



REPORT ON HNCC's COVID-19 RESPONSE

April 2020 - May 2021

HNCC supported more than 1,000 people in Highgate and the surrounding areas through the three lockdowns of the Covid-19 pandemic. Within a week of all face-to-face services being suspended in March 2020, staff and volunteers had established a Food Bank, Meals on Wheels Service, telephone befriending service, prescription and shopping collections and support for parents and carers with young children. The ethos was the creation of a service of equals, all of whom can offer help when they are able, and ask for help when they need it. For so many, this approach has provided a lifeline, and we are proud that in feedback collected in January 2021, 74% of people said they felt better connected to their community as a result of the help they had received.

In Autumn 2020, we published a report highlighting the support given between April and September 2020. This report provides highlights of the subsequent support offered for people affected by Covid-19 between October 2020 and May 2021. In June 2021 our face-to-face services reopened and so it seems timely to reflect on the 14 months that HNCC responded to the Covid-19 crisis.

In October 2020 we created a charity-wide monitoring and evaluation system and we are making excellent progress implementing the digital monitoring framework Time to Spare across the organisation. This has improved our data collection significantly since October 2020 and given us insights into the demographics of the people we are supporting. It has also eliminated the chance of double-counting from our monitoring systems which means that our reporting to funders and the community will be greatly improved.

Since using Time to Spare we are now able to see how many people live in the most deprived neighbourhoods as measured by the Indices of Deprivation.

- More than 50% of food parcels were delivered to households located in the 30% most deprived areas
- 70% of children aged under 5 (218 children) lived in the 30% most deprived areas
- 40% of all telephone befriending calls were made to people living in 30% most deprived areas





Achievements and key stats:

FOOD PARCELS & MEALS ON WHEELS

- 145 volunteers helped with food parcels, prescriptions, meals on wheels etc
- 5002 food parcels were delivered by volunteers between April 2020 – May 2021
- 16% of all food parcels were Halal (Oct 20 - May 21)
- 2757 hot lunches were delivered by Meals on Wheels (April 20 – May 21)

The people we supported with food parcels:

- More than 50% of food parcels were delivered to households located in the 30% most deprived areas (measured by the Indices of Deprivation)
- 47% of households receiving a food parcel were single-person households
- 20% of households receiving a food parcel had at least one person aged over 65 (Oct 20 – May 21)
- 44% of households receiving a food parcel had at least one person aged under 25
 - NB: Some households have both a 65 and an under 25 living together.

FEEDBACK FROM 57 PEOPLE WHO USED THE FOOD BANK IN JANUARY 2021

- 48% had experienced a drop in income because of the pandemic
- 16% had received a positive test for Covid-19
- 29% of people said that they did not have adequate access to laptops or computer
- 17% could not access the internet from home

- 90% said that the food parcel or meals on wheels meal had helped them to eat more healthily that week
- 74% said that receiving the food parcel helped them to feel better connected to people in their community
- 25% said they needed additional help connecting to other services and advice (housing, money and debt advice, children and family advice, health and employment advice were all mentioned)

HOW THEY RATED THE SERVICE

- 84% rated the service 10/10
- 89% would recommend it to someone else
- 84% said the quality of the food was good
- 98% rated the staff or volunteers as helpful / friendly



Profile of food bank users and feedback:

It is difficult to select single case studies that are representative of all food bank clients. Most people tended to fall into three categories:

1. In financial difficulty because of Covid-19. We were approached by many people who had never accessed a food bank before but they had lost their jobs and fell between the cracks of government support. They needed food support until they were able to work again.
2. Those who were experiencing acute illness in their household – either as a result of Covid-19 and the need to isolate or because of an illness that is unrelated to covid-19 such as dementia or cancer etc.
3. Those who were experiencing extreme financial poverty before Covid-19 and this continued and grew worse during the three lockdowns. Many people reported increased spending money on gas, electricity and food as a result of being forced to be home more.

“A lovely service. I started off feeling embarrassed about having to use it but I don't feel like that now. So friendly.”

“Everyone always is welcoming. Thanks”

“I think the food bank provides an incredible service.”

SUPPORT FOR THE UNDER 5s

Around 100 parents and carers were supported via a what's app group and 200 activities packs were delivered containing arts and crafts, cooking ingredients etc. The team also created singing and rhyme sessions on You Tube. Referrals were made to the Emergency Response team for food parcels for families in need of additional support. When the restrictions allowed, the team put on very socially distanced play sessions for children within one household or bubble.



KEY STATS FOR UNDER 5s

- 290 children supported between October 2020 and May 2021
- 100 parents and carers supported on a What's app group
- 200 activity packs delivered with art and cooking activities
- 30 children visited socially distant Santa

- **218 children (70%) live in 30% most deprived areas (Indices of Deprivation)**
- **110 children (38%) live in 20% most deprived areas (Indices of Deprivation)**



TELEPHONE BEFRIENDING

When the pandemic began our helpline received 964 calls. Some of the calls were from people who were very frightened and isolated and the need for longer term befriending became apparent. The team who usually work with the over 60s created the befriending service and have since recruited 14 volunteers to meet the considerable demand. Some people have needed daily calls for reassurance and to help them get through each day. Others have either had a weekly call or enjoyed calls for a few weeks and then moved on. The telephone befriending service will continue for those who continue to shield or feel very isolated although demand has reduced in the past month.

KEY STATS FOR TELEPHONE BEFRIENDING SUPPORT

- 2900 befriending calls made (April 2020 to May 2021)
- At least 190 individuals had telephone befriender (this number is likely to be higher)
- 64% of all people were aged 65+ (Oct 20 – May 21)
- 14 volunteer telephone benders

- **8% of all phone calls made to people living in 20% most deprived areas (measured by Indices of Deprivation)**
- **40% of all phone calls made to people living in 30% most deprived areas (measured by Indices of Deprivation)**

Case studies and feedback

1. SW was 70 years old and blind, with early dementia and mobility issues. She was incredibly anxious about how she would cope during another lockdown and she asked for regular calls to keep her spirits up. She said her befriender had been a “Godsend” and that she wasn’t sure if she would have managed without her.
2. Mary was 72 and had been feeling very isolated. She had been unable to see her family since February 2019 and she told us how she really missed seeing her son, daughter, and grandchildren. Her husband died around 18 months before which really added to her loneliness. The telephone befriender helped her link in with an online choir once a week via zoom and arranged to speak to her once a week. She said:

“Thank you so much for all your help. Speaking to Louise gives me a such a lift. Thank you very much”.



Christmas and New Year 2020

Christmas and New Year can be incredibly difficult for some people on a usual year, and we knew that this year it would be even worse for those shielding or unable to see friends and family. HNCC stepped up our support over the Christmas time and opened every day with the help of a team of staff and volunteers. Food parcels and Meals on Wheels were provided to those in need of food support, and staff and volunteers provided distanced concerts, afternoon tea for those in need of company and support and even a socially distanced visit from Father Christmas for families.

Looking Ahead

In June 2021 all face-to-face services resumed and we are delighted to see everyone again. The Wellbeing Café has moved to a new venue at St Michael's church and we are just about able to meet the huge demand every Tuesday and Wednesday. Our community lunches are available daily with freshly cooked, hot food served daily from St Mary Brookfield and the United Reformed Church. The under 5s programme has grown with at least one play opportunity for babies and toddlers every day in local churches. We are continuing the telephone befriending support whilst the demand is still there but this will be reviewed in a few months.

The food bank is transforming into a poverty reduction project which we will launch in July 2021. Our focus will be increasing income for those living on or below the poverty line. In partnership with Citizens Advice Camden, we will be working with people to make sure they are claiming all the income they are entitled to, helping them to reduce their debt and ensuring that they are accessing the cheapest tariffs on their bills etc. Food collections will still be available via food co-ops operating from the Whittington Estate at weekends.

We are truly grateful for all of the support from all of our funders who enabled us to stay open and help people through this extremely challenging time. We also want to sincerely thank our local community for all of their support. Local residents gave money, food donations and hours and hours of their time to help us reach more than 1,000 people. We hope to build on this tremendous community spirit in the coming months.

Justina Forristal
Head of Fundraising, Monitoring and Evaluation

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