

## What food support is available and how to access it

1. Food banks
2. FOOD clubs
3. Community response
4. Healthy Start vouchers
5. Free School Meals vouchers
6. One off grants
7. Supermarket toolkit/priority slots

### **1. Food banks**

#### 1.1 Offer

Anyone in crisis can be referred to a food bank for short term, emergency food support. Food banks tend to provide food parcels that contain around 3 days' worth of food, usually with ambient non-perishable goods.

#### 1.2 How to access support

To access support from a food bank, citizens need to have an official referral from a recognised referring organisation who will issue a voucher that can be redeemed at a food bank. The referring organisation will work with the person to understand if they meet the criteria. The aim of a food bank is to provide temporary help whilst a longer term, sustainable solution is found. Food banks should not be approached for food until a voucher has been issued. Often a new voucher will be required if a second visit is needed but this is at the discretion of the food bank. In the current COVID-19 crisis, to get a referral Bristol food banks are encouraging people to go through the Citizens Advice Bureau (local or new national helpline 03444 111 444) or the [BCC Local Crisis and Prevention Fund](#). There are many other referral organisations across the city, including some VCSE organisations. A food bank should also be able to tell you which organisations can refer to them.

At the end of this document there is a table that shows which of the main food banks cover which neighbourhood and a website link for each.

There are also many charities and faith groups who have set up temporary food banks to help people during this particularly difficult time, these are covered in section 3 below.

### **2. FOOD clubs**

#### 2.1 Offer

Held at children's centres and community venues across Bristol, FOOD clubs offer a means for eligible families to access a mix of good quality ingredients including fresh fruit and vegetables, dried goods, fresh meat and dairy products. For a £1 membership fee and then £3.50 per week, each member receives a weekly bag of food worth up to £15. As they provide ongoing support, FOOD clubs can help ease the pressure on food banks.

### 2.2 How to access support

FOOD clubs operate at different locations and times across the city and require an appointment to be made to attend. At the end of this document there is a table that details who to get in contact with to refer families and book them in for a timeslot at their local FOOD club (note that document gets updated regularly so capacity may vary each week).

## **3. Community Food Support Response**

### 3.1 Offer

Alongside the main food banks, a number of community organisations, faith groups, schools and charities are offering emergency food provision. These may be new services or adaptations of ones that existed pre-Covid-19. Offers vary from food parcels to pre-prepared meals. Some organisations are distributing food within their local area and others are delivering citywide support.

### 3.2 How to access support

We have produced a map that shows where these community-based emergency food provisions are located, what the offer is and a contact or link for more information. You can filter  the data to see:

- A specific type of offer (e.g. prepared meals, FOOD clubs)
- Services that are available citywide
- Services that are available for specific citizen target groups
- Outlets that provide for faith led or cultural diets

#### **Link to map:**

<https://bcc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d937798b019c48d0877699b166526522>

**Username:** FoodProvision

**Password:** EmergencyFOOd (*N.B. the '00' in 'FOOd' are zeros*)

New initiatives are emerging all the time. We will endeavour to keep the information in the map up to date, but please let us know if you become aware of new emergency food provision in your local area (contact [rachel.sanderson@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.sanderson@bristol.gov.uk))

## **4. Healthy Start vouchers**

### 4.1 Offer

Healthy Start vouchers are available to anyone pregnant under the age of 18. They are also available to people who are at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4 years old and they or their family get:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit with a family income of £16,190 or less per year
- Pension Credit; or
- Universal Credit with no earned income or total earned income of £408 or less per month for the family.

Healthy Start vouchers can be spent on basic foods including milk, plain fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables and infant formula milk.

For more information visit: <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

### 4.2 How to access support

An application leaflet must be completed and sent to Healthy Start, if someone is eligible they will be invited to apply. Leaflets can be requested from a person's midwife or health visitor, from the Healthy Start helpline on 0345 607 6823, by downloading one from the Healthy Start website or an application can be completed online (requires a printer).

## **5. Free School Meals vouchers**

### 5.1 Offer

If a child is usually eligible for means tested Free School Meals (FSM) they may be entitled to vouchers or food parcels in place of the food usually provided at school if they are told to stay at home and isolate

### 5.2 How to access support

Speak to the child's school to see if the school is offering free school meal vouchers or other support such as food parcels. If a child wasn't eligible for FSM pre Covid-19 but may be now due to a change of circumstances, contact their school.

### 5.3 Support during the holidays

Speak to the child's school about support available during the holidays. There will be FSM vouchers available or holiday provision for children with food available.

## **6. Covid Winter Grants**

### 6.1 Offer

Bristol City Council were allocated money by central government to distribute to local residents who have been impacted by covid-19. Some hubs and community organisations across the city

applied for a grant to support people with food and essentials. Some are open for external referrals and have been listed in the appendix. Please contact the organization for full details. Also note this grant has to be spent by end March 2021.

There is also a separate fund run by Bristol Energy Network for those needing support with energy bills. Please see all details in the link below.

[Emergency Covid Winter Fund – Bristol Energy Network](#)

## **7. Supermarket Toolkit/Priority Slots**

### **7.1 Offer**

Anyone who has been identified as 'Clinically Extremely Vulnerable' (CEV) will have received a letter to let them know recent guidance and how they can register for local support. They should call the We Are Bristol Helpline, where they can ask for further support and get signed up for a supermarket delivery slot. They will still need to register for an online account, but their details will be with the supermarket to enable them to access these slots.

Those who are not classed as CEV but do have pre-existing health conditions or are self isolating can also get priority slots through the DEFRA scheme. They can also do this through the WAB helpline.

The toolkit that will be sent along with this document is a comprehensive list of everything that supermarkets are offering to support people to access food, including food boxes, phone orders and different payment options for people paying on someone's behalf.

### **7.2 How to access support**

For those who are CEV, have pre-existing health conditions or are self-isolating, they can access a priority supermarket slot by calling the WAB helpline. These groups are also welcome to use/ be supported to use the supermarket toolkit to access a range of shopping options.