

Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting Date: 12th September 2019

Responsible Officer: Emily Fay, Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance

Email:

1. Summary

1.1 This report provides an update for the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance.

2. Recommendations

2.1 We recommend that the Health and Well Being Board continue to support the work of the Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance.

REPORT

3.0 Background

3.1 Food poverty is an issue affecting an increasing number of households in Shropshire. Food poverty can be defined as “the inability of individuals and households to obtain an adequate and nutritious diet because they cannot afford healthy food”. People can find themselves in food poverty due to a financial crisis, but in many cases people find themselves unable to afford healthy food over extended periods of time.

3.2 The Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance was formed in 2018 to tackle the issue of food poverty in Shropshire and core members include Shropshire Council, NHS, Food Banks, Age UK and Citizens Advice Shropshire. Shrewsbury Food Hub have provided co-ordination funded by Sustain and Shropshire Council and with support from University Centre Shrewsbury.

3.3 The Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance have developed an action plan to:

- Increase support for people in food crisis;
- Prevent food poverty by supporting people to increase their financial resilience and skills;
- Encourage projects across the county which improve access to low cost healthy food;
- Increase awareness of the issue and embed it in the policy of statutory bodies and community organisations so that we can develop an effective strategic response across the county.

4.0 Programme updates

4.1 Communicating food poverty issues

4.1.1 In April we launched the Shropshire Larder website (www.shropshirelarder.org.uk) which brings together locally relevant information for people in Shropshire who are living on a low budget. The site collates information on how to access food banks, the location of community food projects, how to eat well on a budget and where to access support from local agencies in Shropshire.

4.1.2 We continue to raise awareness of food poverty in Shropshire through our website www.shropshirefoodpoverty.org.uk, local media, presentations and will be submitting a report to the Communities Overview Committee for their November meeting.

4.2 Annual Theme: Increasing access to low cost food

4.2.1 Our theme for this year is Increasing access to low cost food. We are encouraging communities across Shropshire to get involved by running food projects in their local area. These projects may involve a community meal, food sharing, starting a food co-op or a holiday hunger project. We are gathering information from existing projects running in Shropshire and across the UK and will be running a workshop in the New Year to share ideas.

4.2.2 As part of this theme we are working with Shrewsbury Food Hub which has been successful in gaining funding to work with four communities in Shrewsbury and Wem to develop pilot community food projects. The first project, on the Meole Brace estate includes a community meal run by local residents and a lunchtime club for children in the school holidays.

4.3 Healthy Start

We have received funding from a national charity Sustain to promote the Healthy Start voucher scheme in Shropshire. Healthy Start vouchers can be used by families in low incomes to buy fruit, vegetables and milk. Currently the uptake in Shropshire is 52%. We are working with Healthy Lives to identify how to increase uptake of vouchers.

5.0 Conclusions

We continue to co-ordinate responses to food poverty in Shropshire and are pleased to see new projects developing.