



# THE EDINBURGH PARTNERSHIP

## Ending Poverty-Related Hunger in Edinburgh

### 1. Executive Summary

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- 1.1 In June 2022, the Edinburgh Partnership considered and approved a draft strategy to end poverty related hunger in Edinburgh for public consultation.
- 1.2 The twelve-week consultation during the summer of 2022. There were 57 responses via the consultation hub, and broad agreement (“somewhat or strongly”) with the vision (80%) and principles (84%) and the actions (82%).
- 1.3 Alongside the consultation, the Council commissioned research from Diffley Partnership, seeking lived experience of emergency and community food provision in Edinburgh, building on existing knowledge and providing valuable insights.
- 1.4 The strategy has been revised to take account of the range of feedback received, for consideration and approval by the Edinburgh Partnership Board.
- 1.5 The main revisions are to make it clearer that this strategy is part of a comprehensive programme to tackle the drivers of poverty in Edinburgh, through the End Poverty in Edinburgh Delivery Plan; and to recognise and address the role that stigma has in tackling poverty.
- 1.6 An Edinburgh Food Poverty Network is being established to promote collaboration and partnership working across the sector. A steering group has been formed to establish the Network and to lead work to deliver the actions set out above. It is proposed that the steering group report progress.
- 1.7 It is proposed that the Food Poverty Network will report into the Edinburgh Partnership’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) Delivery Group, which will monitor progress and provide a mechanism for wider partnership support to assist in the delivery of the strategy.

### 2. Recommendations

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- 2.1 It is recommended that the Edinburgh Partnership:
  - i. Approves the final draft strategy (Appendix 1)
  - ii. Notes that a steering group has been set up to establish the Edinburgh Food Network and to deliver the actions specified in the draft strategy.
  - iii. Notes the role, remit and governance of the Network and agrees to the proposals for governance of the group (Appendix 4)
  - iv. Agrees to receive an update on progress in December 2023.

### 3. Main Report

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- 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. The process for developing the strategy was set out in a paper to the Board in June 2022 ([Ending Poverty Related Hunger](#) – see pages 13-32).
- 3.2 Throughout the development of this strategy, the Council has continued to provide support to people experiencing poverty, including, during 2022-23:
- 3.2.1 **Additional support for people in food crisis or poverty related hunger:** to date £209,000 has been made to provide direct food support for people in food crisis with a further payment of 92k due to be paid in March 2023. This includes support for food banks, food pantries and community food groups.
- 3.2.2 **Additional grant funds to support families experiencing difficulty with energy costs:** a total of £100,000 of funding was provided to Home Energy Scotland (HES) to fund payment of energy crisis grants of up to £1,000 to low-income households in Edinburgh. A further £100,000 has been made available to support this activity and is being distributed through food bank providers.
- 3.3 The draft strategy to end poverty related hunger was developed to address the identified gaps and challenges, and set out a vision, principles and actions across five areas:



- 3.4 Public consultation was held for 12 weeks on the Council's Consultation Hub between July to September 2022 and sought views on the challenges described which the strategy seeks to address, the draft vision and principles to underpin the strategy, and the five areas of actions proposed.
- 3.5 Alongside the consultation, the Council commissioned research seeking lived experience of emergency and community food provision in Edinburgh. Between 1 and 25 November 2022, the independent research agency Diffley Partnership interviewed 20 people living across Edinburgh, asking them about their feedback, suggestions, and aspirations. Supported by service provider staff in four organisations, they reached research participants with a range of backgrounds and experiences including:
- 3.5.1 people experiencing or who have experienced poverty,



- 3.5.2 specific groups who may have barriers or be reluctant to seek help – older people, BAME groups, people with disabilities,
- 3.5.3 families at risk of child poverty, including families with three or more children, families where there is a lone parent and families where there is someone with a disability.
- 3.6 The strategy and action plan were revised in response to the feedback from both of these sources. Key points are summarised below.

### **Key findings from the research**

- 3.7 During the interviews, people were asked about their reasons for seeking support, their experiences of food provision, and ideas and suggestions for future provision. See appendix 3 for the full research report.
- 3.8 People were very positive about any community and emergency food provision they had accessed and raised a range of issues for the strategy to address. This included:
  - 3.8.1 Awareness of support available was generally low
  - 3.8.2 The need for careful messaging about the shape of future provision, with concern being raised about ending the need for reliance foodbanks, both the feasibility of this, and worry about what sources of support there might be in future, if foodbanks aren't continued.
  - 3.8.3 One person described themselves as managing money quite well, although worrying about bills, so hadn't needed to ask for advice or help. This might be an example of a lost opportunity for income maximisation through benefits checks/income maximisation, and the need for awareness raising and easy access to advice.
  - 3.8.4 The value of knowledge, confidence and experience in choosing what to buy and being able to use it to provide nutritious meals, and the disadvantages faced by people who have not acquired them
- 3.9 Many of these themes were also described in responses to the consultation, along with suggestions for how the strategy might be strengthened to address them.

### **Key findings from the public consultation**

- 3.10 There were 57 responses via the consultation hub – 21 from organisations and 36 from individuals. There was a separate submission from a discussion group of people supported by People First. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the consultation responses.
- 3.11 There was broad agreement (“somewhat or strongly”) with the vision (80%) and principles (84%) and the actions (82%).



- 3.12 A key theme of the feedback was the need to root the strategy more clearly in addressing the causes of poverty. As one respondent said “the goal is not to feed people – it is to end poverty related hunger and to recognise that emergency food is only a temporary solution”.
- 3.13 Another strongly made point was that a crucial element was missing from the strategy - tackling the stigma of both being in poverty and accessing supports for people facing poverty related hunger, considered by some to be the biggest barrier in addressing poverty. If someone trying to access a service has a negative first experience with a staff member or service, it can immediately put them off seeking support for a long time, and subsequently, prolong their time in poverty. There was a call for design and implementation of services and the administration of supports to involve people with lived experience to ensure that people feel able and willing to use them.
- 3.14 Consultation feedback also described challenges spanning advice services, benefits, crisis payments and employment; as well as current systems failing to enable early intervention through strict eligibility criteria; and the need for change across all of these.
- 3.15 There was a call for the recognition of the skill and knowledge among community and voluntary organisations, and support for the introduction of a Edinburgh Food Poverty Network with the proviso that it would need to be properly resourced.
- 3.16 There was a range of topics raised which need to be considered in the strategy and actions. These related to the need for:
- 3.16.1 stable, multi-year funding, along with recognition that community and voluntary sector organisations recognition are in the midst of a “permacrisis” of extreme demand through the pandemic and in the face of the cost of living crisis – some may have to cease operating;
  - 3.16.2 support and communication to be accessible to all, taking into account languages, culture, literacy levels, disabilities and mental health issues including anxiety;
  - 3.16.3 Support for people to gain knowledge, skills and confidence with food
  - 3.16.4 Staff and volunteers to be trained, both in how to interact with people in a way that is dignified and respectful, and in food and nutrition

### **Revisions to the draft strategy**

- 3.17 Feedback from the consultation and research has been very valuable in confirming that the initial draft strategy was generally sound in its vision, principles and broad action areas. The main changes have been to:
- 3.17.1 Emphasise that the primary aim is to address poverty and this this is one strand of a comprehensive series of actions across the drivers of poverty, as set out in the Ending Poverty in Edinburgh Action Plan. The



implementation plan for ending poverty-related hunger will align directly with other key workstreams across the Local Outcome Improvement Plan priority areas.

3.17.2 The vision statement has been amended to include making supports stigma-free central, and to embed prevention and early intervention.

3.17.3 The draft implementation plan has also been revised to take account of consultation feedback and the research findings in relation to avoiding stigma, accessibility, identifying and addressing gaps in provision; processes, principles and quality standards; and education in building knowledge and confidence.

### **Development of a Network**

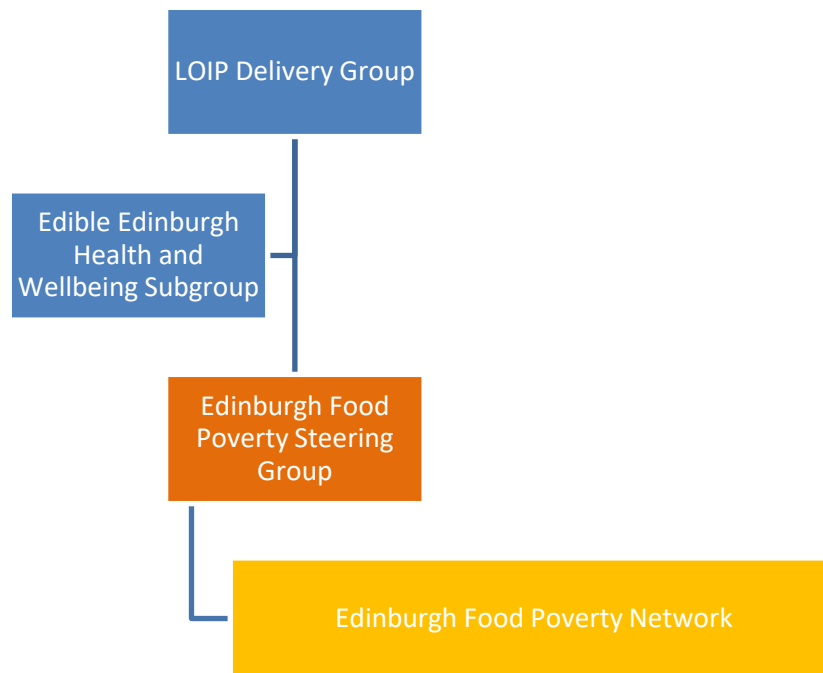
3.18 In recognition of the need and strong support for a Food Network, Edinburgh Community Food will take the lead role for the Food Poverty Network (EFPN), in close collaboration with EVOC. A steering group has been established to set up the Network and to deliver the actions outlined in the draft strategy.

3.19 The role, remit and governance arrangements have been drafted for the Network (see appendix 4).

3.20 The governance framework will support alignment with the range of actions underway to address poverty in the city, via the End Poverty in Edinburgh Action Plan through its direct links with Edible Edinburgh and its Sustainable Food City Action Plan, and the Edinburgh Partnership's LOIP Delivery Group, with its oversight of the three workstreams: enough money to live on; access to work, learning and training opportunities, and a good place to live.

3.21 It is proposed that the Food Poverty Network will report into the Edinburgh Partnership's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) Delivery Group, which will monitor progress and provide a mechanism for wider partnership support to assist in the delivery of the strategy.

3.22 The Food Poverty Network will provide regular updates to Edible Edinburgh's Health and Wellbeing subgroup for information.



### Next steps

- 3.23 Following approval of the draft Strategy, it will be published on the Edinburgh Partnership's website.
- 3.24 The Steering Group will continue its work to implement the Network and lead the delivery of the strategies actions.
- 3.25 Progress will be reported to the LOIP Delivery Group in six months time and a report brought to the Edinburgh Partnership in December 2023.

## 4. Contact

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# Ending Poverty Related Hunger in Edinburgh

An Edinburgh Partnership Strategy

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## 1. Introduction

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In September 2020 the Edinburgh Poverty Commission published their final report – [A Just Capital](#). Their findings challenged the city to end poverty in Edinburgh by 2030, and to make sure that Edinburgh can be a city in which:

- *“No one has to go without the basic essentials they need to eat, keep clean and stay warm and dry”.*

To meet this goal, the Commission made seven calls to action for the city to deliver. Among these, the report called on City of Edinburgh Council, EVOC and local organisations to improve the co-ordination of support services for citizens experiencing food insecurity or at risk of poverty related hunger. In doing so, commissioners reported that:

- *“Emergency food support should not become locked in as a fourth emergency service but serve as a gateway to other support that will ease isolation and build human connection and kindness where it has been lacking.”*

In response to this call to action, Edinburgh Partnership committed to the development of a new strategy setting out the partnership responses needed to end poverty related hunger in Edinburgh.

### **Developing the strategy**

A draft strategy was developed by a core working group led by officers from the City of Edinburgh Council and EVOC. The group led a process of research and engagement including workshops with stakeholders, service providers and the End Poverty Edinburgh citizen’s group, data gathering and analysis.

The draft strategy describes a vision, principles, and outline actions needed to meet the challenge set by the Edinburgh Poverty Commission. It was published on the Council’s Consultation Hub for 12 weeks and promoted across partnership networks to encourage people from all parts of Edinburgh to give their views and opinions.

Alongside this consultation, additional research was commissioned to further understand and gather insights from the experiences of users of food support services.

Feedback from the consultation and the research has been used to further develop this strategy and the actions needed to end poverty related hunger.

## 2. Scope and Strategic Context

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This strategy is part of the city’s response to the Edinburgh Poverty Commission’s call to end poverty in Edinburgh. It recognises that ending poverty related hunger needs action to tackle the root causes of poverty, across all seven areas identified by



the Commission. While emergency food provision has an important role, the key is to support people out of poverty. And access to nutritious, affordable food has an important role in reducing inequalities in health and wellbeing.

### Edinburgh Poverty Commission Calls to Action



The strategy is developed as part of the overall programme of actions underway to address poverty in Edinburgh. These include:

The **Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan**, and its three priority programmes to ensure people have enough money to live on, people have access to work, learning and training opportunities, and people have a good place to live. Associated key Edinburgh Partnership programmes aligned to this work include the development of Community Wealth Building approaches and [Thriving Local Places](#), a re-shaping of the relationship between Edinburgh Partnership partners and city residents.

The **City of Edinburgh Council Business Plan**, which incorporates ending poverty by 2030 as one of three priorities for Council and includes a range of actions across place-making, housing, homelessness, education, income security, transport, and family support within its [End Poverty in Edinburgh Delivery Plan](#).

[Growing Locally](#), Edinburgh's first food growing strategy and its goals to tackle food insecurity and promote community wellbeing through food programmes across the city. The Edible Edinburgh Partnership is a key stakeholder in this work and its vision for good food to be accessible for all, is an important input into this strategy's development.

[The Good Food Nation \(Scotland\) Act 2022](#), spans social and economic wellbeing, health, environment, and economic development and includes the aim that everyone in Scotland has ready access to the healthy, nutritious food they need. The principles and action areas in Scottish Government's ambition to [end the need for foodbanks](#) and [Best Start, Bright Futures](#), its 2022-2026 Tackling Child Poverty

Delivery Plan, and its [vision for a wellbeing economy](#) are also shared in the development of the current strategy.

Within the context of these wider actions to end poverty, this strategy aims to improve co-ordination, access, and impact of support for people experiencing food crisis, including:

- **Cash first supports:** this refers to cash grants for people experiencing food crisis through statutory and third sector programmes; and to income maximisation and money advice services which aim to help prevent future need.
- **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.
- **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.

Edinburgh has a responsive, creative third sector which includes community food organisations. This existing expert knowledge and experience provides strong foundations for the strategy.

### 3. Poverty related hunger in Edinburgh – the challenges

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The findings from engagement activities and consultation have identified a number of key challenges for people in Edinburgh, and the food crisis networks established to provide support. A summary of these findings shows challenges relating to:

- **High and rising need and demand:** the rising living costs and falling real incomes among poorer families across the UK is likely to lead to a significant increase in severe poverty and hardship throughout 2023-24.
- In September 2022 a UK-wide survey showed<sup>1</sup>:
  - A quarter (26%) of households with children reported food insecurity in the previous month, compared with a tenth (11%) in August 2021
  - Food insecurity has increased faster for households with children than those without children where the increase was from 7.8% in January 2022 to 16% in September
  - Households who are food insecure are more likely to be affected by rising energy cost: 60% were using appliances less for cooking compared with 28% of households with no food insecurity
- **Capacity and resources to respond to need:** Even before recent increases in need, service providers were experiencing difficulties in securing the capacity needed to meet demand. The challenge of sourcing sustainable funding is common across providers. 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.
- These challenges have been exacerbated in recent months by the increasing cost of supplies, difficulties accessing donations, and other supply chain challenges arising from the war in Ukraine, and ongoing impacts of Brexit. These pressures are impacting on community organisations' resources, staff retention and their ability to operate.
- **Stigma:** the stigma of being in poverty and of accessing supports is considered by some organisations to be the biggest barrier in addressing poverty, with people feeling too embarrassed or ashamed to seek help, or feeling judged or blamed for their circumstances, or experiencing 'gate-keeping' of support through excessive questions about whether they 'need' support.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/initiatives/food-insecurity-tracking#tabs/Round-11->

- **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. There is, however, a recognised need for stable core funding for these services
- **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.
- 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.
- Examples of food support networks in other local authorities have been identified as useful routes to help:
  - Understand and assess the effectiveness of support to address poverty related hunger
  - Develop and promote common principles across food support systems and improve alignment between different types of support (e.g., cash first, money advice and food bank services)
  - Share capacity and resources, including warehousing, skills, staff, and technical resources, and
  - Collaborate effectively to source external funding.
- **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 income maximisation advice, family and household support to prevent future need.
- There is also variability among volunteers in their approach to people seeking support and their level of knowledge and awareness of nutrition as well as the causes of poverty. If someone trying to access a service has a negative first experience with a staff member or service, it can immediately put them off

seeking support for a long time, and subsequently, prolong their time in poverty.

- **Communication and awareness:** the need for improved promotion of food support available to people in Edinburgh was expressed throughout the research and engagement, as well as for communications to be accessible to all groups of people and for messaging to be stigma-free
- 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.

## 4. Vision and principles

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### Vision

In response to these challenges, partners have identified a vision to guide the work of the city.

Central to this vision is the recognition that without poverty, there would be no poverty related hunger, and so it is crucial that this strategy is supported by a wider programme of actions to end poverty across the city, as set out in the End Poverty in Edinburgh Delivery Plan.

Edinburgh Partnership members should commit to ensuring that:

- **No one in Edinburgh needs to go hungry due a lack of money**, that
  - When do people fall into food crisis, Edinburgh networks aim to give a **cash first** approach to providing support
  - Where emergency food provision is needed, people can also access wider support in ways that are **safe, dignified, respectful**, and **prevent future need**, and that
  - **Community food initiatives** are available in all parts of Edinburgh which give people access to affordable, nutritious food, build people's **wellbeing**, improve **skills and confidence**, and play a role in prevention and early intervention by helping people access the wider supports and social interaction they need to get by
  - **All supports are non-stigmatising**

## What do we mean by 'Cash First'?

Food insecurity in Edinburgh is caused by too much poverty, not too little food. The evidence shows that the key drivers of food insecurity are income crises in a household caused by problems of access to and adequacy of social security benefits, low pay and insecure work, problem debt, and the rising cost of living.

To end poverty related hunger in Edinburgh, nothing is more important than improving access to an adequate and secure income.

Within this context, a '*cash first*' approach means that people who are experiencing food insecurity have the opportunity to access:

- Available crisis fund support to help them afford the food they need (via Scottish Welfare Fund, Hardship Fund, and third sector operated crisis funds), and
- Advice and support to help them maximise their income, manage debts, access available benefit entitlements, and improve employment prospects.

In a cash first approach, local partners commit to doing all they can to offer such supports at the first point of contact for people in immediate food crisis. Where direct help to access food is required – via foodbanks, food pantries, or community meals this is provided in a way that maximises dignity and reduces future need. This means ensuring that the offer of ongoing support to maximise income and manage money problems is made alongside and embedded into every food support service.

## Principles

Delivery of this vision should be guided by four core principles, underpinned by stigma-free responses, to which all partners and stakeholders are committed.

- **Led by lived experience:** The design and review of programmes to end poverty related hunger should be done with and alongside people who have lived experience of food crisis and have relied upon emergency food support in Edinburgh.



- **Dignity by design:** Shame and stigma are key barriers that stop people from seeking help when in a food crisis. People's experience of getting help and the way support is provided can make a significant difference to whether a person is able to avoid future crisis. Dignity by design in approaches to poverty related hunger means ensuring that people can access the support they need:
  - Based on human rights, recognising that the right to adequate and nutritious food is a fundamental human right, as well as the right to a choice of food
  - In trusted places where they feel safe and comfortable, are treated with kindness and where the needs of their pets are considered too
  - With relationships at the heart of the response and people have choice and control over the support they receive
  - In ways that make sure there are no wrong doors and no handoffs, and no complicated, intrusive forms
  - Quick when needed with access to wider support at a time that is right for them
  - Through holistic support that aims to help people build resilience and move on from poverty, as well as dealing with immediate crisis needs
  - Through responses that are flexible enough to meet the needs of local communities and respects local knowledge about what works, and
- **Shared standards of quality:** Programmes to end poverty related hunger in Edinburgh should aim to meet common, shared standards of quality in:
  - Providing access to affordable, good quality, nutritious food that meets cultural needs and food hygiene standards
  - Ensuring staff and volunteers are supported and trained to appropriate standards
  - Ensuring cash first, income maximisation and other advice supports are offered and available to people and are of a required agreed standard, and
  - Support is simple to access and swift to respond.
- **Equality of access:** People in all parts of Edinburgh, from all communities should be able to access support when they need it. Partners in Edinburgh should work towards a principle of ensuring:
  - Appropriate levels of food crisis support are accessible in all areas of the city, without artificial geographical boundaries



- Delivery of food crisis support recognises and addresses physical and digital barriers to access, as well as the need for availability in evenings and weekends
- The provision, promotion, and communication of the support available is co-ordinated across the city so that people know how and where to get support, taking account of language, cultural, literacy and disability related needs, including people with learning disabilities and people who are neuro-diverse

## 5. Proposed Actions

The engagement and analysis carried out to support the development of this strategy suggests five areas of action for Edinburgh Partnership members and stakeholders to prioritise.



Draft Actions for Implementation	
<b>Improve networking and collaboration</b>	<i>Build on existing partnership structures to establish an Edinburgh Food Poverty Network (EFPN) with a remit to:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring together organisations working to end poverty related hunger in Edinburgh</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve understanding of shared challenges and opportunities</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to engage with citizens with lived experience and collaborate in the design of projects and programmes</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share best practice, understand, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions and supports</li> </ul>
<b>Maximise capacity and secure sustainable resources</b>	<i>Through the proposed EFPN and other networks, partners should:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek ways to share capacity and resources more efficiently across partner and stakeholder organisations (including food, skills, technical resources, warehousing)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop improved referral pathways and communication routes across partners to maximise the impact of available capacity</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider options for commissioning processes to deliver greater security of funding for organisations</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate on development of proposals to secure external funding for projects aligned to this strategy</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with private and statutory sector to build capacity/resources; work with supermarkets to get discount cards and maximise opportunities through cafes in hospitals, colleges, and schools</li> </ul>

## Draft Actions for Implementation

<b>Set agreed standards and principles</b>	<i>Through the proposed EFPN and other networks, partners should:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with people who have experiences of poverty and using supports, identify what stigma-free supports mean in practice, to inform implementation</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the standards for food and support which will underpin provision across the city: these will span quality, nutrition, hygiene, and dignity and ensure alignment with guidance including Food Standards Scotland</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the actions needed to communicate and embed these standards, including staff and volunteer training and support</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop agreed standards and working principles for ensuring that 'cash first' and advice supports are available and promoted throughout food crisis supports.</li> </ul>
<b>Improve accessibility of support by addressing gaps in provision</b>	<i>Through the proposed EFPN and other networks, partners should:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve understanding of gaps in current provision, and collaborate on solutions</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop mechanisms for cash first</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek ways to ensure that citizens in all areas of the city have swift and easy access to the full range of supports needed (including cash first, crisis food support, and community-based food and wellbeing initiatives); and that referral processes and eligibility are appropriate</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve data collection and monitoring of impact to ensure that supports are accessible to all communities and groups in the city; use existing data more effectively to target support</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and adopt best practice standards for accessibility for food crisis support including language, cultural, literacy and disability related needs and for promoting wider support; ensuring alternatives to digital access</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how schools and wider education could be most effective in building knowledge and confidence in buying, preparing, and using food</li> </ul>
<b>Improve communication and awareness</b>	<i>Through the proposed EFPN and other networks, partners should:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a communication strategy to ensure that people (citizens and staff) know where and how to get help, embedding stigma-free messaging and addressing the needs of specific groups (language, disability and access/suitability of digital access)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the potential of using reducing food waste as a positive message and a way of reducing any stigma which may be linked to support.</li> </ul>

## Draft Actions for Implementation

- Explore options to develop an accessible information hub providing access to the full range of food support resources in all areas of the city
- Use grassroots and community groups to expand reach

# Ending Poverty Related Hunger in Edinburgh

Summary of online consultation  
responses

# Overview

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- Online survey inviting organisations and citizens to give their views on the draft strategy
- Survey was open for response for 12 weeks
- Promoted through social media and partnership networks
- Online survey was carried out alongside a discussion group with people who have experience of using food support services
- 57 responses in total
- 37% on behalf of an organisation; majority from third and voluntary sector
- Responses from individuals:
  - 61% female; 28% male
  - 64% aged 45 - 64
  - 32% had caring responsibilities; 21% for under 16 year olds
  - 4 respondents used free or low cost food provision

# Executive summary

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- 88% of respondents agreed the challenges identified were the right ones.
- Over 80% also agreed with the draft vision, principles and areas for action
- Insufficient budget/investment and resource are seen as biggest risks to tackling food poverty effectively
- Service provision needs to be holistic, flexible and fully accessible
- Need to acknowledge the cost of living crisis and inevitable increase in need
- Tackling stigma is crucial but missing
- Some felt that action was too reactive rather than addressing the overall cause
- Mixed opinions on cash first initiative – some respondents questioned whether cash would be used appropriately
- Need to develop and create more community networks – wealth of experience and knowledge to learn from

# Poverty related hunger in Edinburgh - the challenge



# The challenge

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Several key challenges were identified in the draft strategy:

- High and rising need and demand
- Capacity and resources to respond to need
- The need for a more strategic approach to commissioning and funding
- A need for improved partnership working and collaboration across the sector
- Gaps in access, variability of standards
- Communication and awareness

88% of respondents agreed that the challenges were the right ones to address.

## Other challenges to address

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- Approach should provide stable and multi-year funding to existing services, their partnerships and enable improved standards.
- Scope for innovation and agile response is needed. New initiatives are positive but, if there is insufficient resource, they are immediately under threat.
- Offering emergency food provision, vouchers and grants are emergency responses. It does not tackle the overall cause of food poverty.
- Service provision needs to be holistic, flexible and fully accessible.
- Not all citizens know how to access charities or face difficulty doing so.
- Stigma – for some, the biggest barrier to tackling poverty; treating people with dignity and respect.
- Recognising the link between food and social inclusion, wellbeing, family bonding etc.

## Other poverty related challenges

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- Cost of living crisis – rising energy bills, high rents / lack of affordable housing, low incomes create difficult choices to prioritise issues over food
- Acknowledging the impact of covid recovery and cost of living crisis on many SMEs and charities' resources, staff retainment and ability to operate
- Strategic leads across the City need to recognise the link between childhood adversity and poverty
- Lack of affordable childcare, breakfast and after-school club places
- Inflexible administrative procedures and criteria.
- Addressing accessibility – low digital and literacy skills, English as a second language / language barriers
- Recognise working poor – can often be impacted by economic change but ineligible for support, creating a poverty trap

Seven experienced members of staff have left to work for local and national government, due to better salary and benefit packages... The costs of heating and lighting our premises have been quoted by energy providers as increasing by 300%

The main reason for [not asking for help] is not that I don't need help, but that I can't face being "judged" or "pitied" for the situation that I find myself in. Pride may be a silly reason for not asking for help - but when it's all you have left, it's important!

Feedback from Gypsy/Traveller people informed us that many of them struggle to access food aid services for different reasons... not living near local food aid services and not having a private vehicle to get there or struggling to get there due to caring duties and/or mental/physical disabilities. Even if individuals own a private vehicle, they may struggle to drive to the location due to the increase in fuel costs.

More clients are being referred for support as they cannot afford rent, energy charges and food.

Some women would actively attempt to hide the fact that their households were living on a low income by maintaining more expensive clothing for when children were in public, not taking free period products within school settings, shopping increasingly in charity shops, and avoiding accessing settings such as foodbanks to avoid being seen by others.

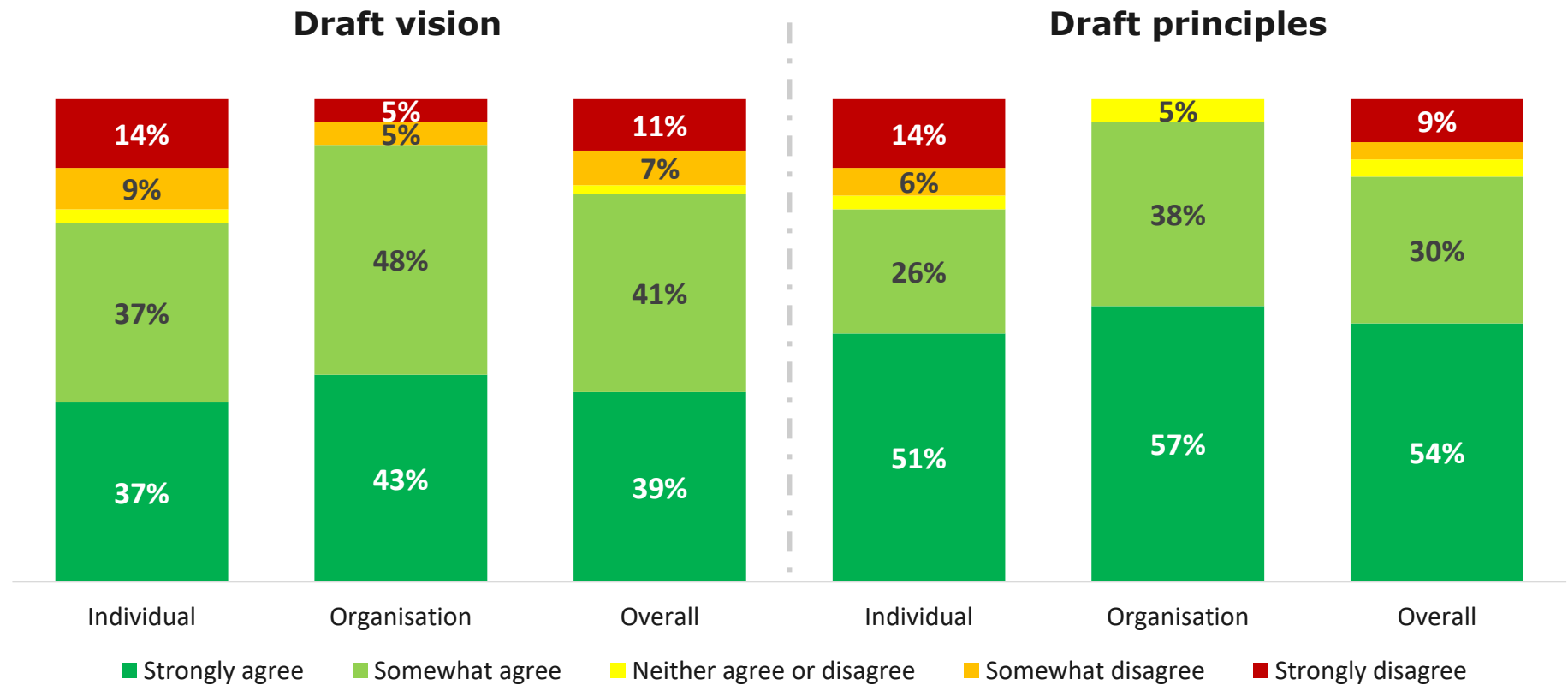
Teachers are paying for/ have snacks to give to the pupils who are hungry

I went through CAP (Christians Against Poverty) where we were given practical help and support to ensure we didn't go into food poverty, were able to pay off our debts and I attended the Money Course that I still use today to ensure I can stay debt free!!

Many of the young people we work with have said they feel worried and anxious about the financial crisis and they need more support to get food. We often put in referrals to food banks, get vouchers for food and discuss the concerns the young people have about this.

# Draft vision and principles

# Agreement with draft vision and principles



## Cash First

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- Some respondents questioned whether 'cash first' was suitable (e.g. for those with addiction, mental health or learning disabilities). Vouchers have a greater chance of being used for the benefit of family.
- Could potentially leave system open to misuse or result in people not accessing wider support they require.
- Charities will struggle to provide the resources for distribution of cash. May create risks in terms of security.
- Others were glad to see 'cash first' being prioritised, as it offers the flexibility to not only pay for food but other households essentials.
- Seen as less stigmatising and gives households autonomy to manage their budgets.

# Principles

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- Inclusive: equality of access and equitable support
- Services are agile and quick at delivering support / resources needed; no complicated forms or referral procedures
- Manage expectations on what data/ personal information people are willing to share and on the level of support that can realistically be given
- Recognise people have different needs to be met (e.g. dietary, cultural, medical)
- Recognise that people may need or want to engage in their own time. "We must be compassionate and empathetic to people's circumstances... too quick to dismiss people for missing appt or not having correct docs."



**FAIR - provides good advice on debt management and income maximisation / access to support**

**Fresh Start's community hub was born from ideas from the local community. This then makes a difference as people feel listened too and see that their voices have been heard. We need to make sure that this happens in a timely manner - making people wait too long is not good.**

**NESSie our new consortium approach to a no wrong door was also born out of asking people what they needed - the challenges that come with this is we do not know what we will achieve when you are starting with where people are at - this makes funding these sorts of things difficult.**

**The Advice Shop provide an excellent all round service however this has been depleted over a number of years**

**Accessing crisis grants through the Scottish Welfare Fund and Hardship Fund requires individuals to have the capacity to navigate the system and application process. The majority of our service users would need support in contacting the fund provider and filling any forms.**

**For distribution of fresh produce, time is critical and food items in pantries that have been donated by community gardens sometimes need to be used on the day of delivery... Quality is critical to ensure that people accessing services don't feel like second tier citizens.**

**All of our work is led and designed by those with lived experience who access our services.**

**Our foodbank vouchers don't expire... At our foodbank centres, everything is optional... the support services are available to everyone who wants to access them, there is never any pressure to engage... Our Money Advice Service allows people to access the service in a way that suits them (at a foodbank centre, over the phone, via email, in person in a public space).**

**The interactions with the first point of contact is crucially important and can make or break an individual's pursuit of support and help. If someone trying to access a service has a negative first experience with a staff member or service, it can immediately put them off seeking support for a long time, and subsequently, prolong their time in poverty.**

# Proposed actions

## Areas for action

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- 82% of respondents agreed with the five proposed areas for action
- Facilitation between third sector organisations to agree on the overlaps, share good practice, avoid working with the same households
- Provide public-facing staff training on communication, empathy, compassion, recognising need / poverty awareness
- Provide education on food prep and usage, allergen awareness, malnutrition to develop knowledge, skills & confidence
- All children have access to free school meals
- Work with all sectors – libraries often forgotten about; offer discount cards for local supermarkets

# Challenges to overcome

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- Access to appropriate funding and resources
- Simplifying processes to create responsive, agile services
- Bureaucracy, red tape, reluctance to change
- Effective collaboration and partnership working
- Effective action and communication – people actually knowing about and accessing services they need
- Sustainable change and action
- Data sharing
- Transparency and accountability
- The scale of the problem

# Opportunities

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- Support community-led projects and use their experience and knowledge to co-design/consult and utilise participatory action research.
- Building on existing and creating more community networks – including community food organisations, schools, libraries, churches and community centres.
- Elected members should reach out to all their constituents and share information on what help is available both locally and centrally.
- The Council, as a data rich organisation, could direct organisations to areas/citizens in greatest need.
- Learn from other countries and cities

## Other ideas

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- Hospital kitchens are available to the general public and at good prices, so are community centres. Could this be extended to school and college kitchens?
- Consider "one point of contact" which could then signpost to appropriate orgs.
- Expand the services of the Advice Shop to ensure that all citizens requiring one can have a welfare benefits check timeously.
- Develop initiatives with main supermarkets – offer vouchers, discount cards etc
- Offer help with delivery, longer opening hours of foodbanks
- Create a centralised database of soup kitchens and meal distribution centres

# Ending Poverty Related Hunger in Edinburgh

## Proposal for an Edinburgh Food Poverty Network

### Introduction

1. In response to a call to action 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.
2. Ending poverty related hunger is one of a series of actions identified by the Commission, all of which are necessary to address poverty in the city.
3. Among the actions directly relevant to ending poverty related hunger are the review of advice services, which is also a key action under priority 1 of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) - enough money to live on; and making the process of seeking help more dignified.
4. A draft strategy to end poverty related hunger has been developed by a core working group led by officers from the City of Edinburgh Council and EVOC, supported by key community stakeholders, feedback from public consultation and the findings of commissioned research on the experiences of people who use food support services.
5. The final draft of the strategy will be considered by the Edinburgh Partnership at its March 2023 meeting.
6. Its vision is that **no one in Edinburgh needs to go hungry due a lack of money**, and that
  - When do people fall into food crisis, Edinburgh networks aim to give a **cash first** approach to providing support
  - Where emergency food provision is needed, people can access wider support in ways that are **safe, dignified, respectful**, and **prevent future need**, and that
  - **Community food initiatives** are available in all parts of Edinburgh which give people access to affordable, nutritious food, build people's **wellbeing**, improve **skills and confidence**, and play a role in prevention and early intervention by helping people access the wider supports they need to get by
7. The strategy, forming part of the city's overall approach to ending poverty, has five key action areas:



8. Key to the delivery of the strategy is the creation of an Edinburgh Food Poverty Network (EFPN).

### Remit

9. The purpose of the EFPN is to bring together organisations working to end poverty related hunger in Edinburgh to:
  - a. Improve understanding of shared challenges and opportunities
  - b. Continue to engage with citizens with lived experience and collaborate in the design of projects and programmes, such as themed seasonal food networking events
  - c. Share better practice, understand and monitor the effectiveness of interventions and supports
  - d. Provide a forum through which city-wide responses to short term emergency crises (such as Covid/Ukraine crisis) can be co-ordinated
10. The EFPN, supported by a steering group, will undertake the actions set out in the Ending Poverty Related Hunger Strategy (see appendix) to:
  - a. Maximise capacity and secure sustainable resources
  - b. Set agreed standards and principles to support quality assurance across the network
  - c. Improve accessibility of support by addressing gaps in provision
  - d. Improve communication and awareness

### Structure and roles

11. The proposal is that Edinburgh Community Food will take the lead role for the Food Poverty Network (EFPN), in close collaboration with EVOC, and provide leadership for the network.
12. A steering group will be formed to support the EFPN:
  - a. Chaired by ECF, with EVOC as vice-chair
  - b. Representatives from: the City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Lothian Public Health, Capital City Partnership, the Edinburgh Partnership, Edinburgh Community Health Forum and key representatives from the community and voluntary



sector including Edinburgh Food Project and Fresh Start, with others to be identified.

13. The role of the steering group will be to:

- a. Develop a programme of work to deliver the actions specified in the strategy (see appendix) and monitor implementation
- b. Ensuring the alignment of key objectives, strategies and resources
- c. Report progress, challenges and requests for support to the Edinburgh Partnership's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) Delivery Group. This will ensure consistency with the priorities and actions set out in the LOIP.

14. Key initial tasks for the steering group will be to:

- a. Agree the role and remit of members; the process for nominating and appointing members; and the frequency of meetings
- b. Develop a programme plan to deliver the actions in the strategy
- c. Determine resource requirements to support the delivery of the strategy actions and then the ongoing running of the network
- d. Identify and secure funding for the establishment and ongoing running of the network.

## Governance

15. The governance framework will support alignment with the range of actions underway to address poverty in the city, via the End Poverty in Edinburgh Action Plan.

16. The Food Poverty Network will report into the Edinburgh Partnership's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) Delivery Group, which will monitor progress and provide a mechanism for wider partnership support to assist in the delivery of the strategy.

17. The Food Poverty Network will provide regular updates to Edible Edinburgh's Health and Wellbeing subgroup for information.

## Appendix

Draft Actions for Implementation	
<b>Improve networking and collaboration</b>	<i>Build on existing partnership structures to establish an Edinburgh Food Poverty Network (EFPN) with a remit to:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring together organisations working to end poverty related hunger in Edinburgh</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve understanding of shared challenges and opportunities</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to engage with citizens with lived experience and collaborate in the design of projects and programmes</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share best practice, understand, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions and supports</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a forum through which city-wide responses to short term emergency crises (such as Covid/Ukraine crisis) can be co-ordinated</li> </ul>
<b>Maximise capacity and secure sustainable resources</b>	<i>Through the proposed EFPN and other networks, partners should:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek ways to share capacity and resources more efficiently across partner and stakeholder organisations (including food, skills, technical resources, warehousing)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop improved referral pathways and communication routes across partners to maximise the impact of available capacity</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider options for commissioning processes to deliver greater security of funding for organisations</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate on development of proposals to secure external funding for projects aligned to this strategy</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with private and statutory sector to build capacity/resources; work with supermarkets to get discount cards and maximise opportunities through cafes in hospitals, colleges and schools</li> </ul>
<b>Set agreed standards and principles</b>	<i>Through the proposed EFPN and other networks, partners should:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with people who have experiences of poverty and using supports, identify what stigma-free supports mean in practice, to inform implementation</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the standards for food and support which will underpin provision across the city: these will span quality, nutrition, hygiene and dignity and ensure alignment with guidance including Food Standards Scotland</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the actions needed to communicate and embed these standards, including staff and volunteer training and support</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop agreed standards and working principles for ensuring that 'cash first' and advice supports are available and promoted throughout food crisis supports.</li> </ul>

## Draft Actions for Implementation

<b>Improve accessibility of support by addressing gaps in provision</b>	<i>Through the proposed EFPN and other networks, partners should:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve understanding of gaps in current provision, and collaborate on solutions</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop mechanisms for cash first</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek ways to ensure that citizens in all areas of the city have swift and easy access to the full range of supports needed (including cash first, crisis food support, and community-based food and wellbeing initiatives); and that referral processes and eligibility are appropriate</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve data collection and monitoring of impact to ensure that supports are accessible to all communities and groups in the city; use existing data more effectively to target support</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and adopt best practice standards for accessibility for food crisis support including language, cultural, literacy and disability related needs and for promoting wider support; ensuring alternatives to digital access</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider how schools and wider education could be most effective in building knowledge and confidence in buying, preparing and using food</li> </ul>
<b>Improve communication and awareness</b>	<i>Through the proposed EFPN and other networks, partners should:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a communication strategy to ensure that people (citizens and staff) know where and how to get help, embedding stigma-free messaging and addressing the needs of specific groups (language, disability and access/suitability of digital access)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the potential of using reducing food waste as a positive message and a way of reducing any stigma which may be linked to support.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore options to develop an accessible information hub providing access to the full range of food support resources in all areas of the city</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use grassroots and community groups to expand reach</li> </ul>