

Food Poverty Action Plan



NORWICH **FOOD** ALLIANCE



November 2019

About the Norwich Food Alliance

We are a group of organisations working together to reduce food poverty in Norwich. This document is the Food Poverty Action Plan, designed to find out ways of tackling food poverty in our local area. Feedback from the Workshop in April 2019 has helped shape the actions that we can take under each of the aims. We have also sought input from people experiencing food poverty in Norwich, to make sure that the kind of actions we felt were important would be practical and useful to the people it would affect.

We have sought to highlight opportunities to create new projects and support current projects, ones which offer solutions to enable all Norwich residents to have access to nutritious and tasty food. A collaborative and networked approach is at the core of these 4 aims: Norwich is lucky to have a wealth of services and projects, but even within the city not everyone is aware of what is available.

Our plan tries to address both long-term outcomes and crisis provision. Increasing Healthy Start and free school meals uptake along with food education for younger people should lead to better long term outcomes for the next generation. Increasing access to healthy food at affordable prices and cultivating interest in home grown food is a long term solution, however, ensuring there is sufficient crisis provision through access to support services is intended to help in the more immediate term.

Using input and pledges from the previous workshop, we have identified potential solutions: now we need action! The Alliance is confident that the actions we are presenting in this document would make a positive difference on the ground to those in need. But we cannot do it alone! We hope that groups can share resources to make these actions come to fruition and make Norwich a place where all residents can access support to lead lives that are free from hunger.

WE HAVE FOUR WORK STRANDS

1. Increasing skills and knowledge around preparing nutritious meals
2. Reducing and making better use of food waste
3. Increasing access to support services
4. Filling gaps in food provision



Food Poverty in Norwich

WHAT IS FOOD POVERTY?

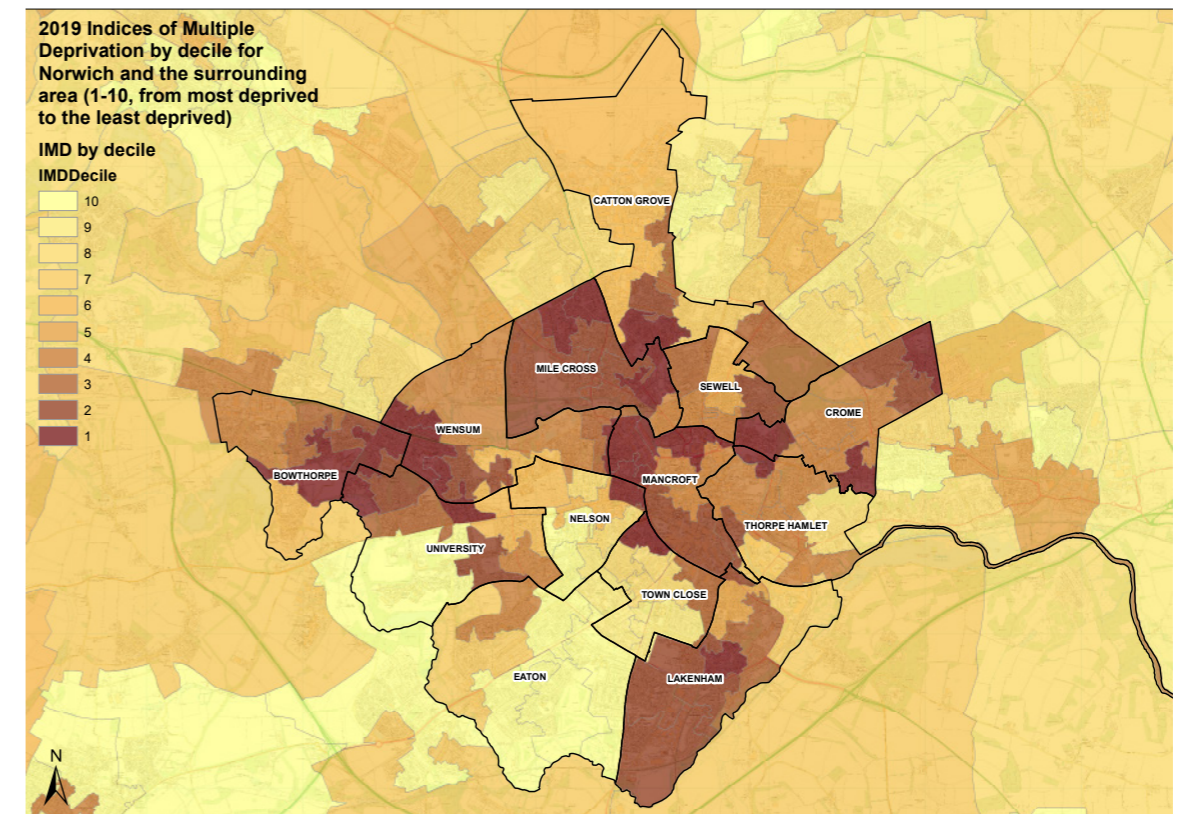
Food poverty is when an individual or family struggle to have enough to eat. This can be triggered by a crisis, or be the result of long term lack of access to a healthy, affordable diet. Food poverty can affect people in different ways: children who no longer have access to free school meals in holiday time, those giving up their own food to allow their families to eat, those who struggle to afford to buy healthy food or those who require support to prepare their meals.

Food poverty tends not to be directly measured by the government. However, food poverty coincides with other types of poverty: if you don't have enough money for food you are unlikely to have enough money for other basic necessities either. Norwich has more children living in low income families than the England average, with 22.2% compared to the average of 17% (HMRC, 2016). Fuel Poverty also helps predict food poverty: Norwich has 13% of households living in fuel poverty, in contrast to 11% nationally (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2017). The recent Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019, has shown that Norwich has a disproportionate number of areas which are in the 'most deprived' decile in the UK (21%). From these statistics, and the lived experiences of those in our community, it is clear that Norwich needs to support those vulnerable to food poverty.

As part of our needs evaluation we conducted a FIES (Food Insecurity Experience Survey) to try to get a snapshot of the level of food insecurity seen by those accessing food provision services in Norwich. Of those surveyed, 42% were renting from the council, and 31% were in accommodation owned by the Housing Association. This highlights what we already know about food insecurity - that it affects those on low incomes and those who are already known to the council. The largest age demographic surveyed was between 45-54, but ages ranged from 16-24 to 65-74. 63% of our sample were single individuals, 21% families and the rest couples or sharing. The sample was balanced for gender. The sample was predominantly white British, 89%. We cannot say for sure that the sample was entirely representative of food insecurity in Norwich due to a limited sample size of 19, but we feel it does give some insight into those who were surveyed at FoodBanks, FoodCycle and The Feed. The FIES we conducted had 8 questions - each is an indicator of food insecurity in the last 90 days. 78% of respondents answered "yes" to 5 or more of the 8 questions.

A vast majority reported being worried about not having enough food to eat due to a lack of money or resources (95%) - these concerns are clearly based on stark realities as within the previous 90 days almost the same number of people had experienced a time when they had to skip a meal. In terms of quality, 74% had experienced a time when they were unable to eat healthy and nutritious food, and 83% had experienced a time when they ate only a few kinds of food. In terms of quantity 83% reported having eaten less than they thought they should, and 61% reported not eating when they were hungry. The extreme end of this is running out of food, which 83% had experienced, and not eating for a whole day, which 41% had

experienced in the last 3 months. From these results it appears that both quantity and quality of food are important aspects of food insecurity in Norwich, and that both are lacking for a majority of people who answered the survey. It appears that there needs to be more food available overall, and that there should be a greater variety of offerings. This was echoed in our April Workshop, and in our subsequent Service User Survey.



WHAT DO WE ALREADY HAVE?

Norwich has a thriving array of charities and community groups who are working to relieve the pressure on those in or in danger of food poverty. Overleaf is the list of groups who are on the Feed's website - if you're missing please get in touch!

Many of the groups in the list overleaf address crisis provision in the city centre, however those experiencing food poverty are in a wide array of situations, including families and individuals who may be securely in housing or not. Travel into the city centre to receive food assistance is not always possible, and we have identified that there is the potential for more community based meals outside of the city centre which could appeal to a wider demographic in a more localised area.

Plan Development Activities

Developing a plan involved gathering data on deprivation in Norwich, this included our FIES data and also information on the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers and free school meals. A map was created showing these data for Norwich and used in the development of the plan in the April Workshop.

To create the plan we asked for contribution from local groups and charities to the Workshop in April. There were 4 main aims under which suggestions and offers were made. Upon reviewing these we have taken the most achievable goals and incorporated them into the plan. To make sure that these plans were going to be practical for those experiencing food poverty, we took these ideas to potential service users through a survey.

Surveys were taken at the following places: New Hope Christian Centre (FoodBank), FoodCycle, Oak Grove Community Church (FoodBank), Gateway Alive (FoodBank centre), Trinity United Reformed Church (community meal) Harford Community Centre (independent foodbank) and The Feed.

The first question on the survey asked respondents to evaluate how important each "aim" was on a scale of 1 to 5. All 4 aims received an average response of at least 4 out of 5, which lends evidence that there is general support for the 4 aims that the Food Alliance have chosen, from the people that might benefit from such actions.



**Formation of Norwich Food Alliance
2018**

Assessment of Need

**Workshop with Local Groups
April 2019**

**Development of
Action Plan**

**Evaluation of Plan by Service Users
August 2019**

**Launch of Food Poverty Action Plan
November 2019**

Further Recommendations from Research

FOOD EDUCATION

Around 43% of the sample had children. Most were not aware of their children receiving information about food and nutrition in school. Less than half of parents thought their children had a good understanding of what a healthy meal consists of. Of those parents who responded 'Yes', that their children do receive food and nutrition education, 75% responded that their children do pass on what they have learned. It therefore seems that when food and nutrition education is available children wish to share their new knowledge with their families. The vast majority of people (93%) thought they themselves did have a good idea of what constitutes a healthy meal. 62% of all those surveyed said they would be interested in receiving recipes for cooking on a budget. This shows that it is likely that the barrier to preparing such meals were financial constraints. We have taken this as evidence that projects around food and nutrition for young people and children could be particularly beneficial, and that healthy, low-cost recipes should be made accessible. In fact, 81% did not know where to go to learn about cooking healthy food on a budget. This makes it clear that more could be done to promote those courses which are already available. This could be achieved through making information more accessible between different skills and food provision organisations so that those who want to can access what is available. The results from the survey also indicate that there is equal demand for online and paper copies of recipes and highlight the diversity of accessibility required when planning to distribute these types of information.

HEALTHY START

Healthy Start is a means-tested government scheme which provides vouchers for expecting mothers or those with young children. The vouchers can be used towards healthy foods such as milk, vitamins, fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables, and infant formula milk. As of 2018, Norwich had 1294 eligible people. However, only 63% of those eligible had claimed them. It also appears that in most postcodes, fewer eligible people are claiming healthy start vouchers than last year. Just 17% of the surveyed parents were in receipt of Healthy start vouchers. 48% believed they were ineligible. 20% of parents did not know about them and 10% were yet to apply. It could be the case that some of those who believed they were ineligible are in fact eligible, however the age of their children was not asked for in this survey. There are at least 10% who appear to be eligible but have not applied, and another 20% who did not know about the vouchers, some of whom may be eligible. From this it appears that there is opportunity to increase uptake through increasing awareness, making eligibility criteria clearer and removing barriers to application.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

38% of parents responded that their children receive free school meals. 38% responded that they were ineligible. Only 7% did not know about them, and another 7% were yet to apply. It could be the case that those who have identified themselves as ineligible are potentially eligible. However it appears that there is good knowledge about free school meals among those surveyed.

GROW YOUR OWN

For those who do not already grow their own food (81%) the most frequently selected response was a lack of space, with over 2/3 citing this as a reason. This implies that more could be done to highlight affordable, available spaces for growing your own food such as allotments or community gardens.

FOOD SURPLUS

The survey asked for views on the use of food surplus. Almost all of the responses to this question were positive, which perhaps means the stigma of using food surplus has lessened as environmental consciousness has increased among the population. There is also evidence of a lack of clarity over what food surplus is. However, a majority said they would be interested in receiving food surplus to use at home.

COMMUNITY FRIDGES

The responses to this question highlighted a general lack of awareness of the existence of community fridges. Many people did not know about them, or how they operate. For many people, the distance would still be too great to travel to and from the fridge. From this, we feel that supporting the community fridges to be more visible, as well as supporting the setting up of new fridges around the city would help people access fresh food locally. The survey also asked if the respondents would be willing to access support and advice at the location of the fridge (like a community hub - as is in effect in some community fridges) and 61% said that they would. This would be beneficial in increasing access to support services.

SOCIAL SUPERMARKET

There was some confusion with this question over what a social supermarket is, as Norwich does not have one locally. Caveats were also mentioned on the surveys, such as depending on the price and types of products offered. When asked if they would be willing to pay a small membership fee to access a social supermarket (this is one way of structuring a community supermarket) 59% responded yes to this question, 14% responded No and 27% responded don't know.

ACCESS AND AWARENESS OF SERVICES

The foodbank is well represented in this survey: 52% of respondents had used a foodbank (however many of the people surveyed were asked at foodbanks) of those who were not surveyed at a foodbank, 1/3 had used one in the past. There was a roughly equal split between people who did know about the many free meals available in Norwich and those who did not. This indicated that more could be done to highlight food provision around the city through sharing information between food providers. Of those who attended the free meals in Norwich, they were asked to say which was the most important thing about the meals were. The findings show that although free food is important to most respondents, that there is an equally important aspect of social connection. It appears that Norwich must be doing quite well in this area for so many people to have selected it as an important reason to attend meals.

01

Increasing Skills and Knowledge around Preparing Nutritious Meals

Norwich becomes a place where community groups and services work together to signpost those in need to resources and information on preparing nutritious meals on a budget. Groups and services help remove barriers to growing food, through sharing knowledge and resources.



FIRST PRIORITY



FUTURE PROJECT

ACTION	SUGGESTION	WHO	RESOURCES REQUIRED
<p>1. PUBLICISING</p> <p>Increase awareness about services in Norwich that provide education and training in food preparation and healthy meals</p>	<p>a) Use LUMi, the Feed directory and other available resources to promote local services supporting people to learn how to cook affordable healthy meals, including through development of paper materials which could be distributed via food banks and other outlets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fareshare • CGL • Soul Foundation • NCAN • DWP/Job Centre • LTC Green Spaces • NW Mind • Norwich City Council • Age UK • Voluntary Norfolk via Better Together Norfolk and Carers Matter • FoodHub • Gateway Vineyard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time: someone to collate all information • Printing: printing the information • Distribution: distributing the paper format and publicising the online version on various platforms • Ongoing: updating regularly
	<p>b) Encourage the incorporation of cooking skills training into community meals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joy of Food • Norwich City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for Training
<p>2. RECIPES</p> <p>Promote recipes for nutritious meals on a budget</p>	<p>a) Identify suitable recipe resources and promote them online and, where possible, via paper copies in appropriate outlets such as foodbanks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trussell Trust • LTC Green Spaces • CFO- NCC • NW Mind • Norwich foodhub • St Francis Community Fridge • NCAN • LTC Green Spaces • CFO- NCC • NW Mind • Age Uk Norwich • Norwich foodhub • CGL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time: gathering recipes that are suitable • Printing: having the recipes printed in sufficient numbers • Distributing to various outlets • Publicising online

01

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ACTION	SUGGESTION	WHO	RESOURCES REQUIRED
<p>3. GROW YOUR OWN</p> <p>Promote available services to support people who want to grow their own food</p>	<p>a) Promote use and availability of existing growing spaces, such as allotments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norwich City Council Enabling Team Outdoor Projects Network Soul Foundation St Francis Community Fridge LTC Green Spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Networks: publicising the availability of allotments Time: find out what is already on offer and how it can be expanded Space: where to grow and store seedlings Distribution: how to distribute seedlings to wider community
	<p>a) Support and promote wider projects to help people to grow their own food</p> <p>b) Setting up of community project teaching people the knowledge of how to grow their own food in small spaces and provide free seedlings or seeds)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuckswood Library garden NW Mind CGL NCAN CFO- NCC Grapes Hill Community Garden Age UK Norwich FoodHub 	
<p>4. COOKING SKILLS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE</p> <p>Develop new projects promoting cooking skills for children and young people</p>	<p>a) Work with partners to support funding proposals for new projects, particularly aimed at children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joy of Food/adult learning Adult learning Gateway Vineyard Fareshare Joy of Food/adult learning Voluntary Norfolk CFO- NCC Norwich foodhub Soul Foundation Gateway Vineyard NCAN Age Uk Norwich 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Space: spaces where training could take place Time: to work on a funding proposal Publicising: making sure young people and those with children can find out about the training

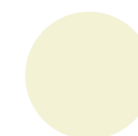
02

Reducing and Making Better Use of Food Waste

Norwich becomes a place where partnerships with food suppliers enable food surplus to be successfully distributed to those at risk of food poverty, through charities and to households. This would allow fresh and healthy foods to be accessible to those at all wealth levels.



FIRST PRIORITY



FUTURE PROJECT

ACTION	SUGGESTION	WHO	RESOURCES REQUIRED
<p>1. VOLUNTEERS</p> <p>Raise awareness of volunteering opportunities to support the collection of food surplus and its distribution to charities, the FoodHub, and community fridges</p>	<p>a) Deliver a campaign to increase awareness about opportunities to volunteer</p> <p>b) Encourage collaboration between groups with similar aims to share their volunteers when possible</p> <p>c) Creation of a Volunteer Coordinator role, to recruit and manage volunteers across the network where required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norwich City Council Adult Learning LTC Green Spaces NCAN CFO NCC NW Mind FoodHub Voluntary Norfolk Fareshare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Networks: publicity Advertising in local papers Funding for 12 months part-time Volunteer Coordinator role
<p>2. COMMUNITY FRIDGES</p> <p>Promote and support existing and new community fridges to enable more people to be able to access fresh surplus food for their households</p>	<p>a) Promote and support existing community fridges as part of the wider food network, for example by publicising their offer in local food banks, sharing information and resources</p> <p>b) Support new community fridges, for example by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying suitable spaces for more community fridges Develop a toolkit of setup guidelines for community fridges Encourage existing community fridges to share their learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Fridges LTC Green Spaces NCAN Trussell Trust NCC Fareshare NW Mind Soul Foundation Fareshare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money: funding for fridges Time: committing to getting the Fridge set up in line with food safety regulations Volunteering: collecting more surplus food and delivering it to the community fridges Volunteers to man the fridge if appropriate Space: community spaces with room for a fridge

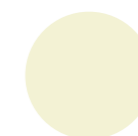
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FIRST PRIORITY



FUTURE PROJECT

ACTION	SUGGESTION	WHO	RESOURCES REQUIRED
<p>3. COMMUNITY SUPERMARKET</p> <p>Develop a proposal for a community supermarket using food surplus</p>	<p>a) Making a place where people can get surplus food for use in their own homes</p> <p>b) Integrating a community café for free to access food, combined with access to social support services</p> <p>c) Hosting cooking courses on-site</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FoodHub • Norwich City Council • Gateway Vineyard • Norwich FoodHub • Soul Church • Joy of Food • WCAW • CFO - NCC • LTC Green Spaces • Norwich City Council • CGL • Fareshare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding: funding a staff member for a community supermarket/café to take the initiative forward • Time: working on funding proposals and strategies • Publicity - sharing the initiative so people get to know about it

03

Increasing Access to Support Services



Increasing access to existing support services through raising awareness of current provision, information sharing and improved accessibility. Groups and services work together to maintain an up to date list of food provision in Norwich, as well as other relevant support services, so wherever support is first sought the same information can be passed on.



FIRST PRIORITY

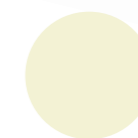
ACTION	SUGGESTION	WHO	RESOURCES REQUIRED
<p>1. HEALTHY START AND FREE SCHOOL MEALS</p> <p>Promote Healthy Start and Free School Meal benefits to encourage and increase in take up by eligible families</p>	<p>a) Promote uptake of Healthy Start and FSM benefits through partner communication channels, including Citizen Magazine and health services</p> <p>b) Streamlining the process of applying for vouchers - having applications ready to access at key venues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norwich City Council FoodBanks GP Surgeries Trussell Trust Gateway Vineyard CFO - NCC NCAN FareShare Norwich Food Hub LTC Green Spaces Norfolk Older People's Strategic Partnership (NOPSP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time: writing the copy for inclusion in Citizen Printing costs: funding the printing of application forms
<p>2. SUPPORTING SIGNPOSTING</p> <p>Increasing access to wider advice and support</p>	<p>a) Find opportunities to support those in food poverty to access wider advice and support</p> <p>b) Develop training for frontline workers and volunteers to support them to encourage people to access this support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norwich City Council Mind St. Francis Community Fridge Norwich Food Hub FareShare <p>THESE PEOPLE DO SIGNPOSTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age UK Norwich LTC Green Services St. Francis Community Fridge <p>THESE PEOPLE CAN HELP WITH SIGNPOSTING TRAINING/ INFORMATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CGL D.W.P NCAN Trussell Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time: ensuring that service information is up to date Time: planning and organising training Funding: for trainers to help develop signposting skills Volunteering: willingness to participate in such a scheme

04 Filling Gaps in Food Provision

Norwich already has a wealth of food provision throughout the week. However, there is considerable overlap and the latest information is not always easy to access.



FIRST PRIORITY



FUTURE PROJECT

ACTION	SUGGESTION	WHO	RESOURCES REQUIRED
<p>1. PUBLICISING</p> <p>Better publication of foodbank and food provision in Norwich</p>	<p>a) Coordinated by The Feed, ensure the details of the free meals are kept up to date</p> <p>b) Include community fridges and allotment and gardens in the above list and keep up to date</p> <p>c) Ensure agencies, groups and individuals in need of the above are kept informed of updates and new things</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Feed • Norfolk county council • CGL • Fareshare • NCAN • MW mind • Tuckswold Library • Age UK Norwich • Fareshare • Norfolk county council • NCAN • DWP/Jobcentre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time: ensuring details of services and groups are kept up to date • Publicity: sharing the list with groups and organisations, and on social media • Printing: printing out the list for display at community centres and churches etc.
<p>2. INCREASING PROVISION</p> <p>Identifying areas/groups that could be better served with food provision. Supporting new community food projects.</p>	<p>a) Creation a map of provision and identify gaps in provision through mapping provision against need</p> <p>b) Work with partners in these areas, or other interested partners to explore new opportunities (community meals, community supermarkets or other)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norwich City Council • The Feed • FoodHub • Henderson Trust • Gateway Vineyard • LTC Green Services • CGL • Soul Foundation • Norwich foodhub • MIND • fareshare • NCAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time: creating and maintaining a map • Funding: for supporting new community projects (rent, capital, staff) • Space: places where new projects could be launched from, or current projects extended • Volunteers: support extended service of community meals through increased volunteering

HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

Measuring outcomes tend not to be everyone's favourite way to spend their time, however in order to be successful in securing funding for current and future projects so that we can support and expand on the work that is already being done, these things do need to be mentioned. These aren't just for show - they can also help you see how the work you are doing is making a difference and potential ways of improvement - meaning that your effort makes the biggest impact - which is what we all want for Norwich.



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NORFOLK POLICE NORWICH CITY COUNCIL ST FRANCIS CHURCH/THE HIVE
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**COULD YOUR ORGANISATION SUPPORT
THE PLAN WITH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:**

**FUNDING, VOLUNTEERS, TIME, SPACE,
PUBLICITY OR DISTRIBUTION?**

