Feeding Coventry & Coventry Food Network's

Summer Holiday Breakfast Club 2020

Monday 27 July – Friday 28 August
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The Coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated the power of community.

In Coventry, community centres have taken an active lead in the distribution of essential food supplies to people who have been shielding and who are vulnerable.

Through working in partnership with voluntary, community and other organisations the Coventry Food Network emerged. Within this network food hubs were set up throughout the city to ensure that food was provided to those who were in greatest need.

The Food Hubs offer a range of community-based support. Including: Summer activities for children, Grub hubs and Foodbank.

Central government extended the free school meal voucher scheme to all children entitled to them throughout the summer holidays, despite this, the severe economic impact Covid-19 has had throughout the country means that many more families are facing hardship.

The Coventry Food Network worked together with partners to provide breakfast and activity packs to any family that may be finding the pro-longed closure of schools and summer holidays particularly difficult.

The Summer Holiday Breakfast and Activity packs were co-ordinated by members of the Coventry Food Network using funding received from Feeding Britain via Feeding Coventry. They were available from 27th July 2020 – 28th August 2020 to any children that lived in Coventry.

On behalf of the Trustees of Feeding Coventry we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has worked on making this project successful.

We are under no illusion about the level of need in our city and that Covid-19 has made life more difficult and caused more families to need support.

Our funding partners, Feeding Britain, Heart of England Community Foundation and the Think Active fund have enabled us to provide breakfast packs on a much larger scale than originally planned.

The Trussell Trust and Coventry Food Bank Team supported us with space in the warehouse, and Coventry City Council were able to provide redeployed staff to support the project.

Our 17 distribution hubs, volunteer pickers, packers and delivery teams worked really hard to make sure that we provided enough packs each week to the venues. Without their support we would not have been able to run the project.

We hope that everyone involved either through volunteering or receiving a breakfast pack has had a positive experience and the feedback is helping us to develop our processes in the future.

Faye Abbott
(Chair of Feeding Coventry)
A total of **2,075** individual children were signed up to take part in the Summer Holiday Breakfast Club 2020.

**6,500** breakfast and activity packs were distributed from 17 locations across the city.

The offer was made available to all children who lived in Coventry.

Information was distributed via school newsletters, social media and the community hubs taking part.

The project was not means tested, but efforts were made to ensure vulnerable families and those on free school meals were made aware of and signed up to the offer.

Due to the limited number of packs, they were distributed on a first-come-first-served basis.

Packs were made by several volunteers at the Trussell Trust Regional Distribution Centre and delivered to hubs by volunteer drivers.

Hubs registered and distributed packs to their communities.
Summer at a glance...

- **2,072** Children signed up
- **17** Hubs
- **6,500** Food parcels distributed
- **£44,251** Spent on food
- **£27,104** Spent on activities
- **5,272** Food parcels distributed
- **41%** Stated financial hardship as the reason why they joined the project
- **52%** Of children signed up collected pads for 3 or more weeks
- **Over 100** Volunteers
- **84%** Of parents that took part gave the project 5/5
- **52%** Of children signed up collected pads for 3 or more weeks
Locations

• There were a total of 17 hubs participating in the distribution of breakfast and activity packs across the city.
• Many of the participating hubs are part of a newly developed network and were already distributing foodbank parcels, hosting grub hubs/social supermarkets and are well established within their communities.
• Other hubs and distribution points included, churches, schools and projects already running in the community.
• Hubs that participated but were not listed on the map included: Empowr-U, Christ Church, CV Life and Stoke Heath School.
Inside the breakfast packs

It was important to ensure that each box was nutritionally balanced whilst also containing exciting breakfasts and activities. The contents of the packs were approved by a dietician and contained 5 days’ breakfasts and 5 activities.

An example of what a pack included was:

- UHT Milk
- Fruit Shoots
- 5 pieces of fruit
- Breakfast bars
- Loaf of bread or brioche buns
- Pot of Jam/Chocolate Spread
- Multigrain Hoops

It was not possible to separate activities by age. Activities encouraged children to be active outside with balls and skipping ropes and contained creative activities like colouring books and crayons.

Groundwork West Midlands also provided recipe cards for families to enjoy and try new recipes, building confidence and skills in the kitchen.

"Today’s boxes have helped more than you might think. Both of my children are so happy to have them. My daughter hasn’t stopped playing with the skipping rope."
Groundwork West Midlands

Groundwork is working across the West Midlands to create stronger, healthier communities and create greater prospects for local people.

Cook Together Eat Together Coventry put together step by step guides on how to create their recipes. Recipes were easy to follow, gave helpful hints and tips about nutrition and encouraged the whole family to have fun in the kitchen.

Information & Advice

Eat Well, Spend Less

If your budget is tight, it may seem difficult to buy foods that make a healthy diet. Here are some top tips to help reduce your food bills and eat healthily at the same time.

Plan ahead:
Make a shopping list so that you avoid buying on impulse and don’t shop when you are hungry. Waste nothing! The average UK family waste almost £60 a month on food. Plan your meals and only buy what you need. Use your leftovers, cook a little more and use it for lunch the next day or freeze for another time.

- Frozen fruit & vegetables: Often cheaper, last longer & ready to use
- Seasonal fruit & veg: fruit and veg that is in season is cheaper
- Swap to supermarket own brands: Often cheaper & faster just as good
- Reduced items: many supermarkets reduce items towards the end of the day
- Wonky fruit & veg: sold at lower prices but still as tasty and nutritious
- Cheaper meat cuts: chicken thighs and wings are cheaper to buy than breasts
- Be careful with offers: They sound great but do you really need them?
- Include more vegetables and pulses: this is a cheap way to make a meal go further

Make the most of your freezer:
- Waste nothing - if you have left overs - freeze them for another day
- Cook extra and freeze portions so that you have healthy ready meals available
- Freeze leftover bread - bread is one of the foods we waste most. Either slice bread or freeze in portions and keep in airtight containers or freezer bags

For more information visit:
www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/20-tips-to-eat-well-for-less
www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes
www.bfa.uk.com/resource/food-facts-eat-well-spend-less.html
When parents/carers were registering a child, they were asked: “Why is it beneficial to you and your family to take part in this project?”

Of the 2,072 children registered 1,650 gave reasons as to why they joined the project.

Financial hardship (653) and the need for extra support feeding children and families (602), together, accounted for 76% (1,255) of the reasons for joining the scheme.

Other key reasons were:

- The opportunity for a variety of food and activities (118)
- Healthier breakfast options (87)
- Existing members of Carriers of Hope (79)
- The project being free (70)
- Joining on the recommendation of friends and family (25)
- Feeling part of the community (16)

Of the 653 people who stated that the reason for joining the scheme was because of financial hardship, 17% (111) suggested that this hardship was a direct result of Covid-19. Many respondents attributing recent furlough, redundancy and self-isolation to having a direct impact on their income.

Other reasons given for financial hardship included:

- Difficulties receiving benefits and late payments
- The length of time children had been off school
- Being on a low income/ single parent.

“I’m the primary carer for my children. My husband lost his job during lockdown, so we went from a low earning family to no earnings at all and we’re just starting to get back on our feet. Thank you.”
I’m a single parent and was furloughed for nearly 4 months... this is appreciated so much. Thank you.

It’s nice to be part of this community as togetherness at this time is key.

Money is going to be tight over the holidays, the children seem to be eating more and more. This will help massively with them.

The food items have helped as I have saved a little money each week ... Having the extra things such as the board games, cards, yo-yo’s have been really good as they have been a big help with keeping the children entertained.

We are missing breakfasts at school, so this is a huge help.

The children have really looked forward to seeing what they were going get in their box each week.
1,065 of the children registered (56%) described their ethnicity as English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Ireland/British. The next highest group was Black or Black British African with 11% (202).

62% of the children registered (1,907 who responded to this question) were entitled to free school meals.

932 children signed up were male
916 children signed up were female
59 children signed up preferred not to say

Although originally targeted at primary school children and their families, packs were available to children of all school ages and were not means tested. Ages of the children and young people ranged up to 21 years old.

Ages of children registered (1,843 responses collected)

Too young to attend school (0-3) 282
Primary school age (4-11) 1140
Secondary (11-16) 380
Post education / College (16+) 41

What We Learnt
Registrations by Ward

As part of the registration process, participants were asked for their postcodes. 1,864 individuals provided postcodes which could then be used to determine which areas of the city children that were signed up to the project lived in.

The areas with the largest number of children signed up were from:

- 1. Westwood
- 2. Binley and Willenhall
- 3. Woodlands
What we learnt from parents/carers

At the end of the project a short survey was sent to all the individuals that had taken part in the project. The survey gave an opportunity for parents/carers, children, the hubs that were distributing the packs and the volunteers that were delivering them the opportunity to feedback their experiences. There was a total of 114 responses, 96 of which were from parents/carers.

Feedback on the project is invaluable as it helps to improve future holiday club provision and ensure that it meets the future needs of communities, organisations, children and families across Coventry.

How successful do you think the project has been?

84%
81 of the 96 parents/carers that responded rated the project 5/5
12 rated it 4/5
3 rated it 3/5

How satisfied were you with the food in the breakfast packs?

86%
83 of the 96 who responded rated the food in the packs 5/5
11 rated the food 4/5
2 rated it 3/5

“I think it’s been fantastic for the kids to provide extra food and activities. It has helped me a great deal.”

“I am a single parent. The breakfast club has helped me immensely with snacks and food. It would have been very difficult to keep to healthy meals the entire holiday... it has been a blessing to receive this food.”

How satisfied were you with the activities in the breakfast packs?

79%
76 of the 96 respondents rated the activities 5/5
16 rated it 4/5
4 rated it 3/5

“The food and activity packs were beyond my expectations and they were quick and easy to collect.”

How satisfied were you with the food in the breakfast packs?

76 of the 96 respondents rated the activities 5/5
16 rated it 4/5
4 rated it 3/5
What we learnt from parents/carers

Would you like to take part in a similar project in the future?

99%

95 of the 96 individuals that responded stated that they would like to take part in a similar project again.

“I was always first in line every week... the queue soon grew. Mothers, carers, grandparents queued with their offspring to collect their boxes. It was always busy with people waiting.”

Did it help that you could collect your pack locally?

96%

92 individuals found it helpful being able to collect their pack locally, 2 were unsure and 2 suggested that it made no difference.

How did you find out about the project?

Most participants found out about the project from either family and friends, social media, their school or the Family Hub. These answers made up 86% of the total responses. Other ways of finding out about the project included: community centres, churches, social workers, foodbank and seeing the team distributing the boxes.

How did you find out about the project?

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<th>Method</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Foodbank</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Church</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Family or Friends</td>
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These boxes gave me peace of mind that we would always have breakfast that was healthy, sadly the cheap alternative is junk food if you’re limited for cash sometimes you have to do what you can to make ends meet.

It has made me want to donate to foodbanks and the supermarket when I can to give something back. Thank you.

The activities were really good. It was good to see the children enjoying being creative and using their imaginations... I was pleased to be able to be involved with this ... and felt a good sense of community spirit and support.

The kids have enjoyed collecting their box every week and were always excited as they would put some lovely games and activities in there for them. Also it helped so much ... with the kids being at home it has been costing more to feed them... Staff have all been very friendly and helpful.

As a single parent on a part time nurse wage, this was an invaluable help to myself, with my child being off school and seemingly eating more than usual.

My son was always reminding me a day before that we had to go and get our breakfast packs the next day . They really love the packs since they could get what they wanted ...they all love fruit....
Recommendations from parents/carers

“I do feel there will still be families that are struggling but did not want to collect due to pride or other reasons so delivery may be a good offering for those.”

“More advertisements locally, maybe in shops as not everyone has access to internet or social media.”

“Maybe get people in the community a little more involved so they could also be part of helping.”

“Maybe different fruits for kids to try ...some kids never get the chance to try other fruit.”

“The boxes were too big and difficult to carry if no transport and little children to care for.”
What we learnt from children

Respondents

A total of 7 children responded to the survey with ages ranging from 4 – 16 years.

All respondents enjoyed the food and drink in the breakfast packs.

6 out of 7 respondents enjoyed the activities.

The one respondent that did not enjoy the activities felt that they were aimed at younger children and did not enjoy them as much.
What we learnt from organisations/volunteers

This project would not have been successful without the exceptional volunteers and organisations involved. From volunteers packing food parcels, delivery drivers and the hubs distributing the packs. Hubs were able to connect with each other to share extra boxes, give advice and work together to provide the best for their communities.

The survey was sent to 17 of the participating hubs, the volunteer co-ordinator at the foodbank and the organisations that helped deliver the boxes each week. There were a total of 11 responses.

How successful do you think the project has been?

- 64% of the 11 organisations that responded rated the project 5/5
- 27% of the 11 rated the project 4/5
- 9% of the 11 rated the project 3/5

1 of the 11 rated the project 3/5

Would you consider taking part in a similar project in the future?

- 100% of the 11 organisations would take part in a similar project in the future.

"The products in the box were excellent. It brought lots of families into the centre who then registered for the food hub."

"It would be great if this project happened again."
What in your opinion worked well?

Organisations were given the opportunity to feedback what they felt worked well throughout the project.

The responses can be categorised into 3 key themes:

1. The variety of contents in the packs.
2. Being able to meet the need and engage with the community.
3. Timely delivery of boxes.

“Great offer to local families, co-ordinated approach and a good variety of things in the boxes.”

“The contents were fab with something for everyone. Children were excited each week to see what new toy or game they had in the box.”

“Meeting the need of the families in our community in a way in which we could not due to Covid-19 … great alternative and perfect for current social distancing restrictions.”

“Deliveries were excellent, always on time and team very helpful. Parcels were of a really high standard and parents really appreciated them.”

“It has been reassuring knowing the children on our case load have healthy food and activities throughout the summer holiday. It has also been helpful engaging with our families.”
What in your opinion worked less well?

1. The size of the boxes
   - Were problematic for some hubs to move and parents/carers to carry home.
   - “The boxes are bulky with lots of cardboard and waste.”
   - “Bags would be better than boxes. The boxes were inconvenient for those who could not drive.”

2. Variety of activities in each box
   - Some families with more than one child had one or more of the same activities.
   - “An activity box per family may have been better than putting activities in each box – families ended up with sometimes 5 identical board games if there were many children.”

3. Administrative burdens
   - Some hubs reported that registering families and keeping a register was timely.
   - “The spreadsheets were not intuitive or user friendly which doubled the workload.”

4. Publicity
   - Advertising the project sooner could encourage more people to take up the offer.
   - “Publicity could have been better, seems the schools had not informed parents, resulting with week 1 having little uptake.”

5. Keeping fruit fresh/dietary requirements
   - Some hubs reported that it was difficult having fruit in the boxes and also expressed a desire for more inclusive dietary requirements.
   - “The fresh fruit in the boxes made it difficult to keep and stop them from going off due to the hot weather.”

6. Training
   - More support on what to expect from the project would have been welcomed.
   - “The mechanics of the project was not clearly understood by the hubs before they opened during the first week, but as we started everything became much clearer.”
I delivered to one family where the children came running out to help me carry the boxes in they were so excited!

Lovely to have parents back in our centre after is being closed for so long, they were very appreciative and glad to speak to other people even at a distance.

We had lots of positive comments from the families saying what a help it was and the children were looking forward to them each week.

We had lots of positive comments from the families saying what a help it was and the children were looking forward to them each week.

The thanks we received from families where this has made a real difference – there were many tears and smiles of thanks and lots of thank you emails. This was a game changer for lots of families.

Seeing how excited the children were to receive their boxes. Hearing them talk about the delicious food inside and the games.

Hearing how thankful some of our families were and seeing the kids faces when food was dropped off.

What was your best moment(s) of the project?
By having hubs take part that were already working within the target communities, families felt more connected to where they live and were more likely to attend other events.

Hubs reported that demand increased each week and that many families in the community benefitted from the breakfast packs, not just those in receipt of free school meals.

The offer was universal and therefore, avoided any stigma that may be felt in seeking help. This ensured that every family had the opportunity to access healthy food.

Both parents/carers and organisations involved in the project indicated that they would like to be involved in future projects, in order to do this successfully additional funding is needed.

From the feedback gathered it would be beneficial for future projects to:

- Distribute breakfast and activity packs in bags rather than boxes, feedback from both parents/carers and organisations suggested that the boxes were difficult to store and to take home.

- Create one activity box to compliment the breakfast packs and prevent families from receiving several of the same activities.

- Remove the administrative burdens from the hubs by investing in technology to register individuals prior to the project.

- Ensure the project is advertised in a timely manner, through mixed media methods so that every family has the opportunity to take part.
We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those that were involved in the project, who without their hard work and support none of this would have been possible.

We would also like to thank our funding partners Feeding Britain, Heart of England Community Foundation and the Think Active fund who enabled us to provide breakfast packs on a much larger scale.

Further enquiries should be directed to the project report team at Coventry City Council, Insight Team:

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Or visit
https://letstalk.coventry.gov.uk/Coventry-Food-Network

• Aldermoor LIFE Centre
• Canley Community centre and Food Hub
• Carriers of Hope
• Christ Church Cheylesmore
• Coventry City Council;
  o Community Resilience Team
  o Insight - Partnerships, Equalities and Engagement Team
  o Coventry Family Hubs
  o Library Service
  o Mayor’s Office
  o Transformation Team
• Coventry Food Network
• CVLife
• Empowr-U
• Eurovia Infrastructure Ltd
• Feeding Coventry Trustees
• Foleshill Community Centre
• Groundwork West Midlands
• Hagard Centre Willenhall
• Henley Green Community Centre
• Holbrooks Community Care Association
• Hope Community Projects
• Limbrick Wood Baptist Church
• Moat House Leisure and Neighbourhood Centre
• Mosaic Family Hub
• Project Packing Co-ordinator
• St Andrew’s Church
  o Parish Administrator
• St Catherine’s Church (Stoke Aldermoor)
• St Francis of Assisi (Radford)
• St Laurence’s (Bell Green)
• Stoke Heath School
• Coventry Foodbank Team
• Volunteers working with Project Packing Co-ordinator
• Volunteers distributing the packs
• Walsgrave Baptist Church
• Warwickshire Search and Rescue

Thank you