



## **BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN GOOD FOOD PLAN**

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### **Eat Well – the food and nutrition strategy for Blackburn with Darwen**

Blackburn with Darwen aims to be a place where everyone can access good quality, healthy, affordable food; where we enjoy a healthy diet and where the food in the borough is produced and sourced locally and responsibly; this in turn supports the local economy and helps sustain the environment. Food will bring the community together - celebrating different food cultures and promoting cohesion through food.

The BwD Eat Well Strategy highlights how all the partners including East Lancashire Hospital Trust, BwD Clinical Commissioning Group, and BwD Council are working hard to support residents to become healthier. This plan supports the Eat Well Strategy, developed over the last three years which embeds plans by a range of public sector organisations. The Alliance will provide a focus for community, voluntary and faith organisations to work with the public sector to realise the overall aim of the Eat Well strategy – to improve our health and wellbeing.

#### **The Challenge.....**

**Around 14,000 children and young people in the borough live in poverty**

**BwD has the third lowest level of disposable income in the UK**

**107 households in BwD were subject to the benefit cap in November 2018 with almost 80% of these single parent families and close to 400 children affected**

**During 2019, Blackburn Foodbank supported just over 11,000 people with crisis food provision of which 42% were children and young people**

**Over 50% of babies in the BwD are not receiving breastmilk at 6 weeks of age**

**70% of the NHS budget is spent on treating Long Term Conditions with poor diet contributing to diabetes, cancer, cardio-vascular disease and obesity. Those from more deprived communities are much more likely to experience them and also more severely.**

**We CANNOT treat our way of this**

## Blackburn with Darwen's Food Resilience Alliance

We all have a relationship with food. We either have too much or not enough, are told we eat the wrong things, or we waste too much. BwD Food Resilience Alliance aims to help us all, whatever our age or background, to have a better relationship with food; to learn how we can manage what and how much we eat. Most of all it will make sure that good food is available to all who need it when they need it; it will do this by encouraging more collaboration between those organisations which provide food to the vulnerable and those in crisis.

The Alliance is a social and community movement, which will bring communities together to end food poverty in its many forms. It will transform the way we think about, source, provide and consume food.

The Alliance will link up those who grow our food locally with those who eat it. We want to understand and change the waste caused by food surpluses in the shops. We want to help our communities cook and eat together.

Food is so important on so many levels – we want to make sure that we all have the best possible for our own sakes, those of our families and those of our communities in a way that is sustainable.

### How will we achieve our aims?

We will develop our plan by involving all those working and living in our communities to get their agreement and commitment to the following principles. As more individuals, community groups and organisations such as housing associations, the Borough Council, Health authorities, local businesses etc, are aware of the movement, they will pledge to take forward aspects of the plan that they know are in their sphere of influence and/or responsibility.

We will work with communities and settings across the borough, to significantly reduce food poverty in neighbourhoods and for children and young people across the borough.

#### **1 It is not acceptable that anyone goes hungry in Blackburn with Darwen**

We will protect people from hunger ...

#### **Who will?**

All those organisations which provide food and support for those in crisis or struggling to feed themselves or their families– food banks, community kitchens, holiday hunger teams, benefit and other financial advisors. All the public sector organisations who provide crisis and ongoing support.

#### **What will we do?**

We will feed those in crisis – with food parcels, cooked meals,

We will know who is doing what, when, where and with whom. We will share what we know within our communities and more widely. We will make sure that the crisis response is documented and understood so everyone knows what the best response is in different circumstances.

We will ensure that children have holiday food provision and breakfast clubs

We will challenge the provision of Free School Meals – we need more, we need better, we need improved school based processes to remove stigma. We will address the issues raised by young people through the Children’s Future Food Enquiry report March 2019.

We will support the uptake of the Healthy Start Scheme to ensure that all eligible ante and post-natal mums and pre-school children have access to the vitamins and vouchers for fruit and vegetables

We will support those who need more care than food – financial, housing, or welfare advice, and work to improve council tax debt collection practices

We will make sure that those agencies involved in caring for those who are in ill-health as a result of an inadequate diet are supported to deliver their strategies eg malnutrition awareness, vitamin D awareness , breast feeding friendly borough work

We will source education and skills support to individuals, families and communities to increase their ability to source and produce good food and meals.

We will promote 4 key areas - healthy weight, reduction in the level of diabetes, understanding of vitamin D and the promotion and protection of breast feeding.

**How will we do it?**

We will develop a plan specifically to protect children and young people from hunger, as well as improving nutrition.

We will work in local communities to gather information about current activities and identify gaps.

We will work with service providers, public sector organisations and local enterprises to have a more coordinated response.

We will produce route maps ...for different communities, age ranges, groups such as homeless

We will identify good practice in other areas and use this to improve our support in BwD.

**2 We will build food security**

This means improving food knowledge and skills in our communities which have a positive impact on accessing, sourcing and cooking food – as well as understanding more about how what we eat impacts upon health and wellbeing.

**Who will?**

We have groups interested in food poverty and insecurity such as the Young People’s Empowerment Forums. We will develop neighbourhood responses involving those with lived experience as well as strategic responses to improving our knowledge and skills.

**What will we do?**

We will work to ensure that we know how to access or buy good food, how to cook it, how to do this on limited budgets. We will encourage communities to grow vegetables, share cooking skills. We will make sure that we have the resources to cook – utensils, fuel. We will work with communities to ensure breastfeeding is promoted and protected.

- Map existing and identify new food growing sites, including statutory and informal, arrange leases where appropriate (permanent and 'meanwhile')
- Match community groups with support and maintenance and support adoption of 'Incredible Edible' status for local community groups
- Help communities protect and take control of assets for food growing and other projects via the Sustainable Communities Act
- Strengthen links with Public Health and Planning and Property Departments to support and enable adoption of permanent community growing spaces and ensure inclusion of growing spaces and major new developments
- Strengthen links with Growth and development to attract and encourage sustainable, food resilient businesses
- Encourage hospitals, health centres and businesses to develop food growing on their sites with staff/patients taking ownership of the spaces

### **How can we address skills, employability and income?**

We will seek to influence wherever we can. We believe good food is everyone's business.

Food security demands a joined up response to welfare reform. BwD should argue for and work towards a system which provides adequate financial support to ensure a household's basic needs are met, reducing use of sanctions, and engaging with claimants to understand their needs and build support around them.

We will identify and engage with all organisations which might be able to impact eg transport companies, DWP, etc

We will understand the skills required by good food companies and ensure colleges and training places are providing those skills.

### **3 We will make sure that good, healthy, affordable food is accessible in our communities**

We will explain the importance of healthy food to everyone in ways which inspire them to respond, whatever their culinary and cultural differences. We will work together in to make sure the Eat Well strategy is driven by all the organisations committed to it. We will fight for resources to maximise our impact on the health of the residents of BwD. We will further develop access to low cost food for vulnerable groups, making sure we do not have food deserts. These are where affordable healthy food is not available.

#### **Who will?**

All those committed to the various actions in the Eat Well Strategy. Communities of interest in the Alliance - Schools, children's centres, community gardeners, crisis food providers, other third sector organisations providing or developing food related services, even if it is not their primary function

**What will we do?**

We will create more local community pantries/co-operatives which enable people to buy/access good food cheaply. We will make sure that there are breakfast clubs, holiday clubs and adequate access to free school meals. We will encourage community groups to cook and eat good food together, by increasing knowledge and skills to all age groups and cultures, developing community cafes and places of welcome. We will promote 'pay what you can' and 'pay it forward' culture within community cafes.

We will work with schools and colleges to obtain their buy-in. We will promote existing and new opportunities to grow food; we will enable as much locally grown food as possible to be used in our communities and the crisis food chain.

We will promote the take up of Healthy Start Vouchers and Free School Meals, working with the council, 0-19 healthy child programme team, schools, charities and communities.

We will seek to discover hidden poor health relating to poor food, i.e. find those that are malnourished and with over or under weight, have pre diabetes, low vitamin D. This will then target action.

**How?**

By continuing to network organisations, find resources, mobilise energy and enthusiasm to build communities by sharing food - 'Sharing is Caring'

**4 We will use surpluses locally**

We will develop relationships and systems with our shops and restaurants to ensure that good food does not go to waste.

We will ensure that good food surplus (waste) goes into our local food chain e.g. foodbanks, food clubs, community kitchens.

We will work with local food growers to share learning on storing and preserving food from allotments to facilitate year round use.

We will work with food growers and suppliers to reduce all food waste – whether surplus food in shops or what we grow on our allotments.

We will work with growers and suppliers to remove poor quality food from the supply chain e.g. remove promotion of BOGOF.

We will do this by raising the profile of the Food Alliance and promoting its aspirations. We will work through those organisations who have expertise in securing surpluses to maximise their reach, e.g. .FareShare, Community & Business Partner's Waste not Want not scheme.

**5 We will be led by data and local intelligence and share our learning widely**

The BwD Food Resilience Alliance pledges to be driven by data and local intelligence in all our activity to ensure the most vulnerable in our communities are protected from hunger. We will use data and local

intelligence to target our resources as a partnership as efficiently as possible, to reduce duplication and ensure we are reaching those most in need.

We will target our resources as a partnership as efficiently as possible, reduce duplication of both food supplies and the human effort to deliver them. The Food Resilience Alliance understands that easy supply of 'free food' in the system goes against the core aspiration of enabling resilience of individuals and communities to provide their own sustainable food

**Who will?**

Members of the Alliance (from large corporate public / private to small local) will share their current information and work to standardise and understand how it is collated and used.

All who deliver food will be able to give the reason for the provision.

**How will we do it?**

By networking with all public agencies, voluntary and private sector to use current available data. We will influence how that data is analysed to promote efficient sharing and learning for all associated with the Alliance. This will develop a system that provides up to date information to match local supply and demand of good food.

We will collect and share data on the effectiveness of the interventions and activity as part of the delivery of the Good Food Plan, which will be received and monitored by the BwD Food Resilience Alliance.



