

Raising Nutrition in Food Banks

Buckinghamshire Pilot:
Summary of Approach, Impact and Learning

Supporting food banks to strengthen healthier food provision

A year long partnership, between Buckinghamshire Council, local food banks and RaisingNutrition, providing practical support to raise and embed nutrition standards, build volunteer confidence and help food parcels enable balanced meals.



4

Food Banks
Supported



47

Volunteers
Trained



3

Accredited
Food Banks



60,000+

Additional Vegetable
Portions Projected
Annually

*"It opened our eyes to whether the food we are giving
is sustainable and practical"* Food Bank Volunteer

What We Did

Food banks play a vital role in supporting people and families during periods of financial hardship and crisis. At these times, access to nourishing food can be especially important for health and wellbeing.

This pilot built on the excellent work already taking place across Buckinghamshire's food banks, through RaisingNutrition's Accreditation Programme, training and advisory support. The work explored practical ways to strengthen healthier food provision and help food parcels better enable balanced meals.

THE CHALLENGE



Provision driven by donated food



High in treats and refined staples



Parcels not designed around balanced meals



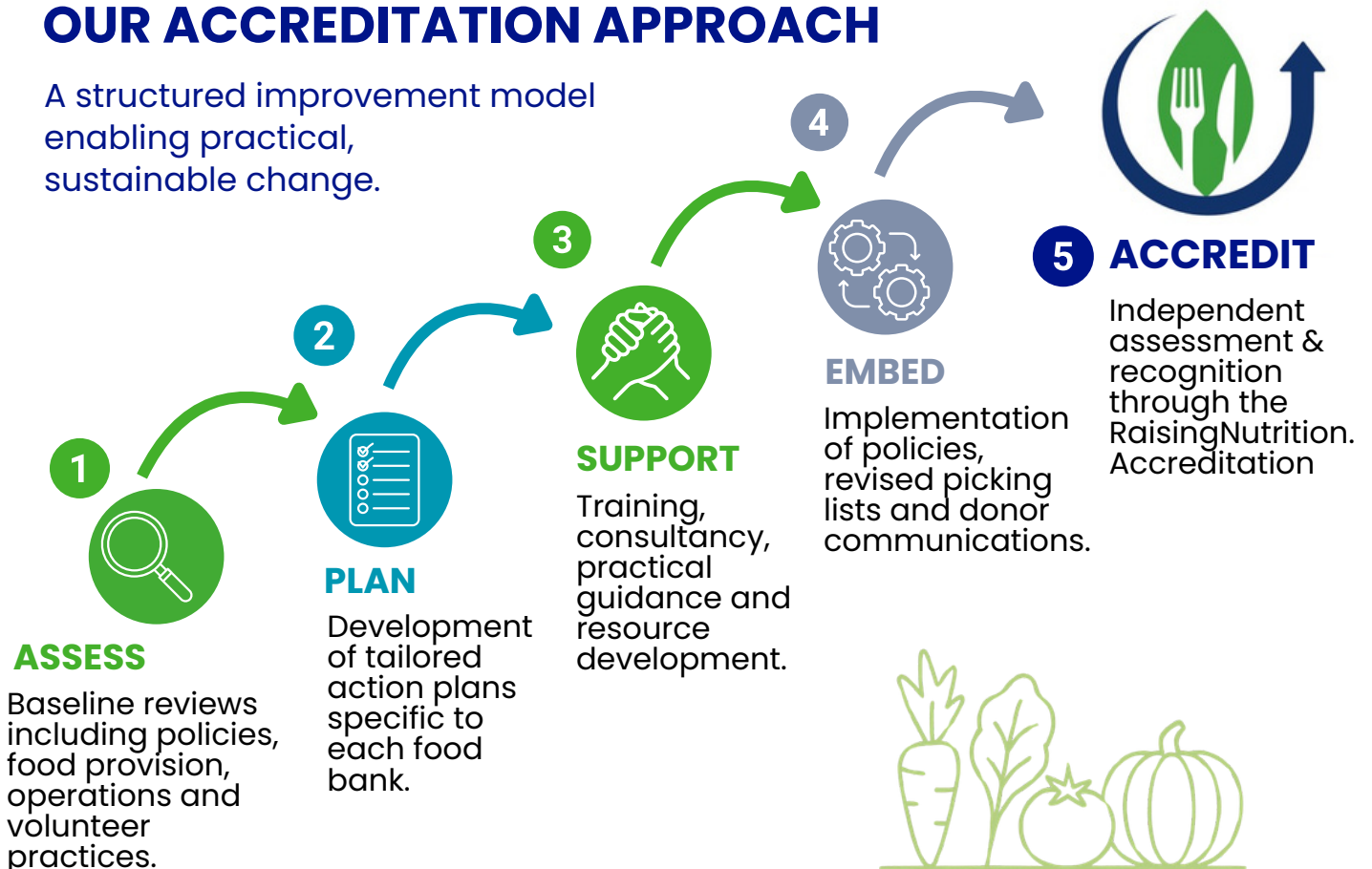
Variable nutrition knowledge and confidence



Limited resources to help clients use food well.

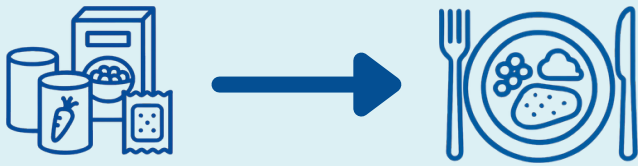
OUR ACCREDITATION APPROACH

A structured improvement model enabling practical, sustainable change.



Support delivered

"DONATIONS TO DINNER" TRAINING



Staff and volunteers benefitted from 3 short food-bank specific training modules, covering elements of food safety, healthy food provision and nutrition basics and practical support and meal creation for clients.

RESOURCES DEVELOPED



- Healthy donation guidance
- Parcel-to-Plate Resources
- Simple recipe resources and meal planning guide



- Practical top-tips guides to support clients with dietary needs

What Changed?

Significant increases in vegetable provision across the 3 accredited food banks.

VOLUNTEER CONFIDENCE IMPROVED



**MORE VEGETABLES
MORE OFTEN**

60,000+
ADDITIONAL PORTIONS
OF VEGETABLES

Projected to be provided through food parcels annually in 2026.

EXISTING STRENGTHS		ENABLED THROUGH THE PILOT	
	Commitment to supporting wellbeing		Accreditation programme, recognition and ongoing support
	Operations and networks supporting local needs		Food policies embedding positive nutrition approaches.
	Food parcel provision with a variety of items		Food provision & resources focused on balanced meal-provision
	Dedicated staff and volunteers		Nutrition training and guidance building confidence
	Strong community support		Community messaging encouraging healthier donations

Key Learning



Think meals, not just items

One of the most valuable shifts was moving from considering individual products within food parcels to thinking about how foods could work together to create healthier, more balanced meals.

This helped to inform:

- Picking Lists
- Volunteer conversations
- Resources
- Donor Communications



Small changes can make a big difference

Relatively small adjustments to picking lists (checklists of food to include in parcels), food purchasing and donor communications can have a meaningful impact on the overall nutritional quality of parcels.



Volunteers are key to success

Training, practical support and simple resources help volunteers feel more confident and motivated to support healthier food choices and meal ideas for clients.



Systems to support sustainability

Policies, resources, tools and the accreditation framework help to embed good practice and ensure lasting impact.



A SCALABLE MODEL WITH LASTING IMPACT

The pilot demonstrated how practical collaborative support to increase the focus on healthier food and meal provision can help food banks build on their existing strengths and further support the wellbeing of their local communities.

The Accreditation Programme provided a clear framework and structure to build capability, supporting and motivating food banks into embedding nutrition into their ways of working and ongoing systems.

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