

Devon Community Foundation

COVID-19 Response Weekly Briefing 7 May 2020

Hello everyone and welcome to this week's briefing. We'd like to make this as useful and interactive as possible, so welcome feedback and suggestions about content.

If you know anyone else who'd be interested in receiving the briefing, feel free to forward, and encourage those to whom you forward to email nicola@devoncf.com to be put on the mailing list. Briefings will come out on a Thursday.

Click on the **BOLD COLOURED** links to be redirected to useful resources - Right click on the links if you want to open it in a separate window.





Resources

Bit of a hotch-potch of resources for you this week. Something for everyone, though!

There has been a welcome recent emphasis on the importance of lived-experience in evaluating and communicating the difference the voluntary sector can make to people's lives. This [guidance](#) on how to support people with first-hand experience to do great **media interviews**, is therefore timely.

Still on a story-telling theme, there's lots of material of interest in the **RSA Food and Farming Commission's** dedicated COVID [website](#). It details their research on how communities and those working in agriculture and food production are coping with the crisis, and explains how anyone can contribute their stories or videos. There are also resources for food and farming businesses.

Socialsuite, an impact management software company, has launched a [free COVID-19 Social Impact Assessment tool](#) aimed at foundations and nonprofits. It's basically a weekly email survey that can be sent out either to employees or beneficiaries or both, to gauge levels of stress, resilience, loneliness, etc, as a result of the crisis. Various dashboards etc are available. Socialsuite are keen to attract new organisations so they can build a larger dataset, while individual organisations can get a handle on the evolving landscape, and respond accordingly. Not tried it, not endorsing it, just flagging it, but if anyone does try it, we'd love some feedback!

I've mentioned these before, but I'll recommend again. **The IVAR briefings** come from conversations with a selection of VCSE leaders, convened partly as quasi-therapeutic stress-relievers, but also fantastic sources of nuanced insight. They're short but detailed, and always worth reading. The most recent one, [A Funding Cliff-Edge?](#) was published yesterday.

Spotlight on ... Food and Nutrition



The National Picture

The current pandemic has forced us to change the ways we access, cook and think about our food. We have all become familiar with the images of empty supermarket shelves and gallons of milk going to waste but are yet to discover what the long-term impacts on our food system will be. Not only have we experienced food shortages, but many people have been put into unstable financial positions that just a few months ago seemed unimaginable.

Food insecurity in the UK is by no means a new phenomenon with 1.6 million people accessing the support of Trussell Trust food banks in 2019. With an increase of people out of work, receiving a reduced income and living without the support of school meals and breakfast clubs, this demand is set to rise as a result of Covid-19.

[The Food Foundation](#) is publishing a range of useful articles and surveys that track the changing challenges and demands on our food system as a result of the pandemic.

[Sustain](#) publishes several webpages discussing food system resilience in response to Covid-19 which includes a number of good news stories from around the UK.

More locally, we too are seeing an increased demand for food aid services across the county.

Dr Clare Pettinger, leading on Food Plymouth's 'Food Equality project' and other research on food insecurity, reports that

"the pandemic has created a crisis on top of a crisis. Food insecurity was already a serious issue in Plymouth, but now we see even more need for longer term solutions to tackle hunger and food poverty from the bottom up. The amazing work of the front line volunteers with emergency food aid providers working harder than ever, to meet an increasing need to feed vulnerable individuals and communities needs to be highlighted....they go way beyond the call of duty."

Here at DCF we have been struck by the number of requests for funding support we have received from those wanting to ensure food provision within their communities. We have been heartened by the stories of local groups and organisations working around the clock to provide this essential service, but also by more informal neighbourhood groups that have come together to make sure those in their towns and villages are fed at this difficult time. The changes in food availability and guideline to shop as infrequently as possible mean that many of us need to be more creative in the kitchen using store cupboard staples whilst still trying to maintain nutritional value.

There are many organisations in Devon working hard to make this less of a challenge!

- **Food is Fun CIC** has set up the Facebook page [“Food buddies south west”](#). This page has quickly grown to nearly 700 members sharing tips and recipes and having positive discussions around food. The group are looking forward to celebrating VE Day with a virtual street party, sharing celebrations and food – [anyone is welcome to join!](#) Food is Fun, with the help of its beneficiaries have also put together the “Cook it” cookery book providing simple and nutritious recipes that can be created on a budget. These books have been distributed to food banks locally to be given out with food parcels and the group have set up a [Just Giving page](#) to enable them to distribute the book further.
- **The Pioneers Project CIC** has also turned to social media to help us eat well, sharing weekly Cook Along sessions on their [Facebook page](#). Recipes include tomato sauce and cinnamon donuts!
- **Recycle Devon** has published an online cookery book, [“have your food and eat it”](#) designed to help reduce food waste. The recipes are simple, budget-friendly and make use of ingredients we are likely to have at home, perfect for these Covid-19 times.

Accessing Food

Many people have been categorised as more vulnerable to the infection and advised not to leave the house even to shop for food. This group of people have now become reliant on an army of volunteers and food delivery services to make sure they are receiving adequate nutrition.

- Devon County Council has put together an [interactive map](#) of Covid-19 support groups across the county. These groups include volunteers who can deliver food and prescription medication to those who have become housebound.
- Plymouth Online Directory has a list of [food aid services](#) as well as a [page](#) dedicated to online food delivery providers such as Caring for Plymouth.
- Foodbanks are providing an extended service at this time, which is proving to be a lifeline for many. The [Okehampton Round Table](#) have been collecting donations in collaboration with their local foodbank and were delighted to announce that they had received over £1000 in donations. There is advice on using a foodbank available [here](#).
- [Punk Against Poverty CIC](#) has set up a network of 30 punk pantries across Torbay where members of the community can opt in to have anything from a repurposed chest of drawers to a bird table in front of their home. These pantries are then filled with surplus food donated by supermarkets and the local community. All pantries are printed with the slogan ‘take what you need, give what you can’. They are available to anyone struggling to access an adequate food supply to help themselves as they pass.
- [HALFF Project Food](#) is working hard to distribute food from its food hubs but is also carrying out its own research into the impact of Covid-19 on local people’s diet and access to food via an [online survey](#).

There are also some important benefits to be aware of which may help with the provision of food at this time.

Pregnant mothers and families with children under 4 years old may be eligible to claim [Healthy Start Vouchers](#). Many families are unaware that they are entitled to this means tested benefit which can be spent on milk, fruit and vegetables.

Food is an important part of our everyday routines and a change to the way we eat can cause increased feelings of stress and anxiety.

- Healthy lifestyle service, [One Small Step](#), is still providing healthy weight services on the phone, as well as digital support for people in Devon.
- [Eating Disorders Counselling Services Devon](#) has been interviewed on BBC Radio Devon about the impact Covid-19 is having on people with eating disorders and is continuing to support people via Zoom.

Homelessness : call for input

Next week we'll have a focus on the impact of the crisis on need in this area, and on the organisations who work to support those affected. Please do be in touch with any stories, examples, reflections from your own experience, or with details of people and organisations we ought to talk to. Please email: insights@devoncf.com.

DCF Funding Update

Crisis grants made since the last bulletin. We're publishing grants data weekly through [360giving.](#)

Team Horrbridge - Community Response - £500

Horrbridge

Purchase of essential food and household items for the community group to support vulnerable members of the community

GO North Devon - £1572

Bideford

Additional costs relating to provision of a door to door car service for cancer patients to access appointments and treatments

Great Parks Community Centre - £1,200

Paignton and Torquay

Increasing support worker hours to enable delivery of remote help relating to debt advice, benefit guidance and emotional support

Exmouth Friends in Need - £800

Exmouth and surrounding areas

Providing essential food, hygiene and cleaning items and meter top-ups for referred local residents to help alleviate financial poverty

