



SHROPSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Report

Meeting Date	18th April 2024			
Title of report	Shaping Places for Healthier Lives: Year 2 progress report			
This report is for (You will have been advised which applies)	Discussion and agreement of recommendations		Approval of recommendations (With discussion by exception)	x Information only (No recommendations)
Reporting Officer & email	Emily Fay, Programme Manager, Shaping Places for Healthier Lives, Shropshire Council Emily.fay@shropshire.gov.uk			
Which Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities does this report address? Please tick all that apply	Children & Young People	x	Joined up working	
	Mental Health		Improving Population Health	x
	Healthy Weight & Physical Activity	x	Working with and building strong and vibrant communities	x
	Workforce		Reduce inequalities (see below)	x
What inequalities does this report address?	This report considers the wider determinants of health, particularly residents experiencing low incomes and food insecurity, both of which contribute to health inequalities in Shropshire.			

Report Content: Please expand content under these headings or attach your report, ensuring the three headings are included.

1. Executive Summary

Shaping Places for Healthier Lives is a three-year partnership project funded by the Health Foundation. The wider objectives of the programme are to mobilise cross-sector action on the wider determinants of health through adopting a systems change approach. Our local focus is reducing food insecurity, particularly in Southwest Shropshire. Local levers identified during the discovery phase included strengthening our local system, reframing food insecurity, supporting residents to maximise their incomes and action at a community level. The preventative focus of this project links with a number of local wider workstreams including the Shropshire Plan, the Early Intervention and Prevention Framework, the Social Taskforce, and the development of Community and Families Hubs and One Shropshire.

Through the support of local and national partners this project has been an opportunity to explore what can be learnt about taking a complex system change approach and what can be achieved by taking a partnership approach to addressing multifaceted problems like food insecurity. This report summarises on the 2nd year of delivery. Moving into the 3rd year of delivery we would like to highlight the Ask, Assist and Act toolkit and training which is in development to support frontline staff and volunteers to hold effective conversations with residents to support them to maximise their incomes.

2. Report Recommendations

- The HWBB Board is asked to consider, discuss and comment on the content of the report.
- We encourage members of the HWBB board to take this information back to their organisations and consider if there are any actions which can be taken to support people experiencing food insecurity. These may include:
 - Considering how their workforce and the residents they support have been impacted by the cost of living and signposting those in need of support to reliable information.
 - Understanding the stigma experienced by people experiencing food insecurity and identifying what actions can be taken to reduce the barriers caused by this.
 - Identifying ways to improve navigation of the support system for residents.
 - Sharing key resources and information with staff and residents.
 - Building in opportunities for conversations about income maximisation with residents. In order to increase confidence and agency, we would also like to invite organisations to register their interest in taking part in Maximising Income training (*Ask, Assist, Act*) along with the use of our toolkit.
 - Reflect on the learning from this project to help shape future delivery of support for residents experiencing food insecurity and financial crisis.

3. Main Report

Shropshire is one of five Shaping Places for Healthier lives project areas in England. The objectives of the Shaping Places programme are to:

- mobilise cross-sector action on the wider determinants of health through sustainable system change at a local level.
- support local authorities to facilitate and enable local partnerships for system change on the wider determinants of health.
- learn how to make changes that impact on the wider determinants of health.

In Shropshire our focus is on reducing food insecurity in South-West Shropshire.

This project is part of the Shaping Places for Healthier Lives programme supported by the Health Foundation in partnership with the Local Government Association. The programme provides local councils with funding to work with partners from their local area to improve health and address health inequalities. The Health Foundation is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and health care for people in the UK. The LGA is the national voice of local government, working with councils to support, promote and improve.

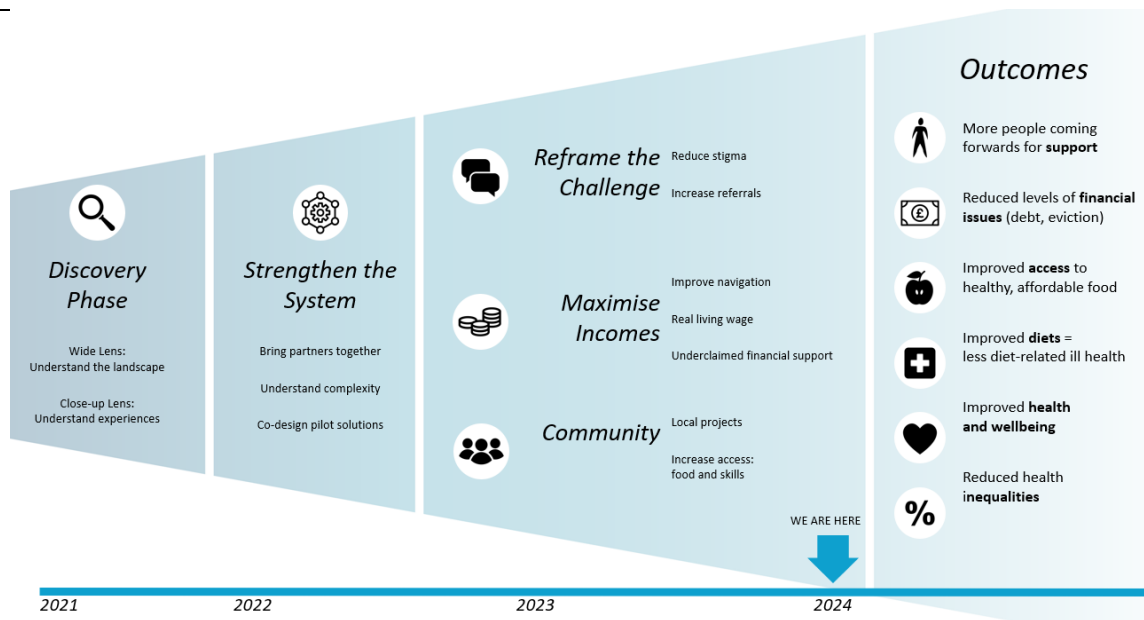
Our Project Team

Our partnership includes the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance, Citizens Advice Shropshire, Healthwatch Shropshire and the Public Health team at Shropshire Council.

Programme Support

The structure of the programme means that the Shaping Places team hold regular meetings with the LGA, Health Foundation, Design Council and the external learning partner PPL and the other four Shaping Places areas (Northumbria, Newham, Doncaster and Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire).

Project Timeline



Discovery Phase

In the spring of 2021, the project team researched food insecurity in Southwest Shropshire. We held discussions with stakeholders and people with lived experience of food insecurity to understand the challenges faced by people living on low incomes in rural areas. Healthwatch Shropshire published a report and their key recommendations included:

- The public and voluntary sector need to work in partnership to create services which are accessible and easy to navigate.
- Improved communication to support more joined up working across the community and public sector.
- Referral pathways to be streamlined to make sure people are able to access the right support at the right time.
- Develop 'wrap around' support for people who are in financial need to prevent them reaching crisis.

The [full report published by Healthwatch Shropshire](#) can be accessed online.

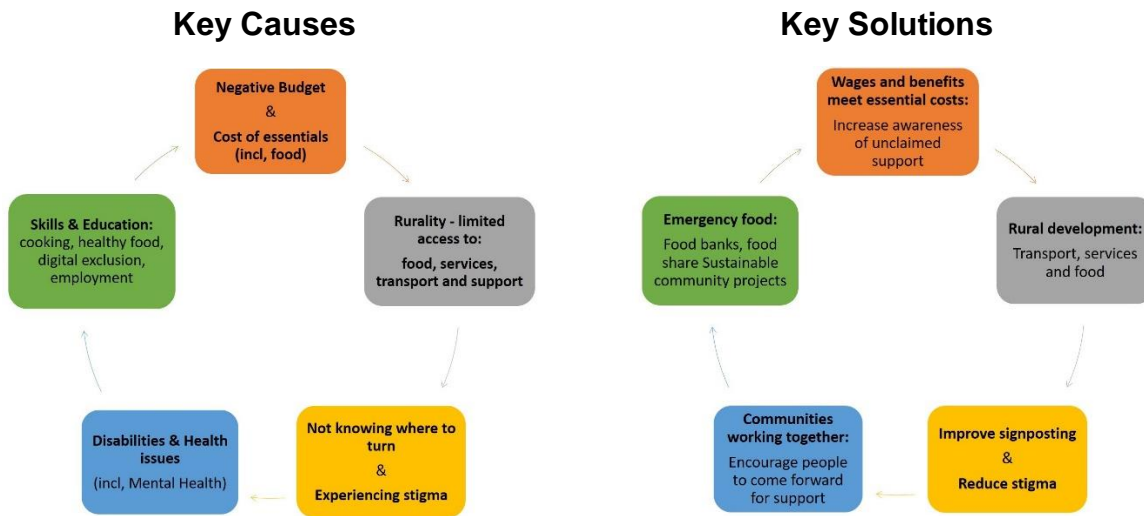
Project Vision

A 10-year vision was developed for reducing food insecurity in Shropshire:



Systems Mapping: Causes and Solutions

Information collected in the discovery phase enabled the development of systems mapping of both the causes and potential solutions to food insecurity in Shropshire. These maps were later simplified to communicate the key causes and local solutions to this complex issue:



Year 2 achievements – At a glance



Communities and Organisations working together

Partnership Working

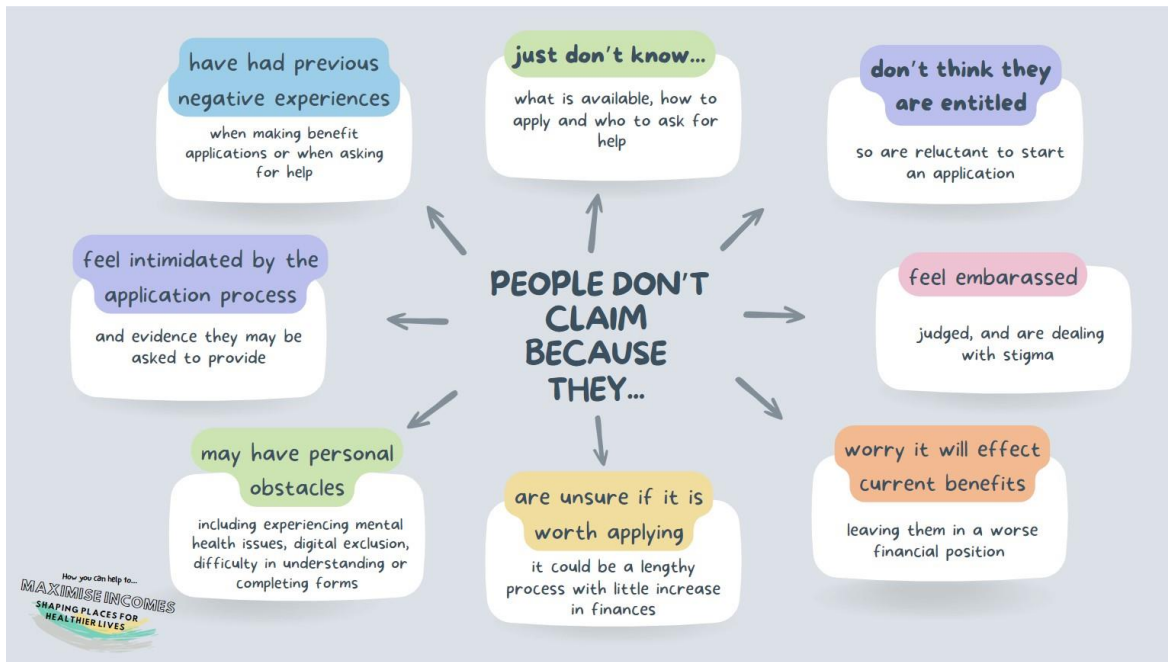
We have continued to work system-wide, with a wide variety of partners to improve information flows navigation of the system and support for people in financial need. Key groups have included the Social Taskforce, Hardship & Poverty group, Cost of Living Communications group, Healthy Lives Steering Group, HAF Steering Group, Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance, Shropshire Food Bank Network Meetings, Shropshire Good Food Partnership, Healthy Start group, Money Advice Forum, Ludlow food network, and Community Connectors.

System-Wide Communications

Throughout the project the Shaping Places team have worked with the cost-of-Living Communication group to develop clear communications which support Shropshire residents to access information about local support and encourage income maximisation.

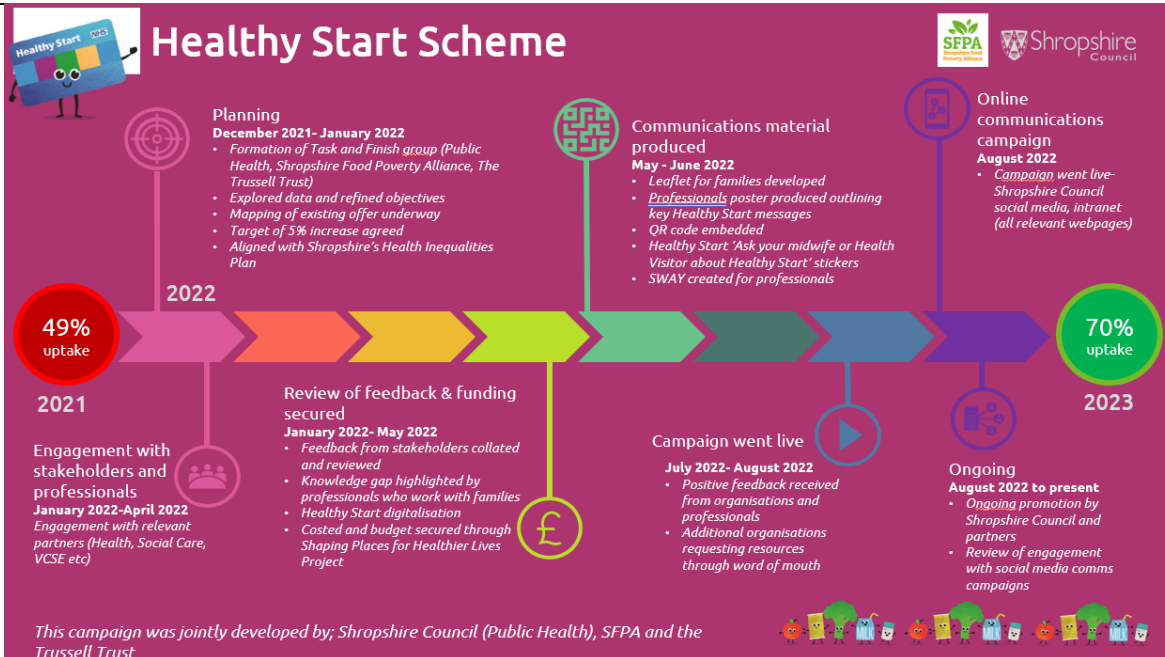
Maximising Income

The cost-of-living crisis has impacted household budgets, particularly due to the increased cost of food and energy. This has led to an increasing number of households having a negative budget at the end of each month (meaning their income is not enough to cover their essential costs. [Citizens Advice](#) now report that more than half of the people they support with Debt advice are now in a negative budget. However, [researchers](#) estimate that £19 billion of support goes unclaimed in the UK each year. Therefore, a key lever to reducing food insecurity is to promote Income maximization to increase household budgets. In Shropshire there are a number of key benefits which are underclaimed, including Healthy Start, Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance. The graphic below explores some of the key reasons people don't claim these benefits:



Healthy Start Campaign

In 2021 a working group was established to focus on the local uptake of Healthy Start, a key benefit to support access fresh fruit, vegetables and milk in pregnancy and early years. Our working group included Public Health, the SFGPA and the Trussell Trust. Our campaign raised uptake from 49% in 2021 to 70% by the end of 2023, demonstrating the impact we can have at a local level when organisations work together to promote the support available to people on low incomes.



Worrying About Money Leaflet

The Shaping Places team supported the SFPA to develop and distribute over 30,000 copies of the Worrying About Money leaflet across Shropshire, a resource which helps people facing financial crisis to more easily navigate the cash-first advice and support available to them locally. <https://www.worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/shropshire>

3x Cost of living sessions.

The Shaping Places team supported the design and delivery of three training sessions for frontline staff and volunteers across Shropshire with a number of partners (including SFPA, Citizens Advice Shropshire, Marches Energy Agency, Age UK Shropshire Telford and Wrekin, and Community Resource). The sessions focused on positive conversations around resident concerns about the cost-of-living crisis and improving navigation of the local system. More than 650 frontline staff and volunteers attended or viewed the sessions.

Advice First Aid Pilot

The Shaping Places team have developed and are piloting an Advice First Aid course in Southwest Shropshire. The aim of the training is to improve the skills of front-line staff and volunteers within community organisations to assist residents to navigate the system of support. They are trained to better understand the information offered by Citizens Advice, how to promote self-help when appropriate via signposting to reliable information, and to identify when a resident has an advice need which requires a referral to a Citizens Advice community advisor. The sessions encourage volunteers to follow the Ask, Assist and Act format:

- **ASK:** Listening and identifying when Citizens Advice can help.
- **ASSIST:** Navigating and sharing reliable information on all kinds of problems (such as managing money) using the Citizens Advice national website, with people who may be unable to do so for themselves.
- **ACT:** Understand when and how to signpost to Citizens Advice, or when to Refer when the person needs more in-depth support.

Sessions have been piloted with Bishops Castle, Church Stretton and Ludlow foodbanks, the Mayfair Centre and Hands Together Ludlow.

In 2024 the Shaping Places team are building on this training to develop a new training package which focuses on Maximising Incomes named Ask, Assist and Act:



CAB Community Advisors

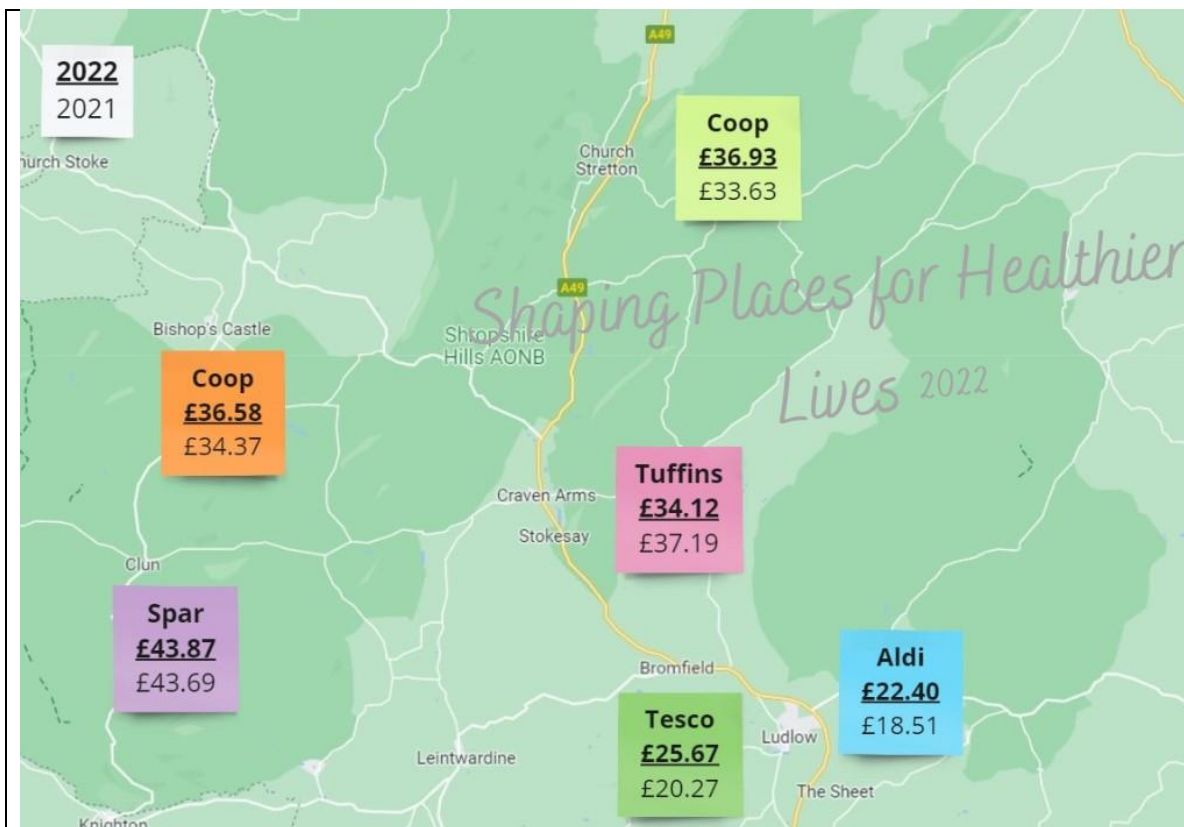
To improve access to advice in Southwest Shropshire, we have used some of the Shaping Places funding to fund a Citizens Advice Advisor to be available in foodbanks and other community venues in Southwest Shropshire.

Reframing Food Insecurity

The Shaping Places team have continued to work with people with lived experience, foodbanks and other partners to further understand the experiences of people in food insecurity with the aim of helping the wider system to understand the complexities of this problem.

Basket Research

In 2021 and 2022 the Shaping Places team visited each food shop in Southwest Shropshire to explore the price of a standard basket of 20 food and essential items. This simple exercise demonstrates the wide disparities in the price of a food shop in a rural area, and also the impact rising food costs has had on household budgets.



Foodbank Survey

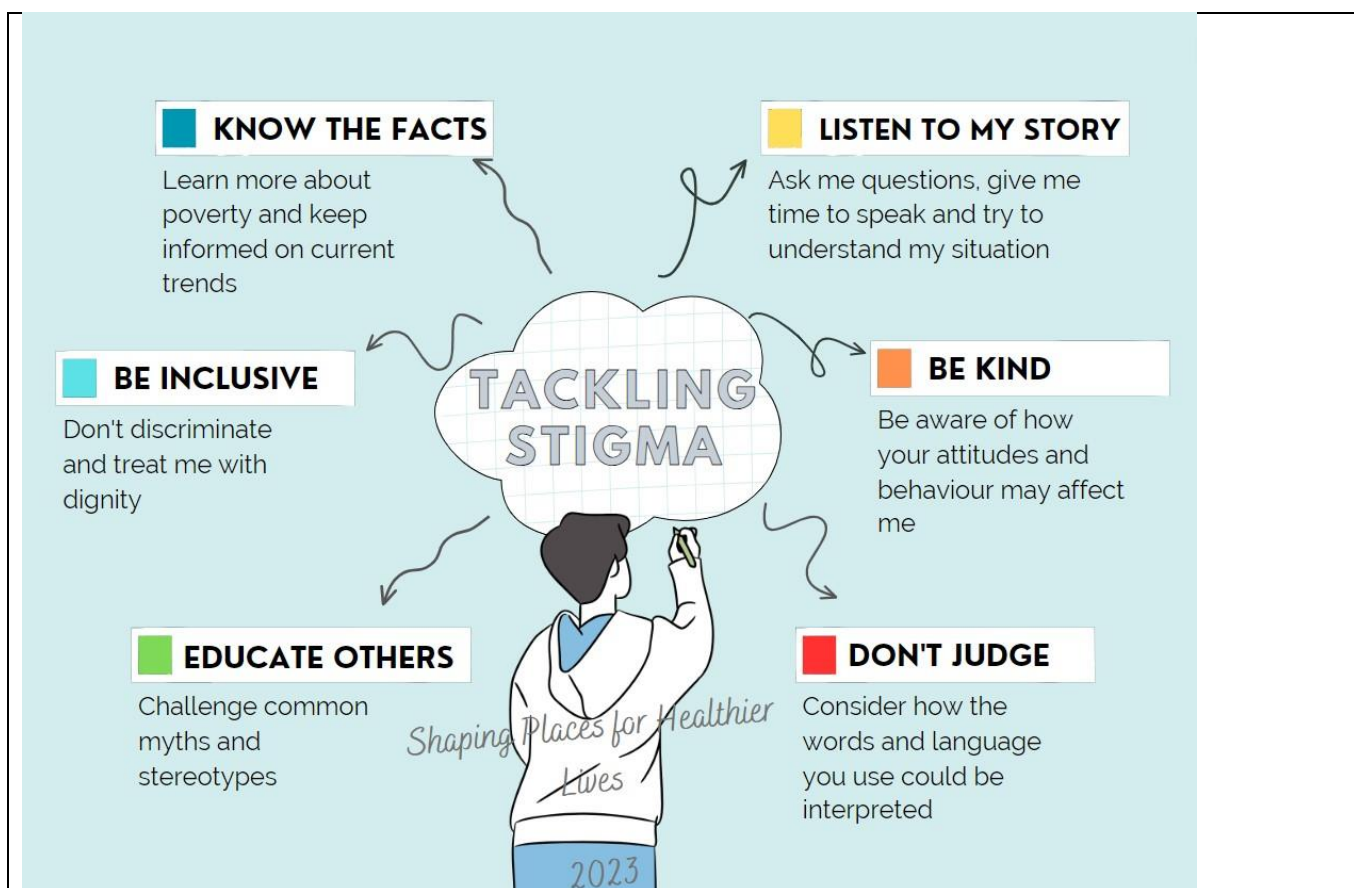
In 2023 the Shaping Places team collaborated with Stretton foodbank to develop a survey of foodbank clients, with the aim of:

- Gathering information about the additional support people may need, and if they are able to access it.
- Stretton foodbank to review their service to their customers, and to see if there are any improvements they may be able to make.
- Providing evidence to other agencies of the needs and concerns of customers who use Stretton foodbank.

Findings were shared with organisations in Church Stretton and helped to inform a discussion about how people on low incomes experiencing food insecurity could be supported in the Town.

Stigma Video

Many people experiencing money worries feel stigma and are reluctant to reach out to others for support. In 2022 the Shaping Places team worked with the Cost-of-Living Communications group, the SFPA coordinator and Stretton Foodbank to create a [video](#) aimed at reducing the stigma faced by residents who need support of foodbanks. The team have also produced a graphic for staff and volunteers to assist them in thinking about how to tackle this stigma.



External learning partner summary from Year 2 learning report

The Shaping Places team work closely with our external learning partner, PPL. In 2023 PPL interviewed 11 stakeholders in Shropshire and identified a range of strengths in the work which has happened locally:

“The project’s theory of change focuses on bringing partners together and enabling change at various levels, with a strong partnership approach, bringing together individuals with different perspectives, skills, experience and access points into the system from a range of different organisation.”

“The complex systems approach positively impacted both individual and system levels, focusing on beliefs, goals, structures, and events.”

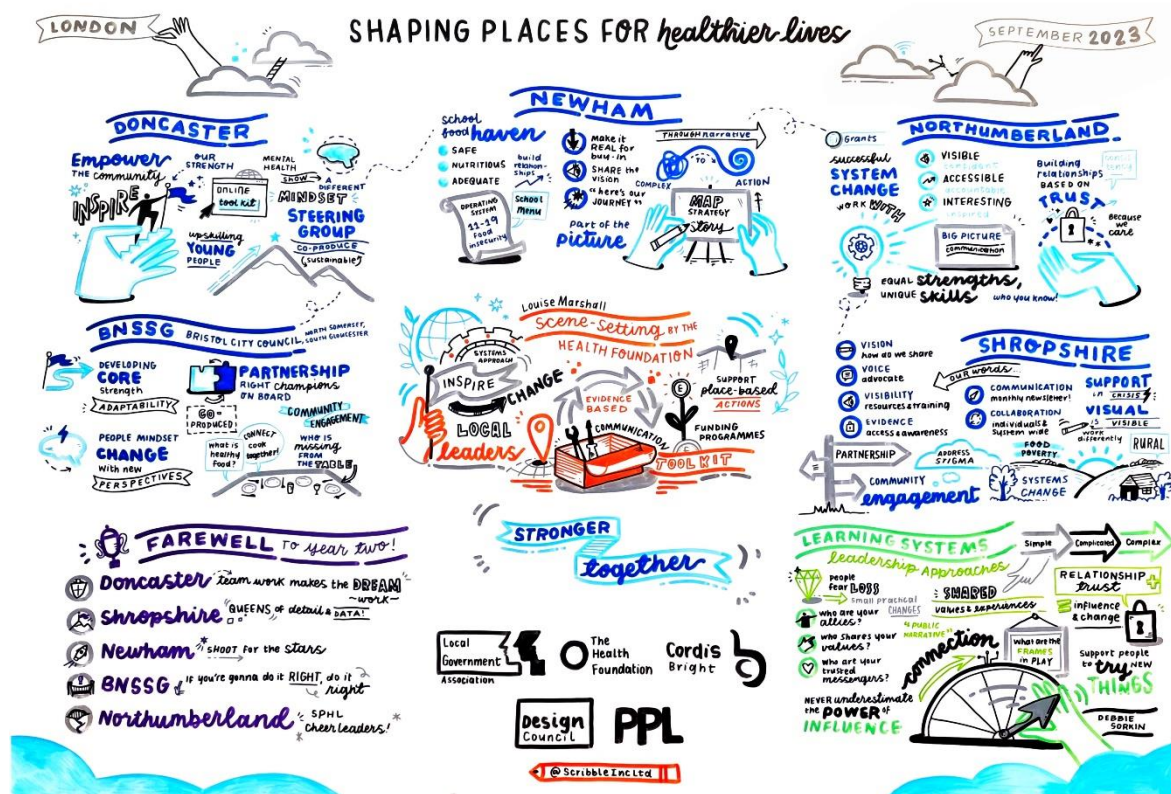
“The core project team have recognised their role within the system to be as a convenor and facilitator, bringing a range of system partners together and providing an environment in which they can make an impact on food insecurity.”

PPL also identified three key lessons for future development:

“Continuing to use storytelling as a tool to influence attitudes and beliefs, and gain buy in from stakeholders to contribute towards addressing food insecurity in Shropshire, using this as a tool to mark change within the system.”

“Ensuring there is more transparency and opportunities to learn about the role taking a complex systems approach has made to the project for wider stakeholders.”

“Focusing on capturing the evidence of changes being made to different parts of the system and across the different levers for change to ensure sustainability of outcomes and key learnings.”



Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal
(NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)

None at this time

Financial implications
(Any financial implications of note)

No direct financial implications at this time

Climate Change Appraisal as applicable

Not applicable at this time

Where else has the paper been presented?

System Partnership Boards
Voluntary Sector
Other

ShIPP
VCSA Board

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Portfolio holders can be found [here](#) or your organisational lead e.g., Exec lead or Non-Exec/Clinical Lead

Cllr Cecilia Motley – Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Communities
Rachel Robinson – Executive Director, Health, Wellbeing and Prevention

Appendices
(Please include as appropriate)
N/A