

Community Food Webinar - Collaborating across Scotland to develop a food insecurity resource space

10 am to 11.30 am

Webinar will start at 10 am



**community
food and health**

(scotland)

Public Health
Scotland 

**Community Food Webinar -
Collaborating across Scotland to
develop a food insecurity resource
space**

Before we begin

- Please keep your microphone on mute
- This session will be recorded, and slides will be shared afterwards
- Format: presentations followed by Q&A
- You can ask questions at any time via the chat



Plan for the session

Agenda

A journey through the Partnership	Fiona Rae & Gordon Thomson
Introducing the food insecurity resource space	Paddy McKenna
Connecting the Food Ladder approach with Cash First Approach	Graeme Robbie
ECF Toolkit	Jo Howie
Amplifying the voices of those with food insecurity	Paddy Mckenna
Evaluating the impact of cash-first approaches. An example from Lanarkshire	Gordon Thomson
Feedback – Menti Meter	Paddy Mckenna



Together we can create a Scotland where everybody thrives

Our 10-year strategy to 2035



The five drivers we'll focus our actions on are:

1. building a prevention-focused system
2. improving social and economic factors
3. strengthening places and communities
4. enabling healthy living
5. providing equitable access to health and care



Food is a vehicle to bring people together

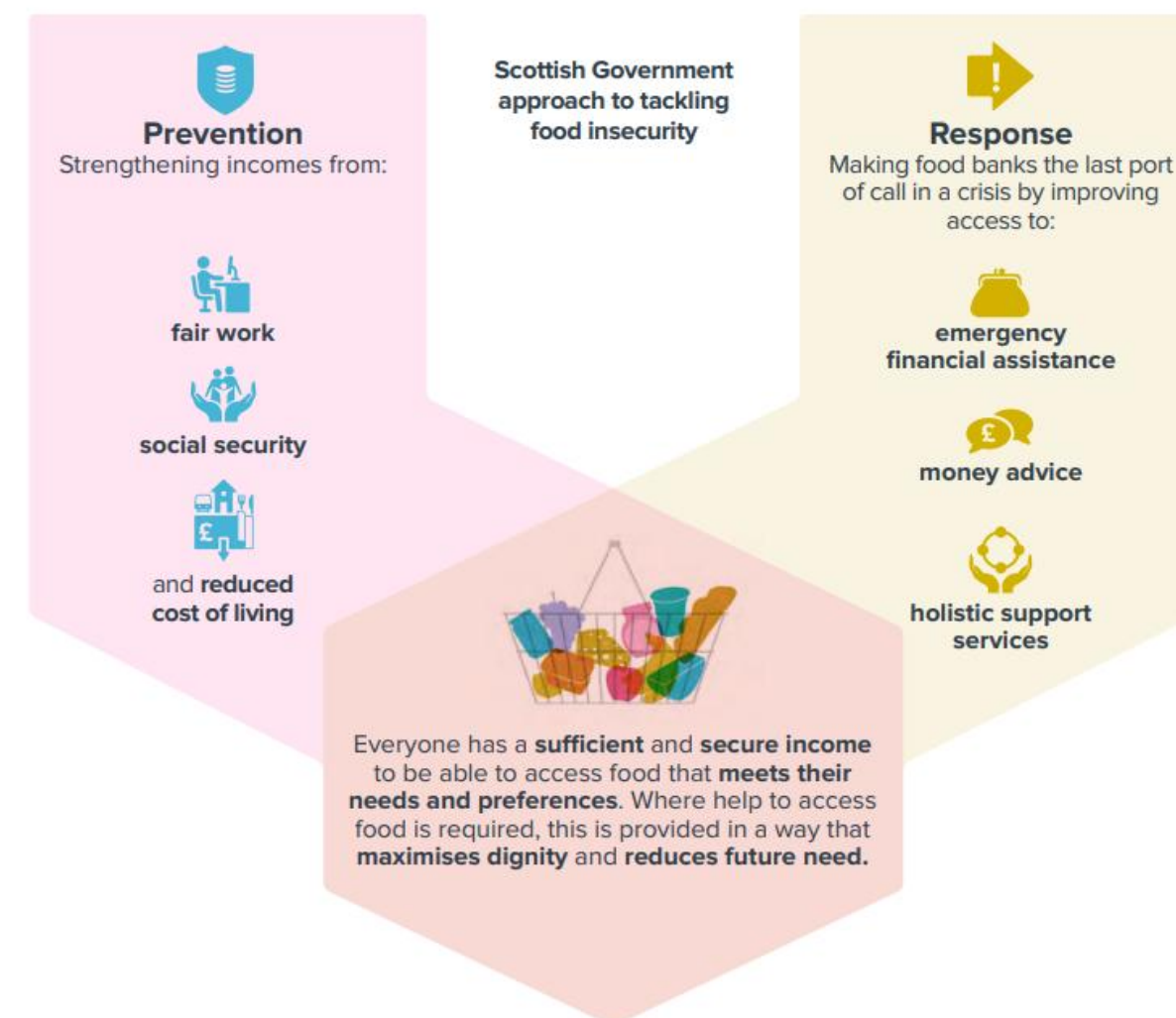


Cash-First:

Towards Ending the Need
for Food Banks in Scotland



Supporting a collective response to prevent financial hardship and crises & preventing the need for food bank





Strength

Partnership

Collaboration



Impact



Food Insecurity Resource Space

- partnership development sessions
- resource bank
- access to information on local and national cash first approaches to tackling food insecurity and poverty
- on all 4 websites
- ongoing development this year



Food Insecurity Resource Space

Looking for support?
Start here.

Policy, Research &
Evaluations

What is cash-first?

Resources for
Organisations

Food Insecurity Resource Space



**Community Food
National Reference
Group**



Food Ladders & Cash First

Graeme Robbie
Depute CEO, CFINE

grobbe@cfine.org

01224 596156



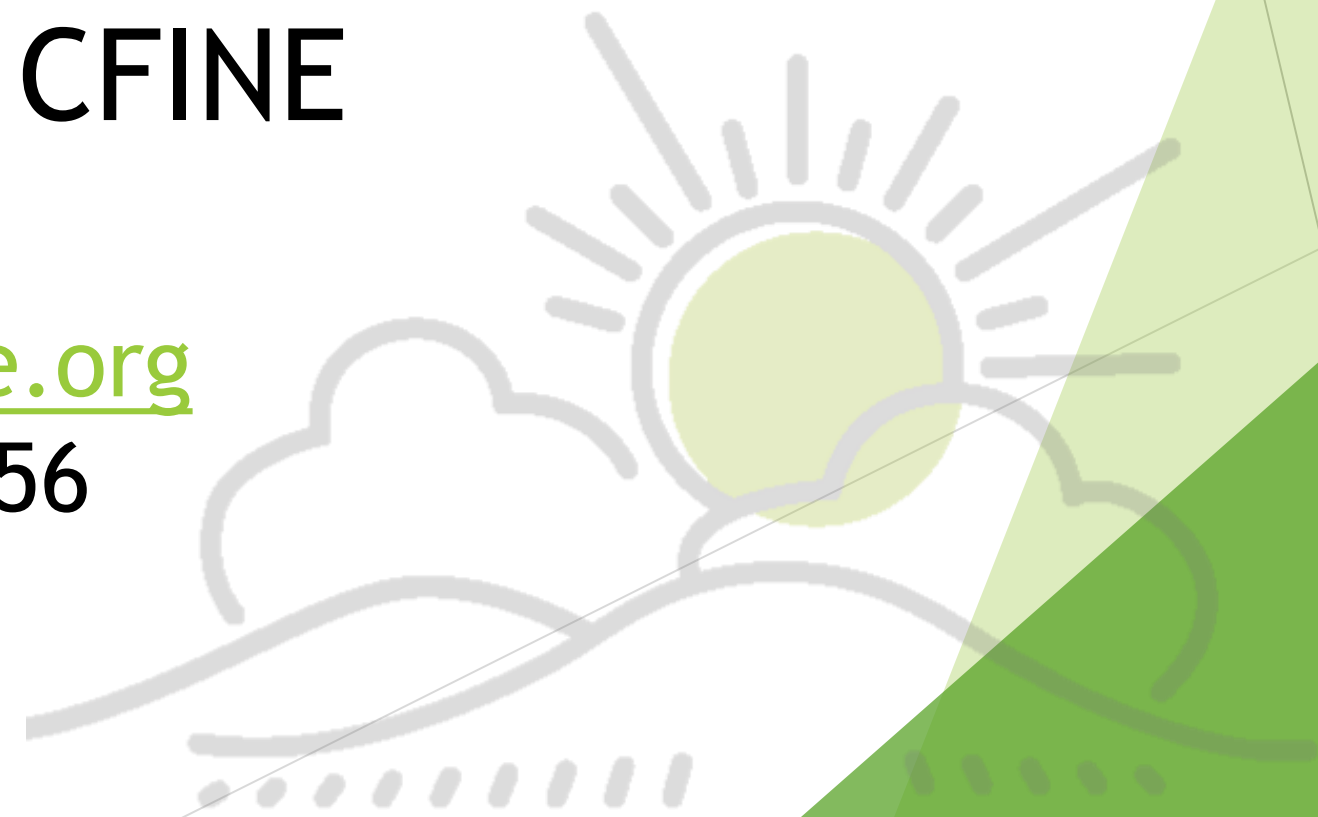


Food Ladders & Cash First

Graeme Robbie
Depute CEO, CFINE

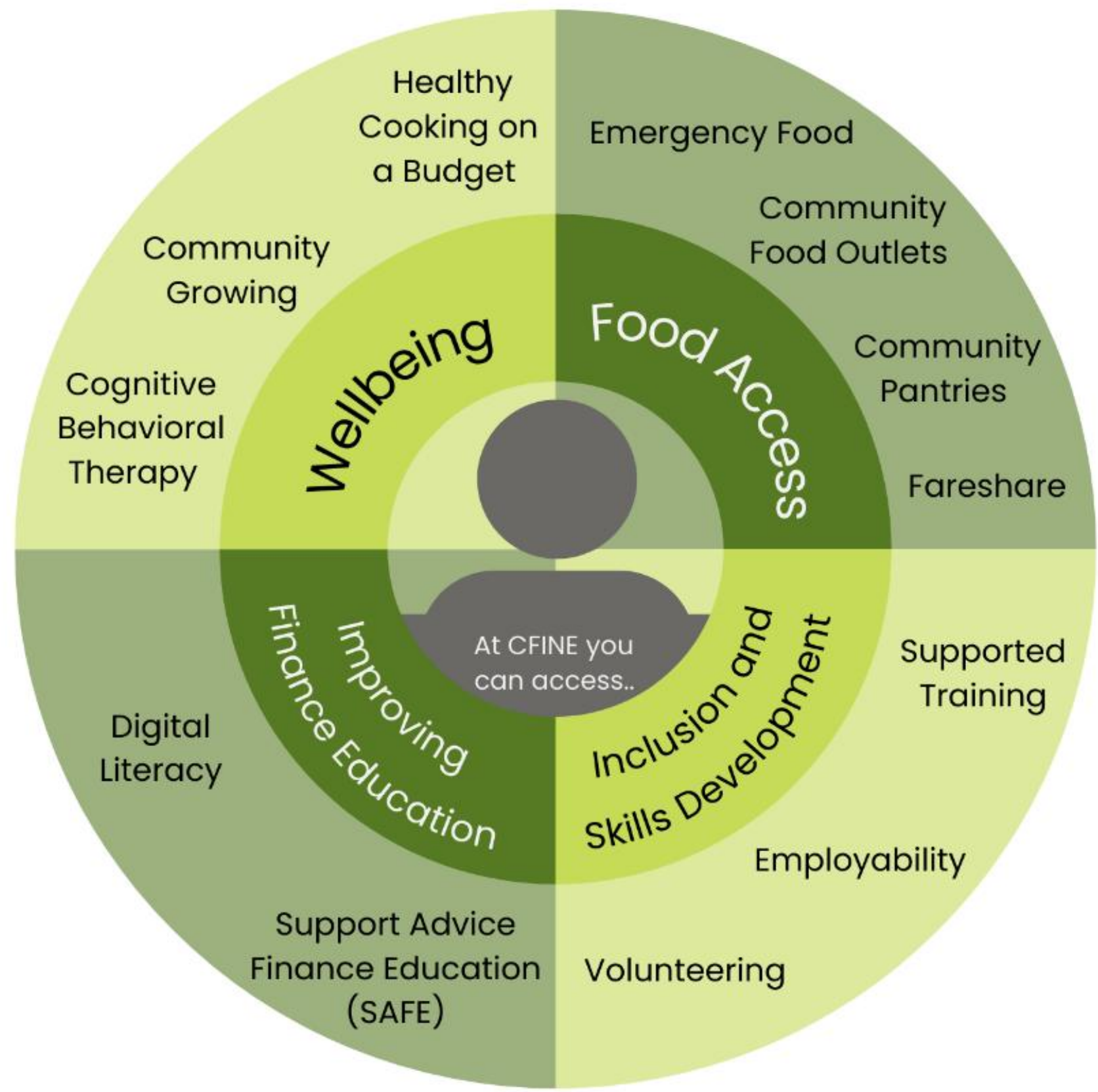
grobbe@cfine.org

01224 596156



About CFINE

- ▶ Community Food Initiatives North East
- ▶ Charity and social enterprise based in North East of Scotland, founded in 1997
- ▶ Operates a range of support services aimed at improving health & wellbeing, tackling poverty, and building resilience
- ▶ Primarily focused on community development, supporting thousands of beneficiaries annually
- ▶ 42 staff, 300+ volunteers



What are Food Ladders?

- ▶ A novel, evidenced-based approach for creating household and community resilience by capitalising on the capacity of food to bring people together.
- ▶ Food Ladders is **not** like existing household food insecurity approaches that focus on the lack of good food within households and then feeds that gap.
- ▶ Activates food and its related practices progressively to reduce local vulnerability to food insecurity and its knock-on effects.
- ▶ Developed by Dr Megan Blake in a paper published in 2019
- ▶ Based on 3 'rungs' of support

Rung 1: Catching

- ▶ Provides a starting point for those who are in crisis. Such interventions might include emergency food aid, mental health support, cash-first crisis payments.
- ▶ Often most acute symptom of poverty is hunger, leading people to request food aid.
- ▶ Food banks in themselves are not helpful - creating dependence, eroding dignity, and changing nothing.
- ▶ However, crucial that they are connected to wider wrap-around services which tackle underlying causes, leading to rung 2.

Rung 2: Capacity building to enable change

- ▶ Supports those not currently in crisis, but who may be struggling to afford and/or access good food.
- ▶ Activities include shared cooking and eating activities, food pantries, financial capability/income maximisation, and employability support.
- ▶ Enables people and communities to be more adaptable by expanding what they can bring to the table to make change.

Rung 3: Self-organised community change.

- ▶ Supports communities to realise goals through self-organised projects that capitalise on what is good in communities.
- ▶ Examples include establishing a social enterprise based on community cooking knowledge that provides employment, cooperative food growing and food procurement that increases the local availability of good food.
- ▶ Aim of food ladders is to support people moving from rung 1 to 3.
- ▶ Complements and aligns with cash-first approach, while harnessing the power of community food.

Conclusion

- ▶ Food Ladders can be transformative as a means for community development
- ▶ Complements existing approaches to tackling food insecurity and poverty
- ▶ Provides coherent framework which mitigates negative impact of endlessly handing out food
- ▶ Can be rolled out at scale depending on resources and identified need

Thank You!

Edinburgh Community Food

Cash First Our Journey

Jo Howie, ANutr

Food and Health Development Team Lead



Why we developed the Cash First Toolkit

- Food insecurity is mainly an income issue, not a food issue.
- Increased demand for consistent benefits and income maximisation advice
- Needed to upskill our staff





What we did

- Wanted to create a practical local resource.
- Worked with partners to identify local support services.
- Developed a simple online toolkit for staff and volunteers – can be updated.
- Included benefits, grants, energy support, debt advice, and referral pathways.



CASH FIRST TOOLKIT



What is Cash First?

Cash first approaches provide people directly with money, pathways to money, or vouchers, making them an effective and dignified form of support for people facing hardship. Where appropriate, they are an alternative to food banks referrals or in-kind support.



Why Cash First?

Cash offers flexibility for people to decide what their immediate needs are, whether they be purchasing the essentials, buying school shoes for their child, paying an energy bill, or paying down debt to get on a more secure financial footing. It can have an immediate impact on people's lives.

What do we need to apply a Cash First Approach?

TRUST

Frontline staff need to be given the trust and autonomy to make decisions about how best to help individuals.

TIME

Time must be dedicated to embedding a cash first approach within the organisation, such as building procedures and applying for funding. Conversations about money also take time.

TRAINING

Training for staff at all levels within an organisation improves confidence and ability to deliver a cash first approach effectively.

KNOWLEDGE

A good knowledge and understanding of the services available within the city is essential to applying a cash first approach.



RESPECT

People must be treated with dignity and respect to know how best to use a cash grant for themselves and their family.



Call to Action

- www.edinburghcommunityfood.org.uk/cash-first-information-and-resources
- Download
- Implement
- Share
- Feedback – Jo.howie@edinburghcommunityfood.org.uk

Thank you

Purple Zone
Start a conversation about money

How

- Use a compassion statement and follow with open questions (see below). Listen with empathy and reflect back
- Offer information
- Explore the information
- Avoid assumptions and being judgemental
- Ask 'what will help?'

Example compassion statements and conversation starters:
Here's some suggestions but make sure your words feel comfortable for you:

- Times are tough. How are you getting on with money at the moment?
- Lots of us are struggling with money at the moment. Do you know where to get support if you needed it?
- Some people have said they sometimes find it difficult paying all their bills. How are you finding it?
- You said you have been feeling very low lately. Do you have any money worries that might be causing this?
- Are you aware of anything that might be causing this anxiety? Is it money worries?

Benefits

- Speaking to someone can relieve their feelings of worrying about money and break the money-worry cycle.
- Using empathy can reduce feelings of shame and stigma
- Open conversations build relationships and trust, opening the door to further signposting and support.

Things to Consider

- Training and support such as Money Counts (see page 7) can boost the skills and confidence of staff or volunteers.
- Conversations around money can take time and frontline staff may often be busy.

Case Study
Paul has fallen behind on his credit card and fuel bill payments. He's been avoiding dealing with threatening letters such notices about cutting his electricity off. The anxiety and stress has left him unable to work, meaning he's further behind on the debt and struggling to pay for food.

After a conversation with someone at a church community meal about his worries, he was signposted to an advice provider who supported him to contact his energy supplier. The supplier was happy to arrange a manageable payment plan and he could keep his electricity on. The advisor also helped him to do a benefits check and he found he was entitled to additional payments alongside his universal credit, due to his housing costs and because he hadn't been able to work.

Green Zone
Offer a cash payment, voucher or grant to meet the immediate need

How

- A cash first approach can be built into funding applications for specific projects, allowing organisations to have a pot of funding, prepaid cards or vouchers for administering to those in need.
- Support people to apply for grants:
- Crisis Grant – help with an unexpected emergency like a fire, flood, job or money loss. Accessible through the council.
- Community Care Grant – help for someone to start a settled home after experiencing homelessness, domestic abuse, imprisonment or leaving care. Also suitable for someone at risk of a home becoming unsettled. Accessible through the council.
- Emergency support is short term. Signposting to a benefits advisor for a benefits check (or to a free online benefits calculator) may prevent people from facing recurring crises.

Case Study
Pilton Community Health Project (PCHP) is a Community Hub in North Edinburgh. They created a Crisis and Wellbeing Fund specifically to mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis. The Fund provides a quick response and can provide cash or vouchers for crisis or wellbeing support.

For example:

- A lone parent bought winter clothes for her children and depleted her food budget. Generational poverty left her unable to lean on family for support. The PCHP Crisis and Wellbeing Fund helped with a food shop for store cupboard staples, and she was signposted to an advice provider.
- Another person's relative fell ill and they needed to travel to England. PCHP were able to pay for train tickets, ensuring they still had money in the budget to feed their children.

Benefits

- Fast and effective way out of an emergency.
- Can be administered as bank transfer, payment to an energy provider, prepaid bank cards, shopping card for specific retailers or physical cash.

Things to Consider

- Is a payment or voucher the best solution for the person at this stage?
- Vouchers, rather than cash, may be more useful for some, such as: those who are overdrawn, in a financially controlling relationship, or those without a bank account or address.
- Provide signposting along with one-off payments to offer more sustained support.
- Cash-in-hand can impact on someone's safety where an active addiction is present.
- Keep GDPR-compliant records of money/ vouchers given out for auditing purposes.
- Charitable payments do not impact on Universal Credit as they are not specified income.

Pink Zone
Signpost to the right support

How

- There are many ways that someone can manage their debt, maximise their income and reduce their stress around money. Provide opportunities for someone with money worries to speak to a trained professional.
- Signpost someone as quickly as possible by giving them a leaflet, directing them to a website or place or simply telling them about an organisation. If needed support them through the process. We can also make direct referrals to other organisations with the individual's permission. Choose the option which is the best fit for the situation.
- The welfare support and grants system is complex and hard to navigate and understand. Providing training and resources for team members can improve their understanding of the benefits system and create a route to financial support for those who use their service.

Benefits

- Anyone can signpost someone to an organisation. No special training is needed.
- This sort of help can make a big difference to someone's life.

Things to Consider

- Sensitive and empathetic conversations can reduce feelings of stigma and shame around poverty, and may encourage people to seek further support when signposted.
- Providing a 'listening ear', support and guidance may lead to people feeling less overwhelmed and helpless.
- Reading through resources together or accessing materials in other languages can help overcome language/ literacy barriers.
- Providing internet-ready devices will assist those without access to the internet.

Case Study
Edinburgh Community Food and VOCAL partnership project - carers support

Edinburgh Community Food and VOCAL came together in support of the health and well being of 303 carers from across Edinburgh. Carers were supplied with a weekly nourishing food box delivered to their homes containing the IFAN 'Worrying about Money' leaflets, information about Edinburgh Community Food training courses supporting employability and were signposted to VOCAL for further support and income maximisation advice. They also received financial support towards their energy bills plus cooking equipment, such as slow cookers to reduce energy costs. The cash first aspects of this project (cash payments and signposting) were integrated from the outset.

Blue Zone
Practical help to take the next step

How

- Provide people with a place to access the internet and with support to use a benefits calculator, or check their eligibility for payments they may not be receiving. Sitting with someone or helping them with language or literacy barriers may be really beneficial.
- Supporting someone with an immediate need such as a food parcel can help to build a trusting relationship and allow for further conversations about finances or other needs.
- Acknowledge that not all questions may be fully answered and consider signposting to an accredited advisor.

Benefits

- Its not easy to speak up about money issues, so when someone does, being able to provide immediate support is important as they may not speak up again.
- Organisations can be equipped with all the resources and knowledge to enable someone to access the support available.

Things to Consider

- Training such as Money Counts (See page 7) can support team members to feel equipped to discuss money worries and provide the right information.
- Supporting people can take time and frontline staff may often be busy.

Case Study
As the host of the Edinburgh Community Cafes Network, Edinburgh Community Food launched a programme of support for Community Cafes called **Take 5 Access**. Alongside food support in the form of Take and Make DIY meal kits and access to free meals, Edinburgh Community Food supported Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI) and Granton Information Centre to provide "Ask & Act" information points within the warm, friendly, inclusive local setting of community cafes. Tablets were supplied to cafes, allowing people to receive supported signposting using the cafe's internet access. Staff were empowered to take people through online benefit eligibility checks and help with the process of applying for financial support.

Paddy McKenna

Glasgow Community Food Network

Project Lead – Freelance

**Freelance Community Development Collaborator
& Third Sector Consultant**



www.glasgowfood.net



paddy@delvecollab.org

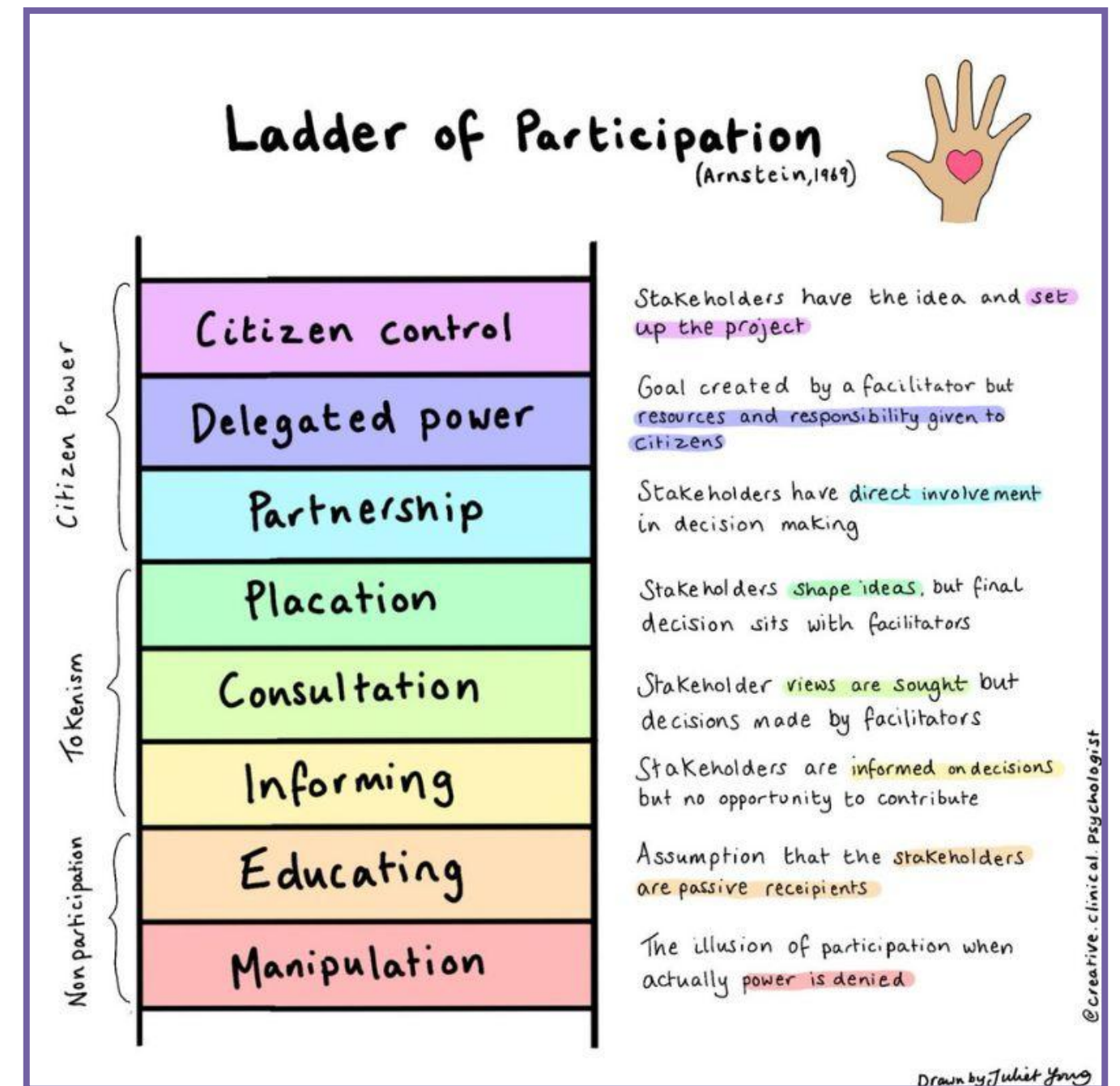


[@glasgowcommunityfoodnetwork](https://www.instagram.com/glasgowcommunityfoodnetwork)



Cash-First Toolkit: the aim

- bring together cash-first resources
- centre the voices of those that experience food insecurity
- apply co-design approaches and participatory methods
- create a flexible resource that can be applied in a range of settings



Cash-First Toolkit: the process

- reconvened after Zine
- met online 5 times & twice in person
- in person launch / exhibition
- £15 per hour remuneration
- creative & collaborative

Cash-first
Toolkit.

A flexible set of practical tools to support community food initiatives to reflect on, strengthen and embed their cash-first approaches.

Cash-First Toolkit: a snapshot



“We don’t want specific food, we need it.”
-Participant

What is a cash-first approach and why apply it?

We want a dignified experience

No One Else Should Experience This:
we deserve better, there's enough for everyone.

The collage includes a photograph of a landscape with mountains and a castle, a drawing of two figures, and a lightbulb icon.

Cash-First Toolkit: a snapshot continued

Our 5 key insights are:

Dignity and choice **SPACE**

Impact on Feelings

Organisations Often Don't Work Together **STIGMA**

Image from 'How might cash first approaches be implemented in community food initiatives?', pg 13. Link to this on page 7.

Talking About Money: an interactive story tool

You are a staff member at a Community Meal. You're chatting to someone who has come along.

They mention that the meal is really helpful because food is so expensive these days.

You listen to them, agree, and move the conversation away from money

You listen to the them, agree, and decide to stick with the topic of money

Ideas for Action

At a community garden: ideas for action

For when conversations about the cost of food and money worries naturally arise, develop ways to document these insights to share with local networks, action groups or internal cash-first or related strategies (clearly alongside the group through applying participatory approaches).

Enable volunteers and staff members to attend 'Money Counts' training to build confidence in using the 'Worrying About Money?' leaflet

Have 'Worrying About Money?' leaflets visible and easy to access

No One Else Should Experience This: poverty is not our fault

How do I apply and embed a cash-first approach?

THINGS WE KNOW HAPPEN	THINGS WE KNOW HAPPEN	THINGS WE'VE HEARD	THINGS WE'VE HEARD
I went to a foodbank and explained that my child with autism needed a certain brand of cereal, which was very expensive meaning less money to spend on food for my other children and me eating cheap noodles for dinner. The staff member there listened and provided me with a large family pack of the right cereal rather than opening and giving a small amount. And they did it confidentially.	People are listened to and their trauma of current or previous experiences are understood.	I don't see what the problem is with there only being pineapples, people should be happy to get them.	If they're hungry enough, they'll eat it.
People sometimes stock up because they have had experiences before where it has been difficult to access food, difficult to survive.	Many places rely on donations and sometimes can't offer choice or a particular product. It can feel like a lot of pressure for the staff member or volunteer particularly when they want to be able to offer dignity and choice.	I've seen them going to loads of places for free food.	People should just budget better.
THINGS WE KNOW HAPPEN	THINGS WE KNOW HAPPEN	THINGS WE'VE HEARD	THINGS WE'VE HEARD

Qualitative e.g.

If I apply a cash-first approach, how do I evaluate its impact?

Quantitative e.g.

"It's miserable being on the receiving end of foodbanks and poverty."

-Participant

"That's been one of the best things is sharing our experiences - it shows that there's something else happening, it's not just our 'personal issues'."

-Participant

"What are we expected to budget? Thin air?!"

-Participant

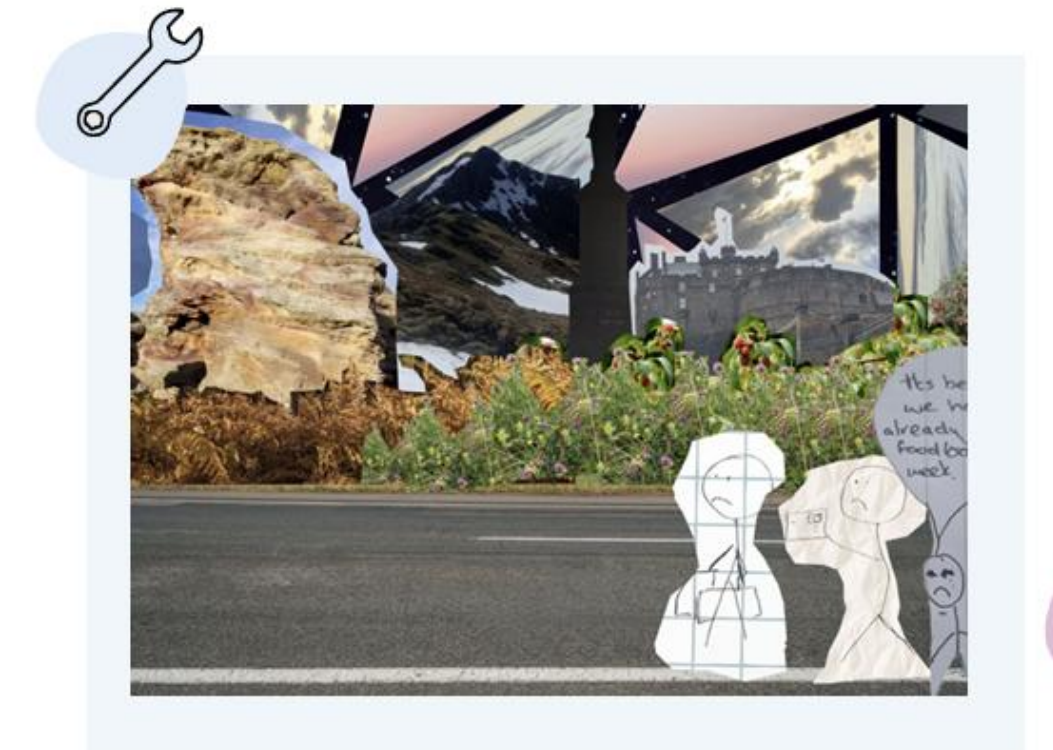
"I had £36 per week to live on. And we're not allowed to work to provide for our families. It's very hard"

-Participant

Cash-First Toolkit: reflections

- strengthens our understanding of how to apply a cash-first approach
- highlights complex barriers
- generates solutions
- challenges dominant narratives

No One Else Should Experience This:
we deserve better, there's enough for everyone.



Cash-First Toolkit: reflections continued

The best thing to come out of this is to have been able to share our experiences - no one experience is the same.

I'm not sharing my lived experience for the sake of it, it's to make it better for the next person in this situation.

I hope that we make people recognise that we're all human beings. This toolkit can highlight the actual human experience.

The cash-first toolkit is so important - we give people the awareness that everyone deserves a better life, with dignity and respect.

Cash-First Toolkit: reflections continued

I hope that we make people recognise that we're all human beings. This toolkit can highlight the actual human experience.

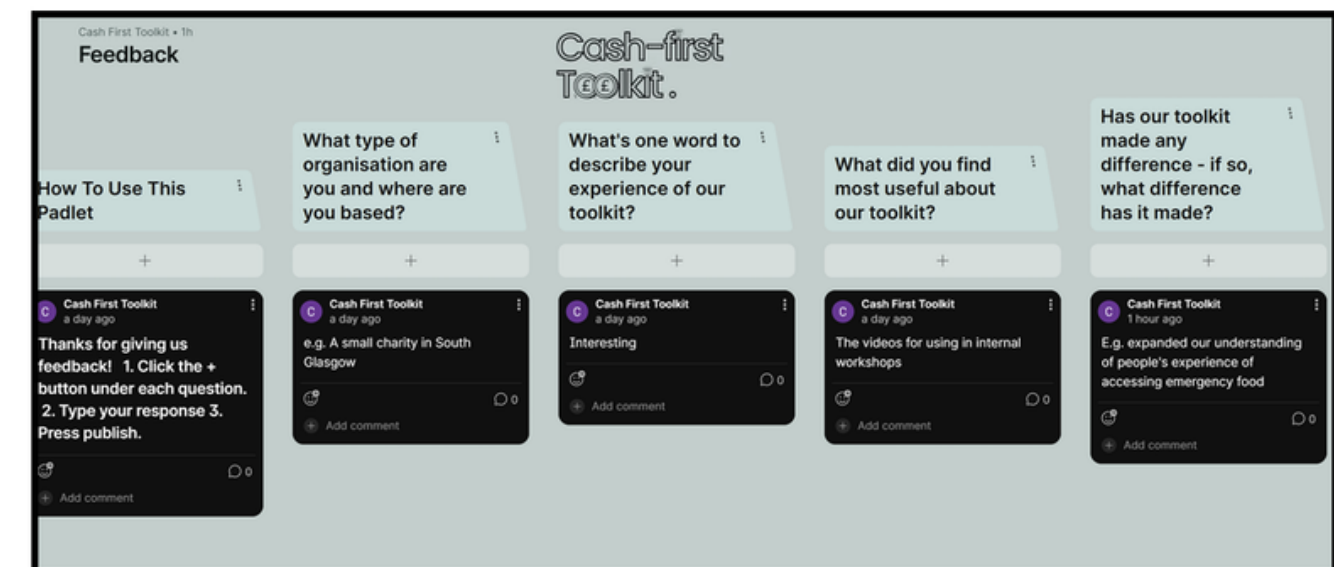
Being given the opportunity to document our voice for other people will hopefully give people that confidence to speak out and build our collective voices – they're louder, they're more powerful.

Cash-First Toolkit: what's next

- Raising awareness
- Collating feedback
- Evaluating impact
- Continuing to learn from the group and amplify their voices.

We would love your feedback on our toolkit

Please complete our feedback questions on our Padlet [here](#) - having it on this platform means that we can see the feedback directly, independently and at any time.



Thank You

Paddy McKenna

Glasgow Community Food Network

Project Lead - Freelance

**Freelance Community Development Collaborator
& Third Sector Consultant**



www.glasgowfood.net



paddy@delvecollab.org



[@glasgowcommunityfoodnetwork](https://www.instagram.com/glasgowcommunityfoodnetwork)





**Lanarkshire Community Food
and Health Partnership**

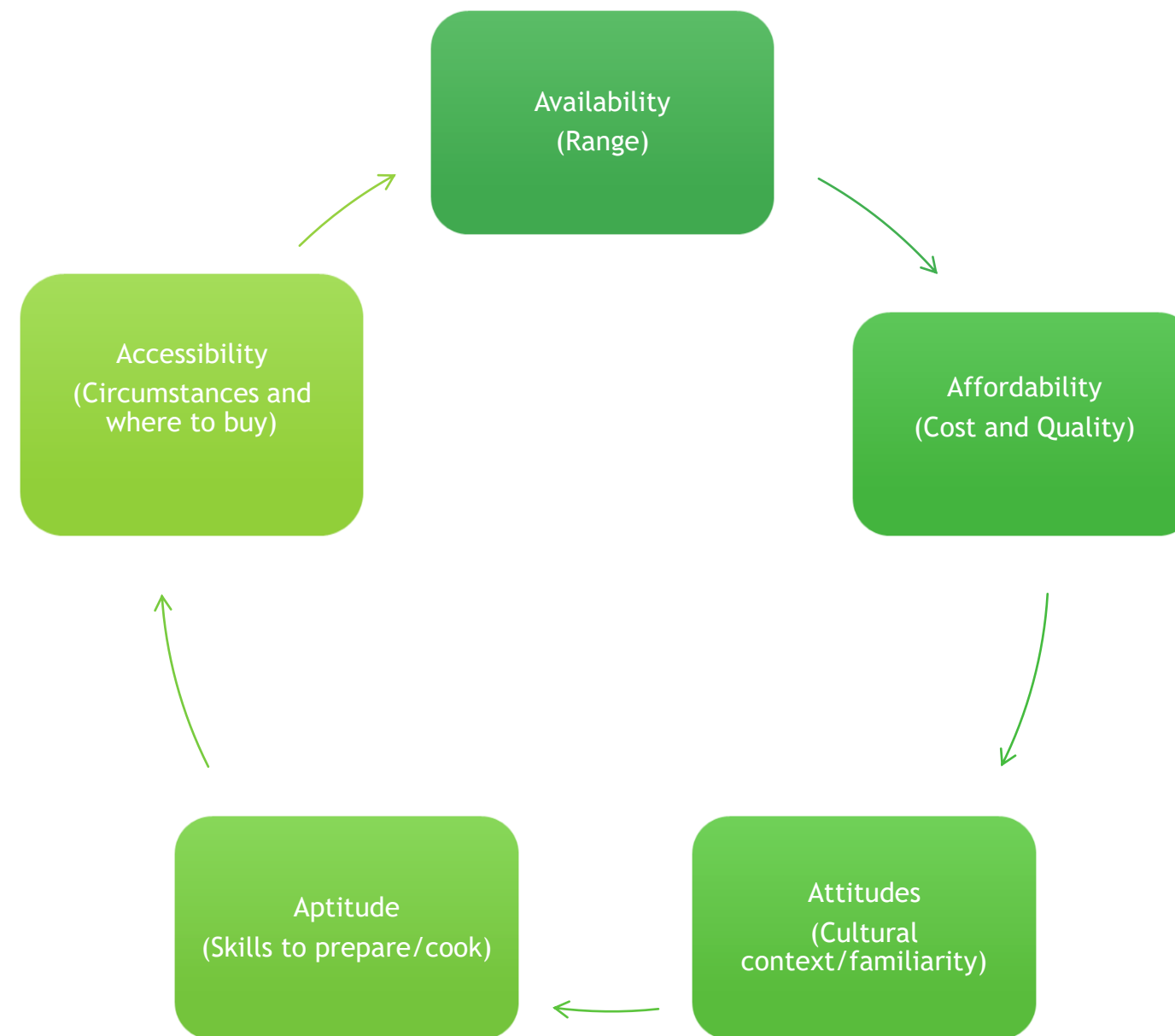
Lanarkshire Community Food
and Health Partnership

LCFHP About Us

- ▶ LCFHP is a Company Limited by Guarantee and Registered Charity in Scotland
- ▶ Founded (as North Lanarkshire Food Federation) 1990
- ▶ Originally run by a network of community groups the organisation is based in Bargeddie, North Lanarkshire

LCFHP Philosophy

“Provide and Promote”



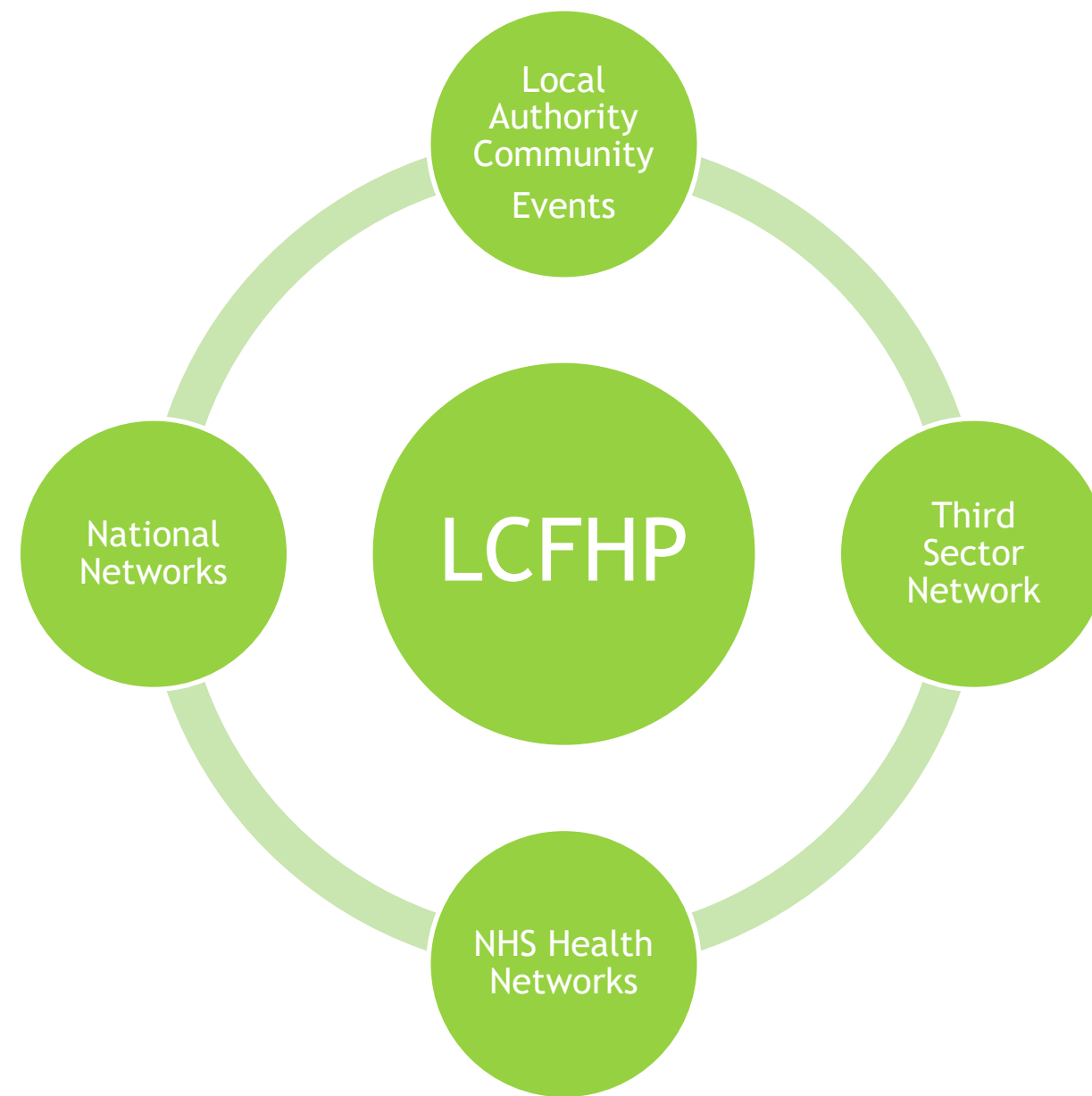
LCFHP

What We Do

- ▶ LCFHP operate several “Branded” Programmes
 - ▶ Community Food Co-op Network
 - ▶ Fruits and Roots (Social Enterprise)
 - ▶ Healthy Cooking and Nutrition Classes
 - ▶ Cash First and Emergency Food Aid
 - ▶ The Wellbeing Kitchen
 - ▶ Co-op @home delivery service
 - ▶ Healthy Mummy Happy Baby
 - ▶ Make Move Munch Clubs
 - ▶ Come Dine With Us
 - ▶ School Holiday Programmes



How do we engage with the sector?



- ▶ Original partnership “Support + Connect 2014” - Lottery Funded North Lan partnership. Aim to reduce need for food bank. 87% of foodbank users didn't need food, they could be helped in other ways. Food bank usage dropped by 20% per annum whilst other areas increased by 100+% per annum
- ▶ Beneficiaries “triaged” and food parcel is last option. Over £50m raised from approx. 30000 benefit checks
- ▶ Community and Voluntary Sector's “Food Ladder” style approach in post-covid years helps reduce need for emergency food when working in sync with cash-first
- ▶ But....

Our cash first
journey
2014-present

We can still improve!

Whilst “Cash-First” is spreading there is still a constant returning to the primal instinct of helping people in crisis by giving food as a “first aid”

Many beneficiaries, for a multitude of reasons, will only accept food and won't engage

Some organisations look to initiate an emergency food aid without exploring. This can keep people in a state of dependency

Organisations also refuse to engage with “cash-first” based on their own principles

Where can
we improve?

Throughout our partnership in North Lanarkshire we have found the following trends;

Every month we found that around 30% of the recipients of emergency were children, mostly from single parents, mostly women. Of the remainder: 60-70% single males, 30-40% single females

Of the monthly referrals or emergency food we found that around 30% were regulars

Of that, most of the family units were a single award

**Benefits of
cash-first**

We've found that working with community groups and emergency food providers to promote cash-first and a food ladder approach is the most effective way to help get on top of the food bank issue

After all, there is no shortage of food in the country. There's not a shop with empty shelves. There's a lack of money for some!

If we can help those who can be helped via cash first and a thriving community food sector, then more resources can be diverted helping the more dependent beneficiaries

Next steps
and
conclusions

Thank you!

- ▶ General enquiries contact:
gordon@lcfhp.co.uk
- ▶ Nutritional enquiries:
shawn.mckelvie@lchfp.co.uk
- ▶ Store enquiries:
Maria.Thomson@lcfhp.co.uk
- ▶ www.lcfhp.co.uk
- ▶ Facebook and X - @lcfhp



Feedback

We'd really value and appreciate your feedback.

- 1.** Go to www.menti.com
- 2.** Code: 4355 3956

Thank you!

Community Food Webinar - Collaborating across Scotland to develop a food insecurity resource space

Any Questions?

