

Appendix 2

Case Studies: Examples of Current Work

School Holiday Hunger

Background and need

In school holidays, with the loss of free school meals given out during term time, and the extra childcare costs around the holidays, families already struggling with low budgets find it difficult to feed their children. The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on hunger published the Hungry Holidays report in 2017 which showed that hunger amongst children during the school holidays may exacerbate inequalities that already exist between children from wealthier and poorer backgrounds. Those children most at risk of hunger during the holidays may also suffer from social isolation, loneliness, and inactivity. These factors combined can lead negative impacts on physical and mental well-being.

Response

In 2017 Sheffield City Council first identified funds to contribute to the development of a local approach to reducing holiday hunger in Sheffield and commissioned Voluntary Action Sheffield to coordinate delivery. Projects needed to offer free nutritious food and activities and be inclusive to children in the city in terms of both dietary need and type of holiday activities. Funding was to be focussed on areas where there are high levels of child poverty and low levels of activities available for young people to participate in.

The outcomes sought were:

1. A reduction in financial strain and food insecurity for families and in hunger for children over the holidays
2. Improved nutritional knowledge, where needed
3. Improved home learning environment, wellbeing, social interaction and reduced isolation, where needed

Large numbers of families attended the activities and the evaluation suggested that they were families that would have otherwise struggled to provide meals and activities. Delivery, reach and impact would not have been possible without the already planned and resourced activities by delivery partners over the school holidays, it was estimated that 50% of the actual costs were met by in kind contributions.

Current action

As a result of the evident need funding was identified to continue to deliver Holiday Hunger and activities continue to run across the city. A range of voluntary and community organisations are now commissioned through the People Keeping Well framework to deliver Holiday Hunger activities – now renamed “Healthy Holidays.” Around 8000 meals were provided to parents, carers, children and young people during the summer of 2019.

Universal Credit Case Study

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) started to roll out 'Full Service' Universal Credit (UC) in Sheffield in November 2018. Eventually UC will replace all working age income-related benefits.

UC represents a very significant change in the welfare system. Unlike the benefits it replaces, the default position with UC is one monthly payment to a household, including housing costs, paid in arrears. People then pay their rent, bills and other costs from that payment. Unlike the previous system, UC is usually applied for and managed online.

In the run up to UC roll out in Sheffield, a **Universal Credit Partnership** was set up and supported by council officers to coordinate the city's activity on UC, bringing together key representatives from Sheffield City Council, DWP and voluntary, community and faith organisations to share knowledge and create links between the different strands of activity around UC, including:

- Communications: Universal Credit Information Sheet and website have been developed www.sheffield.gov.uk/universalcredit which set out key aspects of UC and where people can get help in Sheffield.
- Community groups and public services are working closely together in localities to bring together support for people on UC and to provide information on UC.
- Comprehensive signposting information about locality-based support has been compiled and made available to staff in libraries, housing offices, job centres, GP receptions, community hubs and other services to help ensure that people are directed to the best support for them.
- Support is available from Citizens Advice Sheffield's Help to Claim service (Freephone 0800 1448 444). DWP funds the support up to first successful UC payment. Citizens Advice Sheffield also provides support to those who need to manage their existing and ongoing UC claims, or other welfare advice, a service made possible by SCC grant funding.

The Universal Credit Partnership and Sheffield City Council are measuring the impacts of UC on the people in the city through both data and case studies. The overall picture from these information sources indicate that many people are struggling on UC in Sheffield. This is particularly those whose lives are more complex or who have vulnerabilities that make managing the system harder, and partners are working closely together to help people locally.

However, we have not seen the very widespread negative impacts that some other areas of the country experienced when UC was introduced. This is partly because of improvements that were made to UC before it came to Sheffield, but also due to the sustained work of public and voluntary sector support services in supporting people on UC and the city's strong partnership working on this issue.

Real Living Wage and Ethical Procurement

Sheffield City Council recognises that in-work poverty is an increasing issue in the city, as in the UK. It has been a Real Living Wage employer for its own staff since 2013 and successfully achieved re-accreditation to the Living Wage Foundation in November 2019 for its significant progress towards achieving the real Living Wage across its contracts.

The Real Living Wage is calculated independently of government to reflect the basic cost of living and is based on the principle that work should pay enough to provide for the essentials of life. It is a higher rate and more reflective of the real cost of living than the government's minimum wage, which was relabelled the Living Wage in 2015.

The council's commitment to the [Living Wage Foundation](#)'s principles is embedded in its Ethical Procurement Policy, which aims to use its spending power to encourage wider social value and local economic impact in its supply chains. The policy itself focuses on social value as well as the ethical conduct of suppliers and has led to new, revised tender processes. As part of this work the council has developed a Supply Chain Accounting Employment Toolkit, which is being rolled out to existing suppliers and the results will provide the council with real data and information on how to approach the task of embedding the Real Living Wage more widely.

Sara Johnson of the RLW Foundation told us:

“Sheffield City Council has gone beyond the accreditation, to promote the Living Wage in Sheffield and throughout its supply chain. As part of the Living Wage accreditation process, Sheffield City Council has engaged with suppliers on the real Living Wage and will be able to measure detailed Living Wage impact across the supply chain through the in depth supplier toolkit which it has developed with Sheffield University.”

Our data suggests that now around 80% of our supply chain is paid the Real Living Wage. Moreover, feedback from one of our most recent contracts recognises that paying Real Living Wage is lowering supplier's business costs because a reduction in sickness absence means less reliance on agency cover.

Tess Lanning, Director of the Living Wage Foundation, said:

“We know that when major employers like councils commit to paying the real Living Wage thousands of people get a pay rise, but other local employers also follow their lead. This is how we build true Living Wage places.”

Apprenticeships

Sheffield City Council is committed to having a workforce which reflects the city, supporting all people into employment. We now have apprentices within all portfolios helping to shape our workforce. An apprenticeship is a work-based training programme offered by employers under which the apprentice engages in work-based learning and development, which leads to an accredited professional or technical qualification. They can provide an accessible route into secure, good quality employment.

George's story

George grew up in a low-income family in one of the most deprived parts of Sheffield and lacked many of the early-life opportunities available to other young people in the city. Enrolling on a Sheffield City Council-delivered apprenticeship – supported by the 100 Apprenticeship Scheme wage subsidy – has helped him overcome these barriers to forge a promising career in his chosen field.

George was not inspired by classroom learning at school, nor was he keen to follow his peers into unskilled labouring work when he left school. Eager to work with people, he joined the Council's Apprenticeship Ready IAG programme during Year 11 find out about the range of opportunities available to school leavers, and the steps required to secure an apprenticeship.

George was interested in Health and Social Care, so worked with the Council to develop his employability skills, including CV-writing, interview skills and concentration, which he had found a particular challenge at school. His Account Manager Pippa supported him with an application for an apprenticeship at Enable Sheffield which he confidently hand-delivered to the employer. George took the opportunity to chat to the charity's staff about the role, sector and apprenticeships, making an immediate positive impression with his energy, passion and knowledge.

George interviewed for the apprenticeship and was offered the role. Over the last 18 months, he has worked towards his Level 2 Health and Social Care qualification, working closely with his Sheffield City Council tutor on the learning aspects of the apprenticeship, and with his employer to gain the practical skills required for his role. He continues to earn a wage - providing a degree of financial independence - while working towards his intermediate-level qualification. George is close to completing his Level 2 apprenticeship and aspires to progress onto an Advanced-level course with his employer.

Mary, George's employer at Enable Sheffield says:

"George is absolutely amazing. It's like he's always been here. It's great to give young people opportunities, particularly when they are so enthusiastic. "

George says:

"Enrolling on an apprenticeship is the best thing I've done. For me personally, hands-on learning is the best approach – I'm learning lots more than I would in a classroom. At work I'm enjoying interacting with learners and gaining some leadership responsibilities."