to our service. This growing trend shows no sign of abating.

April 2021: Needs updating with reference to Covid, 2020 stats and any more recent research.

2. Our operating model

We generate stocks of dried/tinned supplies of basic food types via donations from various community organisations (schools, churches etc.) and via supermarket collections. Our standard food parcels are sufficient for individuals or families to feed them for up to 3 days. These packs are issued at the request of care professionals in our community. They will normally be collected by clients at one of our distribution sessions, while we can arrange delivery in particular circumstances. In addition, we also provide emergency packs to referring professionals, so that they can issue them immediately when this is required.

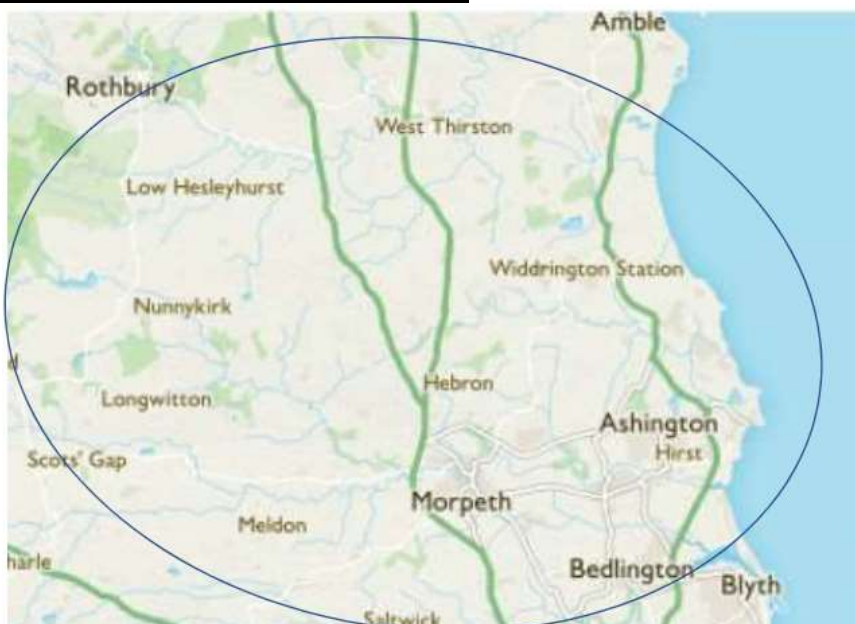
Clearly Wansbeck Valley Food Bank can never be more than a vital stop gap service, providing food while other enduring support arrangements are made for clients, but we aim to do this in the most efficient and caring way possible.

We have recently relocated our warehousing and office accommodation to premises customised specifically for our expanding operation at NTW's Northgate Hospital site on the edge of Morpeth

Our service remains free to clients and referrers. We employ only one part time member of staff for coordination and administrative activities with all other duties being delivered by our dedicated volunteers..

April 2021: Needs updating with details of current operating model.

3. Our operating area and its challenges



Our project covers some 80,000 people living in towns and villages close to the River Wansbeck and the surrounding rural communitiesⁱⁱ. The operating area is shown on the map to the left.

Agencies often request help beyond this core operating area, so we do not adhere rigorously to these physical boundaries. Subject to resource availability we do not adhere rigorously to physical boundaries when requested to help. However as there are other Food Bank projects covering further districts of the county, the vast majority of our operation occurs between Longhorsley / Hadston in the north and Stanington/ Bedlington in the south.

Economic circumstances continue to impact our clients adversely. Of England's 32,844 Lower layer Super Output Areas[LSOAs] recorded in the 2015 government report, Northumberland contains 14 of those within the 10% most deprived. As the table below shows, 8 of these needy communities are served by our projectⁱⁱⁱ. Furthermore in terms of income, our project caters to 10 LSOAs within the most deprived 10% in the country, while in terms of employment Hirst Ward falls within the bottom

1% . Such a combination of persistently high unemployment and comparatively low wages has other knock on effects. For example 80% of houses (2,500 of 3,300 properties) in Newbiggin by the Sea fall within band A, making it difficult for the local council to fund poverty alleviation measures.^{iv}

In such a climate it is families with young children who often suffer the most. In assessments where children live in income deprived households, 6 pockets of our project area were ranked amongst the worst^v . Such parameters demonstrate the importance of our work at both County and National level.

Even towns like Morpeth cannot sit easy – With 60% of its local workforce employed by the state, Morpeth has the highest proportion of public sector workers of anywhere in the country^{vi}. Many could face difficulty as work is transferred from the public to the private sector. Recent changes in the benefits system is a further factor that impacts on many of our clients: various studies are suggesting that significant numbers of persons will need the support of Food Banks as they are transitioned into the new Universal Credit arrangements^{vii}

LSOA	County Ward(s) LSOA falls into	Overall IMD Rank 2015
E01027533	College	1138
E01027545	Ashington Central / College / Hirst	1518
E01027540	Hirst	1600
E01027542	Newbiggin Central and East	1643
E01027527	Ashington Central	1981
E01027539	Hirst	1984
E01027518	Bedlington Central	2727
E01027451	Lynemouth	3066

The Wansbeck Valley Food Bank exists for all of the above reasons and any others that result in people finding themselves unable to afford food.

April 2021: Needs minor updating with particular reference to Covid

4. How a client can access our service

All persons requiring our service come by referral from other parties providing care in our community. Using this referral route has the following advantages:

- The referring party establishes that the client is in genuine need of emergency food and that alternative sources have been explored and discounted. Donors can therefore be assured that food gifted is being used to best effect
- The client has established communication with a referrer who can help them to address the underlying causes of their food crisis.

Our 30+ referrers include both local Citizens Advice Bureaux, the 5 largest NHS General Practitioner partnerships, Health Visitors, Community Mental Health and Social Services teams, local Job Centres, South East Northumberland Credit Union, Northumberland Emergency Transition Support (NETs), ISOS and Bernicia Social Housing, Barnabas Safe and Sound, Contact Mental Health, Stobhill Community Hub and a number of other third sector and council operated community services. .

Upon referral clients attend one of our distribution centres where a completed referral form is exchanged for a food parcel appropriate to the needs of the individual or their family. Every food parcel contains sufficient food for three balanced meals per day. Most of the produce is tinned or dried to preserve its shelf life, but we also make a point of providing a loaf of fresh bread and other items as available, a feature greatly appreciated by our clients.

There are daily (Monday- Friday) distribution sessions in both Morpeth and Ashington, with further distribution sessions on Wednesdays and Thursdays in Newbiggin. Our van drivers also delivery to clients unable to access these centres. This approach has been developed to make the service convenient to the widest possible range service users.

As stated earlier, for referrers such as Social Services “on call” teams and Health Visitors we also provide special packs for issue out of our standard opening hours so that they can address the most urgent of cases without delay.

April 2021: Needs major updating with info on self-referral etc

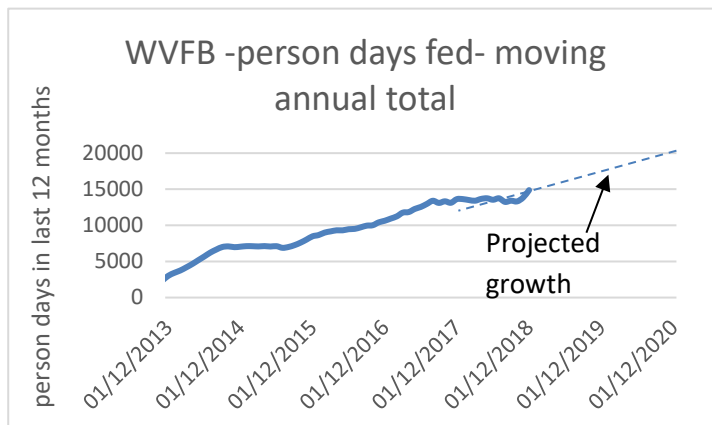
5. Project growth

Since the outset, we have maintained a sustainable and effective platform for growth. This features:

- production of an operating manual of procedures, so that all volunteers and referrers can function in a consistent manner and that the requirements of environmental health, health and safety, client confidentiality etc. are maintained
- increasing our food supply chain, warehousing and distribution capacity so that we can meet rising client needs
- making our service known to those in greatest need through media releases, production of information notices and via our contacts with referrers, councillors and other local interest groups.
- Our model continually evolves as we learn more regarding our clients' needs. For example, we now provide meat vouchers in certain circumstances so that clients can exercise some choice regarding the food they are obtaining.

Wansbeck Valley Food Bank was formed to address what was thought to be a short-term problem. However as can be seen from the graph opposite, the demand for our service shows no sign of abating, so we need to expand our capacity in line with increasing need for the foreseeable future. In response we have enacted the following measures:

- Appointment of one part time salaried worker to assist in service co-ordination.
- Relocation of our main warehousing and office location to larger premises at Northgate Hospital, Morpeth
- An ongoing recruitment programme of appropriate volunteers during 2019; selecting persons who can both fill existing vacancies and show potential to fill key roles in the future.
- Increasing our vehicle capacity for collections and deliveries. In the short term this is being addressed by contract hire, but it is expected that purchase of a second van will be required within 12 months.



Outcomes we intend to achieve during the next 2 years are as follows:

Outcome 1: Continued provision of emergency food through our service to persons in need within our community.

We issued 14,877 person days of food to clients during 2018; this represents 40% increase (equivalent to 4,200 person days) over the 2016 figures. To meet this ongoing rise in need for our service we are planning for :

- a. Provision of 17,500 person days per annum of food during 2019
- b. Provision of 20,000 person days per annum of food during 2020

Outcome 2: Raising sufficient community awareness and engagement that the project can be sustained and continue to develop.

We will measure success against this outcome as follows:

- a. At all times, rates of food input maintain a minimum stock for 4 future weeks' demand
- b. At all times, sufficient trained volunteers and reserves are available to deliver the service for the forthcoming 3 months

Outcome 3: Ensuring that our service is made accessible and convenient widely across our community to those in need

Achievement of this outcome will feature:

- a. An adequate range of contacts in the local care and advice sectors, who can both refer clients to our service and also can help clients to address the underlying problems that cause them to seek emergency food. Whilst specific targets have not been set, we will conduct an annual review of the number, range and geographic locations of referrers to ensure that there is a sufficiency for effective client access
- b. The maintenance of distribution sessions in both Ashington and Morpeth every weekday, and 2 sessions per week of our Newbiggin service.
- c. Distribution sessions supplemented by other measures including van delivery to clients unable to collect food and provision of emergency parcels to referrers addressing matters out of hours

- d. Further initiatives with community partners to provide children from struggling households to receive food via breakfast clubs during term time and other measures during school holidays. Pilot schemes will occur during 2019, which will inform our plans for rollout to a wider client group during 2020.

e.

April 2021: Needs major updating due to Covid and the passage of time!

7. Our financial plans

Our financial plans for the current and next year are set out in appendices 1 and 2.

8. Contributions to the project provided in kind (based upon current volumes of activity)

a. Volunteers' contributions in kind, valued at £67,496 per annum

Our volunteers provide their time free of charge and will not be claiming any travelling expenses until further notice. We value this as a contribution on the following rationale:

- 7794 volunteer hours per annum^{viii} in delivering our 12 distribution sessions, driving our van, managing our warehouse, collecting food, taking calls and undertaking administration of the project. Assessing volunteer's time as worth £8.21 per hour^{ix}, this represents a contribution of £63,989 per annum
- At their own expense, volunteers drive an average of 3 miles return journey on 2,598 occasions per annum to attend the Food Bank. Based upon a rate of £0.45p^x per mile, this represents a contribution of £3,507 per annum

b. Food contributions in kind, valued at a minimum of £78,347 per annum

The value of food issued exceeds £6^x per person day. Therefore the value of food issued during 2018 (14877 person days) = £6 x 14877 = £89,262 minimum per annum. We made purchases of £10,915 during the year and so assess the value of food donated in kind as £89,262 - £10,915 = £78,347 per annum

April 2021: Needs updating with 2021 projections.

9. Project risk management

The Food Bank has adopted a quantified risk management approach for this project, whereby the potential impact of risks is quantified before and after mitigating controls are put in place. The current version of the risk register is shown in Appendix 3.

April 2021: Need lots of help with this!

9. Other information

We are a registered charity with both the Charities Commission and with HM Revenue and Customs, so that gift aid can be claimed on donations from tax payers.

April 2021: No updating needed

Notes and references

ⁱ Per report in The Independent 6 June 2018 based on polling by D-CYFOR of a representative sample of 1,050 UK adults regarding food poverty

ⁱⁱ Based on 2011 Census data for Parishes in Northumberland.

ⁱⁱⁱ English Indices of Deprivation 2015: Northumberland Analysis. Date published: November 2015. Prepared by: Shona Rowe (Intelligence Officer)

^{iv} Data drawn from Northumberland Poverty and Worklessness Assessment – 2012 Update based upon English Indices of Deprivation 2010

^v per Northumberland Poverty and Worklessness Assessment – 2012 Update

^{vi} See Guardian article by Rowenna Davis, Wednesday 2 February 2011, based upon ONS data analysed by research group Local Futures.

^{vii} For the predicted impact of Universal Credit on Food Bank clients see <https://www.trusselltrust.org/2017/09/22/universal-credit-rollout-continues-like-foodbanks-wont-able-catch-everyone-falls/> and <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/food-bank-warns-christmas-hunger-13659318>

^{viii} Volunteer time assessed as follows:

	Volunteers	Hours per session	frequency	Volunteer hours per annum
Distribution session	2.5 (average)	3 (minimum)	12 per week, 600 per annum	4,500
Warehouse session	2	3 (minimum)	2.5 per week, 125 per annum	750

Supermarket collection	4	3 (minimum)	Monthly, 12 per annum	144
Van driving	1	3	7 per week, 350 per annum	1,050
Session supervision	1	3	5 per week, 250 per annum	750
Other project management, data input, financial control etc	1	3	4 per week, 200 per annum	600
Volunteer hours per annum				7,794

^{ix} A contribution of £8.21/ hour value has been used as this reflects the April 2019 National Minimum Wage Rate

^x £0.45p/mile per current rates within statutory system of Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAPs)

^{xi} In 2014 based on food available in a local supermarket the value of donated food within a standard “three day” food pack for an individual was valued at £15.96 +£0.80 loaf of bread purchased by the Food Bank = £16.76 per occasion. As our service has evolved we have been able to also provide toiletries and for certain client categories eggs, cheese and spread. In addition we have commenced a scheme to provide meat vouchers. We are therefore confident that our parcels are of greater value than £6 per day to individual clients. We expect this figure to increase when reviewed in detail later this year.

April 2021: Will need help with getting the info to update all of this section!!