



THE EDINBURGH PARTNERSHIP

Ending Poverty-Related Hunger in Edinburgh

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In response to calls to action made by the Edinburgh Poverty Commission, the Edinburgh Partnership committed to the development of a new strategy setting out the partnership responses needed to end poverty related hunger in Edinburgh.
- 1.2 This paper provides a progress update on work carried out to date in development of this strategy. The paper describes the engagement and research activities led by City of Edinburgh Council and EVOG in design of a new approach to ending poverty related hunger, and a draft paper for public consultation to support next steps in the strategy's development.
- 1.3 The draft strategy sets the partnership a mission to ensure that no one in Edinburgh should need to go hungry because of a lack of money. In doing so, the draft proposes that partners should aim to ensure that:
 - 1.3.1 When people fall into food crisis, Edinburgh networks aim to give a cash first approach to providing support
 - 1.3.2 Where emergency food provision is needed, people can access support in ways that are safe, dignified, respectful, and prevent future need
 - 1.3.3 Community food initiatives are available in all parts of Edinburgh to build people's wellbeing, improve skills and confidence, and help people access the supports they need to get by.
- 1.4 To deliver these aims, the draft strategy outlines five short to medium term strategic actions for the Edinburgh Partnership. These include actions to
 - 1.4.1 improve collaboration,
 - 1.4.2 secure sustainable resources,
 - 1.4.3 set agreed standards and principles,
 - 1.4.4 improve accessibility of support, and
 - 1.4.5 improve communication and awareness of available supports.
- 1.5 In the immediate term, the paper notes that pressures arising from the cost of living crisis are resulting in a significant increase in the risk of poverty related hunger. Actions needed to address these short term risks are outlined in a separate paper for consideration by the partnership.
- 1.6 As next steps, the paper proposes a period of further research, engagement, and consultation on these findings over the period July to September, with a final draft

strategy to be prepared for consideration by the Edinburgh Partnership in December 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Edinburgh Partnership:
- i. Notes that the current cost of living crisis is resulting in a significant increase in poverty related hunger, and that work underway to mitigate this risk is outlined in a separate paper for partnership consideration
 - ii. Approves the draft paper (Appendix 1) for public consultation during July to September
 - iii. Notes the further research and engagement planned to support strategy development
 - iv. Agrees to establish an Edinburgh Food Network, following models observed in other local authorities, to promote collaboration and partnership working across the sector.
 - v. Agrees that a final draft strategy and action plan will be prepared for consideration by the Edinburgh Partnership in December 2022.

3. Main Report

- 3.1 In 2021 the Edinburgh Partnership approved a proposed approach to the development of a new partnership strategy to end poverty related hunger in Edinburgh.
- 3.2 To develop this strategy a core working group led by officers from the City of Edinburgh Council and EVOC was established. This group has led a process of research and engagement including:
- 3.2.1 Four stakeholder workshops
 - 3.2.2 Discussion sessions with the End Poverty Edinburgh citizen's group
 - 3.2.3 Establishment of a service provider reference group
 - 3.2.4 Gathering of baseline data on local and city-wide service provision
 - 3.2.5 Securing resources for additional research activity, and
 - 3.2.6 Site visits to key projects across the city.
- 3.3 The engagement has shown the wide range and scale of statutory and third sector support for people experiencing poverty related food crisis or hunger across well over 100 organisations and local community groups. In broad terms, types of support provided include:
- 3.3.1 **Cash first supports:** Cash grants for people experiencing food crisis through programmes such as the Scottish Welfare Fund, Free School



Meals, as well as other statutory and third sector programmes. Cash first supports also include income maximisation and money advice services which aim to help prevent future need.

3.3.2 **Free or low-cost food provision:** Food banks, food pantries, free meal projects (including delivery, takeaway and van outreach services), healthy meal kits, and school breakfast clubs. In most cases these projects also promote access to cash first, advice and other supports alongside direct food provision.

3.3.3 **Community food initiatives:** Including projects which provide support for wellbeing, skills, and capacity building alongside free or low cost food provision. Projects include community meals, community cafes and food markets, cook clubs, cooking and nutrition courses, and skills development support.

3.4 Across this community of providers and projects, key issues identified include:

3.4.1 **High and rising need and demand:** An estimated 30,000 adults went hungry due to a lack of money in Edinburgh in 2020. In 2022 the cost of living crisis is increasing the number of people in need of food support. Across the UK, 14% of all households are considered to be in ‘food stress’ – levels as high as those experienced during the first covid lockdowns. The Council Advice Shop notes a 20% increase in call volumes in the past month, with a significant increase in visits to ‘food advice’ support webpages. Citizen’s Advice Scotland note a recent doubling of queries relating to food and foodbank access.

3.4.2 **Capacity and resources to respond to need:** Even before recent increases in need, service providers were experiencing difficulties in securing the sustainable resources needed to meet demand. Third sector providers note the significant time and resources needed to pull together funding from multiple sources, as well as challenges in securing core funding or funding for more than one financial year. Such circumstances, providers note, provide a barrier to innovation, long-term planning, staff recruitment and retention, and collaboration across the food support community.

3.4.3 These challenges have been exacerbated in recent months due to the increasing cost of supplies, difficulties accessing donations, and other supply chain challenges arising from the war in Ukraine, and ongoing impacts of Brexit.

3.4.4 **The need for a more strategic approach to commissioning and funding:** Edinburgh Partnership members, The Council and Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership in particular, invest significant resources into a range of food support organisations and activities. The collective scale, range, and impact of this investment, however, is not well



understood, nor is it guided by shared a policy objective or strategic framework.

- 3.4.5 **A need for improved partnership working and collaboration across the sector:** Providers and stakeholders across the sector demonstrate a strong willingness and ability to collaborate effectively when need arises. There is a clear culture of partnership and innovation across organisations in Edinburgh working to address poverty related hunger.
- 3.4.6 At the same time, however, while individual groups of organisations work well together, there is no single network or forum helping providers in all parts of the city to share knowledge, skills, and capacity, or to collaborate on opportunities for fund raising or project development. The lack of such a network also makes it more difficult to co-ordinate city wide responses, particularly in the face of current and future crises.
- 3.4.7 **Gaps in access, variability of standards:** Work carried out to date highlights concerns over gaps and inconsistencies in the availability of support across the city. These include, areas of the city which are under provided relative to need, lack of access to out of hours or weekend support, and inconsistent standards relating to issues such as food quality, nutrition, and hygiene, guidance on 'cash first' support, and the embedding of appropriate family and household supports to prevent future need.
- 3.4.8 **Communication and awareness:** Workshop participants, particularly those from the End Poverty Edinburgh citizen group, noted the need for improved promotion of food support available to people in Edinburgh. Local examples of promotion campaigns in areas such as west Edinburgh provide a useful model. Further work is needed to identify approaches across all parts of the city.

Developing the longer-term strategy

- 3.5 These emerging themes from engagement suggest a number of key areas where Edinburgh Partnership members can play a significant role in improving the impact of work underway to end poverty related hunger in Edinburgh. These include actions to:
 - 3.5.1 Improve networking and collaboration across the food support sector
 - 3.5.2 Help providers secure sustainable resources
 - 3.5.3 Set agreed standards and principles for commissioned support to end poverty related hunger
 - 3.5.4 Improve accessibility of support by addressing gaps in provision, and
 - 3.5.5 Improve communication and awareness of available supports.



- 3.6 These outline actions are set out in a consultation draft strategy (Appendix 1 to this paper), which provides a vision, aims, and the outline actions needed to end poverty related hunger in Edinburgh.

Next steps

- 3.7 The next steps development of this strategy include:
- 3.7.1 Public consultation on the draft document provided in Appendix 1
 - 3.7.2 Continued engagement with stakeholders to develop and agree the action areas outlined in the document, including phasing of activity and resource requirements
 - 3.7.3 Analysis and collation of existing data on food support services provision across Edinburgh to further build understanding of potential gaps in access. This work is being carried out by University of Edinburgh with the support of data provided by a range of stakeholders.
 - 3.7.4 Commissioned research to further understand and gather the experiences of users of food support services. This will include interviews and focus groups with citizens across Edinburgh and is being carried out through funding provided by City of Edinburgh Council.
 - 3.7.5 Further analysis of the total value and configuration of current funding from Edinburgh Partnership members for food provision and support in the city. This information may provide opportunities to consolidate or reconfigure future funding, in line with the findings of the above research and the consultation process.
 - 3.7.6 In parallel with strategy development, proposals will be progressed for an Edinburgh Food Network, following models observed in other local authorities, to promote collaboration and partnership working across the sector. Development of such proposals will be taken forward in full alignment with other groups in the city, such as Edible Edinburgh.
- 3.8 On completion of these actions, a final draft strategy will be provided for consideration by the Edinburgh Partnership in December 2022.

4. Contact

Eleanor Cunningham – Lead Policy Officer, Policy Unit, Corporate Services
Eleanor.cunningham@edinburgh.gov.uk