

## **Appendix 1**

### **Overview of 23/24 Social Supermarket Projects**

Belfast City Council supported 21 social supermarkets during the financial year 2023/2024 with funding received from the Department for Communities CSP and Department for Communities Hardship Funding.

A social supermarket is usually set-up as a shop within a community organisation although some distribute food vouchers rather than operating as a shop. Some have a nominal membership fee and all offer food, cleaning products and toiletries at discounted prices.

Some of the projects are situated within large community organisations; others offer support to particular interest groups. Each operate in a slightly different way as they respond to the needs of their own communities but all of them must offer wraparound provision and/or signposting to services such as benefit checks, debt advice, training and employment advice and childcare. Most work on a referral basis only.

There are three models:

- Large, well-established community organisations operating a social supermarket as well as wraparound services within their own facility as well as signposting people to other services.
- Food banks that have evolved into social supermarkets and offer wraparound services as well as signposting to other services.
- Community organisations providing food vouchers and wraparound services as well as signposting to other services.

A report on each of the 21 social supermarkets supported during 2023 to 2024 is below.

Strategic Partners	Description	Award	Households/ Individuals supported	Location and office DEA DEAs supported
Ashton Community Trust	<p>Operating since April 2022, the Pantry is a wrap-around programme supporting families in North Belfast with food, cleaning supplies and personal hygiene products as well as other support, such as training and employment, family support, health and wellbeing initiatives, childcare support etc. to maximise positive outcomes for the families referred.</p> <p>Families undertake a 12-week programme with referring agents such as local schools, food banks, advice providers, community organisations and Housing Associations.</p> <p>Food vouchers were used to support those engaged with the Community Fridge element of the project and who will also engage in wraparound support.</p>	£33,833.11	151 households / 665 individuals	North: <i>Oldpark</i> DEAs supported: Castle, Court, Black Mountain, Lisnasharragh
Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid	<p>This project supports women and children who have experienced domestic abuse within their home, and adult female victims of human trafficking and their dependent children.</p> <p>There are many forms of domestic abuse one being financial abuse, a key factor for many of the women supported. Some of the women had fled their homes and moved into temporary accommodation with very little money. The project provided food for a short period of time while their finances were sorted.</p> <p>Belfast &amp; Lisburn Women's Aid report that they have never experienced the need for basics from women as we are now.</p>	£21,052.32	202 / 432	South: <i>Botanic</i> DEAs supported: Black Mountain, Castle, Collin, Court, Lisnasharragh, Oldpark, Ormiston, Titanic

Blackie River Community Groups	This project provides holistic support to families experiencing financial struggles. Families are referred from a range of agencies; each household is given three £100 food vouchers over a 3-week period as well as additional support, i.e. information and contacts around benefits advice, debt management, nutrition, citizens advice, family support, health and wellbeing and training and employment.	£109,743.70	386 / 1301	West: <i>Black Mountain</i> DEAs supported: Black Mountain
Boring Wells/ The Larder	<p>The Larder in East Belfast aims to provide those existing on limited incomes with nutritious food sourced as locally as possible, whilst retaining their agency and self-sufficiency. It has strong partnerships and trading relationships with local small producers and suppliers to keep spend local, building wealth in the community and providing access to high quality nutritious food that factors in sustainability.</p> <p>Cookery skills are enhanced via the 'Dinner's Done' project: nutritious meal packs for £1, all ingredients measured out with instructions for preparing at home and the community garden has introduced the health benefits of certain foods and plants.</p>	£49,146.98	282 / 616	East: <i>Titanic</i> DEAs supported: Court, Lisnasharragh, Ormiston and Titanic
Cara-Friend	<p>This project provided a £100 food voucher to 76 people from the LGBTQIA+ community in Belfast as well as a wraparound support meeting with Cara-Friend's Community Development Manager to discuss circumstances, individual needs and signposting to relevant support services.</p> <p>Many were living with a disability, were currently unemployed, had recently experienced a period of unemployment, were homeless or living in a hostel.</p>	£8,149.28	76 / 139	City wide: Castle DEAs supported: Black Mountain, Botanic, Castle, Collin, Court, Lisnasharragh, Oldpark, Ormiston and Titanic

	<p>Each had their own needs, sometimes these needs were complex and multi-faceted.</p> <p>For most of them, this was their first interaction with Cara-Friend and through the project they have begun to learn more about the services offered, hopefully leading to further positive outcomes as they come more familiar with Cara-Friend and the LGBTQIA+ sector.</p>			
Disability Action	<p>Disabled people face a higher risk of poverty and have done so for more than two decades. The project addressed this challenge by providing food vouchers to disabled person's households within the Belfast City Council area. The wraparound services and work to address the underlying causes of poverty alongside the food vouchers was outstanding. Demand was greater than what could be provided.</p> <p>The project increased engagement in Disability Action's services and addressed the immediate food needs of disabled people while signposting to essential services.</p>	£21,052.32	192 / 485	City wide: <i>Titanic</i> DEAs supported: Balmoral, Black Mountain, Botanic, Collin, Court, Lisnasharragh, Oldpark, Ormiston, Titanic
Foodstock	<p>Foodstock operates as a foodbank, social supermarket and also provides benefits, debt and employment advice among other services.</p> <p>The main objective of the social supermarket project was to enhance the wraparound service provided by Foodstock to people living in crisis in the Belfast area during the winter period.</p> <p>It identified people who could benefit from the fund and particularly food vouchers. A recurring issue was newcomer families who were struggling</p>	£18,944.37	152 / 676	West: <i>Black Mountain</i> DEAs supported: Balmoral, Black Mountain, Botanic, Castle, Collin, Court, Oldpark, Ormiston, Titanic

	financially and not able to access culturally appropriate food. At Foodstock, they were able to avail of advice, language services and, through this project, they could purchase culturally appropriate food for both them and their children.			
Forward South Partnership (FSP)	<p>FSP facilitated a successful food programme as well as a city-wide support network to the Roma Support Hub and to newcomer communities across the city through a network of referral agencies and partners. Support offered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh fruit, vegetable and meat packs, halal food, vouchers and hygiene items.</li> <li>• Three community meals in partnership with Fane Street, Holy Rosary and Donegall Road Primary Schools attended by support services.</li> <li>• Food, hygiene and household products provided as part of the social supermarket delivery model.</li> <li>• Referrals from Ballynafeigh Advice Teams.</li> <li>• Referrals completed for white goods support, mental health, signposting to volunteer opportunities, employability, Warm and Well and warm packs.</li> </ul>	£23,619.34	221 / 737	South: <i>Botanic</i> DEAs supported; Balmoral, Court, Lisnasharragh, Black Mountain, Collin, Titanic, Oldpark, Ormiston
Greater Shankill Partnership	<p>The project worked with previously established community links to identify residents in need of support. It provided food vouchers for two local butchers, a local NISA store and the local Iceland supermarket.</p> <p>A range of wraparound services were provided including referrals to the project's advice worker.</p>	£29,242.35	104 / 310	West: <i>Court</i> DEAs supported: Court
Hanwood Trust	The project provided support to residents in the Tullycarnet, Ardcar, Braniel, Knocknagoney and Clarawood areas of Ormiston DEA.	£18,944.37	238 / 533	East: <i>Ormiston</i> DEAs supported: Ormiston

	<p>Food vouchers were provided as well as wraparound support to services including local BCC Councillors, East Belfast Independent Advice Centre, Holywood Road Jobs &amp; Benefits office, NIHE patch managers and area support through the Housing Community Network Forum, Barnardos for family support and also the PHA Pathways programme for counselling if required.</p>			
HERe NI	<p>This project provided food vouchers to LGBTQIA+ women experiencing financial difficulties. A wraparound service was an instrumental aspect of this work and offered family support, healthy social activities, peer support opportunities, mental health support and signposting to external support agencies.</p> <p>Referrals were made to HERe NI's Family Support Service, Rainbow Refugees, the Mental Health Advocacy Team and HERe NI's Older Women's Support Officer for workshops, social activities and counselling.</p> <p>All applicants signed up for HERe NI's mailing list to receive a monthly newsletter and information about workshops and events.</p>	£4,957.48	36 / 62	<p>DEA: Castle (city wide service)</p> <p>DEAs supported: Black Mountain, Botanic, Castle, Collin, Court, Lisnasharragh, Ormiston, Titanic</p>
Homeplus	<p>The Homeplus Social Supermarket provided local people in the Holyland and Lower Ormeau community access to a range of fresh, frozen, dried and tinned food on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Homeplus already supports the local asylum and refugee community in this area and the Social Supermarket provided a service to the local</p>	£21,052.32	15 / 54	<p>South: <i>Botanic</i></p> <p>DEA supported: Botanic</p>

	community as well. A by-product of this was a weekly bringing together of the two communities.			
In This Together	<p>In This Together (ITT) operates a social supermarket across East and South Belfast to support clients in disadvantaged communities living on low incomes and often marginalised because of poor health, housing and employment.</p> <p>The project provided food and hygiene items as well as wraparound support services, and a full Christmas dinner to over 350 individuals. £50 food vouchers were given to clients shortly after Christmas to top up their food supplies alongside their usual weekly packs from the social supermarket.</p>	£49,146.98	196 / 504	East: <i>Titanic</i> DEAs supported: Ormiston, Titanic
LORAG	<p>This project was delivered with key partners from the Inner South Neighbourhood Partnership: Lower Ormeau – LORAG; Market – MDA and Donegall Pass – DPCF and SB Alternatives.</p> <p>The project worked with a range of wider partners locally to promote the programme through the Inner South neighbourhood renewal structures and the family support hub to ensure co-ordinated delivery across the area.</p> <p>A leaflet was delivered to every household in advance of holding clinics in each area from January to March 2024. The programme offered a £100 voucher and referral or support to other agencies. A number of vouchers were kept for those who were housebound and required home visits.</p>	£23,619.34	233 / 675	South: <i>Botanic</i> DEA supported: Botanic

	The programme was a success but at least 4 times the amount of funding would have been needed to meet the demand in this current cost of living crisis.			
Loughview Community Action Partnership	The Scullery at Loughview Community Action Partnership (LCAP) supports families with food supplies for a period of 11 weeks. Referrals come from advice workers, schools or LCAP members. Families attend the programme for 11 weeks; during that time they receive food and are referred to wraparound services for additional support.	£33,833.11	38 / 145	North: <i>Castle</i> DEAs supported: Castle
People's Kitchen Belfast	<p>The Peoples Kitchen food voucher scheme targeted those at risk of poverty and in crisis, particularly those larger families and others using the project's food bank. As well as providing vouchers, the project also referred people to other services including advice, family support hubs, etc.</p> <p>The purpose of the project was to help people out of poverty, allowing them to engage with other services that could prevent them from the risk of poverty and empower them to buy their own food while also raising awareness of what support is available.</p>	£18,944.37	113 / 519	North: <i>Oldpark</i> DEAs supported: Black Mountain, Castle, Court, Oldpark
Southcity Resource & Development Centre	<p>The project is run through a consortium of Belfast South Community Resource, Greater Village Regeneration Trust, Southcity Resource Centre and Windsor Women's Centre.</p> <p>It provides households in need with food vouchers and wraparound support developed by the consortium. Partners are equipped to deal with most issues, from debt, benefits, housing, employment, consumer issues, health and education. All partners have recorded an increase in requests for assistance with utility bills and the provision of food,</p>	£23,619.34	63 / 748	South: <i>Botanic</i> DEAs supported: Botanic, Balmoral, Black Mountain, Castle, Collin, Court, Ormiston, Lisnasharragh



	<p>mostly due to the current economic situation. This project extends the reach especially to a range of vulnerable groups such as the elderly, isolated and migrant families.</p>			
Storehouse NI	<p>Storehouse has provided emergency food support to those in need in Belfast for 16 years. In 2021 it moved from a pre-packed food bag model to a self-choice food "shop" where all items are still free of charge, but service users are given the dignity of choice. Alongside existing long-life food and toiletries, the social supermarket offers fresh items such as fruit, vegetables, bread, eggs and milk.</p> <p>Storehouse offered multi-faceted wraparound support such as bespoke housing and benefits advice/support, employability/CV workshops, skills-based courses including photography, cinematography, pottery, guitar, baking, English language classes and multiple community, mental health and wellbeing environments.</p>	£21,052.32	845 / 1315	City wide: <i>All DEAs</i>
The Parent Rooms	<p>The project was aimed at those experiencing poor mental health exacerbated by financial difficulties. It allowed parents and their infants to access a 10-week Baby &amp; Me programme, which supported parents struggling with mental health issues. Each household was given 3 food vouchers of £100 each. Additional food support needs were met through an existing partnership with Foodstock in the form of food parcels.</p> <p>The wraparound service offered family support, healthy social activities, peer support opportunities, mental health support and signposting to external support agencies.</p>	£4,957.48	17 / 65	North: <i>Court</i> DEAs supported: Black Mountain, Court, Castle, Collin, Titanic

<p>The Vine Centre (North Belfast Advice Partnership)</p>	<p>This project provided food related support to people living in the catchment area served by the North Belfast Advice Partnership, which covers North Belfast and the Shankill. The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided low-income households with temporary support to reduce their food costs and maximise their income when it comes to their weekly shop.</li> <li>• Increased the ability of families to manage their household finances by practical skills such as saving, planning expenditure, seeking value for money and cooking on a budget.</li> <li>• Raised awareness of support available in the local community.</li> <li>• Provided additional support to families by referring or signposting them to relevant support services within their local community.</li> </ul>	<p>£33,833.11</p>	<p>136 / 291</p>	<p>North: <i>Oldpark</i> DEAs supported: Balmoral, Black Mountain, Castle, Oldpark</p>
<p>Upper Springfield Development Trust</p>	<p>This project was organised through a steering group/consortium of partners and offered food vouchers and wraparound support to a wide range of households. Partnerships were established with local organisations including schools and the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership.</p> <p>An assessment was undertaken at the initial point of entry to the project to ensure that everyone in the household was supported. This led to a bespoke plan for individuals and families. Ongoing evaluation ensured that people's needs were being met and that appropriate services and support were being provided. It supported families with children, couples with no children and people living alone including elderly people.</p>	<p>£18,944.37</p>	<p>189 / 583</p>	<p>West: <i>Black Mountain</i> DEAs supported: Black Mountain, Court, Collin</p>

### Case Studies

1. One woman said: "If I hadn't had the support to buy food for me and my children I would have returned to my abusive partner. Thank you."
2. The local school put in a referral for a young single father who has 4 young children as Dad was struggling financially; Dad got an appointment at the social supermarket, engaged in a money maximisation course, had a benefit check and decided to do some training. Childcare was provided and Dad fully completed his course. We will work with Dad and support him in gaining meaningful employment.
3. A member of the social supermarket is 69 and has just been housed in a NIHE property. Whilst doing her weekly shop she met with the project's benefits advisor. A benefit check showed entitlement to additional benefits. Her financial gain for the year was £9,752.00.
4. A 49-year-old single man living on his own in a flat said "During January this scheme gave me food support that I desperately needed after Christmas. The girls told me about a benefit check that other organisations can do and gave me their details to get in touch which I did."
5. Older woman aged 81: "I would just like to say thank you for the support I received in January, the vouchers made such a difference as money has been really tight with the cost of everything now. I also spoke with the staff about feeling lonely and if there was anything available in the community. They referred me onto the Women's Group which I have since joined and have been made to feel very welcome. Thank you for all your help".

### Lessons Learned from projects

- We have gained an in-depth insight into the continuous hardship families are experiencing at this time and the diversity of issues faced.
- There is a need to ensure that in the long-term, social supermarket funding is used strategically to alleviate poverty and not as a temporary charitable gift. Groups need to be given appropriate time to deliver the project properly, and not as a rushed programme to get support out the door in a hurry in a time of crisis.
- Language continues to be a massive gap / barrier to communicating with users of the social supermarket and additional funds / resources in community settings would be welcome to be inclusive to everyone as possible.
- While the funding was much needed in local communities and it is worthwhile to maximise the amount of funding going directly to those that need it, only allowing 10% towards cost recovery is not sufficient to allow a scheme like this to be properly effective & operate as it should do. While some limited costs towards staff time could be claimed, this is not reflective of the actual staff costs involved. Project funding like this that does not allow for staff is continually asking the community sector to deliver for free and undervalues the sector.
- There was a definite gap in support for people needing assistance with fuel/energy costs. While we are aware other programmes of support were available, we found it difficult to refer into these and we saw significant need in this area.