

Brighton & Hove Food Banks and Emergency Food Survey

A snapshot in July 2015

This is a snapshot of food parcels given out by food banks in the city; using information supplied via a phone and email survey in July 2015.

One year on: Food Banks, Food Parcels and Demand

There are currently 15 food banks in Brighton & Hove, plus one in Shoreham, which we have not included in this snapshot. Collectively they give out food parcels to approximately **289 households per week**, with the average price of a food parcel being **£22**.

This compares to 13 food banks in July 2014, giving out roughly 266 food parcels and around 6 food banks in July 2013. **This equates to approximately an 8% increase in food parcels from 2014.**

All food banks give out ambient foods (tinned and dry goods) whilst **80% give out fruit and 73% give out vegetables**. A few also give out non-food items such as washing powder and toiletries.

Most food banks report an **increase in demand** over the last year (67%) with only one seeing a reduction (Hove Salvation army).

NB: that these figures all depend on how you define a food bank, and that food parcels come in varying sizes with varying contents).

Who operates our food banks and who are they for?

The organisations running the food banks are very different – faith based (7); children's centre based (3); neighbourhood based, with support from the Trust for Developing Communities (3); or run by community of interest organisations (2 - Brighton Women's Centre and Brighton Voices in Exile).

The majority of the food banks require a referral to access them i.e. unlike the media stereotype; people can't just show up, although two of the neighbourhood food banks are accessed on a drop-in basis and require a proof of postcode rather than a referral. The two community of interest food banks can also give out food on a drop-in basis.

Other than the neighbourhood and community of interest food banks, most of the food banks in the city are targeted generally at those in need, with the exception of one which is targeted at students.

Additional Services & Food banks

We asked if Food Bank users can access any other services whilst visiting the food bank:

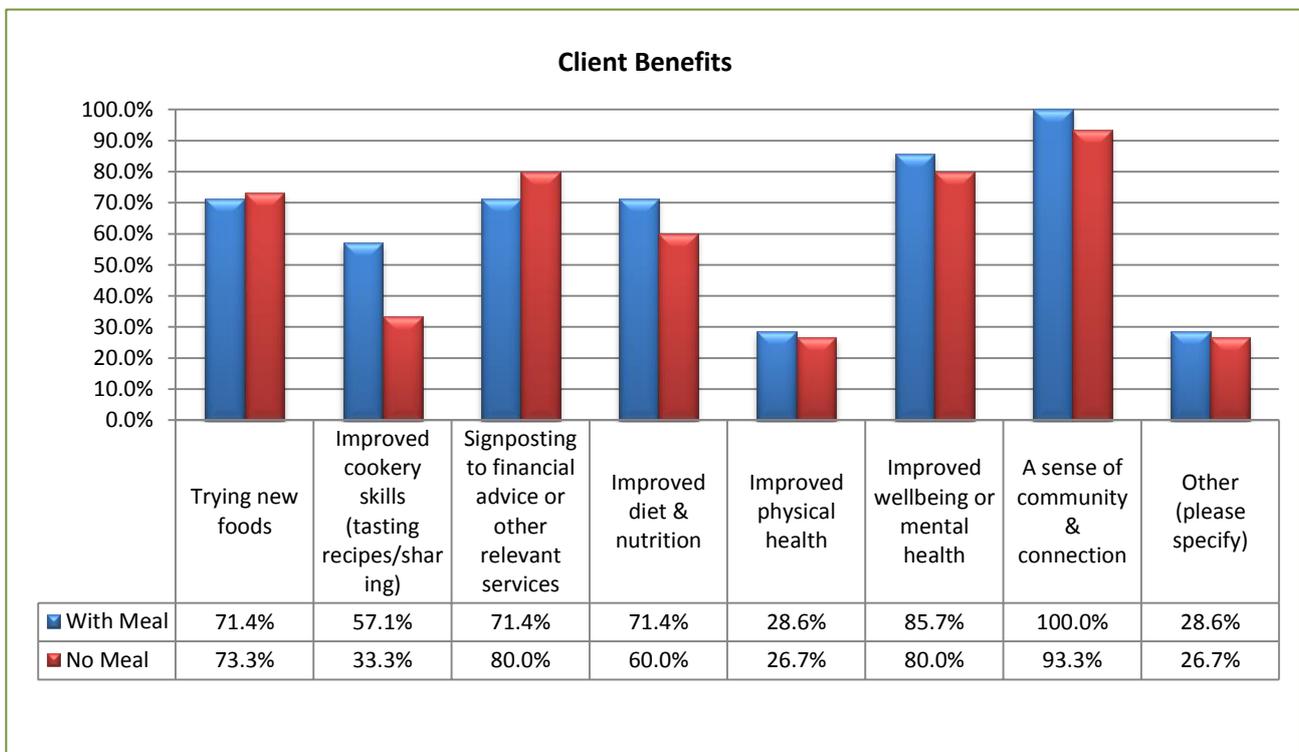
- 80% said they already provide some money advice alongside the food bank services
- 67% provide snacks/drinks
- 47% provide nutritional advice
- 47% provide access to a meal at their projects

One food bank said they also offer home start-up packs, whilst another said they offer a homework and kids club.

Other than access to food we asked what other benefits the food bank users' gain by visiting the food banks:

- 93% think clients gain a sense of community & connection by using their services
- 80% think the clients gain improved wellbeing and mental health by using their services
- 60% think the clients benefit from improved diet & nutrition

The graph below compares those food banks that provide **access to a meal** vs. those that don't and shows what other benefits the clients gain as a result:



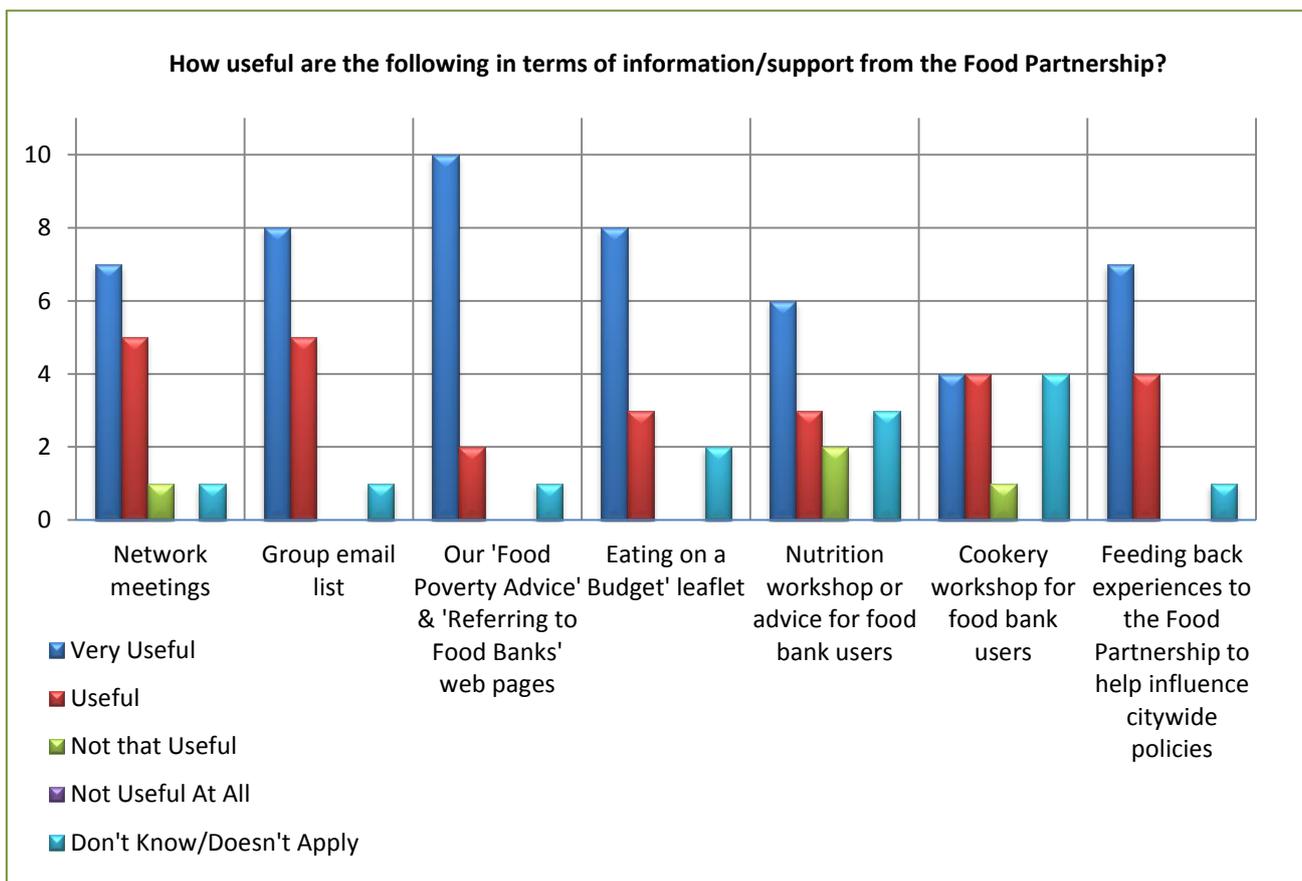
Food Banks were asked if they would consider charging a small fee for some of the food they provide, of the nine food banks that answered the question:

- 67% said perhaps for a fruit & veg bag
- 63% said perhaps for dry goods/other foods
- 29% said perhaps for a meal

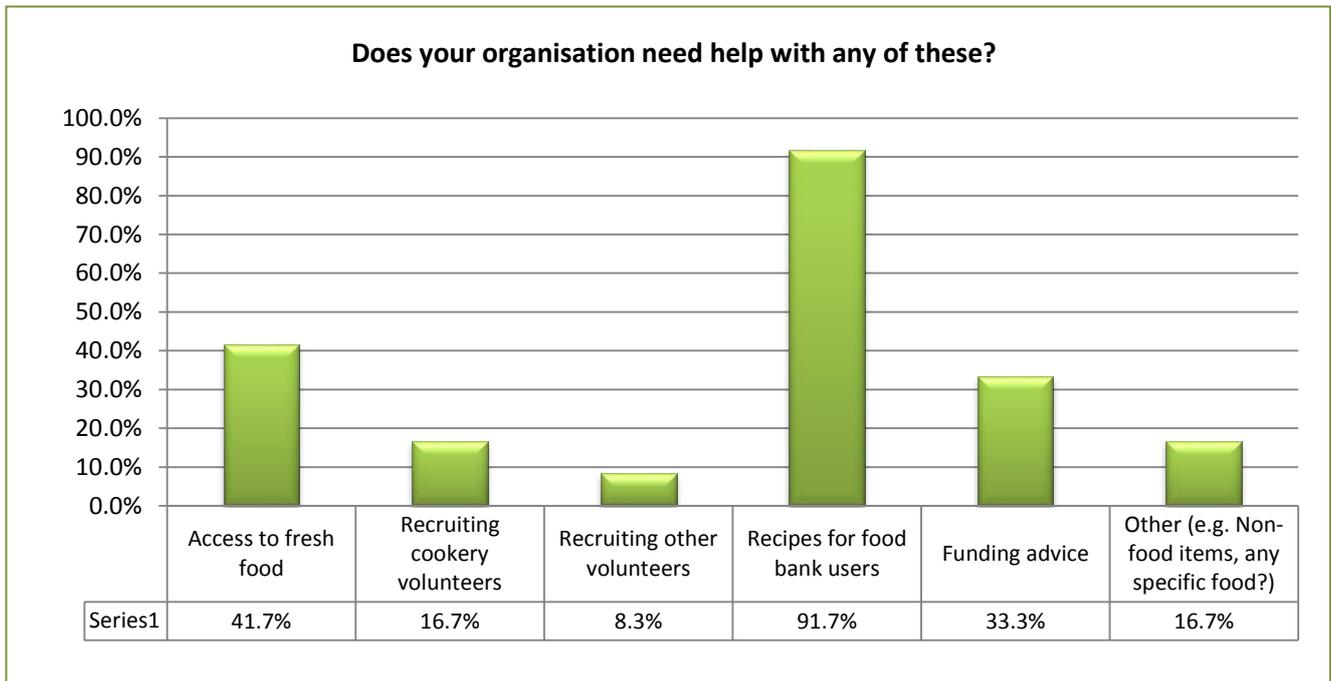
What support do the food banks want from the Food Partnership?

According to the survey 100% of the Food Banks in the city want the Food Banks Network to continue. Only two food banks think there should just be emails and no meetings.

The graph below shows how useful the food banks find each of the services we provide to them:

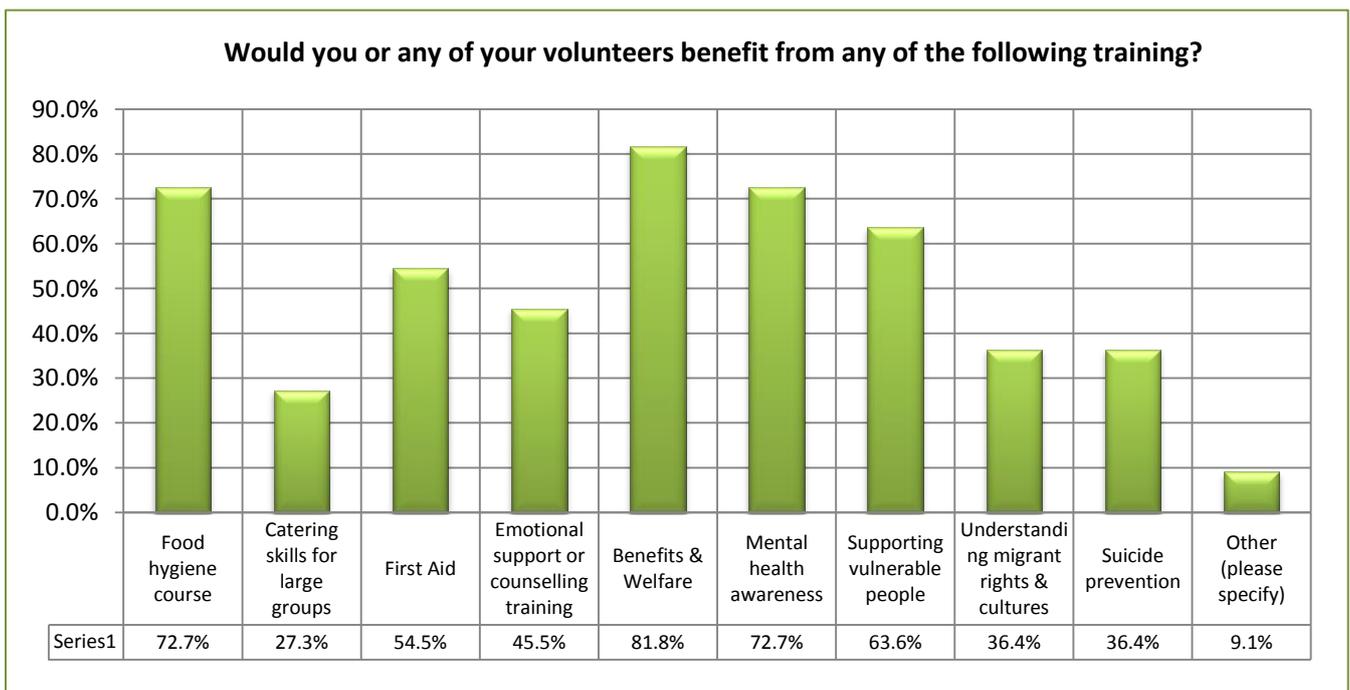


This next graph shows what the food banks need help with most:



One food bank commented on needing additional food during the holidays to provide for struggling families.

Most food banks wanted some kind of training for their volunteers. The graph below shows what was most popular:

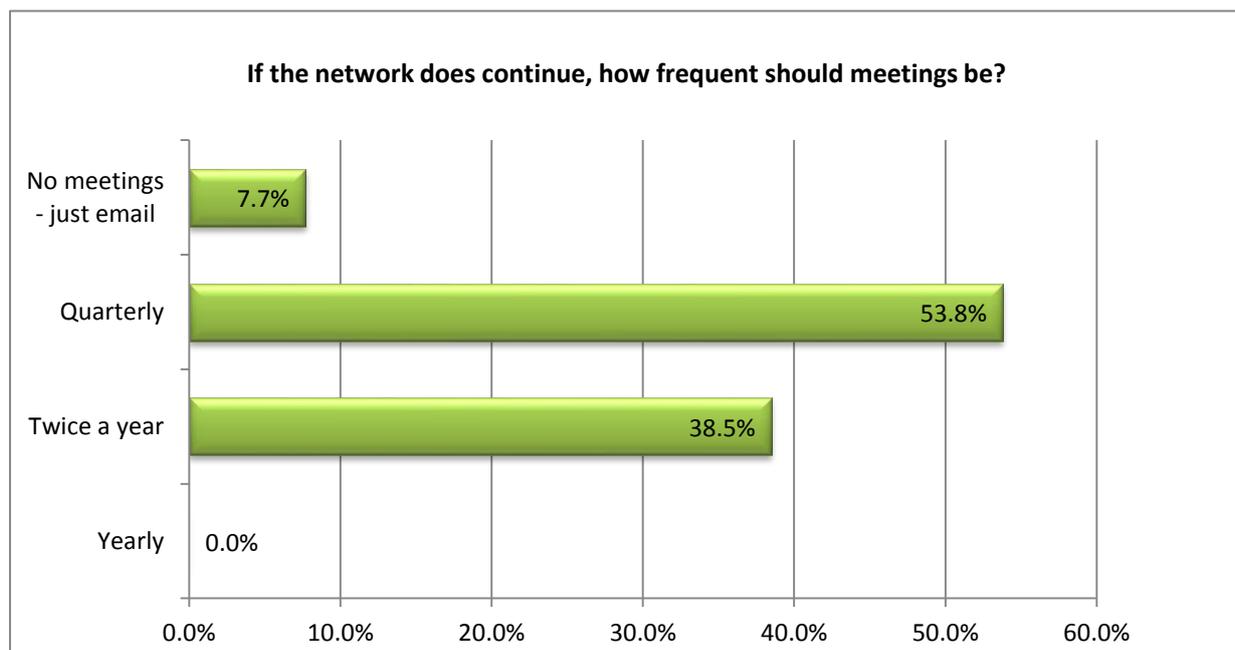


From being part of the network food banks have gain lots of benefits. These are shown in the table below, in descending order:

In the experience of your own organisation, has the network helped any of the following to happen?	Response Percent
Better understanding about what the Food Partnership does	85.7%
Better understanding of the advice services available across the city	78.6%
Regular contact or stronger connections with other food banks	71.4%
Shared tips/ learning with another group	64.3%
Advice or other professional visiting our food bank	50.0%
Exchanged food (e.g. swapping/ sharing surplus)	50.0%
Share experiences with and/or influence other organisations such as Fareshare/Food Waste Collective/Council/Advice services	35.7%
Improved our monitoring system	35.7%
Feeling more inspired & energised about the work we do	35.7%
Attended a training course(s)	21.4%
Improved our referral process	21.4%
Other (please specify)	14.3%

In addition, one food bank said they planned to expand their service to include a community garden as a result of being part of the Food Bank Network.

When asked about the future of the network meetings the graph below shows the majority are in favour of quarterly meetings:



Most food banks want relevant speakers at the meetings, updates on national policy around food poverty, discussions on the B&H Food Poverty Action Plan and more information on the proposed Fairness Commission.

One commented:

“Information on anaerobic disposal of food and food waste concerns. All topics mentioned are relevant. Good to have a mix of local concerns but also the national picture and related topics i.e. influence of local issues on food poverty.”

Future Plans

Comments on future plans:

“Depending on demand, we may open for two sessions a week. Support comes from the Trussel Trust mostly, but we benefit a lot from the network and from meetings and emails.”

“We would like to have a cafe and run workshops and also provide training for our volunteers. We would also like to develop links with allotments to be able to receive more fresh produce to pass onto our clients so that they could have access to fresh fruit and veg on a regular basis even if they are going through it.”

“We are not in a position to do this now but in the future we would like to look into starting a food co-operative.”

When asked if Food Banks would be willing to share information on a new “Emergency Food Directory” section of the B&H Advice Services website 83% said they would share details including organisation name, address and telephone number.

Map of Food Banks & Emergency Food Providers in the City



This map shows the catchment areas for some of food banks in the city. At first glance it seems there is a lack of provision in the centre but actually there are a few food banks that serve the whole of the city. These include food banks that support special groups such as Brighton’s Women’s centre (women only) and Faith Alive Ministries (students only).

Note: It is very likely that there are many people in the city who may not be able to access a food bank e.g. the elderly or disabled. Therefore this survey only gives a snapshot of the demand for food banks in the city and does not take into account the many people who may need to access a food bank but cannot.