

# Community Food Project Toolkit



April 2025  
Version 1

Welcome to the Community Food Project Toolkit, produced by the Community Food Team at Community Action Suffolk.

This is a practical, user-friendly resource designed to support anyone involved in setting up, running, or growing a community food initiative. Whether you're starting from scratch, scaling up, or simply looking to strengthen what you already do, this toolkit is your one-stop reference point for key aspects of running a successful, sustainable project.

It includes a wealth of information, tools, tips and useful links to support your food project, as well as exploring food insecurity and how you could provide wider support to customers.

This toolkit is not intended to be read from cover to cover. Instead, it has been organised into focused sections so you can quickly find the information most relevant to your needs.

Each section covers a core area of project development and management, offering clear guidance, tips, practical tools, and signposting to additional resources. Whether you're looking for governance structures, funding ideas, or help promoting your work, you'll find targeted support here.

Due to funding received from Suffolk County Council, CAS has been able to provide this resource at no cost.

**If you need any further support from with your project, we can be contacted at [info@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:info@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk) or 01473 345400**

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## What is a food project?

There are various types of food projects, and a range of names used for them, often interchangeably.

Below are some of the common types of projects to help you think about what might be suitable in your area.

### Traditional Food bank

Food is available for free. Service users will often need a referral to access the foodbank.

Food is given to customers as a pre-packed bag or parcel. They have little or no choice in what they receive.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customers referred so can ensure reaching people experiencing food insecurity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of food choice</li><li>• Often ambient food and no fresh items</li><li>• No income from supplying food</li></ul>

### Buy A Bag Scheme

Some examples are a Pantry, Top up Shop or Pop-Up Shop

Customers pay a small fee, usually around £3, to receive a bag of food worth a lot more. Food is laid out like a market or shop and customers can choose the items they would like. There are often limits on the numbers of each item people can take. These projects are often open to anyone without the need for referral or meeting certain criteria.

Some of these projects also have a social element, serving refreshments and a space to sit and chat with other people.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customers can choose items they need</li><li>• Offers greater dignity to customers</li><li>• Provides income stream from customers paying for food</li><li>• Often offers a community space so people connect with each other and support services can be provided alongside food</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schemes are often open to anyone without referral, so it is more difficult to know you are reaching people experiencing food insecurity</li></ul>

### Community fridge/larder

A place where food is available for free. These may also be referred to as a pantry.

These are often unstaffed, so may be found in a local church, disused village telephone boxes, and other places that can be easily accessed.

These might be an actual fridge, or they could be a cupboard, shelf or table in a set location.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helpful in more rural areas that find it harder to access traditional foodbanks or pantries</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If unstaffed then you cannot be sure who is accessing food.</li><li>• Lack of direct contact with customers makes it difficult to offer wraparound support</li></ul>

## Other types of projects

Growing projects: community garden / allotment / orchard

Cooking projects: community kitchen / community meal or lunch club / pay as you feel café / slow cooker & microwave donation scheme

Knowledge & Skills projects: growing food / cooking on a budget / basic cookery / Making the most of your freezer

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customers develop their own skills for life, so these projects have a lasting benefit</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will need knowledgeable people to lead projects or possibly pay for an instructor</li></ul>

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### **Decide what type of project you want to set up**

There are lots of different types of food project, which operate in a variety of ways and will require different levels of input from staff and volunteers. Think about which type of project best suits the needs you are trying to meet, and what you have capacity to deliver

2

### **Make a plan**

Think about a typical visit to your project and what it looks and feels like. Now think about all the different things you will need in place to make it happen. Consider who can help you, then think about who can undertake specific tasks. Include timescales and be realistic.

3

### **Ensure your project is well run**

Set up a committee who can oversee the project development and take on specific roles, such as chair and treasurer. Develop your constitution, policies and procedures. Set up a bank account if you need one

4

### **Sorting the practicalities: funding, premises, food supply, volunteers**

Think about all the practical things you are going to need to run your project and how you will get them. You need to consider how you will ensure that your supply is maintained longer term, and not just in the immediacy of setting up.

5

### **Promote yourself: Marketing publicity, connecting with other local groups and services, local councils**

Let people know that your project exists to make sure it is used and well supported. Make sure you reach both your target audience and local organisations and other services.

6

### **Open for business**

Make sure people know the opening date and time for your project. Consider holding an opening event with refreshments. Have information about your project available for people to read or take with them. Consider inviting local press to cover the event and inviting local councillors along to see what your project is doing.

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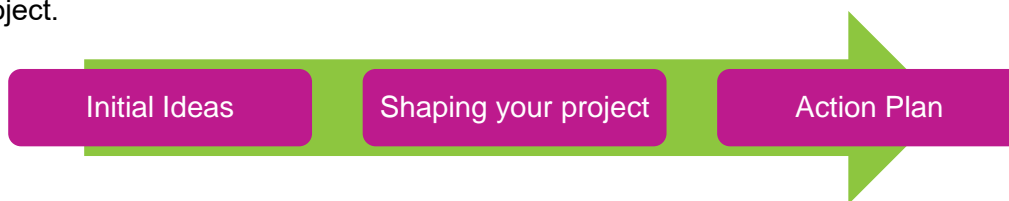
### **Sustaining and developing your project**

You need to think about how to sustain your work long-term while regularly reviewing local needs to ensure continued impact. Think about how you will ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation of your project, and that you have the things you need to operate effectively, in the long term.

## Planning your project

There are lots of things to think about when setting up a new project, from the physical things you will need, to the less visible aspects such as policies and procedures. Having an initial idea or plan will help to clarify your project and make decisions about it. It will help you focus on why you are setting up and what your provision is.

This section aims to support you in shaping your ideas and thinking about the different aspects of setting up and running a food project.



### Initial ideas

Most projects start with an idea and then grow from there. Getting ideas down on paper is very helpful in starting to shape what your project is going to look like.

It will also help you when having conversations with other people about what you want to do and any support you may need.

Below are some initial things you should think about when planning your project.

#### What do you want to do?

- What is the main aim of your project? Can you state it in one sentence?
- Is there a demand for your project? How do you know?
- Who is the project for?
- What activities/services will you offer?
- What area or group will your project serve?
- How will your project operate? (time, day, frequency)
- How will your project be accessed? (referral, open to anyone)
- What other support services might you offer? (money support, cookery skills, drop ins from support services)

#### Top Tip

Demonstrating a need for your project can be quantitative by using data, or qualitative, such as talking to local residents and councillors or recording local observations

#### Where will you do it?

- Where will your project be based?
- Will you need to pay for a venue? How will you cover the cost?
- Where will you store food and equipment?
- Is it easy to get to? e.g. on a public transport route, free parking available
- Is it accessible? e.g. easy for a person with disabilities to come inside and move around
- Is there enough room to set up equipment and for people to move around safely? What is the legal capacity of the space?
- What facilities does it have? e.g. toilet, kitchen

#### Who will help?

- Do you have a core group of people to form a committee?
- Do they all have enough time, energy and commitment to get the project up and running?
- What skills/expertise do they have? Does this include leadership & management skills?
- Do you need to find additional volunteers to help?

Use the planning sheet in [Appendix 1](#) to start getting your ideas down on paper

## Shaping your project

Once you have your initial idea for a project down on paper, now is a good time to get other people involved. You might already have others who are keen to help and could form a committee. You could hold a local meeting to get other people's input and see who else might be interested in helping. The committee might then grow out of this meeting.

There will be a lot of things to consider, and this will be dependent on the type of project you are setting up. For example, if you are supplying food items to people such as cans or packets, where will you get the supply of food from and how will you store it? If you are running a community meal, then you need to consider the cost of ingredients and how these will be covered. Any projects to do with food need to check food hygiene regulations with their local council and consider whether they need to hold a food hygiene certificate.

Get your committee together and start thinking more in depth about your project and how it will operate. You don't need to worry so much about specific committee roles at this stage.

Having a more in-depth look at your project will help you to identify what you already have and what you will need for your project to be a success.

Use the operations planning sheet in [Appendix 2](#) to consider all aspects of your project and what may be needed for each part.

## Action Plan

Now you are clearer about what is needed to get your project off the ground, start thinking about the actions you need to take.

There will be some immediate and short-term actions required, and some things will take much longer, or cannot be completed until other things are in place. For example, you will need a constitution in place before you can apply for a bank account.

### Top Tip

Be realistic in your planning and time scales.

Not everything will happen at once and some things will take time to get in place.

Use the [action plan](#) and [support plan](#) in Appendices 3 & 4 to think about what needs to be done, who can do it and timescales for completion

## Ensuring your project is well run

Having good governance in place will help to ensure your project is well run and working within best practice.

If you want to apply for funding, you will need to have governance in place.

### Legal structures

If you are an established organisation setting this project up, and it will run under the umbrella of your organisation (e.g. a church setting up a pantry project) then you may already have some of the required governance in place.

If you are setting up a new project from scratch, then you will need to consider what type of **legal structure** your project will be based on, as different structures will have different requirements.

Your legal structure will affect things like:

- who runs the charity
- how the charity is run
- what the charity can do, for example employ people or own property

Charity Commission: <https://www.gov.uk/setting-up-charity/structures>

You can find out more about legal structures here:

<https://www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/legal-structures-for-community-and-voluntary-groups/>

A lot of community groups are an **unincorporated association** as this is the most straightforward and flexible type of organisation.

Some things to be aware of as an unincorporated association:

- Your members will be held personally liable, for example for any debts or if legal action is taken against your organisation
- You cannot own property, employ staff or enter into contracts
- Although you may be an informal organisation, you should still follow guidance from the Charity Commission to ensure you work within best practice. This includes things like having a bank account with 3 signatories and keeping annual accounts, but you do not need to submit these to the Charity Commission.
- Once you have £5000 unrestricted reserves you need to register with the Charity Commission.

Find out more

Download our **Getting Started guide** for more information about governance and legal structures

### The basics

To set up your project, you will need:

- A committee
- A constitution or set of rules
- A set of policies that show you have thought through how you are going to run the group and your responsibilities. These should be in place to protect the organisation, the committee members, volunteers, and service users
- Insurance that covers your activities – primarily public liability insurance
- A bank account in the name of the group

## Setting up a committee

The role of the committee is to ensure that the project and its activities are effectively and efficiently managed. They are also responsible for ensuring that the project's money is managed effectively and used appropriately.

The committee should be a group of people who want to take the project forward.

It is important that roles are clear within the committee. Make sure people know what their role is and how to carry it out. Having roles can help to motivate and encourage people.

You may have some people who don't want to have a specific role but are happy to offer occasional help. Embrace their support but also assign roles carefully to ensure you have the right people with time, motivation and skills for the job.

As a minimum you will need a chair, secretary and treasurer.

### Find out more

You can read more about committees and different roles [here](#)

## Writing your constitution

A constitution is the document that sets out the aims and purpose of your project, who is involved, who the committee members are and their roles. It is also sometimes called a governing document.

It is important to have a constitution as it helps to ensure that decisions and actions by your project are fair and responsible. It also acts as a point of reference for anyone in your project and can help to resolve any disputes that may occur.

Your constitution should include:

- Project name
- Aims of your project
- Membership
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)
- Who the committee members are
- Internal arrangements for meetings, voting, looking after money
- What happens if changes need to be made to the constitution
- What happens if your project needs to close

### Find out more

You can read more about constitutions and find an example [here](#)

## Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures that you need to have in place:

- Health and Safety
- Equal opportunities and diversity
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- GDPR/Data protection

In addition, for best practice and/or if applicable, you should have:

- Complaints procedure
- DBS procedure and checking
- Volunteer policy
- Lone working policy
- Money handling policy
- Reserves policy

### Find out more

Visit the [governance page](#) of our website [here](#) for more information, support and resources

Use the free [CAS Organisational Health Check](#) to help you understand if you are on the right track

You will need to consider how you will supply food for your project, and how this will be stored safely, securely and hygienically.

You will need to consider how you develop a sustainable food supply. It may not be enough to rely solely on donations or supermarket surplus stock. You may wish to consider a small charge for accessing food, as this will create an income stream for your project which can then be used to replenish stock.

### Food Hygiene

- You may need to register as a food business with your local District Council and have your premises inspected.
- It is recommended that volunteers complete a Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate
- You will need to carefully consider the types of food you supply (e.g. ambient, fresh, chilled, frozen), how you transport these to your project as certain food hygiene rules may apply, how the food is stored and how stock is managed.

### Food Supply

How is the pantry going to be stocked?

Is this a funded project whereby volunteers will be purchasing food stocks, or will it operate on a give and take basis, whereby people can donate items as well as taking things they need?

What type of food will be supplied? Ambient food is things like tins, packets, and long-life items. Fresh items could include fruit and vegetables, or items that do not need refrigeration but have a shorter shelf life, e.g. bread.

Will you only supply food, or will you also include personal hygiene items and household cleaning items?

If you have a large supply of food, consider how much you will put out at any time. If your pantry is unstaffed, you will not have control over how much a person takes at any time. By limiting how much you put out at any time you can ensure your supply lasts longer.

We recommend keeping large quantities of food elsewhere or locked away, to avoid the risk of theft.

Make sure your food supply is protected from vermin. For example, if you are planning an unstaffed pantry, consider storing food in clear plastic lidded crates. This protects the food from rodents and birds that could damage or contaminate your food supply.

If you are happy for people to donate items into the pantry, it is advisable to have a notice about the types of things that are acceptable and a reminder about best before dates. When promoting your pantry on places such as Facebook, encourage the donation of food items and highlight specific items which get taken quickly, as this helps to encourage community support.

Some pantries have opted for a food waste prevention model, rather than having a focus on food security. This can help to encourage pantry use and removes some of the stigma around accessing free food.

Consider approaching your local greengrocer/ grocery store/ bakery about working together. They could donate their close-to-expiry items to your pantry, thereby reducing food waste in your local area. They could even set up a donation scheme in which customers can round up their bill/ make small donations to supply food to the pantry.

## Keeping People Safe

### Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

Organisations who support vulnerable people, whether young or old, need to ensure they have safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Staff and volunteers need to know how to recognise signs and symptoms, and what to do if they have a concern.

Consider providing training to your staff and volunteers so they can help keep people safe.

See [Appendix 5](#) for Safeguarding resources and information

### First aid

It is important to have a trained first aider on site when your project is open to the public.

You also need to ensure that you have a first aid kit available and an accident book to report any incidents.

### Health & safety

Ensure that you have completed a risk assessment for your project.

Think about the different activities that will take place at your project, what the potential risks could be and how you reduce the risks.

See [Appendix 6](#) for a risk assessment template and example

### DBS

There are 4 types of DBS check:

- Basic DBS check
- Standard DBS check
- Enhanced DBS check
- Enhanced with Barred List(s) DBS check

A basic DBS check is suitable for any purpose and will show details of convictions and conditional cautions that are considered to be unspent.

A standard DBS is suitable for some roles and will show any details that are held on the Police National Computer.

A person will only need an enhanced DBS if they are working with children or vulnerable adults in a regulated activity. You can find out more about regulated activity here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-guidance-leaflets>

#### Did you know

Standard and enhanced DBS checks are subject to eligibility of the roles. Find out more [here](#)

## Boundaries

It is important to have clear boundaries with customers, for both their safety and that of your staff/volunteers.

While it's natural to want to support customers as much as possible—and your intentions come from a place of kindness—it's important to stay within the scope of your project and avoid overstepping its boundaries.

This could be simple things like sharing too much personal information or offering lifts, or it could be going as far as to inviting customers to your home for a meal, to use showers or washing machines.

You need to be clear where your project's boundaries for offering support are and ensure that your staff and volunteers are also clear on these.

## Volunteers

People volunteer for many reasons—some want to give back to an organisation they value, while others may have spare time and wish to stay active or engaged.

Volunteering is a two-way process and so it is important to consider a person's reason for volunteering when recruiting volunteers. This way you can ensure that a volunteering role is a fulfilling role that meets a person's expectations, increasing the chances of long-term commitment.

Ensure that volunteer involvement in your project is properly thought out and managed. It is important to plan carefully how you will recruit, retain and develop volunteers and this should form part of your volunteer policy.

Volunteers are not a replacement for paid staff, and you need to ensure that volunteers are not undertaking tasks that would normally be done by paid staff.

Think about who will manage your volunteers within your project.

Consider how you might give recognition to or thank volunteers for the work that they do.

### Recruitment

When advertising for volunteers, it is helpful to have a role description that outlines task to be undertaken, time commitment, and skills or attributes that might be helpful to the role.

### Training & Development

Once you have recruited volunteers, it is important they are welcomed to your organisation and have an induction. This might include a tour of the facilities, introductions to staff and other volunteers, and training for their role.

Some training may be essential for volunteers, such as food hygiene and safeguarding. Other training might be good practice, such as training around listening and conversation skills.

### Expenses

Volunteering should not cost a volunteer anything.

It is good practice to ensure that volunteers are not left out of pocket because of volunteering with your project. Volunteers can claim reasonable expenses incurred when volunteering for your project, such as travel (including to and from the place of volunteering), equipment such as PPE, admin costs such as postage, stationery and phone calls.

It is important that you can show that what you are paying a volunteer is reimbursement of expenses, so make you have proof of expenses such as receipts and tickets.

#### Find out more

You can find more information about paying volunteer expenses on the [NCVO website](#)

See [Appendix 7](#) for more Volunteering resources and information

You will need to think about any money that may come into your project, money that may be spent, and how this is managed.

Some ways that you may receive money are:

- Cash donations or gifts
- People purchasing food from your project e.g. buy a bag schemes
- Grant funding
- Fundraising events

Some ways you may spend money are:

- Purchasing food supplies
- Rent and utility bills
- Equipment / infrastructure for your project to run e.g. card machines, shelving, storage boxes

### Bank Accounts

If you have money coming into your project, then you will most likely need to have a bank account in your project's name. **You cannot use a personal bank account for project funds.** Your bank account will need to have at least 2 separate signatories.

It may be possible to work with other local organisations to hold funds for you, such as your parish council. A written agreement is recommended in this situation.

Be aware that if you apply for funding then they will only pay money into a bank account that is in the name of an organisation. Funders will not pay money into personal bank accounts.

You will need to have a minimum of two signatories for your bank account.

Think carefully about the type of account you will need, as this will be different to holding a personal account. Different banks will have different names for their accounts such as a communities account, clubs and societies account, or something completely different. Do your research and see what different banks have to offer, and ensure the account meets your needs.

Think about things like how easy it will be to pay money in and withdraw money if you handle cash. For example, if you don't have a local bank branch, is it possible to deposit and withdraw cash via Post Office counters?

To set up an account you will need:

- Evidence that you are a VCFSE organisation to set up an account, usually by having a governing document or constitution
- At least 2 named signatories, usually the Treasurer and up to 3 other committee members. It is best practise that they are not related and not living at the same address. It is best practice to have more than 2 signatories in case of sickness or holiday.

Individual banks will have their own requirements, so it is best to check these when researching the account you need.

If your project is being run as part of a larger organisation e.g. a food pantry as part of a church, and you will be using the main organisation's bank account for your project funds, then you need to consider how your project funds will be documented and ringfenced so that they are only used for the purposes of your project.

## Handling money

Make sure that your organisation has a treasurer. They will administer most of the financial affairs for your project, making sure that financial transactions are accounted for, and that relevant financial paperwork is kept.

However, there may be occasions where money is handled by other committee members or volunteers, for example if people pay to buy food from you e.g. buy a bag scheme, community lunches. Consider what procedures you will have in place for receiving money and safely storing it before it is paid into a bank.

Some things to think about:

- **Hygiene:** Anyone handling money should not also be handling food at the same time. You will need separate people to do each job.
- **Technology:** Will you be a cash-only project or is there scope to have card readers available?
- **Cash tins:** It is safer to have money kept in a lockable cash tin. This includes both when you are collecting money during your project's opening times and when taking money home and/or to the bank. It is less easy for someone to dip into a locked tin than an open tub or bowl with money in.

## Reserves policy

If your organisation has money in its bank, then you need to have a reserves policy. This outlines what money and accounts your organisation has and what the money must be used for.

Funders will often ask about the reserves, or money, that your project holds, so it is important you know what your money is being 'reserved' for.

These are the types of funds you may have:

### Restricted Funds

This is money your project has received to spend on something specific and is known as **restricted funds**.

This may often be money from a funder which will have given conditions as to what it can or cannot be spent on. Make sure you keep this money ringfenced in your accounts. Document any spending of this money as evidence for your funder.

### Unrestricted Funds

These are funds that do not have conditions attached to them as to how they are spent e.g. public donations, money received in payment for food items. These are known as **general funds**.

Your committee or trustees may decide to earmark some of these funds for a specific purpose and so that money is ringfenced. These are known as **designated funds**.

Read more about types of funds here: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/running-a-charity/financial-management/whats-different-about-charity-finance/>

## Funding and fundraising basics

When looking for funding or starting to fundraise, you need to be clear about what you need money for. For example, this could be for start-up costs such as buying storage or promotional materials when setting up a new project.

You need to be clear about exactly how money will be spent and how it will help your project achieve its goals.

Create a budget which shows what you need and how much each item will cost. Also include timescales for when you need the money by, as some items might not be needed straight away.

Create a fundraising plan that shows fundraising events and activities, and when you need to apply for funds by. It is important to plan your fundraising to ensure you always have enough money, rather than waiting until you run out. There are a range of ways to raise money, and you will need to decide which ones are most appropriate to the strengths and needs of your organisation.

It is recommended to use a variety of fundraising methods rather than being reliant on only one source.

Put together a fundraising folder with all the information you need for completing funding applications. This will help make the process easier by having all the information in one place. Include things like:

- Basic information such as registered address, bank details, number of staff/volunteers/beneficiaries
- Budgets
- Breakdown of spend for the money you are applying for
- Evidence such as data, quotes, case studies
- Information that clearly shows how your project will make a difference and how you will show or measure this (expected outcomes)
- Demonstrate how a funder's money will make a difference

When applying for funding ensure you have read the fund criteria and guidance notes first, so that you know you are eligible to apply and that you include the correct information on the application form.

If your application is not successful, ask the funder for feedback, as this will help you improve your application writing skills.

## Finding evidence to support funding applications

When applying for funding, it is important to be able to demonstrate some key points:

- How you know your project is needed
- What is the impact of your project
- What is the long-term sustainability of your project beyond the funding period

You can use quantitative information as evidence of these points, such as your own data collected, or you might also want to look at local and national statistics to build a picture of the local area you serve. There are a variety of websites that have local and national data on a variety of topics, which you can search to find information to support applications.

You can also use qualitative data such as anecdotal evidence, quotes and case studies which you can collect internally within your project. Engage with your local community so that you can demonstrate they are supportive of your project. This can also help to demonstrate a local need. You could do this in a number of ways:

- Host an event to share your plans and get feedback e.g. coffee morning, pizza night, community meal
- A community questionnaire
- Have a stall at local events
- Visit other local organisations and clubs and speak with their members

## Where to find funding

### **Funding4Suffolk Portal**

This is an online portal that is a searchable database of local and national funds. You can create searches, and the portal will then send you notifications when funding matches your criteria.

### **Suffolk County Council VCFSE Funding Alert**

Join the mailing list to receive a fortnightly update of local and national funds that are available.

### **Suffolk Community Foundation**

Suffolk Community Foundation have a range of different funds available, which changes regularly. You can find their available funds here: <https://www.suffolkcf.org.uk/current-grants/>

### **District Councils**

District Councils often have different funds available for communities within their district boundaries.

### **Councillor Locality Budgets**

District and County Councillors have a budget allocated to them each year which they can use to support local projects. You can apply to Councillors for funding to support your project.

Contact the Communities team at your local council for more information.

See [appendix 8](#) for funding resources

## Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important to regularly monitor and evaluate your project to ensure it is on the right track, and to ensure that what you are doing is effective and meeting the objectives of your project.

Monitoring keeps track of what you are doing whilst you are doing it and enables you to make changes or act if things aren't quite right. Evaluation looks at whether you have achieved what you set out to do and the effectiveness of your project overall.

It is recommended to set up some simple systems to gather evidence and monitor your progress.

Collect different types of evidence to help you monitor and evaluate your project, not just data.

It is also important to monitor your project's finances so ensure you have systems or processes in place for keeping invoices, recording payments and ensuring that income expenditure tally with your bank statements.

### Collecting Data

Collecting information from your customers can help you to ensure you are reaching people that you set out to help. It can also help to identify trends, such as an increase or decrease in numbers attending your project.

Think about what data you need to collect and only record what is relevant to your project. Gathering information from customers can be a barrier to them accessing your project, so make sure you get the balance right.

Data is also helpful for supporting funding applications as it means you can easily show information about your project. Depending on what data you collect, you can show things like attendance, household demographics, employment status and how far people are travelling to attend your project.

You may decide that you are not going to collect any information from your customers and make your project accessible to anyone, no questions asked. This is fine to do, but it can still be helpful to capture basic information such as how many people attend each week, as this will give you an indication of any increase or decrease in demand for example.

### Types of data

There are 2 types of data: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative data is numbers and factual information. It is information that can be counted or measured.

Qualitative data is descriptive and can refer to things that can be observed but not necessarily measured.

Here are some examples:

Quantitative	Qualitative
Numbers of people, parcels, volunteers, Volunteer hours Age and gender of customers Employment status Postcode	Anecdotes Observations Case studies Quotes Thank you letters and cards Photos and videos

## Social impact

*Social impact can be defined as the effect on people and communities that happens as a result of an action or inaction, an activity, project, programme or policy. (goodfinance.org.uk)*

It is important to check that what your organisation does is effective and is achieving what you set out to do e.g. supporting customers to maximise their income, feeding a certain number of people each month.

## GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

If you are collecting data then you need to ensure that you are doing so within GDPR, which are the regulations around how you collect, store and use data.

You need to consider what information you are collecting, why you are collecting it, whether a person can be identified from this, how you use and share the data, and also how you ensure that the data is stored securely (both electronic and paper data) and how data is then disposed of and when.

For any data collection you will need to have a privacy notice which states what information you are collecting and how it will be used.

## Identifying the need for change

Your monitoring and evaluation process may reveal that your current actions are not quite working in the way you planned, and so you need to make changes.

Firstly, pinpoint exactly what isn't working and ensure you are addressing the right issue.

Discuss issues with your project team and try to identify why it isn't working. It can also help to connect with other local food projects and look at how they work, or for them to visit your project and give an outside perspective on your operation.

This can then help generate ideas for solutions or changes you can make to ensure you meet your project's objectives.

See [appendix 9](#) for monitoring & evaluation resources and [appendix 10](#) for data collection resources

## Business planning for long term sustainability

As a VCFSE organisation you may not think that business planning is relevant to you.

However, a business plan will help you to set out your organisation's goals and how you will achieve them, ensuring that your organisation is resilient. A plan helps an organisation to focus and plan for the future.

Having a plan also enables your organisation to be proactive rather than reactive, ensuring that you are benefitting those in need and are well placed to make changes or overcome challenges as they arise.

A plan also helps to ensure your project is accountable, as it shows how any money you receive is being used, which will attract funders and supporters.

Overall, having a plan ensures that everyone in your organisation is working towards the same goals.

### Tips for creating a plan

- Keep your plan simple and concise.
- Be realistic.
- Think about your plan in terms of 1 year, 3 years and 5 years to help set goals.
- State how you will measure or show that you are achieving your goals?
- Use SMART objectives: Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Timely, Relevant

See [appendix 11](#) for business planning resources

## Publicity and Marketing

You will need to publicise your food project so that people know you exist.

Think carefully about how and where you publicise yourselves. If your project is only for those living in a certain area, you might want to only publicise yourselves locally or in those specific areas.

Make sure you include basic information such as days and times you are open, who the project is for and what you offer. It is also helpful to include contact details in case anyone has any questions about your project. Consider your target audience when deciding between an email address or phone number. Older people may not have internet access for example.

Clearly state the venue with a postcode so people know where to find you. If it is out of the way, or the building entrance isn't clear, you might want to include simple directions such as 'entrance door is down the left-hand side of the building.'

You may want to consider having a sign outside your venue on the days you are open, so people know they have come to the right place when they arrive. This could be a simple A-board or a poster on a noticeboard or the entrance door.

### Social Media

This includes sites such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn and X. Consider which platform will suit the needs of your project. For example, Instagram is heavily focused on photos and TikTok is a video focused platform. Facebook enables you to create pages or groups for your project, and post text, images and videos.

You can include links to your social media pages on any promotional materials you create.

It is a good idea to have someone who looks after your social media so that you post regularly on it and raise the profile of your project.

### Local newsletters and websites

A lot of villages have a newsletter. This can be a paper version or sometimes it is circulated online. These are great resources for reaching people that are very local to your project.

Some villages and parish councils have a website so think about promoting your project on these as well. You may find that they also have a Facebook group or page that you can advertise your project on.

### Leaflets

Leaflets are helpful to promote your organisation - you can include a range of information, and they can be left in a variety of places for people to see, such as shops and libraries. Use websites like Canva to design your leaflets for a professional look. It is free and easy to use. You can download your design which can then be sent to printers. Local printers will usually be able to print your leaflets at a reasonable price.

Make sure you include contact details on leaflets in case someone has a query about your project. Choose phone numbers and email addresses carefully, as changes could quickly make your materials outdated and unusable.

## QR codes

QR codes are small black and white patterned squares. They work in a similar way to barcodes - people can scan them with a smartphone in order to visit a webpage or download a document for example.

They are useful if you only have limited space on promotional materials for information, as you can include a code for people then to find out more about your project. They are also a good way to avoid printing too much.

There are websites that you can use for free to create and download your own QR codes. You will need a URL to embed into the code when you create it, such as a web address.

## Images

You must ensure that any images that you use in materials are royalty and copyright free. This includes clipart, graphics and photos.

You cannot download images from Google to use without permission of the image owner, else you are at risk of being fined. It is very easy for companies to check whether someone is using their images without permission.

There are sites that you can download images from that you can use without permission, such as Pixabay, Unsplash and Pexels. There are some sites where you can pay to use their images, such as Shutterstock and iStock.

If you are taking your own photos for materials or to use online, then make sure you have the permission of people who are in the pictures. It is a good idea to have a photo permission form that they can sign to give their permission.

## Websites

You may wish to create your own website for your project. This can be helpful for having all the information about your project in one place online.

Websites can be easy to set up and to maintain. There are also organisations and businesses that can help you to do this.

We recommend keeping the website simple. Remember to include basic information such as:

- Location
- Opening times
- Contact details
- What your project provides
- How people can access your project e.g. referral, open access, pre-book

It can also be helpful to include some pictures of your project in action so people know what to expect when they turn up.

See [appendix 12](#) for publicity and marketing resources

## Developing relationships with local businesses and supporters

You may want to explore connecting with local businesses that may be able to support your project. There are a variety of ways they might be able to support you, and they don't necessarily need to be directly related to food.

This could include:

- Making you their charity of the month / year for any fundraising activities
- Acting as a collection point for food donations
- Providing volunteer support either regularly or one off e.g. at Christmas
- Food businesses passing on surplus food
- Sharing knowledge or expertise e.g. business planning

You need to ensure that relationships with businesses are mutually beneficial. For example, a food business donating surplus food saves them money on waste collections, and boosts your project's food supplies, so both sides are benefitting. Consider what you can offer in return for a business supporting your project.

Think about your project's Unique Selling Point (USP). What makes you special or different to other projects? Why would this appeal to the businesses you are approaching?

Make sure that you are well known in the area by marketing your project. Businesses may prefer to work with projects that are well known and have a good reputation locally, rather than a project that they have never heard of or know nothing about.

Be strategic about who you approach. Local businesses often network and may share information. Target those whose values align with your project, rather than using a blanket approach

Food insecurity is a symptom of other problems and is rarely the main or sole problem a person faces. Food is what will often attract people to a place, and attending a food project can be the first step a person takes seeking help.

The 'food iceberg' below demonstrates how a need for food is usually what is seen by communities, but it is the unseen issues that are actually causing the need for food and driving a person's food insecurity.



Solely providing food without offering additional support rarely solves food insecurity. It can alleviate the initial problem of a person not having food but will not tackle the root cause that has led to a person experiencing food insecurity.

If you are running a staffed food project, it is likely that you will meet customers who are experiencing a range of problems which are impacting their food security. These could include housing, employment, debts, benefits sanctions.

By providing additional support to customers, you can help them to become self-sufficient and help break dependency on food projects. This can be as simple as knowing what services are available locally that you can signpost or refer customers to or perhaps having space for people to sit and talk, and for volunteers to listen and offer support.

If you are running an unstaffed project, we recommend displaying information of where people can seek further support. Include phone numbers as well as websites where possible, in case a person doesn't have access to the internet.

### **Importance of community**

Developing a sense of community helps customers feel supported. Simply having space for people to connect with others helps them build relationships with yourselves and other people.

Having regular familiar faces at projects helps to build trust as clients get to know staff and volunteers at a project. Once they have built trust, they may then start to open up.

Consider how you might create a community space at your food project, such as some tables and chairs with tea and coffee making facilities.

### **Support Service Delivery**

Having a community space also means that other organisations could visit your project, such as health services or social prescribers, to provide support and information to your customers. It is most effective if they join in with a coffee morning or meal, chat and get to know people, rather than setting up a stand in the corner of a room with leaflets and waiting for people to come to them.

It also helps if services attend regularly as this helps customers get to know them and build trust, even if they only come on the first Friday of the month for example. Consistency is important.

### **Money Guiders**

Money Guiders is free online training available across Suffolk, to support organisations and volunteers to confidently have conversations about money with their customers.

It does not qualify volunteers to give financial advice but can help them to be confident in guiding customers in financial conversations and to know their boundaries when talking about money.

### **Warm Handover**

Warm Handover is part of Suffolk Information Partnership. Over 100 organisations across Suffolk are part of Warm Handover.

It is a system where an organisation can make an online referral for their clients to multiple partners in one go. This system focuses on supporting vulnerable people who may not seek out support on their own.

### **Signposting**

It is helpful to know of other local services and organisations in your area that can offer support with things like housing, debt, employment, benefits, money and budgeting. We recommend having a list of contact details that you can share with customers so that you can direct them to appropriate support.

Suffolk Infolink is a useful online directory which you can search for services and organisations in your area.

## Food Ladders

To support your customers with food insecurity it is important to think about how your organisation can support them with more than just food.

Whilst you are not expected to have all the answers, it is helpful to know about what other support services are available locally that you can signpost or refer customers to.

One way to help you think about a customer's journey is using a Food Ladder. Developed by Dr. Megan Blake from the University of Sheffield, Food Ladders focus on building local resilience around food security, and they recognise the fact that no two people experience food insecurity in the same way.

Food ladders focus on 3 rungs, with each rung holding equal importance:

1. **Catching:** Emergency activity such as food parcels, free meals, vouchers, signposting
2. **Capacity building:** Supported activity such as community gardening, food clubs, social eating, and training
3. **Self-organisation:** Community-led activity such as community owned growing spaces, campaigning, looking out for each other, food co-ops

Activities in each rung can focus on different aspects of a person's life, such as food, social life, environment, economy and physical/mental health. People can enter the ladder at any stage, they may use multiple rungs at the same time and can move up and down the ladder depending on how their circumstances change.

However, a ladder can only work if all the rungs exist. Therefore, it is important to think about how your food project fits into the wider food landscape of your community and how you might work with other local projects and support services in the area to support residents with their food security journey.

**Have a look at the resources section for more information about Food Ladders and useful links.**

See [appendix 13](#) for resources to support your customers

<p><b>What is the problem or need you have identified?</b> (Who is affected? How many people? Where are they? Evidence you have collected or found)</p>	
<p><b>What is the main aim of your group?</b></p>	
<p><b>What other groups or services are there addressing the need in the area?</b> (Can you work together with these groups, share ideas or meet gaps in service)</p>	
<p><b>Who is your target group?</b> (Describe who will benefit from the services/activities you want to provide)</p>	
<p><b>How will you achieve your aim?</b> (Describe the services or activities you aim to provide)</p>	
<p><b>What resources do you already have?</b> (people, time, skills, money, equipment, services, premises etc)</p>	
<p><b>What other resources do you need and how will you obtain these?</b></p>	
<p><b>How will you let people know about your project?</b> (service users, potential volunteers, other local organisations and services)</p>	

## Appendix 2 Project Plan: Operations



### How your project will operate

What is your project called?	
What type of project will you set up?	
What is the demand and how do you know this?	
Where will your project be located / run from? Is it accessible for those with disabilities and easy for people to get to e.g. by public transport.	
What are the opening days/times?	
What area will your project cover?	
Will it be manned / unmanned?	
Who will be able to access your project?	
Will customers need to pay for food? How much will it cost and what will they receive?	
How can customers access your project? e.g. do they need a referral	
How many times can a customer visit each week/month?	
Will customers need to pay an annual subscription?	
Describe a typical visit to your project	

### Project Administration

How will people contact your project? e.g. phone number, email, website, Facebook	
How will you let people know you exist? Where/how will you promote your project?	

## Governance

Will this project run as part of an existing organisation, or are you an individual/new organisation setting up the project?	
Do you already have a governing document in place, or do you need to write one?	
What policies and procedures do you already have or what might you need to write/develop?	
Will you have a managing committee / steering group for the project? Who will be on this and what roles will they undertake?	

## Food supply and storage

What type of food will you supply? e.g. ambient, fresh, chilled, frozen	
How will you stock your food project? e.g. donations, food surplus, purchasing stock	
Where and how will your food be stored?	
Who will be responsible for stock control – supply, rotation, overall food hygiene?	
Who will check if your project needs to be registered as a food business with the District Council? Who will do the registration if needed? What support might be needed to do this?	
How many people will need to have completed their Level 2 Hygiene Certificate? How will you achieve this? e.g. funding, training provider	

## Volunteers

Who will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the project?	
Who will manage / be responsible for volunteers?	
Are there specific roles needed? Who will do these?	
What will volunteers do at the project?	
How will you ensure that volunteers have a positive experience with your project?	
How will you recruit new volunteers for your project?	

## Customer experience

Who will be responsible for new customers?	
What will be involved with supporting new customers?	
Will you collect any data from new customers? If so, what? How will this data be stored, and is this GDPR compliant?	

## Additional support services

What other support can you offer through your project? e.g. cookery skills, debt advice, money skills, reading support, CV writing	
How will this be delivered?	
What other organisations could you approach to offer additional support services?	

## Community Support

What other organisations can you develop relationships with, in your local community? e.g. church, school, WI, Men's shed. How might you mutually benefit each other?	
Who else may be able to offer support to your project? e.g. district council	
How will you raise awareness of and support for your project?	

## Money

List your weekly costs that you will need to cover and how much these will be. e.g. rent, heating, storage, food supplies	
How will you cover your weekly running costs?	
What set up costs will you incur and how will you pay for these?	
What funding do you already have in place?	
Who else may be able to support you with funding?	
How will you cover the costs of any additional food supplies?	
Do you have a bank account set up in your organisation's name, with 2 separate signatories? If not, how will money be managed?	
How will you raise money throughout the year?	
How will you cover unexpected or one-off costs?	

## Health and Safety

Do you have people with up to date first aid training?	
Do you have enough first aiders to cover every session?	
Have you got first aid kits?	
Have you completed a risk assessment?	
Do you have trained fire wardens?	
Will any volunteers be required to work on their own (lone working)? If so, how will they be kept safe?	

## Training

Considering all of the above sections, are there any areas you feel you might benefit from learning more about?	
Who in your team might need to be trained and what on?	
Where can you access this training?	
Are there any further cost implications in accessing this training? If so, how will you fund this?	





## Appendix 5 Safeguarding resources



What to do if you are worried about someone: <https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/organisation-support/safeguarding/are-they-safe-are-you-worried-about-someone/>

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/protecting-people-at-risk-of-abuse/mash?nodeId=460b9597-19cc-58e1-aabf-dd1dcc09244c&entryId=bc41209c-7d72-508d-926c-b4add2894ede>

Safeguarding training: <https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/organisation-support/traininganddevelopment/training-and-development-safeguarding/>

Example safeguarding policies: <https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/organisation-support/safeguarding/safeguarding-example-policy-and-procedures/>

Free downloadable Safeguarding posters to display at your project and other helpful resources: <https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/organisation-support/safeguarding/safeguarding-more-resources/>

# Appendix 6 Risk Assessment Template



Organisation name:

Assessment carried out by:

Date assessment was carried out:

Date of next review:

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done

For more information on managing risk visit [www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/)

For examples of how to complete a risk assessment visit <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/risk-assessment-template-and-examples.htm>

## Appendix 7: Volunteering

### NCVO

A wide range of information and guidance is available from NCVO for involving volunteers with your project, from recruitment and management, volunteers and the law to ending a volunteer arrangement.

Involving Volunteers: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/involving-volunteers/>

Running a volunteer induction: [Running a volunteer induction | NCVO](#)

Supporting & Managing Volunteers: [Supporting and managing volunteers | NCVO](#)

### Volunteer Suffolk

Volunteer Suffolk is Community Action Suffolk's website which connects Volunteers with Volunteer Co-ordinators. Volunteers can register their interest and apply for volunteering roles and organisations can advertise their opportunities for free.

<https://volunteersuffolk.org.uk/>

### DBS resources

DBS checking tool: <https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check>

CAS DBS service: <https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/business-support/dbs-checks/>

**For further information and support with volunteering visit**

**<https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/volunteering/>**

## Appendix 8: Funding & Fundraising resources

### Useful websites for finding supporting data

#### Suffolk Observatory

The Suffolk Observatory contains all Suffolk's vital statistics; it is the one-stop-shop for data, statistics and reports all about Suffolk provided by a variety of organisations.

Through data, reports and analysis, the Suffolk Observatory provides a comprehensive picture of the County and is a great source for useful facts and figures that will help you write reports and presentations, inform strategic and business planning, prepare funding applications or support academic research.

<https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/>

#### Place Based Needs Assessment

Place-based needs assessment dashboards (PBNAs) are focused on a place, and the needs of the population in that place.

In addition to information about health and care, they include information on housing, education and poverty, as they can affect people's health and wellbeing: they are wider determinants of health.

Most of the information is taken from public data, but information is also included from Children and Young People's Services, Adult and Community Services and Health datasets.

<https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/jsna/pbna>

#### Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) datasets are small area measures of relative deprivation across each of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom. Areas are ranked from the most deprived area (rank 1) to the least deprived area.

<https://data.cdrc.ac.uk/dataset/index-multiple-deprivation-imd>

#### Priority Places Food Index

The Priority Places for Food Index (Version 1, October 2022) is a composite index formed of data compiled across seven different dimensions relating to food insecurity for the four nations in the UK.

It is constructed using open data to capture complex and multidimensional aspects of food insecurity. It has been developed in response to the 2022 cost of living crisis which puts many of our communities under severe financial pressure and at an increased risk of food insecurity.

<https://data.cdrc.ac.uk/dataset/priority-places-food-index>

## Useful Contacts and Websites for grants & funding

### District council grants

**East:** <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/community-grants-and-funding/>

**West:** <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/community/community-grants.cfm>

**Mid:** <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/mid-suffolk-district-council-funding-1>

**Babergh:** <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/grants-and-funding>

**Ipswich:** <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/communitygrantfunding>

### District council Communities teams

**Ipswich:** [communities@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:communities@ipswich.gov.uk)

**West:** [families.communities@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:families.communities@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

**Mid Suffolk & Babergh:** [communities@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:communities@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)

**East:** [communities@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:communities@eastsuffolk.gov.uk)

## Where to look for funding

Funding4Suffolk Portal: <https://funding.idoxopen4community.co.uk/suffolk>

Suffolk Community Foundation: <https://www.suffolkcf.org.uk/current-grants/>

Suffolk County Council VCFSE funding alert: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/community-funding/funding-for-charities-community-organisations-and-social-enterprises>

**Visit the Community Food Team webpages for more funding resources**

**<https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/webinar-series/>**

**Community Action Suffolk offers training in funding and sustainability.**

**Visit our training web page to find courses.**

**<https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/cas-events/>**

## Appendix 9: Monitoring & evaluation

### Social Impact

Video - How do you measure social impact: [https://youtu.be/KDCYc\\_0h13g](https://youtu.be/KDCYc_0h13g)

Understanding Impact (includes information on evaluation techniques): <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/understanding-impact/>

### SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is a planning tool which will help you identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. It can help you to identify and build on the things you are doing well and stop or change things that are not as successful. It can also help you think about things that are external to your organisation that could provide new opportunities or threats that need to be managed.

### Theory of change

*“Theory of change process encourages us to reflect on our aims and plans, to discuss them with others and to make them explicit.*

*The output from a theory of change process describes how we believe our activities will lead to the outcomes and impacts we want to achieve.”* [Charity Support, Impact Measurement, Philanthropy Impact \(thinknpc.org\)](#)

Theory of change in 10 steps: [Theory of change in ten steps - NPC \(thinknpc.org\)](#)

### GDPR

Understanding GDPR: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/digital-technology/data-protection-and-cybersecurity/gdpr-data-protection-law-brexit-and-how-keep-top-your-responsibilities/>

Creating a privacy notice: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/advice-for-small-organisations/create-your-own-privacy-notice>

## Appendix 10: Data Collection

## Membership forms

Some projects ask people to register with them by completing an application form. They are then given a membership number. Every time they attend the project their number is then recorded.

The advantage of this is that it anonymises data collection. They are also useful for gathering lots of data in one go. You will need a privacy notice and to store the information provided securely.

Forms could collect information such as:

- Name, address contact details
- Size of household
- Age and gender of people in household
- Employment status of those over 18
- Benefits receipt
- Housing status e.g. owned with mortgage, private rental, housing association, temporary housing

Make sure you only collect data that is helpful to you e.g. housing status and employment status can help to demonstrate the demographic of your customers when applying for funding.

## Anonymous data

You can collect other information anonymously as well if you are trying to find out certain information.

For example, if you wanted to know the age or employment status of people attending, or their reason for using your project, you could have a simple postcard with tick boxes next to a list that people then put into a box.

Similarly, you could ask customers to put counters into different boxes according to their answer to a set question, or use different colours to represent different answers.

This way you are not collecting any personal data that could identify a person

**Tallies** - At the most basic level, you could simply count how many people have attended your project on a certain day, how many people have come through the door, how many food parcels you have distributed or how many meals you have provided. This can help to identify trends.

**Straw poll** - useful for gathering simple numbers and demonstrating opinions or preferences. Pose a question with multiple choice answers. People then add a tick or sticker next to their answer, or could put coloured counters in a box to indicate their choice

## Qualitative data

You can collect thank you letters and cards, case studies, photos and videos.

You could keep a book of quotes and when they were made. For example, if someone thanks you in passing and makes positive comments about how your project has helped them then write this down with the date.

Similarly, if people are making suggestions or telling you that things aren't quite working then also record this, as it can act as supporting evidence for funding applications. E.g. "*our customers are telling us that .... isn't working because of .... so we want to do ... to address this.*"

## Postcodes

By collecting the first part of a post code this will give you an indication of where your customers are travelling from without identifying their actual address. e.g. IP14 5, IP2 0

You can use online tools such as Google maps to plot postcodes from a spreadsheet, which can help with visualising customer locations.

<https://www.google.com/earth/outreach/learn/visualize-your-data-on-a-custom-map-using-google-my-maps/#edit-your-map-data-3>

## Questionnaires/surveys

You may need some information or feedback about a specific area of your work and decide to create a questionnaire or survey.

There is lots of software available to make this easy. This would enable people to visit a website and complete the form, and the software will create a spreadsheet of answers for you.

Online software for questionnaires:

- Microsoft forms
- Google forms
- Survey monkey
- Doodle poll

You need to ensure that however you collect data, the format is accessible to all your customers. For example, if you have an online questionnaire it is recommended to also have paper copies available for those who are not able to get online, or may struggle to use computers.

Top tips for designing a questionnaire: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/strategy-and-impact/impact-evaluation/planning-your-impact-and-evaluation/choosing-evaluation-methods/designing-questionnaires/>

## Appendix 11: Business planning

Business plan template: <https://www.charityexcellence.co.uk/uk-charity-business-plan-template/>

Writing a business plan: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/strategy-and-impact/strategy-and-business-planning/business-planning/writing-your-business-plan/>

## Appendix 12: Publicity and marketing

### Royalty-free Image sites

Pixabay: [www.pixabay.com](http://www.pixabay.com)

Pexels: [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com)

Unsplash: [www.unsplash.com](http://www.unsplash.com)

### Canva

Canva is a free online design software and is great for designing posters and leaflets. It is easy to get started with and use. You can upload your own images and logos to include in your materials. You can download your designs in a variety of formats, depending on what you are going to use them for.

[www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)

### Suffolk Infolink

Suffolk InfoLink is an online directory of community information; local clubs, societies, community and voluntary organisations, childcare providers and services. Members of the public can search for services local to them. Organisations can set up their own account and create a profile on Infolink, sharing details such as what your project offers as well as opening times and location.

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/>

### Social Media

Facebook: [www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com)

Instagram: [www.Instagram.com](http://www.Instagram.com)

LinkedIn: <https://gb.linkedin.com>

TikTok: [www.tiktok.com](http://www.tiktok.com)

X: <https://x.com>

## Appendix 13: Supporting your customers

### Money Guiders

When people reach out for help, money guidance is often given alongside wider support. This self-development programme helps organisations or individuals to confidently talk about money with their customers and give safe, effective guidance. It is government backed, proven to work and UK wide.

Find out more here: <https://maps.org.uk/en/our-work/money-guiders#>

Free training is available for staff and volunteers. Contact your community food officer at CAS for more details.

### HENRY

HENRY is a training programme focused on supporting families to give their babies and children the best start in life possible.

Find out more here: <https://www.henry.org.uk/>

Free training is available for staff and volunteers. Contact your community food officer at CAS for more details.

### Warm handover

Warm Handover is part of Suffolk Information Partnership (SIP), which is run by Suffolk County Council.

SIP is a partnership of various organisations and services in Suffolk. The Partnership runs itself, holding quarterly meetings to share updates on partners' services, discuss topics of interest and work on projects. It also produces a newsletter, encourages informal contact amongst partners

Warm Handover is an online referral services that organisations can sign up to, in order to refer vulnerable customers to other services. You can refer to multiple organisations within the partnership by filling out one form.

Find out more here: <https://suffolkinformationpartnership.onesuffolk.net/warm-handover/what-is-a-warm-handover/>

### Healthy Start

Healthy Start is a national scheme run by NHS to support families to buy milk and healthy food. Eligible families receive a Healthy Start card, which works similar to a debit card, and is topped up every 4 weeks.

The card can be used to buy

- plain liquid cow's milk
- fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables
- fresh, dried, and tinned pulses
- infant formula milk based on cow's milk

Visit the [Healthy Start website](#)

[Download free Healthy Start leaflet](#)

## Food Ladders

Food Ladders - A multi-scaled approach to everyday food security and community resilience:

<https://geofoodie.org/2019/06/19/food-ladders/#more-48713>

Introducing Food Ladders: A way of seeing community food provision:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9hbTXeBZjU>

Food Ladders toolkit: <https://geofoodie.org/food-ladders-toolkit-welcome/>

## Welfare Support

**Infolink Cost of Living Support** – key contacts for support around food, fuel, finance and housing

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

**Local Welfare Assistance Scheme (LWAS)** – help for those experiencing financial hardship

<https://residents.suffolk.gov.uk/lwa>

**Suffolk Infolink** – Infolink is an online directory of organisations and services, that is useful in finding out about what is available in your local area: <https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/home.page>

## Citizens Advice

**Babergh:** <https://www.sudburycab.org.uk/>

**East Suffolk:** <https://citizensadviceeastssuffolk.org.uk/>

**Ipswich:** <https://www.citizensadviceipswich.org.uk/>

**Mid Suffolk:** <https://midsuffolkcab.org.uk/>

**West Suffolk:** <https://suffolkwestcab.org.uk/>

## IFAN (Independent Food Aid Network)

<https://www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk/>

Free downloadable leaflets for each district of where to access further support

[Babergh](#)

[East Suffolk](#)

[Ipswich](#)

[Mid Suffolk](#)

West Suffolk: [Leaflet](#) [Poster](#)

## Other Downloads

[Accessing Food in Suffolk poster](#)