

# BELFAST FOOD NETWORK



**Enough is Enough – Belfast's  
response to food poverty**

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# **What do we mean by food poverty?**

**“inability to have an adequate and nutritious diet ... due to issues of the access to and affordability of food ... with related impacts on health, culture and social participation.”**

**Friel and Conlon 2004**

# **What are aims of Food Poverty Working Group?**

- **Increased access to affordable healthy food in Belfast**
- **Fewer people experiencing food poverty in Belfast**
- **Place food poverty on the policy agenda**

# **Sustainable Food Cities Award Framework**

- **Multiagency partnership established to assess and tackle full range of issues**
- **Living wage being promoted**
- **Relevant agencies providing rapid referral to hardship funds and emergency food aid**
- **Relevant staff trained and able to advise on accessing healthy foods and skills training**
- **Healthy weight services being provided – healthy diet and physical activity promoted**
- **Efforts being made to maximise uptake of social food provision**
- **More healthy options available in shops, takeaways, vending machines, catering settings**
- **City working to prevent food deserts and food swamps**

# FPWG approach

- **Problem assessment**
- **Data collection**
- **Landscape mapping**
- **Coalition and network building**
- **Relationship building with decision makers**
- **Develop city-wide action plan**

# Who is on the FPWG?

- **Advice sector – Advice NI, East Belfast Independent Advice Centre, Ligoniel**
- **Belfast City Council**
- **Belfast Health Development Unit**
- **Belfast and South Eastern Health & Social Care Trusts**
- **Belfast Healthy Cities**
- **Consumer Council NI**
- **FareShare**
- **Food banks – Storehouse,**
- **Food Standards Agency**
- **Grow**
- **Public Health Agency**
- **Ulster University**

# **Some key facts about food security in NI**

- **Greater reliance on state benefits than rest of UK**
- **Not yet seen full implementation of Welfare Reform**
- **Higher proportion of income spent on food**
- **Greater dependence on convenience stores as opposed to supermarkets**
- **National Diet and Nutrition Survey shows NI has some of poorest nutritional habits in UK**

# What do organisations in Belfast provide people with?

- 36 distribute food parcels, either through a food bank or independently
- 26 run courses on nutrition/cooking skills/healthy eating on a budget
- 19 regularly provide free cooked meals
- 6 provide low-cost cooked meals (e.g. through a community café)
- 2 provide un-cooked food at low cost



# Food banks in Belfast

**3 Trussell Trust**  
**6 Independent**



# 11,697

people in NI received three days' emergency food in 2013 – 2014 from Trussell Trust food banks

▲ **489 %**

over the previous year

# 4,338

people fed by 5 independent food banks in 2014

# The most common reasons for visiting a food bank in Belfast are:



Low - income



Benefit delays,  
cuts and  
sanctions.

**Other reasons**  
include  
debt,  
unemployment,  
homelessness,  
mental and  
physical health  
problems, and  
having no  
access to public  
funds.

## Community Gardens

**Community gardens** enable access to fresh food at low or no cost, as well as enabling participants to exercise, develop new skills and make new friends.

# 14

organisations in Belfast run or participate in community gardening projects.

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**Belfast City Council** also runs 12 community gardens and 6 allotments.



# Enough is Enough event

## 23 March 2015



# **Enough is Enough Food Poverty Recommendations**

- **Rights-based approach**
- **Address the structural causes**
- **Advocacy**
- **Widening the debate**
- **Promoting availability of fresh, healthy food**
- **Data collection and measurement**



## Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)



## **Welfare reform mitigation**

**... Stormont should pilot strategies to tackle food poverty, potentially through a network of community food shops, social stores and supermarkets.**

# Enough is Enough

## Collaborative Response

- **Promoting access to healthy fresh food through community shops/social supermarkets and surplus food redistribution**
- **Building community food knowledge, skills and cooking**
- **Tackling child hunger**
- **Promoting the availability of fresh healthy food through community gardens**
- **Increasing access to advice and support services**
- **Determining best practice for monitoring food poverty**
- **Strengthening advocacy and influencing food poverty related policies**