



**Strategy to
Alleviate Poverty in Barnet
2023 - 2028**



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1. Introduction

Chipping Barnet Foodbank’s strategic plan is a local adaptation of the Trussell Trust’s national strategy to create a society without the need for food banks, under the headings of Changing Communities, Changing Policies and Changing Minds. Chipping Barnet Foodbank’s strategic plan has been enabled by a Trussell Trust grant which enables the Foodbank Manager to devote ten hours a week to work on the development and implementation of the strategy.

The process of developing the strategy started in September 2022 with a well-attended workshop for trustees and the core group (subsequently re-named “management team”) led by the (outgoing) TT Area Manager Amy Wisenfeld. During this workshop, we undertook some initial brainstorming around the 3 areas of the Trussell Trust strategy. See [Appendix E](#).

Trustees then set up a Strategy Steering Group as a committee of the board comprising trustees and management team members.

The group has also been advised by Pat Caplan of Goldsmiths College. The strategy has been “emergent” in that opportunities have been taken to take action in line with the aims of the strategy before it is completed.

2. Time Period

Our strategic plan is focused on the next 5 years, from 2023 to 2028.

3. About the Charity

The charity’s object is ‘the prevention or relief of poverty in Chipping Barnet and surrounding areas, in particular by providing emergency food supplies to individuals in need.’ To achieve this, the charity provides emergency food parcels broadly in line with the guidelines of the Trussell Trust with which the food bank is affiliated. We aim to ensure that all clients presenting with official vouchers during food bank opening hours receive appropriate food parcels in line with Trussell Trust and local policies. Those without vouchers are either provided with emergency vouchers and parcels or given advice as to potential alternatives.



The food bank hosts a Citizens Advice service, and offers other support beyond food provision, including supermarket and fuel vouchers. The charity was exclusively run by volunteers until June 2022, at which point a part-time Foodbank Manager was appointed. Subsequently, a part-time Client Signposting Lead was appointed in March 2023 and a part-time Advocacy, Campaigning and Organising Lead was appointed in May 2023. Trustees are elected at the AGM by the official representatives of the eight local member churches: Barnet Brookside Methodist, Christ Church CofE, St Gregory's R.C., St James CofE, St John's URC, St Mary the Virgin, St Peter's R.C. and URC Wood Street.

The week-by-week work of the food bank is managed by the management team under the leadership of Foodbank Manager, Victoria Miller.

Charity Commission Registration Number: 1163042 Address: 63 Somerset Road, New Barnet, Barnet, EN5 1RF.

Constitution Adopted: 09/10/2013 as amended on 29/09/2014.

4. Mission

Guided by a Christian ethos, the charity seeks to alleviate poverty in Chipping Barnet and surrounding areas by providing food parcels and other necessities and services, in an inclusive way that embraces individual cultural identities. We are an organisation which seeks to change communities, policies and minds at a national and local level, fostering a deeper understanding of, and coherent response to, the causes of poverty.

5. Vision

We envision a society without the need for food banks, where everyone can afford to purchase sufficient healthy food and other necessities needed to maintain a life of dignity.

6. Values

Solidarity & Empathy

We engage empathetically with those accessing our services, standing in solidarity with them and putting their wellbeing above everything else. We recognise that for staff and volunteers to live these values, they too need to be supported and valued.

Equity & Inclusion

We believe we share the responsibility to support one another in our communities. To create change, we must work together for a fairer society. We respect people for who they are, understanding that each person has different circumstances. We allocate resources and opportunities to try to reach equal outcomes for all.

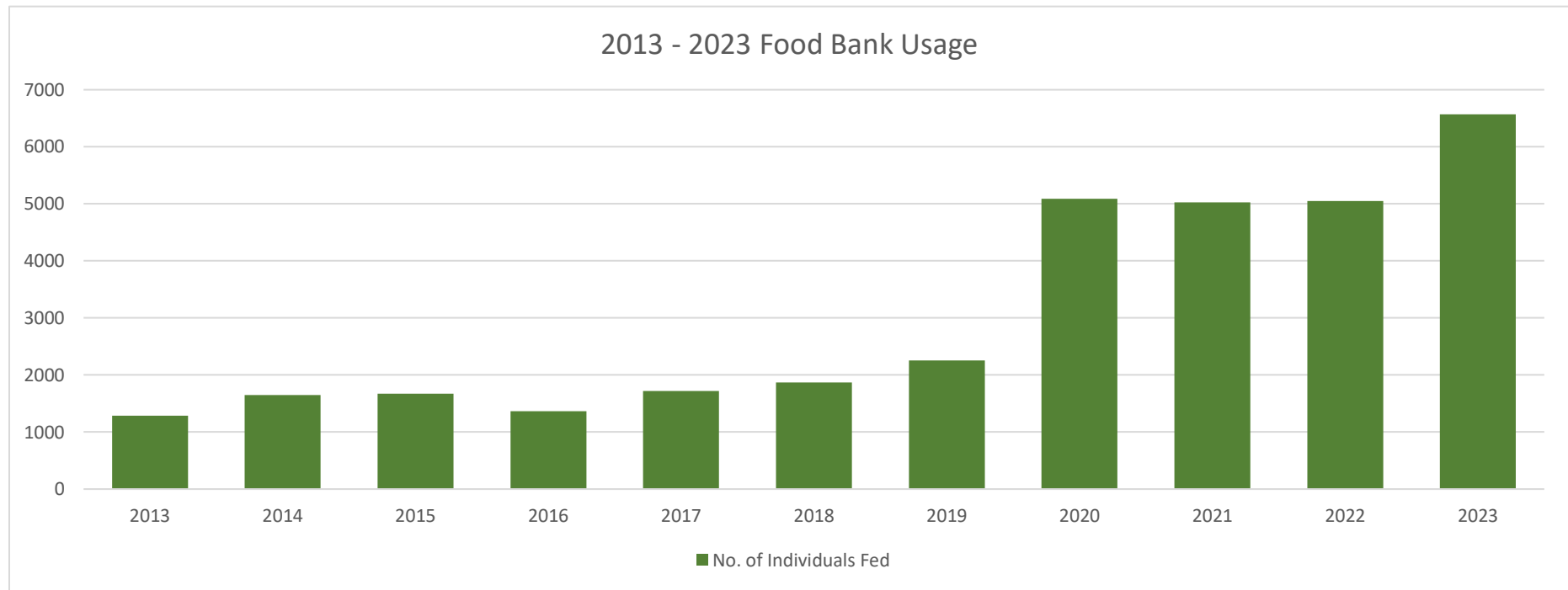
Dignity & Justice

Believing that it is not right that anyone should face hunger and poverty, we are motivated by a desire to see a more just society. Everyone should have enough income to afford the essentials. We recognise the innate value of each individual person and seek to prioritise their needs and concerns in a spirit of mutuality and friendship, regardless of background.

7. Needs Assessment

Chipping Barnet Foodbank has determined that food insecurity in the area is so high that a strategy is needed with the aim of alleviate poverty. This view is based on:

- Ten years of data we have collected about use of our food bank,
- The upward trend of usage in recent years (please see graph below),
- The London Borough of Barnet's Food Plan,
- Natarajan, L. et al (2022) Food Security and Civil Society University College London, UCL "The study provides insights from local stakeholders for the food security strategy of the London Borough of Barnet",
- Good Food for All Londoners - produced by London Food Link (the umbrella for all of Sustain's initiatives in London),
- The research work of Pat Caplan of Goldsmiths College who is a member of the Strategy Steering Group.



8. SWOT Analysis

To identify our starting position, the Strategy Steering Group has produced an analysis of the food bank in terms of its strengths, weaknesses (both internal factors) and its opportunities and threats (external factors). The impressive list of strengths far outweighs the weaknesses identified, and action is being taken to address many of these. The Activity Plan below sets out how the opportunities will be grasped. The external threats are common to most food banks (and indeed many charities) stemming largely from the cost-of-living crisis and demand for food exceeding donated supply.

Please see our SWOT analysis in [Appendix A](#).

9. PESTEL

To place the food bank in its current wider context, the Strategy Steering Group has produced an analysis under six headings: Political, Economic, Societal, Technological, Environmental, and Legal. The wider context is largely influenced by the prevailing political landscape. Please see our PESTEL in [Appendix B](#).

10. Stakeholder Analysis


We created a Systems Chart ([Appendix C](#)) that shows Chipping Barnet Foodbank at the centre of an interlinked network of local and national organisations with whom we interact in some way and who are able to contribute, directly or indirectly, to achieving our strategic aims.

The systems chart shows the names of the Strategy Steering Group members who have volunteered to take a particular interest in one or more stakeholders, developing for each an “empathy map”. The principle of an “empathy map” is that for each stakeholder with whom we wish to engage, we attempt to understand better where they currently are and how they might most effectively address poverty issues without having to refer people to the food bank. It is about reaching the position whereby referral agents only direct a client to the food bank as a very last resort and after they had explored every other option with the client.

The empathy map entails getting into the shoes of the stakeholder. Trying to understand their position in as empathetic way as possible so that we are able to help them. One of our empathy maps, can be found in [Appendix D](#).



Hence, as representatives of the food bank, we are better able to help clients address their poverty while keeping the food bank as an option of last resort.

11. Activity Plan

Ref	Activity	When will it start?	What will it involve (sub-activities)	Who will do the work?	How will we evaluate it?	How much will it cost? What do we already have?	Comms plan	Partners
 CHANGING COMMUNITIES								
1	Consolidate the now expanded food bank premises to provide a more welcoming, hospitable and supportive environment.	November 2023	Renting St Peter's Hall for two sessions per week. Setting up space for partners and specialists to work.	Client feedback lead Trustee Sarah G. Volunteers' feedback Foodbank Manager and management team.	Feedback from clients and volunteers.	Additional monthly rental of £693 for which funds are available.	Regular updates on our social media channels.	St Peter's RC Church
2	Set up a financial inclusion advice centre based in new premises.	March 2023	Building a partnership with CAB. Recruiting an advisor to work in food bank	The Foodbank Manager and management team.	CAB reports showing number of people helped with problem debt.	£32,280 funding from Trussell Trust for the provision of the service over the last	Leaflets to put in people's food parcels. Mailing to referral	CA Barnet

			<p>centre.</p> <p>CAB adviser to be at client sessions to support clients with advice on things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benefits - Employment - Debt and money - Housing - Immigration 		<p>Reduction in food bank visits from people using the service.</p> <p>Amount of money back in household budgets.</p>	two years.	<p>agencies.</p> <p>Social media and website promotion.</p> <p>Contact local newspapers.</p>	
3	Set up a Client Signposting service to enable food bank users to access specialist support.	March 2023	Meet with clients at the food bank at each open session and facilitate their accessing other local organisations. Use the STEP Signposting system.	Appoint a Client Signposting Lead (Jacqui Roeder appointed March 23).	Use the data from STEP to determine the number of people referred to different agencies.	£ 9445 in 2023 - 2024 Grant sought and provided by Barnet Community Fund.	<p>Run signposting reports.</p> <p>Social media and website promotion.</p> <p>Mailing to referral agencies.</p>	<p>Barnet Council</p> <p>Young Barnet Foundation</p>
4	Set up a Digital Inclusion Service to enable clients to access on-line advice	January 2023	Support clients with accessing relevant websites and completing	Jim Connelly commenced in new facility in March	Keep a record of the amount of people we have supported	Jim volunteers his time.	Work with BOOST Barnet to promote.	Barnet BOOST

	and support.		<p>on-line applications.</p> <p>Support clients with general IT issues.</p> <p>Give out mobile phones and SIM cards.</p>	<p>2023.</p> <p>Other digital champions in Barnet.</p>	through this project.		<p>Social media and website promotion.</p> <p>Informing referral agencies.</p>	
5	Consolidate links with existing local partners.	November 2022	<p>Consolidate mutually supportive relationships with organisations such as Age UK, Mind Enfield & Barnet, Christians Against Poverty, National Energy Action (NEA), JIMS Café and HAB.</p>	The Foodbank Manager and management team.	More drop in sessions being organised at the food bank for clients.	Funded by TT grant.	<p>Leaflets advertising what support can be accessed.</p> <p>Social media and website promotion.</p>	Variety of local partners

	 CHANGING MINDS		 CHANGING POLICY					
6	Establish strong links with Barnet Council members and officers.	July 2022	Meet with councillors and officers (including new Food Officer & Refugee Outreach Officer) and develop mutually supportive relationships.	Chair, Manager and Campaigning, Advocacy and Organising Lead.	Number of visits from councillors.	Funded by TT grant.	Barnet First Magazine Other local newspapers.	Barnet Council Barnet Food Hub
7	Contribute to development of Barnet Food Plan and its implementation.	Sept 2022	Address Barnet's Health and Wellbeing Board and advise on food insecurity aspects of the plan.	Foodbank Manager Campaigning, Advocacy and Organising Lead	Involvement in the Barnet Food Partnership. Support with the Barnet Food Plan action plan.	Funded by TT grant	TBA	Barnet Council Barnet Food Hub
8	Consolidate a Campaigning, Advocacy and	End 2023	To develop a Local Influencing Strategy, and to	Appoint a Campaigning, Advocacy and	Successful creation and implementation	A three-year grant obtained	Work with local newspapers.	Trussell Trust

	Organising Service with the aim of changing policies and mindsets so as to alleviate poverty in the Barnet area.		lead a team of volunteers to enable its implementation. Building on the work described in Stakeholder Analysis section above following training by Trussell Trust.	Organising Lead for 30 hours per week (Bob Bevil appointed May 23)	of a Local Influencing Strategy.	from Trussell Trust. £28,800 per annum	Social media and website promotion. Leaflet drop to local residents	
9	Encourage local churches to contribute even more in alleviating food insecurity and helping to prevent people falling into poverty.	Nov 2023	Organise a workshop lunch for local church leaders.	Trustee Laura supported by Manager and Campaigning, Advocacy and Organising Lead.	Additional local churches becoming actively involved.	Funds are available	Joint events with local churches Promotion through church newsletters	Variety of local churches
10	Work together with referral agencies so that more people can be helped at source rather than at the food bank	End 2023	Recognition is needed that most referral agencies are themselves in a constant state of financial uncertainty and with shortages of staff	Teresa Williams, Foodbank Manager, Client Signposting Lead and Campaigning, Advocacy and	More volunteers understanding our referral partners and being able to offer advice and support to clients	Funds are available	Organise an event with referral agencies	

				Organising Lead				
11	Understand better the complex diversity in the area with a view to meet specific needs more effectively	End 2023	Work with Inclusion Barnet and other organisations with remits for needs of ethnic minorities.	Foodbank Manager and Campaigning, Advocacy and Organising Lead	Partnership with Inclusion Barnet	Funds are available	TBA	Inclusion Barnet Barnet Council
12	Meet with local supermarket managers to discuss how they might be able to: a) Contribute even more in alleviating food insecurity issues, and b) Help to prevent people falling into food insecurity.	End 2023	Check with Trussell Trust regarding any national or regional relationships with each supermarket chain. Then arrange meetings with managers.	Campaigning, Advocacy and Organising Lead	TBA (see action point 14 below re monitoring)	Mainly (already-funded) time of Campaigning, Advocacy and Organising Lead		Sainsburys, Waitrose, Co-op
13	Negotiate with Barclays Bank for better interest rates and matched funding.	End 2023	Also with other service providers such as internet. See attached empathy map.	Treasurer	A better interest rate for our bank account. A higher % matched	Volunteer time of Treasurer	Mailer to local businesses Use social media	Barclays Bank

					funding donations.			
	Organise CAB “Advice First Aid” courses for volunteers and trustees.	End 2023	Campaigning, Advocacy and Organising Lead to attend “Train the Trainer” training from CAB.	Manager and Campaigning, Advocacy and Organising Lead	Number of volunteers trained on AFA course and able to use skills learned in client sessions.	Funds are available	TBA	CA Barnet

12. Measuring and Evaluating Impact

At the quantitative level, the activities have been deliberately framed with SMART principles in mind. To this extent many of the activities are binary; that is to say they do or do not happen. For example, the setting up of a Digital Inclusion Service is a binary activity (activity number 4). In addition, wherever possible, the activities have been framed in a way that can generate quantitative data. Keeping with the Digital Inclusion Service example, it is possible to track exactly how many SIM cards and other resources are allocated to clients. While activity number 6, establish links with Barnet Council stakeholders, is less binary it is still possible to capture quantitative data, e.g. exactly how many of the 63 councillors have received an invitation to visit the food bank.

Qualitative evaluation may be more difficult to ascertain but certainly not impossible. Kirkpatrick’s model of evaluation has value here by considering reactions, learning, behaviour and results associated with stakeholder engagement with the food bank. At the first level of reaction it is possible to make observations or openly ask stakeholders, including clients, for feedback. At the second level of learning, it is possible to enquire what knowledge, skills or insights stakeholders have gained as a result of engaging with the food bank; this is the before and after aspect. At the third level of behaviour, it is possible to observe and ask about changes in behaviours initiated by stakeholders as a result of engaging with the food bank. Finally, at the fourth level it is possible to discern the results of the reported changes in behaviour, for example, food donations from new donors. Ultimately, the evaluation is concerned with the extent to which each activity contributes to the alleviation in poverty in Barnet.

Appendix A - SWOT Analysis

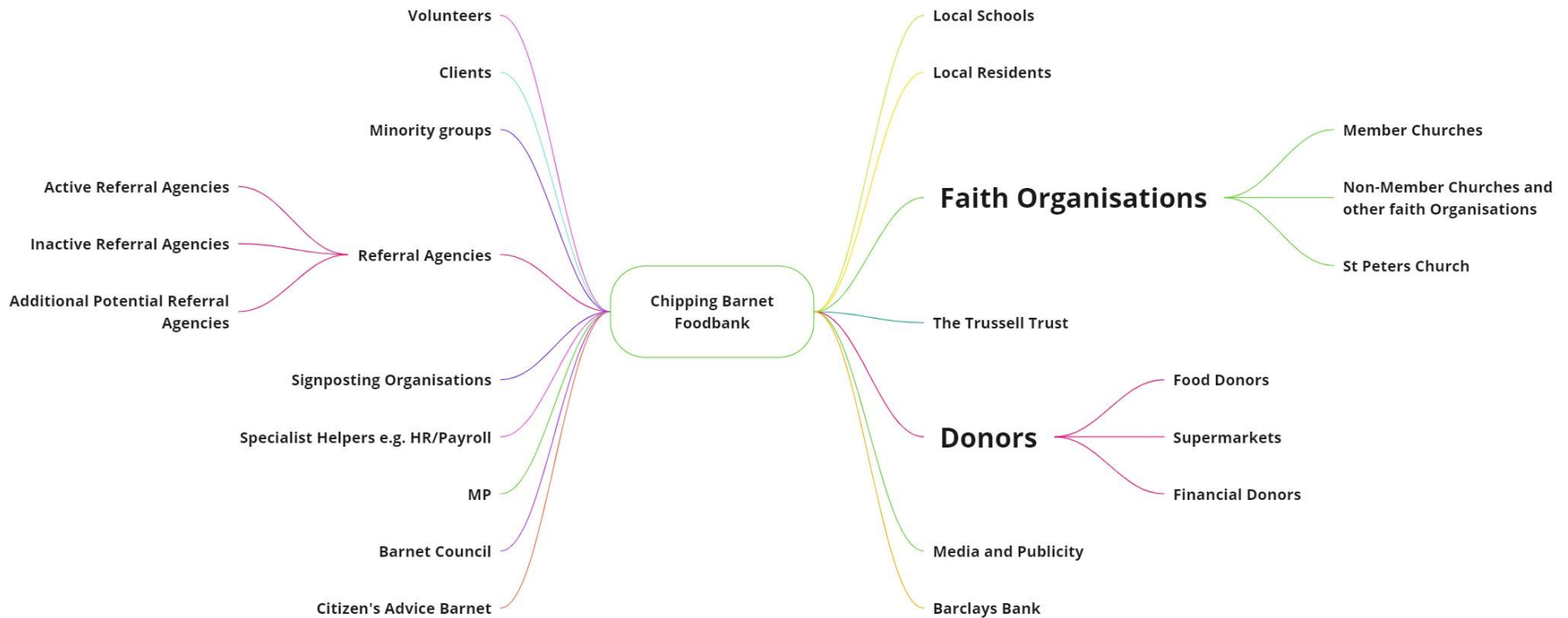
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-year grant from Trussell Trust to enable strategy development. • Appointment of Victoria Miller as salaried manager. • Excellent core group of volunteers. • Large number of trained volunteers. • Good recent track record of working well with other organisations. • Healthy bank balance. • Steady flow of financial and food donations Good reputation among General public, potential clients, partner organisations, the local authority and Trussell Trust. • Good links with other like-minded organisations. • Good links with Citizens Gateway and Ukrainian refugee groups. • Supportive board of trustees. In past three years, trustees have led three important working groups. • Most trustees now have a portfolio of responsibility. • Excellent premises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trussell Trust grant just for two years. • CAB service has suffered a number of large interruptions to service. • Half way through TT funding period for CAB. • CAB's sustainability outside CBFB's control. • CBFB is overly reliant on key volunteer organisers. • Large pool of volunteers but small managerial group and too few team leaders. • Weak links with minority groups. • Manager having to take incoming calls. • Lack of administrative backup for manager. • Lack of job descriptions for support roles. • Some policies needed to be developed and existing ones not sufficiently visible.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges posed by pandemic overcome well. • Manager is highly competent with technology and social media. • Food bank has access to and use of good range of electronic devices such as tablets and laptops. • Efforts are being made to reduce use of plastic bags. 	
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build on sound partnerships already formed • To create new links and potential partnerships, including with other food banks whose vision and practice may differ from ours. • To use food bank funds to enable other organisations to deliver on the strategy. • To further develop St Peter’s hall into a welcoming and effective space. • To work with the Banet Food Plan to maximise opportunities to structure approaches to council and other organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further government measures exacerbating existing cost of living crisis. • Reduction in government fuel subsidies. • The food bank being overwhelmed with demand for food and other essentials. • The “cost of giving” crisis results in food and financial donations continuing to dwindle. • The amounts needing to be spent on food meaning that longer term funds for salaries are jeopardised. • The economic climate forcing partner organisations to cut back or close. • Partner organisations themselves inundated with demand. • TT grants not renewed.

Appendix B - PESTEL

<p>Political</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At national level, government policies are hitting the most vulnerable hardest. • At local level, new council taking active interest in food bank and showing support. <i>(For instance, paths to food bank considered top priority for snow clearing and gritting during December 22 bad weather.)</i> 	<p>Technological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A move towards government financial support provision moving online. • The emergence of local digital poverty charities.
<p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospect of recession hitting households, raising demand and reducing donations. 	<p>Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing public awareness of the accelerating risks of global heating. • Less cynicism evident about scientific evidence. • Food bank requires significant use of transport for food supplies and deliveries to clients, and for clients to visit food bank and take goods home. • Pressure to reduce single use plastic.
<p>Societal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waves of industrial unrest and strikes causing further economic pressures. • Strikers losing pay and the public facing disruption and loss of earnings. • An increased awareness among the general public that food banks now cater for people from all walks of life and that they form a vital emergency service. • Food banks have a good press and Chipping Barnet Foodbank is well respected locally. 	<p>Legal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demands on food bank from GDPR, Health and safety, food hygiene legislation. • Legal restrictions via Charity Commission as to how food bank could use funds to enable partner organisations to deliver on the strategy. • With three employees (from May 23) additional legal burden as an employer.

Appendix C - Systems Chart





Appendix D - Example Empathy Map - Clients

By Sarah Greenwood

How they think and how they feel

- Driven to food bank by need to feed themselves and their families.
- Inner questioning 'How has it come to this?' - tremendous courage to come into the food bank
- Belittled by the system, without voice or agency
- Fear for the future... is there any point in carrying on?
- I should be doing better than this. Why am I in this mess?

What they hear

- 'Put up and shut up'
- 'You have no power. We are in control'
- Phone constantly ringing from companies demanding money (6 times per day from energy company, daily emails chasing tiny sums of money)
- We don't trust you - you are suspicious
- You are to blame

What are their gains?

- Immediate, (but temporary) hunger alleviation
- Transient human contact

- Signposting to agencies which can help with specific problems - but this is at the cost of having to reveal family/personal vulnerability and giving repeated explanations about why you are in the situation you are in... non-deserving poor or deserving poor arguments are still in society = PERSONAL RISK

What are their pains?

- Living in poverty is a traumatic situation
- Isolation. Little community spirit - knowing no one and not belonging to a community/interest group. No money for petrol or transport or joining fees
- Increased awareness of personal vulnerability
- Increasing debt -higher interest rates for personal bank loans, increased energy costs for pre-payment meters.
- Housing insecurity -mortgage payments each month which UC doesn't contribute to,
- Trapped into 'little life' through poverty
- Exhausted by constantly budgeting - not enough money to pay for essentials - NO CHOICE - yellow label food, charity shop clothing, ebay goods
- Feeling 'less than'
- Lack of access to usual credit systems.
- Energy price increases make UC non-survivable,
- Constantly having to give up things you enjoy, losing friendships because you can't afford to meet
- Dreading the children grow because of the cost of clothing and footwear
- Cost of social activities for children impossible to meet - feeling incredibly sad when children lose their friendship circles because they can't keep up

- Job Centre staff incompetence: sending clients to appointments, out of borough, which didn't exist. Asking people to come back the same day with documents which were not requested by email then saying they weren't needed when they did this, changing or cancelling appointments with little notice.
- Fatigue. Stress. Feelings of being overwhelmed
- Fulfilling UC requirements of work search

What they say and do

- Little. Come to the food bank. Overly thankful. Desperate. Clinging on. Will give you a script of something 'acceptable'

What they see

- Other people thriving and having a better time... increasing awareness of society over indulgence, waste, excess... go to the tip and see what gets thrown away

Conclusions

- Need for wellbeing support or mental health support or mentoring

Appendix E - Strategy Workshop Output (September 2022)

