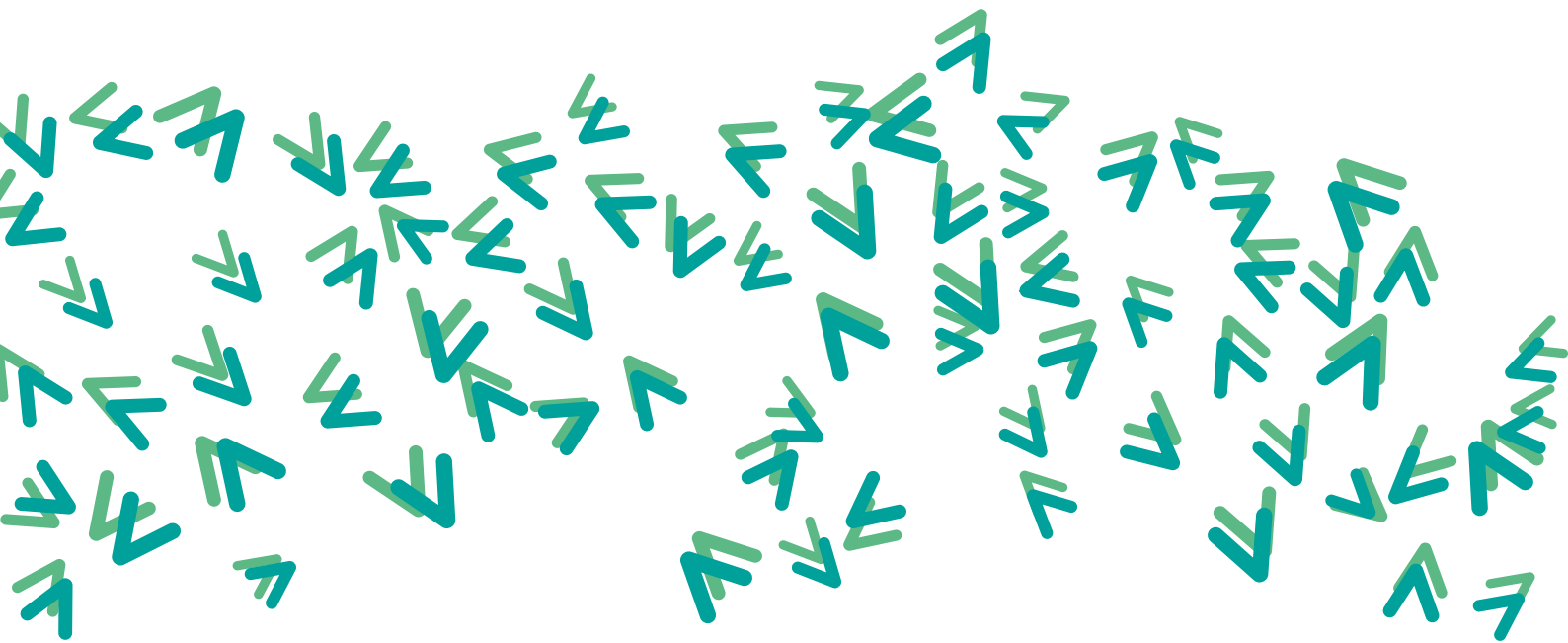




Food, Families, Futures Handbook



June 2018
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Contents

1. Introduction

- Children in Scotland 3
- Food poverty 4
- Holidays: A time of pressure 5
- Food, Families, Futures 5

2. Supporting guidance

- Leadership 7
- Partnership working 7
- Participation and engagement 8
- Planning and delivery 9
- Child protection 12
- Volunteers 13
- Communication and media 14
- Contact us 14

3. Appendices

- A. Principles and guidelines for the participation and engagement of children 15
- B. Planning the project 16
- C. Sample attendance register 17
- D. Evaluation areas and questions 18



1. Introduction

This handbook will provide you with information to help you plan and deliver a community-based club with the aim of addressing a variety of issues affecting children and families.

It is based on the experience of Children in Scotland and a range of partners across different sectors who joined forces to deliver clubs and activities under the umbrella of Food, Families, Future in late 2015.

This section provides some background information on the programme and Children in Scotland plus information on some of the key issues. The next section goes on to outline the different areas to think about when planning and delivering clubs, with the appendices offering a range of templates to adapt and use.

We're always keen to find out what you think so please do get in touch and let us know what worked, what didn't and any examples of your own work. Contact details can be found on page 14.

Children in Scotland

Giving all children in Scotland an equal chance to flourish is at the heart of everything we do. By bringing together a network of people working with and for children, alongside children and young people themselves, we offer a broad, balanced and independent voice. We create solutions, provide support and develop positive change across all areas affecting children in Scotland.

We do this by listening, gathering evidence, and applying and sharing our learning, while always working to uphold children's rights. Our range of knowledge and expertise means we can provide trusted support on issues as diverse as the people we work with and the varied lives of children and families in Scotland.

Bringing partners together, responding to local strengths

We are working on a range of diverse thematic projects, including Food, Families, Futures, now entering its third year, which addresses a major social issue: food poverty and its links with wellbeing, learning and attainment. We want to help break the cycle of increasing poverty and disadvantage and improve the quality of life and opportunities for people.

Our role in the Food, Families, Futures programme maintains a careful balance of strategic and delivery work streams with a focus on identifying and developing partnerships; working with professionals and engaging with children and families, and the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the clubs. We bring community partners together and respond to local needs and strengths.

Food poverty

The Scottish Government estimates that 220,000¹ (more than one in five) of Scotland's children are living in poverty – a level that is significantly higher than many other European countries. In Denmark and Norway, for example, 10% of children or fewer live in poverty, while the Netherlands has an overall child poverty rate of 11%².

According to independent analysis conducted by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS), relative poverty is forecast to increase throughout the UK by more than 4.1% by 2020/21, reversing the downward trend in overall child poverty that has been observed since the late 1990s³.

Professor Elizabeth Dowler described food poverty as 'the inability to consume an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food that is useful for health in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so'⁴. Sadly we are certainly seeing the impact of food poverty on children in Scotland.

Information regularly published by the Trussell Trust offers the most complete picture of emergency food aid provision in Scotland. Their most recent figures demonstrate that 170,625 three-day food parcels were provided in 2017/18, of which 55,038 were for households with children⁵. This represents a 17% increase compared to the year before, continuing the upward trend that has seen total annual referrals in Scotland increase from 2012:

2012/13	14,318
2013/14	71,428
2014/15	117,689
2015/16	133,726
2016/17	145,845

However, it is likely that these figures significantly underestimate the true scale of foodbank usage. That is because, while the Trussell Trust is by some measure the UK's largest foodbank provider, a substantial proportion of emergency food aid is provided by other organisations.

We also know that the majority of people experiencing food insecurity will not, for various reasons, attempt to access a foodbank. Research publication *The nature and extent of food poverty/insecurity in Scotland*⁶ concluded that 'there are more people struggling to feed themselves and their families in Scotland than current food bank figures suggest', citing single mothers with young families as being of 'particular concern'.

Tam Baillie, former Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland said in October 2016, 'This can only harm children's physical and mental well-being; unless their basic need to be well nourished is met, we cannot expect children to concentrate at school or on other activities'⁷.

1 [Annual report on the Child Poverty Strategy for Scotland; Scottish Government; 2016](#)

2 [OECD Poverty Rate Indicator; 2018](#)

3 [Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2017-18 to 2021-22; IFS; 2018](#)

4 [Find out more about Professor Elizabeth Dowler by reading her Warwick University staff biography](#)

5 [End of Year Stats; Trussell Trust; 2017-18](#)

6 [The nature and extent of food poverty/Insecurity in Scotland; Heath Scotland; July 2015](#)

7 ['Plea for government to top up child benefit to help feed kids who are hungry and poor'; Third Force](#)

Holidays: A time of pressure

For many families on a low income the holidays can represent a time of worry and stress. There are approximately 175 non-school days a year¹ where children are unable to access free school meals – not only can this cause real strain on family finances, it can deprive some children of the only hot, nutritious meal they might receive each day.

We know that free school meals are vital for many families, but when this provision ends and holidays start it can mean crisis. School holiday projects help to ensure families can access food and wellbeing activities at a time that would have been associated with great insecurity and stress.

Going to school hungry and struggling through the long school holidays can impact on children's happiness and wellbeing. It also limits their mental and physical development with long-lasting and wide-ranging consequences. They are more likely to have a life expectancy of 23 years less than their most affluent counterparts².

Food, Families, Futures

Our programme aims to make a meaningful difference to people's lives by meeting the immediate need, tackling food insecurity, and the wider needs of additional skills/training for children and parents, such as food preparation and hygiene. This aims to improve the confidence, learning and attainment of children and increase their future opportunities.

'They ask me every day, "We want to go, we want to go!" I want this to happen every year, it's good for the kids.'

The programme runs with support from the major UK food supplier Brakes (through their Meals & More programme) and, over the past two years, additional funding from the People's Postcode Lottery, Asda, the Gannochy Trust, Forteviot and Anton Jurgens. In the first phase of the project Business in the Community Scotland was also our charity partner.

The programme has focused on working with communities experiencing multiple deprivation in Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, Perthshire and the Irvine Royal Academy cluster in North Ayrshire.

'It's got to be the way ahead for Glasgow, for any part of the world, but I'm so thankful it's here in Glasgow.'

¹ [School term and holiday dates; ; mygov.scot; 2018](https://www.mygov.scot/)
² [The Scottish Government \(2015\) Long-Term Monitoring of Health Inequalities](#)

The main aims of Food, Families, Futures are:

- To improve the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families
- To create a supportive environment for parents/carers to bond, listen and better engage with their children's learning
- To provide the opportunity for young people and adult members of families to gain qualifications and certification in subjects related to the local economy
- To engage the wider community (i.e. local organisations, businesses and local groups) to support activities which develop life skills, knowledge and potential employment routes for people
- To make better use of community assets outwith school/term hours and foster stronger relationships within the communities in such a way that the programme continues after year one.

Through Food, Families, Futures, Children in Scotland is putting policy around food poverty into practice. We believe our focus on food insecurity and the impact on children helps make the case for increasing quality holiday provision for our most disadvantaged children and families.

One of our partners, Media Education, has been commissioned to produce a number of short films, capturing the experiences and voices of those involved in the summer clubs.

The first film was produced in 2016 and showed what can be achieved by working in partnership. This was used to promote the clubs in a variety of ways and helped with the significant expansion in 2017.

The 2017 film involves children, families and practitioners (including community chefs) sharing their feelings, opinions and experiences of the clubs. It really captures the positive impact the clubs have had across communities, especially for children and families.

All the films are available by going to [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and searching for FutureFoodScot.

**'What a laugh. Fun, I'm
telling you, what a lot of
fun and laughter.'**

2. Supporting guidance

This section provides you with information and suggestions on key areas which we feel are essential to the successful delivery of a club.

Leadership

A Project Lead is important in each area or club. This is a central person who has an overview of all the partners and aspects of the project to ensure its smooth delivery.

They should:

- Take overall responsibility for the planning and delivery of the project
- Have an understanding and an overview of the aims of the project specifically related to the local area
- Identify and approach relevant local partners to be involved
- Facilitate and manage communication and meetings between partners
- Ensure responsibilities and timelines are met
- Oversee the management of the role of any volunteers involved
- Facilitate the recording and monitoring process
- Liaise with relevant parties regarding media communication, the evaluation and reporting.

Partnership working

Food, Families, Futures is designed, managed and delivered on a local basis to best meet the needs of the children and families in the area.

It brings together local partners from various organisations/sectors, such as:

- Education
- Community Learning and Development
- Food/catering
- Play, activities
- Welfare and rights (Housing, CAB)
- Community Police.

'I've made friends that you would only see in the playground and say "hi" to and now you're actually chatting. Some people, maybe one parent families...they've got more confidence, they're chatting away, they're getting involved now.'

It is crucial the partners involved in the project share core values around:

- The health and wellbeing of children (physical, mental, emotional)
- The essential role of food and activity in maintaining and developing the above
- The essential role of children and parental engagement throughout the project
- Schools (and where appropriate, their kitchens) as a central community resource.

Once the principles of the project are agreed there are of course practical considerations that every partnership must discuss. These will be around roles and responsibilities of development, delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

Good communication between partners supports the success of Food, Families, Futures including regular contact whether through meetings or other methods. This is true throughout the project from planning to evaluation and reporting stages.

Participation and engagement

'Nothing about us, without us!'

In line with how participation is described by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, Children in Scotland's goal is to engage children and young people in meaningful, ongoing dialogue and to enable them to have effective and fulfilling participation. Children and young people should be actively listened to, treated fairly and have their opinions respected and taken seriously.

With this in mind, children and families must be involved in the planning and development of the project at the earliest juncture, in these six key stages:

- Planning and coordination
- Inclusion
- Child protection
- Delivery
- Communication
- Feedback, evaluation and next steps.

'What the kids get out of it is looking forward to it, joining in the games, actually happy their parents are taking part.'

Please see Appendix A for a summary of Children in Scotland's own principles and guidelines for the participation and engagement of children. It is essential that all stakeholders are involved in the co-design, co-production and evaluation of the Food, Families, Futures project. A sense of ownership can help ensure engagement and success, not least because it will specifically be answering the needs of the local community.

It should be informed by and, where possible, led by the engagement of children and their parents/carers, with staff involved also engaged and consulted at the earliest stage. Please see Appendix B for suggested areas/questions that may be of use when initially planning and evaluating the project.

Planning and delivery

Inclusion

The local school is the hub for the programme's activity and all children attending the school are entitled to apply. It is a universal offer. There should be no restrictions on attendance criteria (for example free school meals entitlement).

The only limitation is how many places can feasibly be provided. Signing up to the project will enable planning around expected numbers – with flexibility built in for encouraging and supporting attendance if numbers are low or expanding plans if numbers should swell.

All aspects of the project must be able to be accessed by all attending. (See specific areas below). This means practitioners must remove barriers to participation and offer support where necessary. Barriers may include getting to the venue to attend the club; the physical aspect of the venue and activities; language; cultural considerations around food and activities and additional support needs that impact on understanding, relationships etc.

Attendance

The greatest positive impact for children and families is experienced when parents/carers attend the project with the children, for some or all of the time.

The initial engagement process is useful in exploring the reasons why parents/carers should attend and what will make this work on a practical level for families. For example, whether the attendance requirement could be for the whole programme, mornings or afternoons only or a number of days over the period. This needs to be determined prior to registration and also to ensure that there are arrangements in place when parents/carers are not in attendance.

Food, Families, Futures is not a childminding service.



Advertising and promotion

This needs to be as inclusive a process as possible and not a barrier to participation. It is vital to 'meet' families where 'they are'. Children and families may be reached and encouraged to attend in various ways:

- School networks
- Partners
- Other community organisations
- Meetings
- Groups (social, support, faith)
- Peer/family networks
- Leaflets
- Social media.

'A favourite bit of mine has been going on all the trips and getting fresh air. Well normally if you're in the house you get bored and put pressure on your parents, so that way it gives them free time to themselves and like we can go and have our own time'.

Registration

Again, this must not be a barrier to participation.

How do families register their interest initially (for example, through school or through a partner)? They may need to complete a consent form for any off-site activities and/or photographs and films. Some families may need support with this.

Activities

Food, Families, Futures is not an extension of the school term. Children are on a holiday, which happens to include activities planned and delivered by experts who understand the purpose and benefits of play in relation to learning, health and wellbeing. Activities must therefore ensure variety, stimulation, progression, etc. over the agreed period, where possible based on the findings of the engagement process.

Appropriate pacing of activities and choice of activities for those attending is important. Children and families have a variety of needs and interests and a 'one size fits all' approach rarely works well. Practitioners need to plan for a variety of eventualities, based on their knowledge of the needs of those attending. For example, some children do not respond well to loud large group games and an alternative must be made available.

Food

Food is the central feature of Food, Families, Futures. The emphasis is on family / community preparation, with expert support where necessary. The intention is not to recreate the 'school lunch' experience – the purpose is to create a holiday experience of preparing, eating and clearing up by the children and families.

Each project determines how this is delivered, perhaps through the local authority contractors or a community provider. There is an expectation that at least two days per week children and families will prepare a cooked meal.

The food will be based on the consultation and planning process with children and families, within the boundaries of what is possible given the practical nature of the venue, time restrictions etc. The dishes must be healthy, simple to prepare and affordable and reflect any findings from the engagement process.

Any special food requirements will also have to be catered for – including allergies and cultural and religious requirements. Again, the engagement work and/or registration will help supply this information.

Recording and monitoring

It is essential to keep a daily register of the children and family members who attend (including those who attend only once and those who attend on numerous occasions). This helps maximise attendance by identifying where families may need support to attend. It is also necessary information for the evaluation of the impact of the project and for funders.

For the same reasons, it is advantageous to gather additional information on the children such as age, gender and additional support needs. This should be done as discreetly and respectfully as possible.

Please see Appendix C for a draft attendance register.

Evaluating and reporting

Evaluating the success and impact of the project will be crucial for reporting purposes and future planning. All partners' and stakeholders' input should be sought, including children, families, practitioners and volunteers.

A variety of ways of gathering this information can be used, including quantitative and qualitative information. Approaches must be participative to ensure any barriers are removed. This can include one to one or group sessions, voting, drawing, photographs and films. Other useful approaches include paper or online questionnaires and surveys and the use of email and social media, remembering that some partners and stakeholders may need support accessing and completing these.

See Appendix D for possible evaluation areas and questions.

Risk assessment

As per all school and community-based activities with children and families, a risk assessment must be completed ahead of the start of the project. The registration process will help identify specific additional needs (for example physical disability, which will inform fire evacuation procedures). The Project Lead should ensure this assessment happens, that all partners are consulted and when completed it is shared with all partners.

Child protection

We must recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is always the primary consideration, as enshrined in legislation
- all children have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

We must seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- developing and implementing effective policies and procedures linked to child protection
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents, carers and children appropriately.

We can achieve the above by:

- Ensuring staff involved in running the project are appropriately PVG checked through their substantive post
- Holding a session to take place in the planning stages with all staff regarding child protection procedures and code of conduct (who the Designated Member of Staff will be, what the procedural steps are, where to find relevant contact details etc).

If any staff or volunteers are involved in delivering regulated work with children, it is essential that they are members of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme and that (PVG) checks are carried out by Disclosure Scotland. If in doubt of the criteria, check out the Disclosure Scotland website or contact them on 0870 6096006.

For staff and volunteers not delivering regulated work, support and preparation for their role must include reference to child protection.



Volunteers

It may be advantageous to all parties to approach local community groups for extra volunteers to help run the project. For example, this may be an excellent opportunity for interested pupils from the local secondary school to benefit from the experience. Project partners may have links with interested groups and funders may also have staff who would like to volunteer.

To ensure all involved have a positive experience working on the project, best practice would dictate that volunteers' names are garnered as soon as possible in the process. The Project Lead may wish to facilitate a meeting between volunteers and staff ahead of the project (if time and capacity allow) or produce a brief guide for each volunteer and send it by post/electronically ahead of the start of the project. Either approach should cover:

- Aims of the project
- The shape of the day/week
- Activities planned
- The role of the volunteer on the day
- Brief child protection guidelines.

At the start of each day of the project it is good practice to have a staff and volunteers briefing before the children and families arrive, again to ensure that all involved have a positive experience working on the project. A similar meeting at the end of the day to go over the successes and challenges and thank the volunteers is also advisable.

The Project Lead may also identify a member of staff who could be a 'buddy' for the volunteers – their point of contact over the day if they have any questions etc.

As previously mentioned, any volunteer involved in delivering regulated work will need to be a member of the PVG scheme. The preparation for their role in any club must include reference to child protection and a clear understanding of who they need to speak to in the event of a concern.

Communication and media

The Project Lead should facilitate a discussion with all partners around how the story of the project will be shared, especially how to harness the strength of the voice of the children and families.

Local Authorities, individual schools and project partnerships may very well have their own way of sharing good news stories – newsletters, Facebook, Twitter etc so an agreed approach is essential.

Media messages around this work must ensure the dignity of all involved – including children and families. We need to work hard to avoid labelling and stigmatising children and families.

Contact us

If you wish further information please contact Elaine Kerridge, Policy Manager (Participation & Engagement):

- **ekerridge@childreninscotland.org.uk**
- **0131 313 8840**

Appendix A: Principles and guidelines for the participation and engagement of children

These principles and guidelines are in line with how rights are described by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. They have been developed to inform the way we involve children and young people in our work.

We are happy to share these principles and guidelines. We encourage others to reflect upon their own practice and consider them in relation to their own organisational context.

Six key stages

These principles and guidelines can be applied at all times, from start to finish of any work involving children and young people.

1. Planning and coordination

Participation and engagement with children and young people should begin at the project design stage. They should be included in the planning and coordination of activity from the start.

2. Inclusion

When conducting any participation and engagement work, the group should be as inclusive as possible, ensuring a mixed demographic and removal of any barriers to participation.

3. Child protection

Awareness of child rights and meaningful participation complement and strengthen child protection practices. Every organisation must follow its own child protection guidelines.

4. Delivery

At the start of any session, always make it clear to the children and young people that there are no right or wrong answers when being consulted about their views. The purpose behind any participation activity should also be clearly explained from the outset. A variety of approaches and methods should be used to suit the needs of the group.

5. Communication

All communication in participation and engagement work should be accessible, clear and accurate.

6. Feedback, evaluation and next steps

No project is complete until the children and young people know how their voices have been listened to, what impact their contribution has made, and what has happened as a result of what they said and why.

The full version of 'The Participation and Engagement of Children and Young People: Our Principles and Guidelines' is available on the Children in Scotland website.

Appendice D: Evaluation areas and questions

Attending:

- Why did you want to take part in the club?
- How many times did you come along? Why?
- How do you feel about doing this together with your friends and family?

The activities:

- Which activities did you do?
- Which activities did you enjoy/not enjoy?
- Are there any activities you would like to suggest for future clubs?

The food:

- How do you feel about preparing/making food together?
- How do you feel about the meal times (food on offer, eating with others)?
- What healthy food do you think everyone would like more of at the club?
- What did you learn about cooking/food/diet/energy?

The school as the venue

- How does it feel being in school during the school holidays?
- Has it been convenient/useful holding the club in the school?

Learning:

- What did you learn?
- What skills have you developed?

Community:

- What do your friends and other family members think of the club?
- Have you made any connections with people you did not know before?
- Do you think the club has had a positive impact on the local community?

Future plans:

- Should the club run again?
- What have you enjoyed the most about the club?
- What would you change about the club and why?

General thoughts

- What word(s) would you use to describe the club?
- Why is the club important?