

Invitation to Tender Income Maximisation and Substance Use

October 2024

Background

The Pathfinder programme was launched by the Trussell Trust in 2020 within a variety of foodbanks to explore ways to end the need for emergency food provision. Foodbanks across the Trussell Trust network had the opportunity to join the learning programme, and the activities look different for each foodbank. The focus of learning is on four areas: referral pathways, financial inclusion, changing minds and participation.

Both Levenmouth Foodbank and Dundee and Angus Foodbank are currently working within the Trussell Pathfinder programme to realise a future in which our foodbank is no longer needed, where work and welfare pay enough for people to be able to afford the essentials. We want to shift our focus away from food provision so that we are working more closely with the community, local authority and third sector organisations to tackle the underlying causes of poverty. Together we aim to be providing holistic and tailored support to meet people's wider needs.

Levenmouth Foodbank Community Support Project

Levenmouth Foodbank Community Support Project (LfCSP) was established in 2013 with the vision to improve the lives of Levenmouth residents by alleviating poverty and social isolation. Over the years, the needs and difficulties faced by people in the community have changed and there is an ongoing need for emergency food provision.

LfCSP operates two foodbank sessions and two busy community cafe sessions each week, in addition to a schools project for primary age children once per month.

In addition to core services, in the last two years the team at LfCSP have engaged in work to better understand referral pathways to and from the foodbank, review signposting provided by foodbank volunteers, provide income maximisation services with a partner service, and improve engagement and participation with people who use the service.

Through our referral pathways work, we have been exploring how individuals with complex needs can receive more appropriate and effective support to reduce dependency on emergency food aid.

Dundee and Angus Foodbank

Dundee Foodbank was set up in 2005 and Angus Foodbank in 2012. In 2021, they merged with the shared aim of "the prevention of relief of poverty in Dundee and Angus and surrounding areas in particular but not exclusively by providing emergency food supplies to individuals in need." Alongside this, Dundee and Angus Foodbank (D&AFB) has worked to provide additional support by signposting individuals to additional support services.

An opportunity arose for the Trustees to purchase the building on Albert Street, Dundee, where the foodbank had been operational for a few years. The purchase was completed in 2022, and renovation work was undertaken to transform the building into a Community Café space, alongside meeting rooms and a new process for foodbank clients. The Community

Café opened in July 2023, and as of the end of September 2024, has seen over 5000 people through the doors, many of whom are now regular visitors. Alongside the foodbank's provision of food parcels, the community café provides a support hub through numerous local voluntary and statutory services, aiming to tackle the root causes of foodbank use. In the same period, we've seen over 1500 engagements with support agencies, covering issues regarding income maximisation, housing, energy, substance use and many more. We know that each one of these engagements can be transformational, and potentially life-changing, but we also recognise that this is potentially not the only answer.

The Project

A Shared Vision: Ending the Need for Foodbanks

Trussell's vision is for a UK where no one needs a food bank to survive. Both LfCSP and D&AFB are working locally to reduce the need for mass emergency food provision.

Income maximisation is currently at the forefront of proposed solutions to ending or reducing food poverty, and thus the need for foodbanks. However, we recognise that for a percentage of our foodbank clients, increasing their income alone would not be enough; for example, people affected by substance use and / or addiction.

We have witnessed situations where the results of income maximisation have led to relapse and accidental overdose, putting people at risk of fatality. Therefore, we want to explore whether the current systems of delivery for income maximisation have the potential to cause harm and act as barriers to recovery for those experiencing addiction.

We believe that researching this topic is essential to informing future strategies supporting the end for the need for crisis food support in Scotland and the UK. To date, this topic has not been adequately addressed when considering the future of foodbanks.

Aims

Working together with Dundee & Angus Foodbank, we have three goals in commissioning this research:

1. To initiate discussions regarding the potential implications of using income maximisation approaches such as cash first to support people with addiction.
2. To amplify the voices of people who have current or past experience of addiction, in a manner that is accessible, supportive, and meaningful.
3. To open the conversation about who may continue to access services for food provision, and what support they would require that best suits their needs, in a future where the welfare system guarantees the essentials for everyone.

This research will help us to better understand this issue, giving us a platform to inform future work, and the confidence to include people with experience of addiction in future cash-first or income maximisation projects, without the fear of causing harm.

Project Summary

We require an exploration of the unique issues faced by people who are, or have been, substance-addicted and have accessed foodbank services in Levenmouth and Dundee. We will gain a better understanding of the key considerations needed as part of a call for an Essentials Guarantee for people who are substance addicted.

Research Activities

1. Rapid Evidence Review:

Asking the question; 'What does the existing evidence say about the use of Income Maximisation approaches, including cash first, in supporting people with substance addiction who are also in destitution or experiencing food insecurity and hardship, and having to turn to a food bank to survive?'

We are particularly keen to understand evidence that is from Scotland and the UK or in countries or areas that are comparable to Scotland.

2. Participatory Engagement

Capturing the journey, experiences and outcomes for people effected by substance addiction, who have been supported by the food banks and accessed Income Maximisation, specifically cash first approaches within the Levenmouth and Dundee areas.

We envisage this could initially involve:

- a. People with lived experience of substance addiction and food bank use or engagement in income maximisation services
- b. Food bank staff and volunteers
- c. Income maximisation advisers
- d. Practitioners
- e. Local partners

We are open to the methodologies chosen and approaches taken. We see this activity being informed by the rapid evidence review.

Research Considerations

In order for the research to have practical application and recommendations, the research will embed participatory approaches that are accessible, inclusive, equitable and safe, to engage people who have lived experience of addiction or substance use.

We have access to people with lived experience who will be able to offer advice and guidance to help support and shape the research. In particular we would like people with lived experience to be involved in:

1. Shaping research Activity 2
2. Developing meaningful and applicable recommendations
3. Developing accessible research findings

Research Outputs

1. An accessible presentation highlighting key findings and recommendations that can be used with partners and local policy and decision makers.
2. Short word report no more than 50-60 pages, providing a comprehensive but accessible report covering:
 - Executive summary
 - Introduction
 - Methods
 - Findings
 - Conclusions
 - Recommendations
 - » For policy, service provision and practice.
 - » For future research and evaluation.

Specification What We Are Looking For

We are looking for a team or partnership who has:

- A good grasp of Income Maximisation approaches, with specific knowledge of cash first approaches desirable.
- Experience and knowledge of the complex issues caused by substance addiction.
- A proven track record of engaging people who have been affected by these issues using accessible, inclusive, equitable and safe methods.
- A solid understanding of the Scottish political and social contexts.
- Experience of embedding participatory approaches with people with lived experience into their research methods.
- A passion for ending hunger and hardship in Scotland and more broadly the UK.

Timelines and Budget

The final plan and any reports will be completed by Friday 29th August 2025.

This project has a maximum budget of £27 500 (including VAT) which will be paid on a project basis.

Available Support

The primary contact will be Ruth Livingstone, Manager of Levenmouth Foodbank Community Support Project.

The secondary contact will be Hannah Cheek, Deputy Manager and Pathfinder Lead at Dundee and Angus Foodbank.

Ruth and Hannah will serve as a coordinator for contacts and research within their respective areas.

You will meet regularly with Ruth and Hannah to discuss progress and to resolve any issues or concerns that may emerge.

Application Process

Response Format

Please respond with the following information to Ruth Livingstone (ruth@levenmouth.foodbank.org.uk) by Friday 20th December 2024 at 5pm. If you have any queries or wish to discuss the project further, please contact Ruth.

Proposals should set out how you would deliver the research objectives. They will be assessed against the evaluation criteria listed in the following section.

The proposal should also include:

1. Your experience
 - a. List any relevant experience and projects, showing examples where possible.
 - b. Include details of anybody who will be involved in delivering the work, a project lead and point of contact.
2. Proposed outline of how you will approach the work.
3. Proposed timeline and budget for the work.
4. Consideration of compliance with research ethics, safeguarding and GDPR.
5. Any other information you believe is relevant up to three sides A4.

Evaluation Criteria

Following the deadline, submissions will be assessed by a panel using the following criteria:

Price (20%) to include:

- ▶ Demonstration of understanding of timescale and budget
- ▶ Ability to deliver within the timescale and budget

Quality (80%) to include:

- ▶ Clarity and credibility of proposal
- ▶ Experience of engaging a wide range of people to co-create work product
- ▶ Understanding of the key issues faced by people experiencing food insecurity and crisis situations
- ▶ Experience of engaging with vulnerable individuals, including those experiencing addiction
- ▶ Demonstrable facilitation skills
- ▶ Experience of handling sensitive data

We expect to make a decision on applications the week commencing 6th January 2025.