

'I really feel the kindness of strangers'

'It makes me feel that I matter to other people in the community'.



What we heard about food and the cost of living impact on our communities in OX4.

By Hassan Sabrie and Mujahid Hamidi

Community Researchers

July 2024



Where Communities Thrive



Your voice on health and care services

About this report:

This report is a *collaborative document* reflecting our research journey and the voice of the communities we work with. Together, we have produced a document that reflects what the community researchers want to say and brings forward the voice of those who gave their views.

Much of it is written by community researchers Mujahid Hamidi and Hassan Sabrie from Oxford Community Action in their own words.

With co-writing and support by Healthwatch Oxfordshire.

We also produced a **film** to summarise this report and gives a voice to our community, the film can be seen here

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/our-videos/> and youtube link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_P3MMGUirl

The online report and easy read version can be found here

<https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/research-reports/>

Acknowledgements

With huge thanks to **all** the community volunteers, OX4 Food Crew, Oxford Mutual Aid, Waste2 Taste and for all members of all communities represented, who worked hard to develop this work with us, distribute questionnaires, and make sure people's voices are heard.

Thanks, in particular to all those we spoke to, and to Nigel Carter, Nicola Josse. And to Veronica Barry and team for ongoing support from Healthwatch Oxfordshire.

Thanks also to NHS South East CPAR (2) Programme, University of Reading and Scottish Community Development Centre.



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Executive Summary

Access to affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food is key in enabling people to live well. In Oxfordshire, community organisations play a major role in making sure that those most likely to experience health inequalities, have the access they need, especially in the context of the UK's cost of living crisis. This **report and accompanying film** (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_P3MMGUirl) bring together the findings by **two community researchers** and voices the experiences of the people and communities they support in their own words. The purpose of this community research work was for us to understand more about the challenges our communities face, but also to turn what we have heard into practical next steps and action. What could this be and where might action come from?

What did we do?

From May 2023 to June 2024, Hassan Sabrie and Mujahid Hamidi from **Oxford Community Action** (OCA) took part in a community research programme – the second programme of Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR2), supported by Workforce, Training & Education, NHS England South-East. Through the year, they took part in training and mentoring with University of Reading and Scottish Community Development Centre. Healthwatch Oxfordshire acted as their host throughout the year, providing ongoing hands on, practical and research support to the community researchers on the ground.

As community researchers from OCA, Hassan and Mujahid chose to explore issues around cost of living and food provision – building on the community food support service OCA provides in East Oxford to up to 300 people a week.

OCA is a member of the **OX4 Food Crew**, a partnership of grassroots groups collectively responding to the growing crisis of food poverty. Hassan and Mujahid brought two other members of the partnership, **Oxford Mutual Aid** and **Waste2Taste**, into the research to hear from a wider group of people using community food support services.

Through a survey and ongoing conversations, the researchers heard from **166 people**. This report brings to the fore the voices of those who gave their views.

The report, along with Easy Read and summary versions can be found at: www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/research-reports/

The film can be seen on our website at:

www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/our-videos/

What did we hear?

People told us that accessing community food support services helps them with:

- **Cost of living** – help with saving money, feeding family, and making ends meet. 57 (35%) of respondents told us *‘It means I can feed my family’*. The overwhelming majority told us that they use the food support because it *‘saves them money’* (120 responses, 73%).

“We would starve on several days a week – we truly struggle without them.”

“Knowing I can receive cooked meals twice a week has relieved some of my worry, bills and burden.”

- **Community** – being part of a community, meeting people and *‘giving back’*.


“It makes me feel that I matter to other people in the community.”

- **Access** – including physical access, time, food choice and cultural preference.
- **Health and mental health** – reducing isolation and bringing support for those with ongoing health or mental health conditions.

34 (21%) said receiving food *‘supports my health and mental health’* and indicated in comments that poor health is often a driver behind the need to access food provision – often with multiple knock-on effects, meaning people are unable to work, or are on benefits or low income, as well as impact on independence.

“Need food parcel because of money, but also because of my ill health”

We heard that the cost-of-living crisis has increased people’s bills and that many people are finding it hard to make ends meet, including those in work, and on benefits. Some people told us they are having to make difficult choices about how to spend money and that the cost of living is having a negative impact on people’s mental and physical health.



People were appreciative of the community food support they receive, but some commented that the food bags they received did not offer choice, consistent quality, enough food, or that they wanted more basic ingredients including fresh and healthy food. 58 (37%) people said that there is **not enough cultural choice of food** in Oxford – comments suggested this was both in terms of community food support and wider availability.

We asked people **what wider support would help them manage** the cost of living. The most popular responses included:

- Practical support and advice to manage finances, such as advice on housing and benefits and support for managing money.
- Practical support to access healthy food, including a bigger or more healthy range of food in community food support bags, community meals and training in skills for shopping and cooking on a budget.

Social interaction was a strong positive people told us came from community food services – and people welcomed ideas to build on community activity.


- Just under half of respondents (49% of responses to this question) said they were interested in growing food together in the community. Many of these respondents said they would need support with learning skills and accessing tools and equipment.

Next steps and actions

We will share this report and film in Oxfordshire with key decision makers and make sure this insight is heard. The report will be shared with Oxfordshire Prevention and Health Inequalities Network, Oxfordshire Place Based Partnership, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, Oxfordshire Food Network among others.

The report and film and our work as community researchers was presented at the NHS South East CPAR2 regional showcase event in London in June 2024.

We will also share back to our communities, with a presentation of the report and film, along with ongoing feedback about practical action and next steps from this work.



We have suggested next steps (see page 35 for more detail) for different partners, including:

- **Strategically:**

- Improve awareness, information and access of support to those facing challenges of cost of living for those using community food services, including those with long term health challenges.
- Explore how to build capacity within the community to better support signposting, advice, and links to wider support, e.g. through exploring development of embedded 'social prescribers' model or similar trusted advocates within food services.
- Make information more accessible and culturally appropriate, ensuring that support services reach out to meet people where they are based.
- Draw on our findings to learn and link into work already taking place in OX4 around addressing health inequalities and the wider determinants of health – in a deep-rooted and culturally appropriate way.
- Discuss how to better support community food services to be effective and sustainable, particularly in the light of the cost of living.

We have *already* linked up with Oxfordshire County Council to help inform their approach to cost-of-living support and to support distribution of over 600 leaflets to all recipients of the food services about cost-of-living financial support and benefits available.

- **On the ground:**

- OCA, OMA, Waste2Taste, OX4 Food Crew (with HWO support) to discuss potential next steps for individual and joint action, including the future sustainability of community food services, via an event in Autumn 2024.
- OCA and OX4 Food Crew to continue to use the food service as a platform to reach and build community wellbeing, support and empowerment and to build capacity and skills within community to offer support and advice, e.g. embedded social prescriber type model.
- Use what we have heard to explore wider activities around community, health and food – including community meals, food growing, and health and wellbeing support and development of 'social supermarket' models.

Building on this research, OCA and OX4 Food Crew have *already* taken next steps towards action:

- OCA have linked up with Oxfordshire Community Action Group network (CAG) community gardener. The aim is to support the process of planning to set up growing spaces with OCA and others in Blackbird Leys and other potential areas in East Oxford.
- We will also explore opportunities through strengthening links with the Well Together programme, and links to Oxfordshire Food Strategy and Healthy Planning.
- OCA are now working with local OX4 Advice agency Agnes Smith Advice Centre to start to provide monthly advice sessions at their food distribution service.
- OX4 Food Crew together exploring working with Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) to co-produce bespoke Oxford focused interactive signposting resources to ensure people get the support they need
- Development of trial 'social supermarket' model to improve access and buying power to affordable, healthy and fresh food.

1 Who we are

Community researchers from Oxford Community Action

Oxford Community Action (OCA) formed in 2018, to support new and emerging Black and Minoritised communities alongside more established communities to tackle and overcome barriers created by structural inequalities (e.g. labour market and ethnic health inequalities). These barriers prevent individuals and communities from reaching their full potential and enjoying equal representation and participation



Hassan and Mujahid doing data analysis.



as active citizens within UK institutions and wider civil society.

www.oxfordcommunityaction.org

Two members of OCA, **Hassan Sabrie and Mujahid Hamidi**, spent time as community researchers from May 2023 to June 2024 training as community researchers under the NHS South East Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR2).

Healthwatch Oxfordshire

Healthwatch Oxfordshire (HWO) acted as the 'host' organization supporting OCA community researchers on their journey- providing ongoing hands-on help, practical training and mentoring throughout the research process and on the ground engagement.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire as an independent organisation listens to people about their experiences of health and social care and supports people's stories and voices to be heard, highlighting areas of good practice or change. More information about Healthwatch Oxfordshire can be found at: www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

Since 2018, when we first worked with community researchers, we have developed a wealth of experience in community and participatory research approaches. This has enabled us to support communities explore topics of importance and to have a voice. We have shared our skills and experience with other organisations to support them in developing their approach to community research. We support bringing people's views to decision makers and to key committees.

See our website for more information on our community research work:


[Our work with community researchers - Healthwatch Oxfordshire.](#)

CPAR2 Programme

As community researchers hosted by Healthwatch Oxfordshire, Hassan and Mujahid were part of a second wave of **Community Participatory Action Research (CPAR2)** training and mentoring supported by Workforce, Training & Education, NHS England – South-East.

Through the year (May 2023- June 2024), training and mentoring was provided by both **Reading University** and **Scottish Community Development Centre**. Funding from this scheme meant that the time of community researchers to do their research was reimbursed.

The CPAR programme was initiated in 2022 following COVID-19 acknowledging that *"inequalities in health have become magnified amongst some Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups disproportionately*



affected". It built on recommendations from Public Health England, that insight of those with lived experience was key, and that communities must be brought firmly into the centre of decisions to build solutions to persistent health inequalities.

The CPAR2 programme (2023-4) theme was to explore the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis, and insight on community and system led solutions into inequalities. This programme provided support for the researcher time, on-the-job learning and mentoring for up to 30 Community Researchers across the South-East region.

The findings of the research will be used to support key decision makers and commissioners at local and system levels and in informing priorities and service development for communities experiencing inequalities in health. Findings were shared at a South-East celebration event in London for all researchers on 6th June 2024.

This project findings were shared locally with decision makers both in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), as well as those at 'place' in Oxfordshire.

Others involved:

The community researchers from OCA chose to explore issues around cost of living and food provision. They brought in two members of **OX4 Food Crew**, a partnership of grassroots organisations in OX4 collectively responding to growing crisis of food poverty. More information about OX4 Food Crew can be found at: www.Ox4foodcrew.co.uk

OCA is a member of this partnership, and linked to **Oxford Mutual Aid**, www.oxfordmutualaid.org and **Waste2Taste** www.waste2taste.co.uk in order to reach those using food provision.

Community Wealth Building
from food poverty to resilience and prevention

OX4 FOOD CREW

OX4 Food Crew (OX4FC) is a partnership of nine organisations based in OX4 working with and for people experiencing food poverty, which has been exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic. Founded in April 2020, we quickly responded to local needs by delivering nutritious cooked meals to people experiencing food insecurity in the local area. We are now developing the partnership to move beyond the emergency pandemic-driven response to include services which help build community food resilience. These include free cooking for health and wellbeing courses for parents, 'Pay as you feel' community meals, and incubator support for food social enterprises including Damascus Rose Kitchen and No Vice Ice. As a coalition of organisations, our aim is to work with local communities to co-investigate and design flexible, community-led support and innovations that will help build food resilience in the local area, alongside ongoing emergency food support.


Source: Oxfordshire Food Strategy 2022

2 What we did and why

Oxford Community Action (OCA) has been aware for some time of the pressures of cost of living for people living in Oxford's communities. In 2020, during Covid-19 pandemic they set up an emergency food distribution scheme, which continues to this day. Volunteer community members work hard every Wednesday to pack and distribute up to 300 bags of food to households across the OX4 area.

This has become not only about food distribution, but a way of building community, giving mutual support, and of developing a collective voice for some of Oxford's diverse and multi-ethnic communities. Over time, there have been many spin offs to this grassroots group including stronger relationships with local decision makers, health services, and the more established voluntary groups. Importantly it has also enabled those with lived experience to highlight challenges, and to identify actions.

OCA is part of OX4 Food Crew, a partnership of groups also providing food support in different forms in the area, be it cooked meals, household distribution, or community larders. In doing this research, OCA worked together two of these partners Oxford Mutual Aid and Waste2Taste.



Together, the three groups distribute food to over 700 people on a weekly basis. Reaching to all three groups helped to reach a wider voice and insight from those living in East Oxford who are using food distribution services. Together we heard from 166 people.

OCA have long recognised the challenges of meeting the increasing demand for food support – a symptom of the wider cost of living – and not a solution to deep roots of inequality. All such schemes are volunteer run, and face challenges to capacity, supply, finance, as well as increasingly limited food availability, choice and quality.

In this research OCA identified that they wanted to know:

- more about why people use the food service,
- to understand the cost-of-living impact, and any possible solutions in the longer term
- to identify what they could do as a grassroots group and wider to better support
- as well as to identify where and by who, where more support could be given strategically.

Appendix 1 gives some of the context for cost of living and drivers of food insecurity, and an insight into what else is happening in Oxfordshire around food and support to the cost of living. It also has an in-depth story from someone involved in the OCA food service.

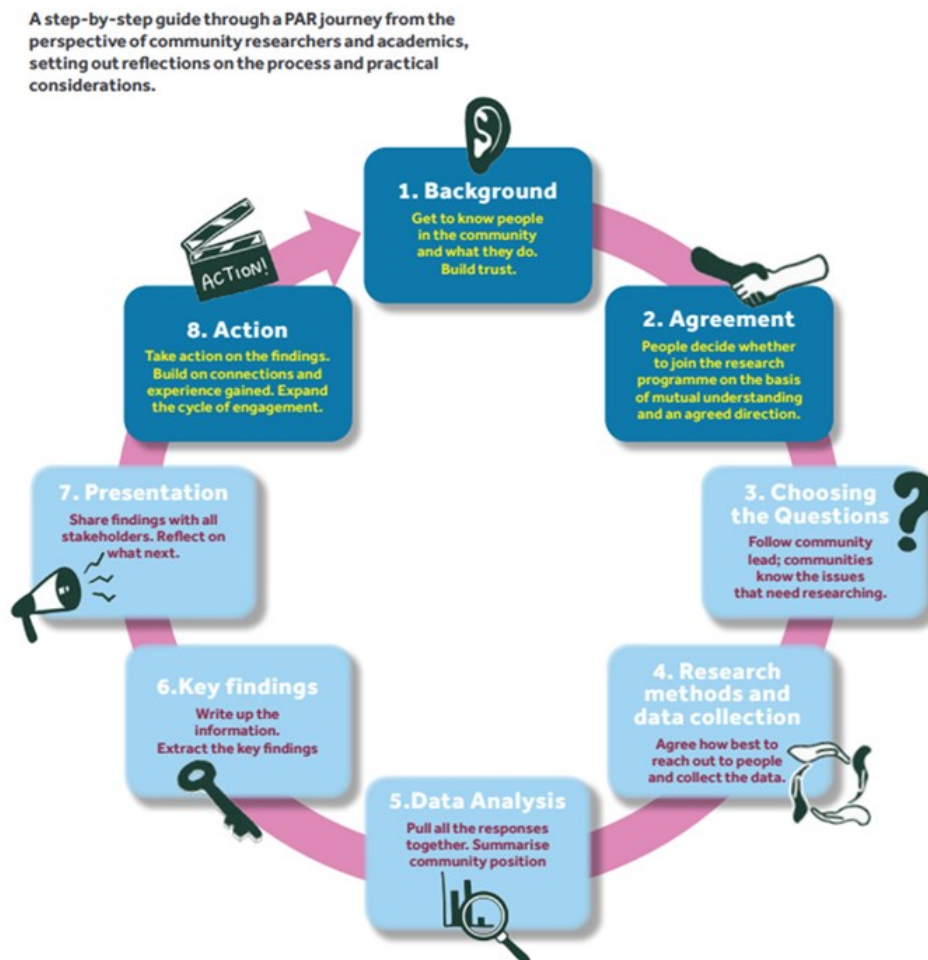
3 How we did it

Learning the skills of community research

This year – and this report has been all about the *process* of learning to be a community researcher. Hassan and Mujahid have taken a year on the research journey to learn the skills of community research, building skills and expertise. They have had regular training sessions, mentoring, and support from University of Reading and Scottish Community Development Centre, as well as peer support from community researchers across the South-East.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire, as host, sat down with the researchers regularly to give support on the ground throughout the year. Together, they have

gone step by step throughout the action research process – from initial idea, developing question and survey, collecting and analysing data, GDPR



The 8 Stages of Participatory Action Research
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Steps of Research. Source: University of Reading (2022) CPAR A Toolkit

training, and supporting the film making process, co-writing this report and planning its dissemination and impact.

Building on their learning from working together over the years, Healthwatch Oxfordshire and Oxford Community Action have contributed insight more widely to learning about community research. This includes being part of the developing Oxfordshire Community Research Network.

In March 2024 they jointly presented about their work and learning at the launch of the Oxfordshire Local Policy Lab, an alliance between the University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and Oxfordshire County Council, aiming to bridge the gap between research and policy.

In June 2024 together we shared this work with the CPAR2 NHS South-East celebration event in London.



Developing the questions

The start of the research planning involved talking to beneficiaries of our food support service at OCA and identifying what sort of questions would be relevant to our research. Through our partnership with the OX4 Food Crew, we were reminded of the fact that our partners could also benefit from our research, so we decided to extend the research to the beneficiaries of Waste2Taste and Oxford Mutual Aid (OMA), who also helped to further tweak the questions. This enabled us to reach a wider voice in OX4 of those using food supply services.

We designed a survey - with questions focused on the cost-of-living crisis and food insecurity, but we also added questions to gauge interest in community food growing - as this is something that we were interested in learning people's views on and had been discussed as an idea among community members for some time.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire hosted our survey online using their survey tool and we shared the survey link on the OCA website and in paper form given out in the food bags. A digital link and QR code to the survey link was circulated amongst community WhatsApp groups to encourage more uptake.

All surveys were anonymous we did not collect any personally identifiable information, apart from demographic information.

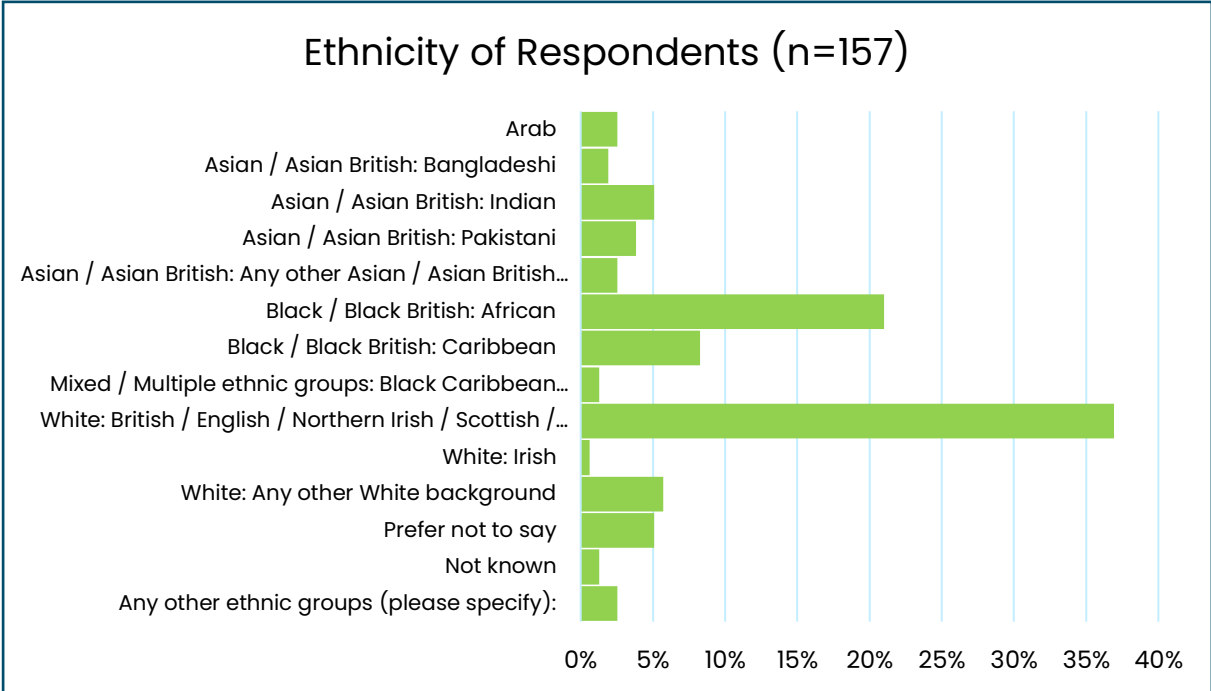
We had to ensure that we were compliant with GDPR laws and that stored data and data in transit were anonymous and secure. Hassan and Mujahid also took a course in GDPR training, courtesy of Healthwatch Oxfordshire. We were aware that not everyone would choose to access a digital form, so we also printed out paper copies of the survey to distribute to participants if preferred. As people collected their food bags in our weekly food redistribution service, we also asked if they would like to participate in some community-led research. Their responses were then transferred to our digital form later.

Oxford Mutual Aid (OMA) distributed the survey via text message, but also contacted some participants to read out the survey questions over the phone and recorded their answers directly onto the online form or in written format to be transferred to a digital version later. Waste2Taste also worked with volunteers to support people to give their views.

A lot of powerful words were shared with us, and we felt the only way to give justice to the weight of community voices was to create a film to amplify the voices of the communities. We worked with a local film maker Nicola Josse, of Film Oxford to develop the story and interview participants and representatives of OCA, OMA and Waste2Taste.

We faced a few challenges in this stage of the project, namely discussing such sensitive topics with community members. So, we had to ensure that the dignity, privacy, and agency was protected at all times. There is a lot of stigma attached to attending a food bank, but our food redistribution service has turned into a friendly and welcoming community gathering that is focused on helping one another.

This research has acted as a catalyst to focus discussion around identifying practical support with the cost-of-living crisis within our food redistribution service at OCA and wider OX4.



Respondent ethnicity- 157 respondents.

4 Who we heard from

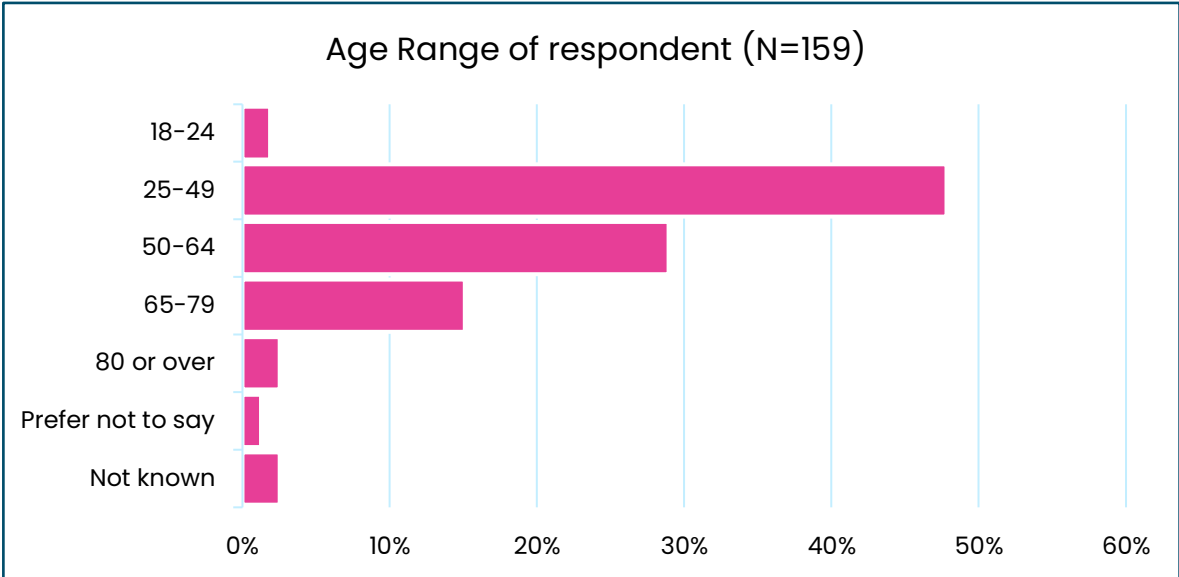
Between us, **we heard from 166** people during this project.

People defined their ethnicity using National Census categories but could also define their ethnicity themselves. Most of the respondents from OMA and Waste2Taste identified as White British, but OCA had a much more

diverse set of respondents, with the majority who described themselves as Black/ British African or Black/Black British Caribbean.

We know from conversations with the people accessing OCA food bank and other sources are often in paid employment and some can be categorized as ‘working poor’ – not receiving a living wage, or below a living wage. Some of whom are employed in precarious and insecure work. This was previously evidenced in our previous research with Healthwatch Oxfordshire [See for example here: [HW Guidance \(healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk\)](http://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk)]. People tell us they juggle multiple jobs and shift work – this may be a factor for OCA’s respondents.

A lot of OCA’s beneficiaries are key and essential workers. The majority of these respondents are most likely to be in the working age group 25–64.



Of the respondents who told us the first part of their postcode 76% (152) live in the OX4 area, 13% (19) live in the OX3 area, 8% (12) live in the OX2 area, 3% (5) live in the OX1 area and less than 1% live elsewhere.

One gap highlighted in the methodology – was that we didn’t reach as many men as women – if we had enough time, we would have reached out to more men to respond to the survey. This may also be that more women are receiving the food support.

The questionnaire results were examined by the community researchers with support, and we agreed on themes – creating sheets of comments grouped into key areas – bringing these out to highlight what people told us. We have used people’s own voice in this report to make sure that they are heard.

5 What people told us

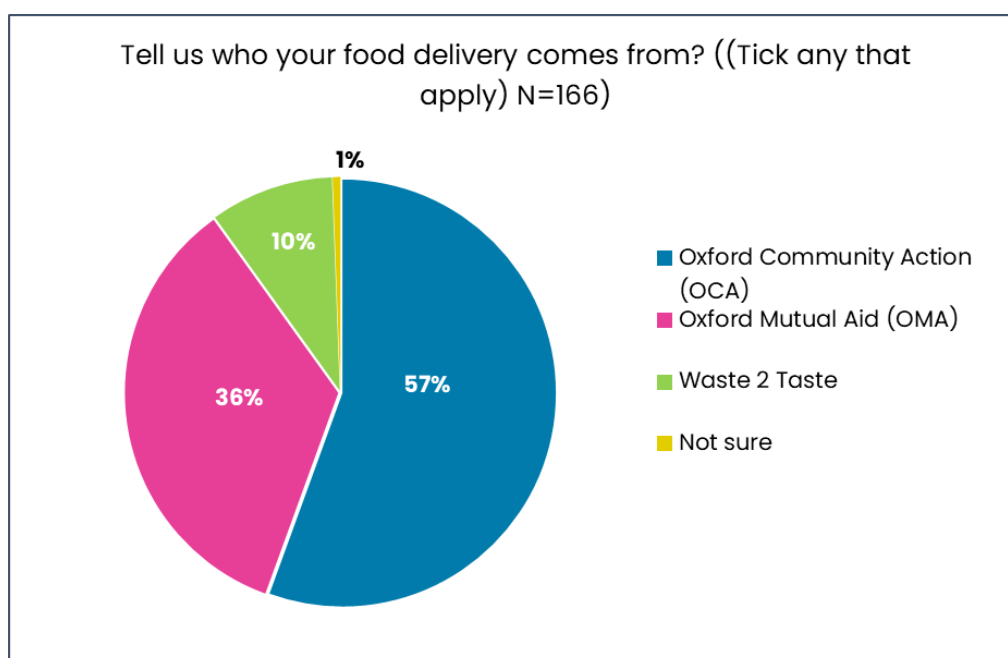
This section draws out the voices of people in their own words and highlights some of the key themes based on what people told us. It also summarizes the responses from the survey, where people chose options.

Who uses food support?

We wanted to understand more about the people who use community food support services. In the four years OCA have run the food service for example, we have not asked people this question - so did not have this insight into why they were accessing food delivery.

We asked people to tell us about **which food source they used**, and how long they have been using it. 166 people responded:

- 95 from Oxford Community Action (OCA)
- 16 from Waste2Taste
- 59 from Oxford Mutual Aid (OMA). Some people commented that they used multiple sources to access food - including food larders and food banks as well.

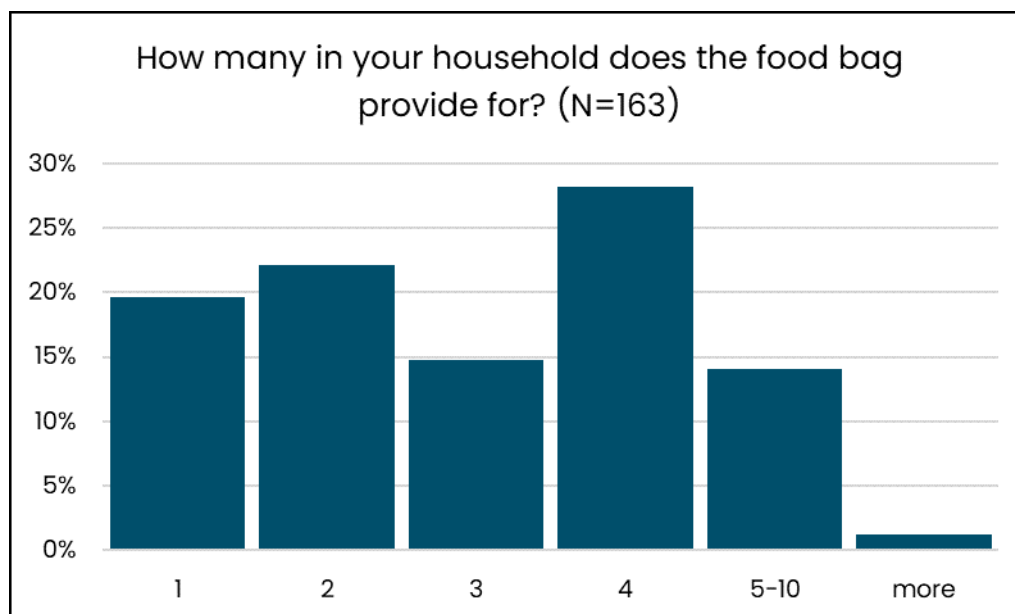


We asked people to tell us **how many in their households** was the food bag providing for. 46 (28%) of the respondents told us that the food provided for 4 people in their household.

- 23 (14%) told us it provided 5-10 people

- 32 (19%) told us it provided for one
- 36 (22%) for 2 in the household.

We know that some people who use our food services live in 'multiple occupancy' households.



We asked people to tell us **how long people had been receiving** food:

- The majority - 70 responses (42%) told us that they had been accessing the food services for 1-2 years.
- 45 (27%) for 3 years.
- 48 (29%) for less than a year - perhaps reflecting the ongoing pressure and more recent cost of living increase.

Each of our community groups started their food redistribution schemes as a response to need during the Covid-19 pandemic. These schemes are run entirely by volunteers, and source food through donations, supermarket donations and via Sofea, a food redistribution charity. During Covid, some funding was received from the local council.

People receiving food may pay a nominal contribution, which for OCA now contributes to running costs of the scheme. However, reliance on volunteers involves a huge commitment of time and energy, and increasingly supply of food is becoming more challenging to access due to cutbacks by supermarkets and other providers.



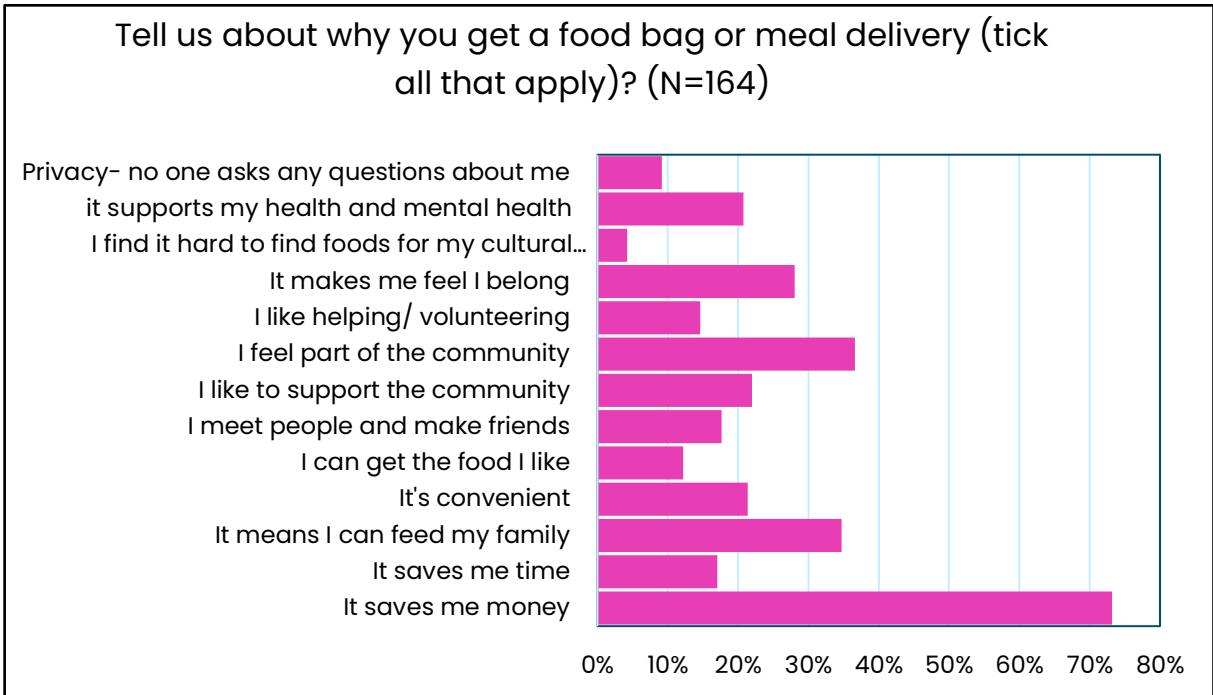
Mutual support is provided by the groups within the OX4 Food Crew, and Oxfordshire more widely has focus on food including food insecurity across partners within its shared Food Strategy.

We know that many of the community members were on restricted incomes during Covid, some with furlough, but often with no income or support due to work loss or being in less secure jobs, low wage, self-employed or shift work.

People originally took the food due to the lack of funds, but are still accessing the food support now, 3 years later with additional cost of living pressures. Living in Oxford is costly, with house rents and prices, as well as other costs well above the national average.

This prolonged pressure has uncovered hidden poverty, which the pandemic highlighted. Some of the people that needed the food support told us that they weren't accessing it due to the stigma. OCA for example has respected this, and never asked for referrals or for any details of peoples' situation – *'no questions asked'*. This is especially important for people with 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) (known through OCA's conversations with beneficiaries) and those with fears of immigration concerns. Others, as discussed later indicated that they have long term and ongoing health conditions, and some were experiencing Long Covid.

Why do people use food support?



NB: Respondents could tick more than one answer

In question 6 of our survey, we asked people to tell us about why they used the food service, ticking all answers that applied. Of the 164 people who responded to this question clear themes emerged that using food support helps people with:

- **Cost of living** – help with saving money, feeding family, and making ends meet.
- **Community**- being part of community, meeting people and ‘giving back’.
- **Access** – including physical access, time, food choice and cultural preference.
- **Health and mental health** – reducing isolation, and support for those with ongoing health conditions.

Cost of living

The **financial benefits** of receiving food was a strong theme as shown in comments throughout the answers to this question, indicating it helped households manage the cost of living and reduce worry. Receiving food and saving money on food had a positive impact on other costs within household expenditure.

- The overwhelming majority told us that they use the food banks because it ‘saves them money’ (120 responses, 73%). Comments indicated that having a food delivery enabled leeway in essential household funding as a whole – including bills, and alleviated ‘heat’ or ‘eat’ choices.

“It has helped a lot financially.”

“The money I save pays other bills.”

“Knowing I can receive cooked meals twice a week has relieved some of my worry, bills and burden.”

“It’s hard to afford food at the moment.”

Some comments indicated the reliance on food services to literally survive:

“We would starve on several days a week – we truly struggle without them.”

"It helps my general wellbeing having nourishment, otherwise could not afford spending money on it, and will starve."

"It keeps me going with the money I have - I'd be literally stuck without it as I'd run out of food."

- 57 (35%) of the responses said, 'it means I can feed my family' and the comments showed how:

"It makes me more happy knowing I can feed my daughter."

"It means I can feed myself."

"Helps you out, get things you wouldn't normally buy or only buy as a treat, like biscuits or sweets, crisps."

"It allowed me to get enough food to feed my family."

Community

The positive benefits from being involved in the food service and their roles in **building community** came out clearly – in all a combined total of 195 responses showed a strong sense that it was valued for this.

We heard that the community felt a strong sense of belonging and building communities, which contributed greatly to participating in the food redistribution:

"OCA makes me feel like I belong."

We also heard people valued **making friends and meeting people**, for example, through food deliveries to their home, seeing someone regularly, so reducing social isolation and loneliness.

Comments showed that this was highly valued, and people told us they felt like 'someone cares'.

"The people that bring (the food parcels) are always really kind and helpful."

"When the parcel come, it makes you feel like someone cares."

"I get a friendly person visiting me every week from OCA."

"They have been so supportive in my most difficult times."

"It makes me feel that I matter to other people in the community."

"It is too much help, they come to my house, the service. It's very easy for me, I am so glad."

Some valued being part of something and **being able to give back**, through being volunteers and part of the food distribution (packing and delivery for example) as well as receiving food.

"They are doing an excellent work by providing for the community and thinking about all the families that are really benefiting from their cause. I like to support them"

Some noted that even though there was a **stigma** felt in using a food service, this was alleviated due to feeling part of the welcoming groups

"They're amazing, bless them, the people behind it are brilliant. The people who drop it off are amazing, and on the phone, they've built up a relationship with me. No one wants to use a foodbank, but they've made it feel like no big deal"

"I am really happy with all the support we receive. I just feel ashamed to receive food support"


15 responses indicated that they use the food bank because 'no one asks any questions'. Some did not want anyone to know that they were receiving food parcels.

Support to health and wellbeing

- 34 (20%) said it '**supports my health and mental health**' and indicated also in comments that poor health is often a driver behind the need to access food provision –often with multiple knock-on effects, meaning people are unable to work, or are on benefits or low income, as well as impact on independence.
-

"Need food parcel because of money, but also because of my ill health"

"It takes a huge amount of financial and physical effort away from me, especially when I am very sick"



“Need food parcel because of money, but also because of my ill health. When I have to go to hospital it's so great to come home and find the food parcel.”

“Often don't have any energy to cook, stand or plan for a meal so having waste2taste meals cooked and delivered is just heavenly support. Its nourishing, comforting, and makes me feel I am not forgotten. So important for me and a huge cost saving also.”

People told us that receiving food parcels also help **support mental health and wellbeing**, and relieve stress and worry:

“The kind staff and volunteers are a welcome, happy interaction in my very isolated and quiet life”

“The food delivery has relieved my stress and worry about the rent and bills”

People also told us about the support in accessing food, where ill health meant that this was **difficult for example to get out or to carry shopping**.

“It is too much help, they come to my house, the service, it's very easy for me, I am so glad.”

“Aside from financial constraints, I have debilitating health issues that affect my mobility”

Some people were able to address mobility and access issues through a food delivery, again linking to barriers due to disability or illness:

“Makes a huge difference, I'm frequently bed bound and can't walk far”

“I have limited mobility, I find it very difficult to get to the shops”

“It's difficult for me to walk and carry bags because of...health problems”

For others, food supply helped overcome barriers to getting food, faced due to poor mental health:

“Me and my husband both have anxiety with panic attacks so it is hard for us to leave the house”

Another great benefit people told us about from accessing a food parcel is the encouragement to **eat healthier and to support healthier choices**:

“Food is brilliant. It has got me back into veg. When I see fresh veg in the parcel, it reminds me to cook with it. I feel better and I’m eating less fast food”

“I can eat more healthier and sometimes buy what I need like essentials”

“The food I get from Waste2Taste helps me saving money but also helped me to be more active as I go to the café to collect my meal. I have lost 8kg since I started coming. The meals are so healthy and so good”

“Clearly it has made a difference to our healthy eating. We are eating a lot more vegetables. We are cooking a lot more using the ideas how to use this food because it's always a good mix of there's always everything, bits and pieces” (See story in appendix).

Access

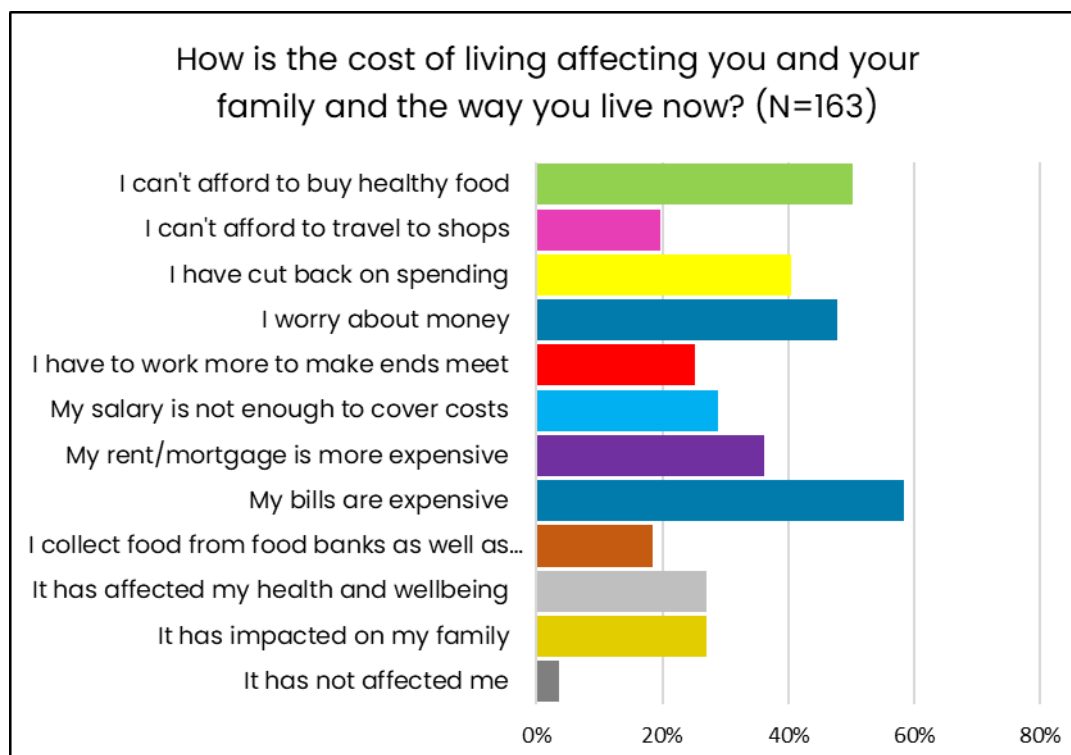
Other responses – seen in the chart above, indicated a range of reasons broadly around access, including convenience such as time saving, improved physical access, and choice – getting the food they prefer – including cultural foods of choice.

One person mentioned that they receive food parcels for **sustainability** reasons:

“Sustainability was another reason why I get these bags. I understand that there is a lot of food wastage but this way I feel that I have made my contribution towards reducing wastage”

6 How is the cost of living affecting people?

We asked people to tell us **'How is the cost of living affecting you and your family and the way you live now?'**



Across all the responses people gave, strong overarching themes became clear. Firstly, the cost of living has as we know **increased prices and bills** and made everything expensive. Some are struggling to meet living costs.

"Rent is too expensive and making life uneasy. Landlords also keep increasing rent"

"We are struggling to afford bills. Running into energy debt and a constant worry about finances or lack of them"

"The living standards getting expensive"

Those on benefits, told us that they struggled to make ends meet and that the money they receive isn't enough to cover rising costs. We know that Oxford is a costly place to live, with above average rent and house prices.

“Every single bill I have [has] gone up, yet my benefits stayed the same. [The] cost of living is crazy and this affected me mentally”

“Because of my severe medical conditions, there have been breakages in my service; as a result, my pension is not sufficient to meet our expenditures on daily life. Inflation has further raised prices of everything... makes it difficult for us to make ends meet”

“The benefits I receive is not enough since it’s mostly spent on all my bills”

It was clear that insecurity and money worries can result in a **negative impact on mental and physical health** both of individuals and the wider family. Some felt more isolated as a result.

“I have become more isolated from the world. My expectations of life have diminished”

“It has added extra stress to my mental health, and I can’t shop as I need to for a family of my size”

“Depressing and feeling desperate”.

“I struggle massively. Benefits, house, car, and food cost as alternative health care needed is massively affecting my day to day living and mental health”

“Depressed and anxious. Feel I can’t give my kids the same as others can”

“It’s impacted on my mental health as I’m struggling to afford things that me and my family need and often not having enough money by the end of the month”

Families and individuals told us they **have to make difficult choices** and cut back on the basics of living, social and other activities.

“I don’t go out as much now – I used to meet up with friends once a week for a coffee but it adds up over the month – stopping this has affected my mental health”

“It’s making it hard for children, as parents you want to get them everything so it’s really hard when you can’t get them

the things they need. I already cut back on spending years back so there is nothing to cut again"

"With my increased bills, I'd have to choose between feeding my family and heating our home"

"When you go shopping, you're like 'can't buy that, it's too dear'. Even putting the heating on, you're like 'no, we're not putting it on until a certain time'. We've had to cut back on things for my child, like going to the cinema – can't take my child to the cinema"

"This service has been a valuable part of making the difference to whether you miss out on a meal because food is becoming unaffordable".

7 Food choice in Oxford

Question 7 asked about how people manage to find the food of their choice and culture in Oxford. We asked this because feedback from people who use Oxford Community Action and other services has highlighted some feel, they find it hard to find food of their cultural choice and that food services often don't offer enough fresh, healthy and basic ingredients.

Most of the responses about cultural access came from OCA as this group serves a more diverse community.

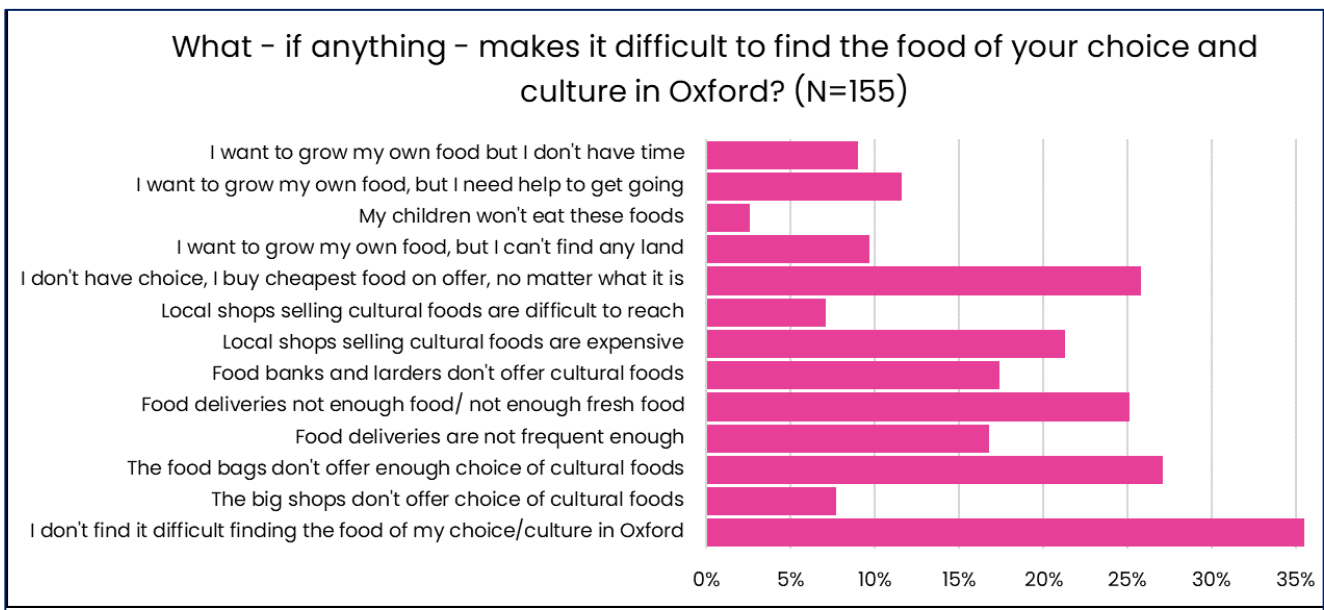
58 (37%) responses indicated there was **not enough cultural choice of food** in Oxford.

"No West Indian food. Have to take a taxi to shop"

"The food is suitable for me, but I do voluntary work giving advice and talk to a lot of East Timorese people, they get things they can't use in food parcels like tinned food. What they really need is meat, fresh vegetables, eggs are ok, cooking oil and rice, no tines. People I speak to will prioritise buying rice and just eat that."

“OCA food bag contains various variety of stuff and there is always something for everyone from an adult to a child. OCA thinks very carefully and meets everyone’s needs, we have a very diverse community!”

39 (26%) people mentioned that they didn’t feel like that have a choice and that they buy the cheapest food on offer. This obviously will have an impact on people’s ability to eat a healthy diet, including consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables which can be costly.



Comments on food bag provision and choice

People relied on and valued the food bags they received, and the support from the groups. However, some commented that the food bags they received did not offer choice, consistent quality, or that they wanted more basic ingredients including fresh and healthy food. Some also noted that food amount seemed to be ‘going down’ and was not always enough to meet needs.

“More vegetables. Two weeks ago I had in my food bag, a potato a lettuce, tin of baked beans and lots of peanut butter sweets. Often there is food out of date or going off.”

“More variety of food would be good, and more food - I know you are doing your best but we really need twice the amount of food in a parcel for the six of us. And it's good if

you make sure people ask for what they want to avoid food waste.”

“Sometimes it would be good to have more choice or information about what’s available.”

“..healthy food is really appreciated, especially fresh fruit and vegetables that can easily be cooked and eaten by one person.”

“It’s just the size of it – it started going down and down and down, today I just got a bag with a day’s worth of food in it, so now I have to sort out food for the rest of the week. You could conglomerate with other food banks – why don’t you merge together, that way you can sort people out with a few more items.”

“There’s often not enough food to feed everyone in the parcel, like sometimes we just get four potatoes, that’s not enough for six of us, what are we going to do with four potatoes? If we don’t use things we give them to the local foodbank.”

8 Basically, it’s about money!

We asked what wider support would people want to help manage the cost of living, with questions 8 and 9 focused on **people’s suggestions for practical improvements to support individuals and community** with have heard before in previous work with Healthwatch Oxfordshire (e.g. community wellbeing report [Research reports – Healthwatch Oxfordshire](#)).

It shows that that the drivers of food poverty are a combination of managing impact of cost-of-living increase and wider determinants including high cost of housing and living in Oxford, insecure or low paid jobs, and other factors like poor health.

Of 145 responses to this question, (people could tick multiple boxes):

- **Practical support and advice for managing finances** for living was a key theme.

“I’d like to retire. I’ve got my illnesses. I’m going downhill. I’ve got lots of health issues. If there was some advice on retirement, about whether you can retire if you haven’t been working...”

- **Practical support around healthy food access and food budgeting**

was a key theme including:

- 69 (48%) community meals (although this may indicate a want for social and community interaction),
- 79 (55%) said they wanted more healthy food, or a bigger range of food in bags
- 29 (20%) skills for shopping on a budget
- 23 (16%) cooking skills on a budget
- 8 (6%) practical advice for feeding family
- 23 (16%) indicated need for help with cooking equipment at home,
- 12 (8%) support with transport to affordable food shops.

“Advice on which benefits to claim would really help”

“Would like to see my benefits increased with reference to inflation”

“More benefits to cover the price of food and bills”

“I would be very happy if anyone could help with my electricity and gas bills”

- **Other responses included:**

- 12 (8%) immigration advice
- Advice on health, social care and mental health support 46 (32%) and help with linking to that local support 20 (14%)

The majority of responses were around **managing with the lack of money** to survive in these challenging times. People wanted information and access to practical advice and support about how to manage. Comments indicated they were not necessarily aware of support available¹. People indicated that having advice on debt, employment, benefits, reducing costs, retirement and housing would be useful.

¹ The larger food services e.g. Sofea food larders do bring in support and advice around cost of living more formally

One comment gave insight into the need for better housing support and protection.

“housing is the main problem for Timorese people. The cost of living and also the problem with landlords around informal living arrangements like unlicensed HMOs. And lots of people have financial responsibilities to extended families. I spoke to one person who is supporting 7 people back home”

Some indicated they needed more support with basic household items:

“Cooking equipment - toaster, pots, kettles, microwave”
“Applied for council funding for a new bed but were told, you've got to budget for that yourself.”
“Help with food for pets”

Some respondents did say they are already accessing some existing support.

“I get support from (local voluntary group) for various things including providing me with a laptop, and my son got a phone from the community centre”

Answers also highlighted other important themes which have been also reflected previous comments – (in responding, people could select any topic that interested them, so could select multiple boxes- percentages show how many chose these options).

Opportunities for social interaction was important. Some people have also mentioned that having community meals would help them budget.

“We need more community meals to help us because everything is getting too expensive”
“I asked for help with my garden, but never got it. Used to go to a social group but had to stop because of fatigue. Would be interested in social group on phone or somewhere where you can sit and chat to people.”

9 Food growing? *'It's Community growth'*

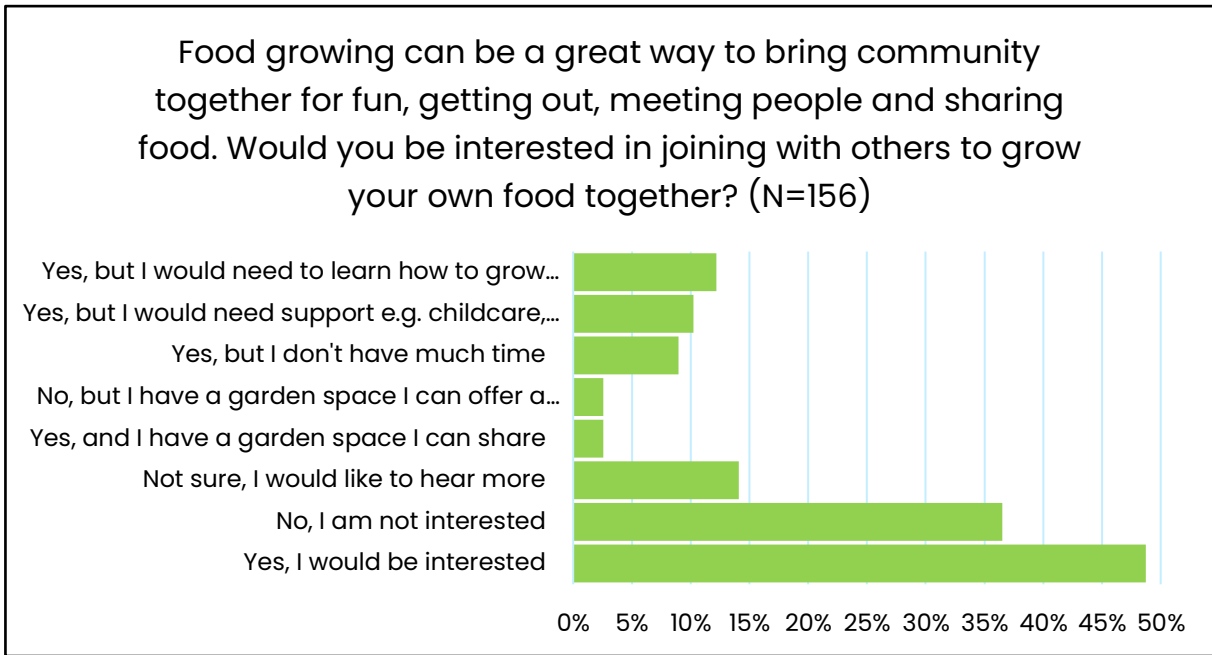
We asked **'Food growing can be a great way to bring community together for fun, getting out, meeting people and sharing food. Would you be interested in joining others to grow food together?'**

Why did we ask about this?

OCA as an organisation is keen on building community led solutions to wellbeing and supporting empowerment. We know that food growing is not a solution to food poverty. But we also know that food growing can be a good way of bringing people together and reducing isolation. As an activity it has wider benefits for health, mental health and wellbeing, access to outdoors, green space, physical activity, as well as developing food literacy and interest (see for example evidence:

https://www.sustainweb.org/resources/files/reports/GH_Benefits_food_growing_for_health.pdf). With the right support, food growing activity can be a key element in health promotion and prevention programmes - there are many examples of this nationally. We wanted to hear if there was interest in this idea, this is what we heard from 156 people.

- 76 (49%) responses indicated that they would be interested in food growing
- 16 (10%) responses indicated that they would be but would with support for childcare or mobility
- 19 (12%) were interested if they could have support to learn how to grow, others noted interest but limited time.



People recognised the opportunity it would give to meet others, contribute and feel part of the community.

"I would love to give back to the food bank. I would need to learn how to do it, only know about tomatoes and cress!"

"I am already involved in some communal growing at my supported living and my nan helps."

"I would really like to come along especially if there is a chance for people to be together and chat."

"I've never grown my own food but would like to learn more."

4 people told us they would be willing to **share a garden** space.

"I have a Housing Association property with a medium sized rear back garden (no front garden). If planting spices, I'm happy to share."

And some mentioned they would like help with their own garden.

"Being elderly couple with multiple severe medical conditions. We would love any help."

Of 79 (51%) who told us they were 'not interested' or 'not sure' about food growing the main reasons given were that they felt unable to contribute due to poor health or mental health issues.

"I'd be interested but due to my mental health I can't interact with people I do not know."

"My mental health at the moment will not allow me to do this."

"I can't do gardening due to my health reasons."

"I have anxiety and learning difficulties, so find it hard to meet new people."

However, with the right support, structure and planning, we know that gardening can be fully inclusive and accessible - so this does not need to be a barrier.

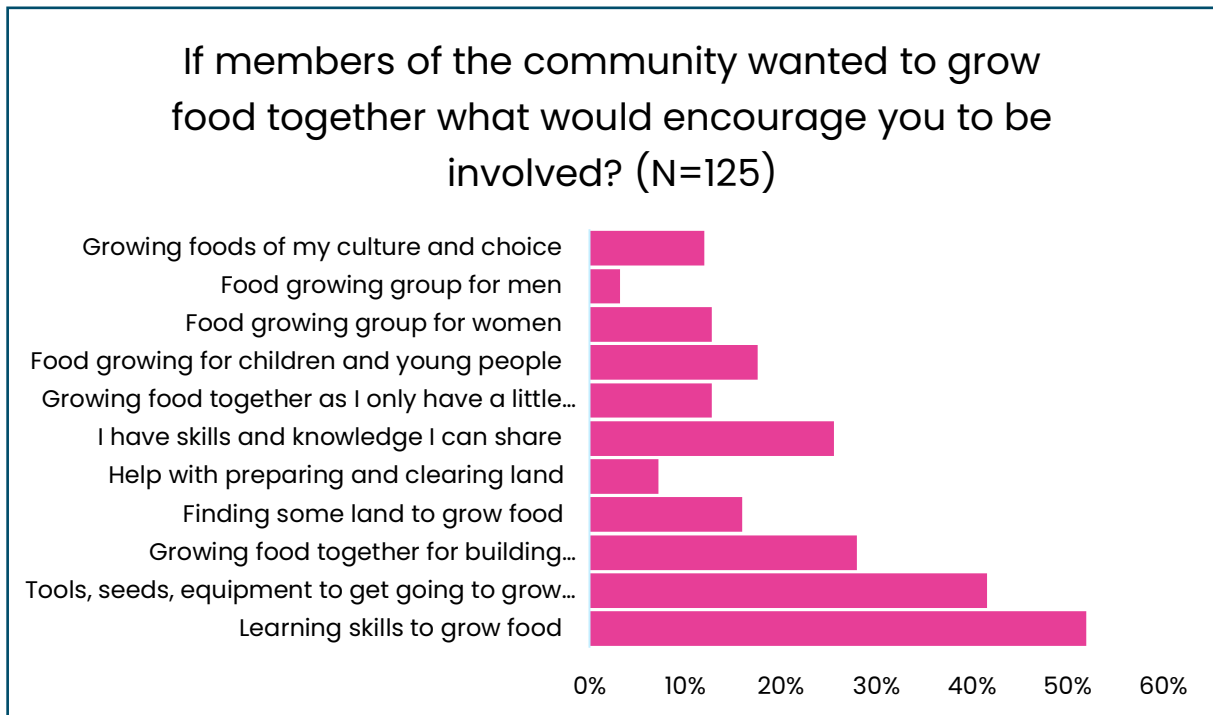
"...depression/anxiety make it difficult to get out - but it would be therapeutic to be able to grow my own food and be out in nature."

We asked people to tell us what would encourage and support them to take part in food growing.

Of 125 responses:

- 65 (52%) told us they would like to learn skills to grow food – 32 said they had skills and knowledge to share with others
- 52 (42%) wanted support with tools and equipment
- 29 (23%) commented they needed help finding land, or clearing land (we know some people do not have access to large gardens that would allow them to grow any significant amount of food and access to land and green space is also a barrier faced by black and multi-ethnic communities)
- 51 (41%) commented they would want to grow food together with community/time constraints
- 22 (18%) responses indicated interest in a group for children and young people, and 16 (13%) a women's food growing group

- 15 (12%) indicated they would like to grow foods of their culture and choice.



10 Next steps and action


We will share this report and film in Oxfordshire with key decision makers and make sure this insight is heard.

We have shared our report with Oxfordshire County Council to support their developing focus on impact of cost of living on residents and informing how better to support.

The report will also be shared with support of Healthwatch Oxfordshire to Oxford City Council, as well as to Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, Oxfordshire Place Based Partnership (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board), and Oxfordshire Prevention and Health Inequalities network (and potential 'Marmot Place' focus), and others including the Well Together programme.

The report and film and our work as community researchers was presented by the researchers at the NHS South East CPAR3 showcase event in London in June 2024.

We will also share back to our communities, with summary report, film, and ongoing feedback about practical action and next steps from this work.



We have already linked up with Oxfordshire County Council to distribute over 600 leaflets to all recipients about cost-of-living financial support and benefits available.

The purpose of this community research work was for us to understand more about the challenges our communities face, but also to turn what we have heard into practical next steps and action. What could this be and where might action come from?

Strategically:

- Improve awareness, information and access to cost-of-living support for people using these food services and those with long term health challenges, including for example, benefits, employment and financial advice and support, and improved promotion and uptake of healthy start, free school meals and holiday support.
- Reach out to bring in information and involve services to connect with and meet the people where they are – and including information in accessible formats and translated materials.
- Explore building capacity within the community to better support signposting, advice, and links to wider support, e.g. through development of embedded ‘social prescribers’ model or similar trusted advocates.
- Highlight what we know and have heard from people about the cost of living, including driver of and impact on poor physical and mental health – to guide more deep rooted and culturally appropriate support within communities – and within strategic action and programmes to tackle the wider determinants of health including opportunity to further support health and wellbeing of people using food service.
- Encourage system review discussion – statutory partners – on sustainability, demand, supply (healthy and cultural foods) and support of community food services post Covid and in light of cost of living- together with OCA, OMA, Waste2Taste, OX4 Food Crew and including Good Food Oxfordshire.

On the ground:

- OCA, OMA, Waste2Taste and OX4 Food Crew (and others) to discuss potential next steps for individual and joint action based on what we have heard and insight into future sustainability of offer.
- OCA to continue to use the food service as a platform to reach and build community wellbeing, support and empowerment.
- OCA and OX4 Community food services- to continue to support alongside exploring ways to help increase food production, buying

power and sustainability and build resilience, health and wellbeing and skills in the community.

- Bring people who took part together for meal and presentation of film and report to share what we have heard with participants of the food service and decision makers – plans for an event in autumn 2024
- Use what we have heard to explore wider activities around community, health and food – including community meals, food growing, and health and wellbeing support, and development of ‘social supermarket’ models.
- Strengthen links to wider food justice movements including Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) and Feeding Britain.

Food growing:

Through hearing that there is interest in food growing, OCA and OX4 Food Crew have *already started* to take practical next steps towards helping this to happen:

Food growing: OCA have linked up with Oxfordshire Community Action Group network (CAG) community gardener to support the process of planning to set up food growing spaces with OCA and others in Blackbird Leys and other potential areas in East Oxford. We will also explore opportunities through Well Together programme, and links to Oxfordshire Food Strategy and Healthy Planning. Vision to:

- Set up food growing support and opportunity throughout the community.
- Work with key decision makers to support identification and availability of potential suitable food growing land, including ‘meanwhile’ space and address some of the inequalities in access to green space, including underrepresentation and barriers faced by black and minoritized communities to growing and land access.
- Explore setting up training and learning sessions and a tool bank to enable people to start using garden and green space in their neighbourhoods





Building resilience

- OCA are now working with local OX4 Advice Agency Agnes Smith Advice Centre, to start to provide monthly advice sessions at their food distribution centre.
- OX4 Food Crew together exploring working with IFAN to co-produce bespoke Oxfordshire focused interactive signposting resources for food service users to ensure they are getting advice and support needed, and make sure not missing out on benefits.
- Proposing to trial development of 'social supermarket' model to improve access to affordable, healthy and fresh food.

11 Appendices

Story: One person's experience of being part of Oxford Community Action food service



Being a member of OCA has been one of the best things that has happened to me and my family in particular. I feel the togetherness and the diversity that we shared at OCA is very unique. You don't see that everywhere. And it's been a few years now that all the projects that they run, we've been part of literally everything and not on any occasion have we felt any lacking ... it's always there is a care, genuine care that they have for people.


And you can sense that with every little thing that they are doing. I feel through me I've managed to introduce more families to them and it's been a real blessing. It's just that the OCA team are very welcoming, very approachable and very caring.

I think to start with the, you know, I, me and my family have been benefiting with their holidays activities. And I am one of the parents who was very anxious of taking kids into very public places because they do have some additional needs. So first of all, it was lovely to have a platform where you can come and, you know, there's no judgment.

You just feel very welcome. And then ... my respect towards the food project is a little bit more different to usual. I shared once that I have come from Pakistan. For many years I've been here. We were always taught a huge respect towards the food, even at home, we were living good, but never waste any food and that is ingrained in us. So when this whole project was all about respecting food and how to utilize it in such a way that it is usable rather than going into waste.

This was very appealing to me, and that's when I started, you know, the few times there was some food and nobody was claiming it and I was saying, I'm happy to take it. And then a few times before the holiday activities, I made something from that food and brought it for children. So that's how I got involved.

And even, you know, now I feel it's very important that we respect the food that is available to us. It's a huge help financially as well, because the food items that



you get often in the food bags, it's amazing what you get some time. If I would be going shopping, I wouldn't be buying that otherwise.

And clearly it has made a difference to our healthy eating. We are eating a lot more vegetables. We are cooking a lot more using the ideas how to use this food because it's always a good mix of there's always everything, bits and pieces. So that also help. That is the healthy eating has been introduced in my house as well as some of the items that I wouldn't buy from the shop or superstore otherwise, which I get through this.

So I it has widened my thinking of how to use the food, what to make from it, for example, which is the purple cabbage, one of the least favourite and least used items in my culture. But when I get it, we try to pickle it, we try to sell it, we try to make a salad from it.

Everybody, you know, has been impacted with the cost of living and the price has gone up recently and we are equally impacted as everyone else. And it's looking quite in a way worrying with coming times. Like even if you go to a charity shop, the price you pay for a pre-loved item is gone so up, let alone going to a brand new, you know, shopping and things.

So definitely it has decreased the area of what you need to buy. You have to think twice, if not more. That is this exactly actually you need. So necessities I think is more important now. The wishes or the wish lists are totally out at the moment. And I think it is quite sad that for the coming times it leaves you, especially families with young children.

And if there is like for one family member working and making earnings for everyone else, it's just very important now to watch. Even then before that, where are you spending and what are you spending on and where that money is coming from? Equally so I feel before these talks were not in the home, but now even with our young children's, we have to make these conversations to them that it's not everything that is achievable now because we have to think so.

I think growing food is such a big impact. You know, going to any form of growing food is always ideal and it's not only going to help with the production of, you know, more food as well as people who are getting involved in doing that, how much impact they're going to have on their mental health, physical health and the, you know, more importance to try to have some of the my trainings in the mental health side as well.

So I do always talk about mental health because again, if I would be sitting and worrying about the shopping list rather than if I'm growing and half of my food is

coming from my own effort or from it from a project that it's involved. So it's definitely going to bring less stress on, you know, buying and doing everything.

So I think these smart little projects where people who can be involved like, you know, some elderly people or people with some mental health or even know, you know, people who are able to do voluntary work, but as well as those who would benefit mentally and socially by being involved. Definitely any of these projects where we can grow more food, weather permitting.



Wider context: Food and cost of living – What we know

The *Joseph Rowntree Foundation report: UK Poverty (2024)*, starkly illustrates the reality of people's day to day struggle with poverty, cost of living, squeezed income and support, and with it, the disproportionate impact on certain groups – particularly those from minority ethnic communities, those on low incomes, disabled people and lone parents.

Poverty goes hand in hand with food insecurity, and in turn use of emergency and other food provision sources to make ends meet, even for those in full time work (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2024:115 on). The Trussell Trust report on *Hunger in the UK (2023)* highlighted “insufficient income is the fundamental driver for almost all people forced to use a food bank” (14).

“We see further evidence of deepening poverty in the increasing number of food-bank users, with more emergency food parcels being delivered by the Trussell Trust network than ever before”

Good food – affordable, accessible and culturally acceptable – is a key component of a healthy and active life. Increasingly, with impact of the rising cost of living, and additional challenges, people are having to cut corners, and this is having a knock-on effect in all areas of their lives – as we have heard in this report. Both physical and mental health suffer, with impacts moving beyond just the individual, to family, community and wider economy (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2023).

Local and campaign groups like Sustain and Food Foundation have taken clear positions on identifying the roots of food insecurity, and highlighting the need to tackle the underlying causes upstream at the same time as giving support communities to build resilience. Focus on improving benefits and benefits access, improved wages and job security, tackling holiday

hunger, supporting uptake of free school meals and improved family support are key.

In Oxfordshire

OX4 area in Oxfordshire, where this study is focused, appears as one of the ten most deprived wards in the county, across domains including income and employment deprivation, health, education and skills and barriers to housing and services (JSNA bitesize Jan 2023 Oxfordshire’s 10 most deprived wards [202301 Bitesize Oxon 10 most deprived wards.pdf \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://oxfordshire.gov.uk/202301/Bitesize_Oxon_10_most_deprived_wards.pdf)).

Community insight profiles commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council public health in OX3 and OX4 areas - also highlight in more detail the impact of cost of living including challenges of accessing healthy, affordable food (The Leys 2022, Rose Hill <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/community-insight-profiles>)

Food poverty


9-14% of Oxfordshire’s residents experience food insecurity. This is **62,000—96,000 people** (Moretti et al 2021)

In 2022, the **rise in living costs** mean households face an average loss of **£1,200 to their annual incomes** forcing people into a ‘heat or eat’ dilemma (Harari et al. 2022)

Cost of living rises disproportionately impact lower income households. There are fewer good-quality ‘value’ ranges and **prices increase up to 350%** for basic items (Monroe, 2022)

Source: Oxfordshire Food Strategy 2022

Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2024-30) sets some of the wider context for wellbeing in the county, touching on aspects of food. This, along with other councils’, health and organisation led strategies, address some of the ‘wider determinants’ of health that lead to food insecurity and drive health inequalities, such as the whole systems approach to healthy weight, economic development, and healthy planning, as well as council led cost of living and benefits support. Increasingly there is more joined up work taking place between different partners, and including communities



and voluntary groups, in together exploring the solutions to tackling some of these issues. Oxfordshire Place Based Partnership, and Oxfordshire (See for example the Well Together Programme [Well Together Programme - Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action \(ocva.org.uk\)](#)).

Good Food Oxfordshire, a network of organisations '*working towards a fairer, healthier and more sustainable food system*', has led the way in supporting development of the Oxfordshire Food Strategy [GFO Oxfordshire Food Strategy](#). This was developed collaboratively with public health, local groups, local and district councils, farmers and businesses. It has mapped and highlighted food access and provision services across the county, and supports community based food initiatives including cooking and growing [Food Poverty Training | Good Food Oxfordshire](#). There is increased coordination and communication as a result across the county around finding solutions to some of the challenging issues faced when it comes to food.

Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill health

Priorities

Expand and strengthen existing services and programmes aimed at those at risk of food poverty, including Community Food Networks (foodbanks, larders, and fridges), Healthy Start Vouchers, Holiday Activities and Food.

Adopt Healthy Place Shaping principles and a Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight.

Outcomes

Everyone in Oxfordshire can access healthy food every day without shame or stigma.

More eligible people accessing existing schemes that tackle health and nutrition inequality.

Uptake of available central government funding is maximised, making full use of available funds, and providing evidence of the local need.



Source: Oxfordshire Food Strategy 2022

12 References and useful links

- Community Engagement: improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities. NICE Guideline NG44. 2016.
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- <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/research-reports/> Oxford's New and Emerging Communities Views on Wellbeing (Jan 2021)
- <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/our-work/research-reports/> Community Research in Oxfordshire. Healthwatch Oxfordshire. (Nov 2023)
- Good Food Oxfordshire including emergency food map
<https://goodfoodoxford.org/>
- Food Foundation <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/>
- Oxfordshire Food Strategy (May 2022)
https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s60603/CA_MAY24_22R07%20Annex%20GFO%20Oxfordshire%20Food%20Strategy%202022.pdf
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2024) UK Poverty 2024
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/uk-poverty-2024-the-essential-guide-to-understanding-poverty-in-the-uk>
- JSNA bitesize (2023) Oxfordshire's 10 most deprived ward
https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/system/files/documents/2023_01_Bitesize_Oxon_10_most_deprived_wards.pdf
- Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2023)
<https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/>
- Healthwatch Oxfordshire - *Community Research in Oxfordshire* (November 2023) [Research reports - Healthwatch Oxfordshire](#)
- Healthwatch Oxfordshire - work with community researchers [Our work with community researchers - Healthwatch Oxfordshire](#)
- Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) [Home | IFAN \(foodaidnetwork.org.uk\)](#)
- Marmot, M. Fair society, Healthy lives: *The Marmot Review. strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010.* (2010)
- Institute of Health Equity (2020) *Health Equity in England. The Marmot Review 10 years on.*
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Oxford Community Action

www.oxfordcommunityaction.org - local action by Oxford's diverse communities

عمل محلي من مجتمعات أكسفورد المتنوعة

Qeynta Talo bixinta

Ba comunidade hotu hotu ina Oxford laran

hatua ya Jumuiya ya Oxford

አካላዊ ስምዖን ኦክስፎርድ



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