

## Community Kitchens

### Sharing learning from the SFC Network

*“The best place to be for anyone wanting to know about what’s happening with Community Kitchens in the UK is in this room”*

Matthew Thomson, Fifteen Cornwall

### Workshop summary

Many SFC members have set up their own community kitchens, are thinking about it or are working with existing kitchens. So why all the interest: what are community kitchens, and how can they help food partnerships to achieve their goals? This facilitated, participatory workshop is an opportunity to share experiences which clarify, inspire and encourage whilst also providing a reality check. It will use Brighton and Hove Food Partnership’s experience of setting up a new community kitchen last year and other SFC members’ experiences of different models to explore the benefits, opportunities and challenges of setting up a successful community kitchen.

### Participants (from expected attendance memory on the day)

Ben Messer	Food Matters	<b>Facilitator</b>
Carol Stanners	Office of Chi Onwurah MP	
Gareth Batty	FareShare Yorkshire / Good Food Barnsley	
Gemma White	DMBC	
Iain Stewart	Edinburgh Community Food	
Jamie Sadler	Food Newcastle	
Jemma Hynes	FoodSync	
Jessica Blenman	Be Enriched	
Laura Foster	Scaleup NE	
Louise Robson	Public Heath	
Matthew Thomson	Fifteen Cornwall	<b>Presenter</b>
Micaela Basford	Micaela Basford	
Nancy Doyle-Hall	Virgin Money Foundation E13	
Penny Walters	Food Power Newcastle	
Simon Shaw	Sustain – Food Power	
Sonja Woodcock	Leeds Food Partnership	<b>Presenter</b>
Tracy Lynch	Greggs	
Vic Borrill	Brighton & Hove Food Partnership	<b>Presenter</b>

## Introduction

- Workshop focus:
  - **What a Community Kitchen is**
  - **Different approaches and models**
  - **How they can support your food strategy and food partnership**
  - **The reality of setting up and running a Community Kitchen**
- Outputs to feed into an **SFC Network Community Kitchens FACT SHEET**

## Question to participants

**What's your BIG QUESTION about Community Kitchens?**

## Inspiration and sharing experiences

Vic Borrill	Brighton & Hove Food Partnership
Sonja Woodcock	Leeds Food Partnership
Matthew Thomson	Fifteen Cornwall

- Presentations based on responses to **3 key questions**:
  1. **How would you describe your Community Kitchen?**
  2. **Why did you think a Community Kitchen would be a good idea?**
  3. **How does your Community Kitchen support your food strategy and food partnership?**
- Discussion based on the list of **BIG QUESTIONS**

## Key outputs

**Summary of BIG QUESTIONS from participants:**

Community Kitchens – a **place-based solution to food access** – but are they enough of a response?

Can **mobile Community Kitchens** work as well as working those from a base?

How can you ensure that Community Kitchens are **about the community**?

How can you **balance income generation and community objectives**?

How do you make Community Kitchens **stack up financially**?

What **strategic connections** are needed to make Community Kitchens viable?

How do you address **health and safety and hygiene issues**?

How to link Community Kitchens with **further education**?

How to incentivise **commercial companies to engage** with Community Kitchen initiatives?

How to maintain **food supply for Community Kitchens** (from re-purposed or re-distributed food for Community Kitchens that prepare and provide meals)?

## Summary of discussion RESPONSES:

**Strategic connections** – to make connections you need to understand ‘your own magic’ – to demonstrate (a community kitchen’s) viability and potential impact.

**Strategic connections** – these are different for different purposes: building the kitchen and running the kitchen requires different strategic support.

**Finance** – Split the finance up between different components of the project – seek and secure a mix of funding.

**Strategic connections** – difficult to make the case and convince potential partners – in particular regarding ‘social value’. Needs to be based on trust.

**Strategic connections** – Property connections are particularly valuable, but need to prove value, prove reputation and explore feasibility together.

**Finance** – be realistic, acknowledge that some activities (particularly those with vulnerable groups) will never stack up financially and will need grant support or will never generate income.

**Making it work** – be patient, build up the project gradually, begin with going out and working in kitchens in communities before setting up your own kitchen – this helps to prove social value and build reputation.

**Safety and Hygiene** – The Nationwide Caterers Association [www.ncass.org.uk](http://www.ncass.org.uk) provide training and certification of hygiene and safety for mobile food provision. Very useful.

**Training** – Example of good practice regarding training for mobile food provision from Age UK Thanet and their mobile food provision service (meals-on-wheels)

**Food supply** – need to avoid competition for surplus food – best achieved through a co-ordinated approach and establishment of surplus food groups/networks

**Storage** – always a key issue to be addressed re surplus food and food provision

## How was the workshop? Evaluation responses

### Learning:

- Lots of good examples from other areas
- Range and types of community kitchens – not just one model
- The way in which you can successfully open a Community Kitchen in a high needs area
- There is no blueprint
- (The country of) Iceland has a Community Kitchen in every community

### Actions:

- Visit Leeds
- (Simon Shaw) Ask Food Power network for their examples and learning (on Community Kitchens) – are there any specific questions to ask (for the SFC Fact Sheet)?

### General comments:

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Matthew Thomson, Fifteen Cornwall

- Great networking and good practice sharing
- Great open discussion and experience sharing
- Encourage people to speak to/visit the speakers and other contributors who have a Community Kitchen
- Small table discussions and post-its would help quieter participants to contribute
- Lovely gentle facilitating
- (*Something I liked?*) Ben!