

# North Lanarkshire Council Food Poverty & Insecurity

*“Nobody is left without food”*

The Financial Inclusion Team



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# Welfare Reform – Food Poverty & Insecurity Strategic Framework

- *Ensuring access to money advice and income maximisation*
- *Developing, maintaining and improving systems and services to ensure that people in crisis have access to food.*
- *Improving uptake of free school meals and breakfast clubs and services for Older People*
- *Sourcing, warehousing and distributing food at low or no cost to support activities which address food poverty.*
- *Promoting access to affordable, healthier food and food preparation and cooking skills - particularly in deprived communities.*
- *Maximising volunteering, employability and training gains for priority groups from all food poverty activities.*

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# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Benefit Check

Applicable Amount		Income	
Personal Allowance	<u>£73.10</u>	Occ Pen	£35.35
total	<u>£73.10</u>		

Therefore benefit entitlement =

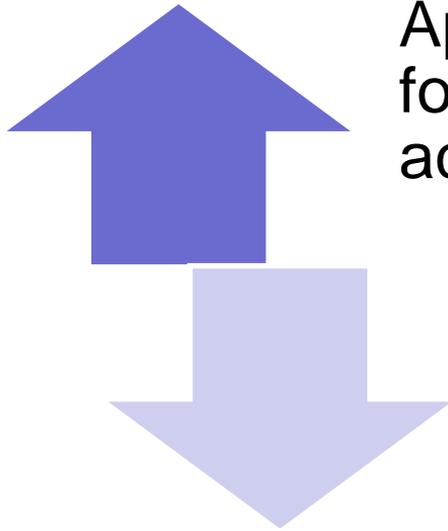


# Referral Pathway



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# Finding from April to July 2015

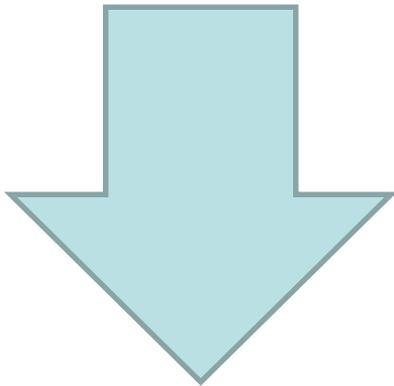


April to July 2014 - 1558  
food parcels provided  
across North Lanarkshire

**April to July 2015 - 1388  
food parcels provided  
across North Lanarkshire**

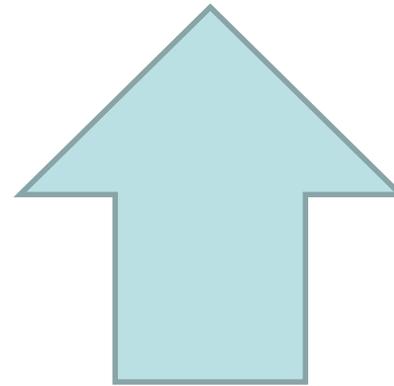
# Finding from August to October 2015

## Areas Using the Pathway



Referrals **down** in one food bank **15.5%** and in another down **12%**, compared to the same time period in 2014.

## Areas Not Using the Pathway



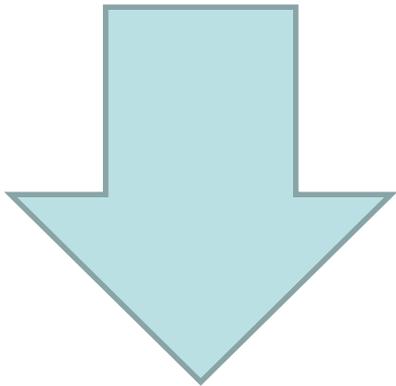
Referrals **up 43%** in the food bank, compared to the same period in 2014.

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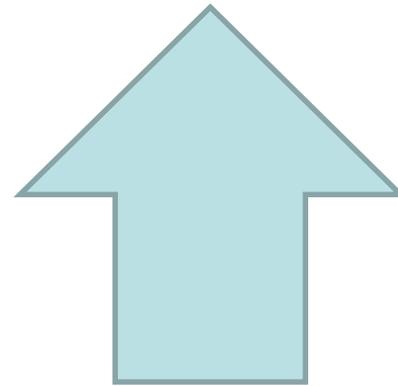
# Findings from November 15 to January 16

Areas Using the Pathway



Referrals **down** in the largest food bank in North Lanarkshire by **27%**

Areas Not Using the Pathway



Referrals to small food bank mainly from faith groups up **11.9%**

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# Information and Advice in the Food Banks

- North Lanarkshire placed a welfare rights officer in food banks
- 84 people seen by the welfare rights officer in the food banks
- 87% of the people seen did not need to be at the food bank – they were assisted with;
  - Benefit claims due to shortfalls in income
  - Advocated to ensure that delays in payments were addressed
  - Crisis grants were awarded

# Examples of cases presenting at the Food Bank

## **Example One**

*The man presented at an external advice agency requesting a referral to the food bank as he had no money to buy food due to his low income, he was given a referral.*

*The WRO Met with him in the food bank, carried out a benefit check, and identified a shortfall in income of £61.65 per week, this was a premium due to him due to his disability. The WRO completed the paper work, not only did he receive the additional weekly income but he was also awarded backdated payment of £1979.21.*

# Examples of cases presenting at the Food Bank

## **Example Two**

*The man presented at an external advice agency requesting a referral to the food bank as he had been sanctioned for 13 weeks, he had been receiving hardship payments, however, he then failed to sign on and these payments stopped. The man was referred to the Food Bank*

*The WRO at the food bank met with him, she secured him a crisis grant of £75 and advocated on his behalf with the DWP to have his hardship payments put back in place. The man was also advised of his right to appeal the decision.*

# Examples of cases presenting at the Food Bank

## **Example Three**

*The service user had been referred to the food bank by an external advice agency, the welfare rights officer within the food bank met with the person completed a benefit check and found the families income to be maximised. The family had received £497 benefit income in the last five days, and still had £50 cash on the Friday in the food bank, and were due a similar amount of benefit income over the following week, with the first payment due on the Monday.*

*There was therefore no need for either a crisis grant or a food parcel.*

# Examples of cases presenting at the Food Bank

## ***Example Four***

*The service user presented at an internal service as she had no money, she had a partner, an 11 month old child and a 3 week old baby, she was referred to a food bank.*

*The welfare rights officer in the food bank met with her, and through the interview found that she was due a payment of child tax credits the following day, but could not access this due to fraudulent use on her bank account that the bank was investigating.*

*The WRO made a claim for a crisis grant and was awarded £67*

## What the Food Banks Say About the Pathway....

*“For this month we have been partnering with the Financial Inclusion Team of North Lanarkshire Council by having Welfare Rights Officers in each food bank and the results have been excellent and concerning. Excellent in the respect that those who engage with us sometimes get access to a financial pay out from the Scottish Welfare Fund or became aware of additional benefits that they could apply for. Concerning in respect of why are they not being told of this before they step into a Food Bank, why is this information not being told to them when they have a right to know.*”

*At Basics Food Bank we are encouraged by the downturn in Food Parcels going out. Compared with February last year we gave out 32.4% less Food Parcels. We want to see this figure reduce month on month as food banks are not the answer to food poverty. The answer to this is giving the people who come to us the correct means to live, its a human right being denied to many. Do not put up obstacles or expect them to produce something when they are given nothing.”*

**David Shaw – Basics Food Bank**

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# The Pathway

These examples all highlight the need for a Pathway – the need for an advisor approach to tackling food poverty. If we are simply referring to a food bank are we asking;

- **Is the person's income maximised?**
- **The person is in crisis – have they applied for a crisis grant?**
- **Has the person explored the possibility of challenging an unfavourable decision?**
- **Can I advocate to ensure the person's benefit claim is dealt with timeously?**
- **Does the person have the means for fuel to cook the food if they get a parcel?**
- **Does the person require help with budgeting skills?**

# The Pathway

The importance of the Pathway is;

- **There won't always be a benefit solution**
- **There won't always be entitlement to a crisis grant**
- **There WILL always be a solution to the food crisis**

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*Thank you for your time*

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