



Community Planning Aberdeen

Progress Report	1.1 Project End Report: Increase the number of people using community pantries by 20% by 2023
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Date of Report	6 th May 2022
Governance Group	CPA Board – 6 July 2022

Purpose of the Report
This report presents the results of the LOIP Improvement Project Aim to increase community pantry use by 20% by 2023 and seeks approval to end the project as the aim has been achieved.

Summary of Key Information
<p>1 BACKGROUND</p> <p>1.1 A new stretch outcome was introduced into the LOIP ‘No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026’ to communicate the Partnership’s commitment to reduce inequalities in the city and to mitigate the causes of immediate and acute poverty through projects which will ensure all people across the City have access to food, fuel, shelter and finance.</p> <p>1.2 Food poverty has become an increasing issue across the country in the last few years, and it is estimated that 21.5% of children in Aberdeen City are living in poverty ‘Making sure no-one goes without food due to poverty’ was the second highest ranking issue in the CPA Values Simulator exercise carried out in March 2021 and food poverty features in all 3 Locality Plans.</p> <p>1.3 There are several mitigating factors that have contributed to food poverty including the COVID 19 pandemic, the rise in the cost of living and the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>2 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AIM</p> <p>2.1 Against this background, in December 2019 the CPA Board approved the project charter for the initiation of an improvement project which aimed to increase community pantry use. Following the refresh of the LOIP in July 2021, the aim was updated for a 20% increase in membership of the community pantries to be achieved by 2023. The charter was revised in January 2022.</p> <p>2.2 Mitigating food poverty through increased memberships of community pantries was highlighted as an area where people could be offered dignity and choice rather than the foodbank offer of crisis provision. While food banks provide vital support to those suffering financial hardship, they do not represent a sustainable means of accessing</p>

food. Pantries offer those on low incomes to set up a yearly membership and pay a minimal weekly fee. Beneficiaries are also offered wrap around support whilst visiting the pantry which includes financial and budgeting support too. This also encourages community engagement.

3 WHAT CHANGES DID WE MAKE?

3.1 Several change ideas were tested throughout the project, and these have been adapted to fit around the COVID 19 restrictions response. The ideas tested are listed below.

1. Test a call & collect food bank system for beneficiaries to become pantry members, to provide a more dignified, sustainable way of accessing food.

Foodbank / call and collect users encouraged to sign up for the CFINE pantry. The benefit and advantages of being a pantry member have been consistently communicated to those who come to CFINE for an emergency food parcel. This not only encourages a more dignified way to access food but also encourages engagement with other members of the community as well as pantry volunteers. We have seen a steady number of beneficiaries become pantry members or at least enquire about being a pantry member and this number continues to rise.

2. Test supporting volunteers to run pantry, to extend the concept of community ownership.

Recruiting new and supporting existing volunteers has been key to the success of all CFINE pantries. The pantry based at CFINE's main office in Poynerook is primarily run by volunteers who take care of everything from organising rota's, stock control, booking slots for beneficiaries to shop as well as assisting on pantry days. Volunteers within the mobile pantry are also steadily increasing and eventually it is hoped that the mobile pantry will be run solely by volunteers. Having volunteers at the heart of the pantries have created a community feel where beneficiaries feel welcomed and supported.

3. Test a booking system used to book slots for pantry shop to ensure people feel safe using the pantry and to remove stigma

This was set up as a direct result of restrictions put in place due to the pandemic. By having a booking system with set times, we were able to ensure that beneficiaries, volunteers, and staff adhered to national safeguarding procedures such as social distancing, cleaning, and hand sanitising. This new way of accessing the pantry has also meant that the shopping experience is much more dignified as beneficiaries can shop at their allotted time without the stigma of having to wait their turn. Feedback received tells us that this is something that will continue long after all restrictions end.

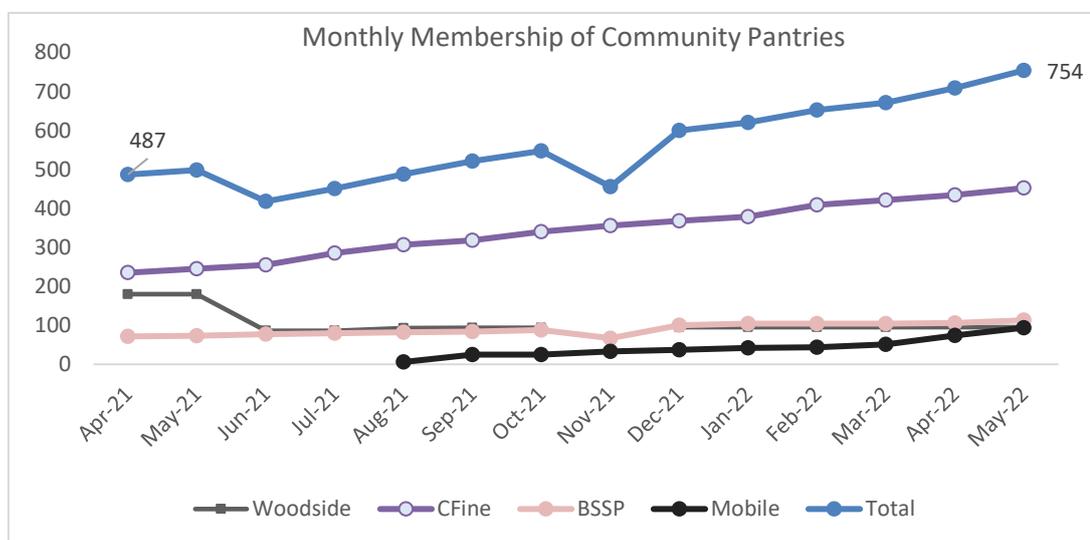
4. Test a mobile pantry to increase access to pantries across priority areas

The mobile pantry was launched back in September 2021 with Middlefield and Tillydrone were identified as pilot areas. This was on the back of research and liaison with community connectors who identified a need for such a service in these locations. Tillydrone is now proving so popular that we are looking to extend to two pantry slots here. The pantry is now servicing many communities fortnightly across Aberdeen including priority areas. These are Kincorth, Middlefield, Sheddocksley, Tillydrone, Seaton and Bucksburn. Hilton and Northfield have just recently been added. We are also identifying areas of hidden poverty throughout the city and are looking to extend

into these areas in the future also. The mobile pantry offers flexibility to those not in a position to travel and work has begun on strengthening partnerships in community hubs so those that need it most have support to access it.

4 HAVE OUR CHANGES RESULTED IN IMPROVEMENT?

4.1 Our multi-disciplinary project group has surpassed its aim of a 20% increase with a 55% increase in total pantry membership between April 2021 & May 2022 as evidenced in the chart below. The changes tested have made significant improvements in how beneficiaries' access the community pantry, and this has enabled us to surpass our aim. Whilst the pandemic has impacted greatly on the day to day lives of people this has also been used as an opportunity to look at current services and practises. Some of the changes tested have now been adopted as usual practise due to the success. The data below shows that the improvement has been sustained with an increase each month since November 2021.



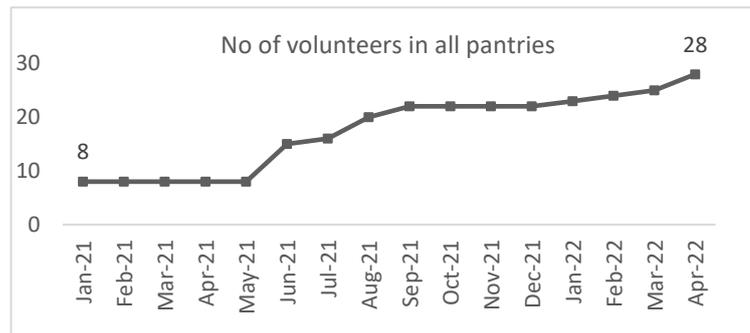
4.2 Ensuring that the pantry membership is active and up to date is key to ensuring that the numbers are sustained and truly reflective. As such, part of our ongoing work within the pantry was to contact members who had not attended for a few weeks. This allowed us to check in with beneficiaries as well as free up spaces for new members.

4.3 Positive outcomes for each of the changes tested were achieved as evidenced below:

1. Test a call & collect food bank system for beneficiaries to become pantry members, to provide a more dignified, sustainable way of accessing food.

From starting testing the change idea in August we have seen that through our targeted support 25 beneficiaries move from emergency food parcels to pantry members.

2. Test supporting volunteers to run pantry, to extend the concept of community ownership.



We have seen a 250% increase in pantry volunteers since Jan 2021 with 28 volunteers across all pantries as at April 2022.

3. Test a booking system used to book slots for pantry shop to ensure people feel safe using the pantry and to remove stigma

Feedback from our pantries members has been positive about the booking slots, with feedback stating:

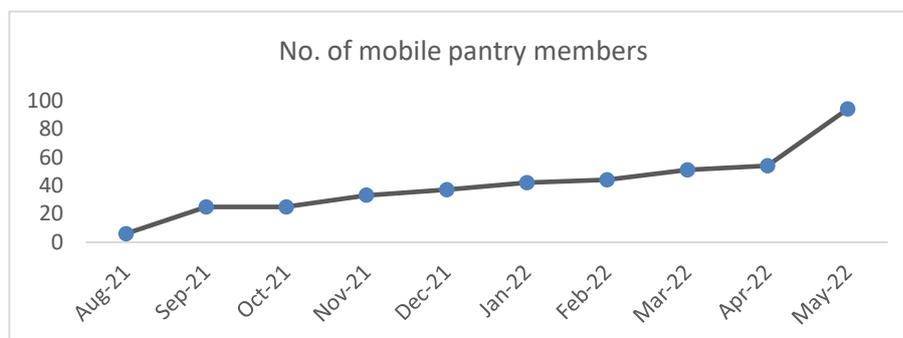


“One thing I really love about visiting the pantry is that from day one of visiting I was treated like a person. You are never judged or looked down on and you are always made to feel welcome.”

“The Pantry is brilliant, such value for money. You pay £2.50 and leave with over £20 of food. I tell all my friends to join. Even with the new system, it is great, I feel really safe and everything is done so well with the one-way system, but it’s a shame we aren’t allowed in the coffee bar, I really miss that. “

“Less worry and stress about where the £ is coming from for our next shop!!”

4. Test a mobile pantry to increase access to pantries across priority areas



As of May 2022, the mobile pantry had 94 members and is available in 8 neighbourhoods, namely: Kincorth, Middlefield, Sheddocksley, Tillydrone, Seaton and Bucksburn, with Hilton and Northfield having been recently added. The number of members have increased monthly since it launched in August 2021.

Feedback from one mobile pantry member was:
“I thought I would be embarrassed coming, but I actually really enjoy it. I always get at least 2 meals covered. In the holidays the kids came and was excited at getting veg! They are not enthusiastic about fruit and veg, but they are if it’s from the van.”



- 4.4 Finally, working with LOIP project 10.1 (Support on Liberation) led by Scottish Prison Service, provided a direct pathway for individual’s accessing the voluntary throughcare support to receive food parcels on their day of liberation, and provided them with access to a community pantry. This has allowed for the development of close partnership working between the New Routes throughcare team run by SACRO and the Shine throughcare team run by Turning Point and has led to 58% of individuals having accessed food parcels from CFine. Since August 2021 20 liberations have gone on to join the CFINE Community Pantry accessing affordable food for their families.

5 HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN AND MONITOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

- 5.1 The data shows that the increase in pantry membership has been sustained with membership increasing each month since November 2021.
- 5.2 The changes implemented have been adopted as business as usual and will continue as they have proved successful as evidenced above. CFINE continues to collect and analyse all data regarding pantry membership uptake and has identified escalation pathways with local partners should performance levels decline. Continual review and reflection of current processes is Imperative for the smooth running of pantry operations. Regular catch up with volunteers and development team will ensure consistency of service as well of any improvements needed. The Project team members will continue to use and build on the learning and identify opportunities to develop and implement future improvements.
- 5.3 Should it be agreed that the project is ended, the data recorded will continue to be monitored and reported to the Anti-Poverty Group, as well as improvement Programme Dashboard/Outcomes Framework to ensure that performance continues.

6 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALE UP AND SPREAD

- 6.1 With the current cost of living crisis, demand, and requirement for access to affordable food has increased. To meet this demand, the increase of pantry members (whether this be community based permanent pantries or community mobiles) will continue to be encouraged and further development out in the community will strengthen the wrap around support that beneficiaries receive.
- 6.2 CFINE has a commitment to launch a further four pantries out in the community and development is underway to make sure this happens. Development and progression of this will be informed by the community and reported to the Anti-Poverty Group.

Recommendations for Action

It is recommended that the CPA Board:

- i) Agree that testing is concluded and that this Improvement Project is brought to an end on the basis that the project aim has been achieved and the changes tested will continue with business as usual and that the Anti-Poverty Group will continue to monitor the data;
- ii) Note that the dataset for the overall aim will continue to be included on the Improvement Programme Dashboard/Outcomes Framework to ensure progress is monitored; and
- iii) Note that the pantry model will be scaled up through the development of a further four pantries in Aberdeen and that development and progression of this will be reported to the Anti-Poverty Group.

Opportunities and Risks

Opportunities

Continue to grow pantries with support from community groups and partners.

Opportunities for beneficiaries to become volunteers increasing self-confidence and the possibility of gaining wider employment in the future

Risks

Food supply due to external factors

People

Consultation

Anti-Poverty Improvement Group

Project Team

Management Group

Background Papers

LOIP

Project Charter – Community Pantries

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