

Minutes of Food Poverty Network Meeting #40

Date: Wednesday, 3rd February 2021

Venue: Microsoft Teams online

Time: 11:00am – 12:30pm

In Attendance

Name	Organisation
Catherine Conlon (CC) (Chair)	safefood
Joana Caldeira Fernandes da Silva (JDS)	safefood
Anne Parle (AP)	safefood
Tracey Thompson (TT)	safefood
Sharon Gilmore (SG)	FSA NI
Fionnuala Close (FC)	FSA NI
Naomi Davidson (ND)	FSA NI
Christine Dale (CD)	Dept. of Health NI
Darren Moan (DM)	Dept. of Health NI
Margaret O'Neill (MO'N)	HSE
James Elliott (JE)	Dept. for Communities NI
Sharon Polson (SP)	Dept. for Communities NI
Bertrand Maitre (BM)	ESRI
Eimear Delahunty (ED)	Food Cloud
Philippa McKeown (PMcK)	Consumer Council NI
Meabh Austin (MA)	FareShare Northern Ireland
Gary McFarlane (GMcF)	CIEH
Maeve Carey (MC)	Lisburn and Castlereagh Council, NI
Tracey Colgan (TC)	Health & Social Care NI
Zoe Fletcher (ZF)	British Dietetics Association
Catherine Kilkenny (CK)	Department of Social Protection
Sarah O'Halloran (SO'H)	Department of Social Protection
Yvonne Fleming (YF)	Cross Care ROI
Hannah Williamson (HW)	Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke

Apologies

Name	Organisation
Anne-Marie Brooks	Department of Children and Youth Affairs, ROI
Ursula O'Dwyer	Dept. of Health ROI
Janis Morrissey	Irish Heart
Sinead Conroy	SECAD
Sarah O'Brien	HSE

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1. Welcome & apologies

CC welcomed everyone to the meeting. The apologies were acknowledged and new members, Sarah O'Halloran & Catherine Kilkenny were welcomed.

2. Presentation by Sarah O'Halloran, Department of Social Protection

Sarah presented on the Department of Social Protection's ROI Roadmap for Social Inclusion. CC asked Sarah if, when considering the Roadmap for Social Inclusion what was the target and what was taken into consideration for addressing poverty? Sarah advised that there were a range of targets that go beyond purely poverty measures, with different aspects of social inclusion being considered and as such, it was not just about the top-level consistent poverty or income poverty measures. Sarah advised that the roadmap was very frontloaded i.e., the majority of commitments were for delivery in the first couple of years and a mid-term review would be carried out in 2022 which would also be an opportunity to review and recalibrate with a view to adding further measures to further progress the roadmap. YF asked if it would be possible to get Sarah's contact details and also asked about the "driver's of food poverty" and had there been some form of collection of existing data and research done on this? YF advised that she was aware that there was some research which had recently been completed in this area? Sarah advised that a trawl of data would have been carried out at the start and during development of the roadmap but would welcome being made aware of any more recent data available. YF also asked if the work being done by DoSP involved looking at the compilation of all the existing direct services as there were a lot of services without any wrap-around supports? Sarah advised that the Minister met with **safefood** & the DOH and subsequent to the meeting with the Minister, the option of mapping was discussed, and all the support services were currently in operation. Sarah advised that she was working with another agency and they were in the process of setting up a Numeracy & Literacy roadmap so would be interested in a mapping exercise that would take everything into consideration that would help to identify gaps e.g., is the current funding being distributed effectively, for example, could the "Meals on Wheels" model be applied to "Holiday Hunger" for school children? MO'N referenced the "Food Parcels" and advised that the HSE has been working with local authorities to support this wrap-around service however MO'N advised that, whilst it was recognised as an extremely important service, there are opportunities to improve the service as well as the standards around it and identify risks and intervene earlier on e.g., malnutrition & weight loss. MO'N advised that she would be very happy to link in with SO'H to give an update on all HSE's activities around this area. FC advised MO'N that in the AIFPN member update document, there is a link to a UK based University of Sheffield report who compare the responses to food provision specifically

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regarding COVID-19 and the document compares the 4 nations which could be interesting for SO'H to review. ED mentioned that FoodCloud would be very keen to be part of the wrap-around mapping as they witnessed a very quick response to the COVID-19 food crisis and as a result they have a vast network of informal food distributors across the ROI who wouldn't be considered traditional food providers such as Meals on Wheels or Community Childcare and it would be important to include these networks in any mapping exercise. JE informed SO'H that the DCNI had run the social supermarket pilot programme as well as being part of the emergency response and access to food in the past year and would be very interested in being part of the mapping exercise.

3. Minutes from last meeting

There were no amendments to the minutes from the previous meeting.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Updates from Dept. of Health NI & Dept. of Health ROI

DoH NI – provided by Darren Moan

DM advised that following on from the update provided by the DOH, the DOH would continue to fund free school meals up until the middle of 2022 recognising the health, inequality and food poverty issues that have arisen - 97,000 families were affected by these issues. The department had worked with the Food Poverty Indicator Sub-group and were pushing to maintain the current measure for food poverty within the health survey which was measured every 2 years. This would go forward to NISRA colleagues for them to consider should they be in a position to do face-to-face surveys in 2021 and a decision on this had been planned for April depending upon the COVID-19 situation.

DOH ROI – (Ursula O'Dwyer unable to attend)

CC advised that due to Ursula being unable to attend the meeting, a DOH ROI update will be sent in by email.

ACTION 1: UO'D to submit DOH update by email.

Dept. for Communities NI– provided by James Elliot

JE advised that they were trying to move away from the food boxes from the earlier days and offer a more sustainable response during the Christmas Period. Funding was also put

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out through their established seasonal campaigns such as St Vincent DePaul, Salvation Army, Save the Children as well as others. The approach taken over the last 6 months was to try to utilize what was already there and build on these services. In terms of 2021, the Dept for Communities NI have only just received a draft budget and were working through the implications of that. It had been hoped that the Dept. of Communities would have been in a position to roll out Social Supermarkets however, the work required to do this hasn't happened in the past year because of all the emergency response work so it is now anticipated that, at the minimum, the current pilots would continue and depending upon budget this would determine what else the Department could do. It is also expected that some form of emergency funding will continue as the situation will be ongoing beyond 31st March which would enable work to continue with the Councils.

6. Review and conclusion of action plans from 2020

JDS asked all FPN members if they could please close out and submit their 2020 action plans.

ACTION 2: All FPN members to submit final 2020 action plans with updates to indicate action status.

7. Action Plans 2021

Both NI & ROI action plans were reviewed during the meeting and JDS made any necessary edits and amendments during the call.

TC of Public Health Agency queried if she should ask some PHA Dietitians to attend AIFPN meetings as there appeared to be a lot of obesity related actions in the Action Plans. TC suggested that the actions should focus on food poverty as the AIOAF exists to address obesity. There was some discussion on the overlap between food poverty and obesity and it was agreed that the actions should be reviewed to emphasise the food poverty aspect more, especially where the action also addresses obesity prevention, as they are often difficult to separate. TC of Public Health Agency will look into the possibility of sharing actions from the Obesity section of the Public Health Agency with this forum that relate to Food Poverty as there is some cross-over between Food Poverty and Obesity.

ACTION 3: **safefood** and FSA to review actions to emphasise the food poverty aspect of actions which also relate to obesity prevention. TC to investigate sharing of PHA Obesity section actions with AIOAF members.

8. AOB

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2021 AIFPN webinar – Food parcels, practical ways to move away from food poverty and holiday hunger were suggested as topics for the webinar.

ZF highlighted the work of the BDA with the Department of Agriculture on a Future Food Strategy for NI. FC mentioned the FSA NI was involved in some early discussions with DAERA.

9. Date of next meeting (to be confirmed by doodle)

ACTION 4: TT to circulate Doodle poll with dates for next meeting to all members.