

# Community of Practice Q&A

There were a number of questions and discussions that came from our guest speakers' presentations 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025. This document is an attempt of bringing those questions, answers and observations together for anyone that might like to look back on the conversation.

## Questions for James – Your Local Pantry

### Q: Is it £10 per person or 10 items per person?

- **A:** James confirms it is 10 items per person. Some pantries offer family memberships, where households with more children might pay a larger fee to take more items. Typically, members can take three “heart items” (higher value), seven “diamond items” (canned or packaged goods), and some free food (e.g., fresh fruit and veg or items past their best-before date).

### Q: Can you give a ballpark range for the charges?

- **A:** James shares that some pantries charge £3.50, while the maximum charge is capped at £7 for a single member. Family memberships tend to cost an additional £2-£3, depending on the household size.

### Q: What about mobile pantries? Are they sustainable in rural areas?

- **A:** James acknowledges that mobile pantries are expensive to run due to the cost of diesel, paying drivers, and logistical challenges. Though funding can be secured to set them up, ongoing costs make them harder to sustain. The preferred model is to move food from the van into community spaces like village or church halls to provide a better experience for shoppers, which also reduces the need to queue outside.

### Q: Is there a cap on the number of members a pantry can handle? And is there a waiting list?

- **A:** Each pantry sets its own limits for members. While some pantries offer membership for a fixed term (e.g., 6 months or 1 year), the Your Local Pantry model allows members to stay as long as they need. The pantry can create waiting lists and close to new referrals when necessary to manage capacity.

### Q: What is the criteria for joining the pantry?

- **A:** The pantry uses screening questions on their website, designed to have a low bar for entry. These questions include whether someone is struggling with money towards the end of the week or month or is unable to cover basic bills. If a person meets one or more criteria and the pantry has space, they are allowed to join.

### Q: How often do members come to the pantry?

- **A:** Some members visit fortnightly, which is a model being tested to increase capacity, especially for single individuals.

### Q: How does the pantry source its food?

- **A:** James explains that food is sourced through national charities, local providers, and partners like Feeding Britain. The pantries receive a booklet listing various food providers, and the team also helps them establish local relationships. Sourcing food remains a constant challenge, balancing national resources with local community connections.

## Questions for Michelle – Resurrected Bites

**This section is less Q&A and more thematic discussion with some questions posed to explore further together or in future.**

Alice S co-ordinates "Feast" in North Yorkshire. This focuses on food poverty and aims to engage families, particularly those with children who receive benefits or free school meals. The key idea is to organise cooking sessions during school holidays (Easter, Summer, Christmas) and potentially provide funding to support these efforts.

- **Questions:**

- Would you be interested in collaborating on this cooking programme?
- How can we improve participation and engagement from parents and carers?

Michelle discusses the challenges they faced in organising cooking sessions for families, particularly getting both parents and children involved.

- **Questions:**

- What can be done to improve engagement and ensure better turnout for these sessions?
- How can we make the sessions more appealing or easier to access for families?

Both Michelle and Alice acknowledge the difficulty of engaging family's post-pandemic, noting that people are often less likely to participate in community activities, even if they are beneficial.

- **Questions:**

- How can we address the decline in participation after the pandemic?
- What methods can be employed to make these programmes easier to access for families?

Alan asks about the interaction between community food providers in Harrogate, inquiring whether there are any gaps that need to be filled, or if there's potential for more collaboration.

- **Questions:**

- Are there any gaps in community food provision in Harrogate?
- How can local organisations work together to avoid duplicating efforts and better meet community needs?

Tom raised concerns about supporting people with chaotic lifestyles, such as those who are homeless, and how the choice of location for food services (e.g., town centre or other venues) can impact service delivery.

- **Questions:**

- How can food service providers best support vulnerable groups, particularly those with chaotic lifestyles?
- What considerations should be taken into account when choosing a venue to serve different needs effectively?

**Michelle** talked about their decision to move food services from the town centre to other locations, such as Saint Marks and Jennyfield. They were careful not to duplicate services already provided by other organisations like Springboard. The goal was to ensure that the service didn't take away from existing community work.

- **Questions:**

- How does the choice of location impact community engagement, especially for vulnerable groups?
- What is the best way to avoid duplication of services and ensure that all community needs are met?