



Bradford 2025 Food Symposium

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on behalf of the Fair Food Futures UK Team

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The research

Mixed methods NIHR-funded study (2023-2025) in Tower Hamlets and Bradford examining the role of community food organisations (CFOs) in reducing the need for emergency food assistance, focusing on the experiences of families.



March 2023-October 2025

Bradford and Tower Hamlets, London

WP1 - Mapping of local food aid systems
(what help is available where and what are the components)

WP2 - Longitudinal qualitative research

- Embedded research in 9 settings for 12 months
- 3 waves of interviews with food insecure families who are using (30) or not using (10) CFOs + sharing photos



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Outputs so far...

- Policy brief for National Stakeholders
- CFO systems map
- Policy brief for Local Authorities
- Feedback to DEFRA and DWP
- Internal feedback to CFOs
- Photo exhibition
- Academic publications



Some key findings

- Many families use community food organisations (CFOs) regularly, as a way to manage persistently low incomes.
- Food insecurity is more often linked to complex interconnected issues (e.g. health, care responsibilities, barriers to access secure and better paid jobs) rather than short term crisis



Some key findings

Families value:

- food that is good quality, good value and includes fresh products
- friendly, welcoming, safe, confidential access to food support
- enough time and a suitable space to talk to a staff member (suitably trained)
- if support beyond food is promised, then it's followed up
- CFOs as a social space, which helps breaking down isolation



CFO recommendations - based on observations of good practice:

- Opportunities for food choice
- Consistent fruit and vegetables
- Meet dietary and cultural needs
- Consider cooking facilities
- Create welcoming and private spaces
- Regular training, including on subconscious bias
- Strategies to remove language barriers
- Invite users to become volunteers
- Partner or signpost to other agencies
- All staff familiar with eligibility processes
- Safeguarding and GDPR training
- Session de-briefs



Building up of toolkit

We will produce an 'Actionable Toolkit' written for local authorities, national government and CFOs aimed at reducing the need for emergency food in families with children.



What we need from you

Q1 How will the toolkit be used by your organisation?

Q2 What should the toolkit look like?

Q3 What should the toolkit contain?

Q4 Should the toolkit be different for different audiences (local authority, referral agencies, food organisation)? In what way?



Link to answer online:
<https://tinyurl.com/48cj4tts>



Thank you!

Find out more about Fair Food Futures UK on our website:
<https://www.fairfoodfuturesuk.org/>

Any questions?

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