

# The Porridge Pot Project

A breakfast campaign delivered to support and encourage local vulnerable families to eat a healthy breakfast.

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## Background

Covid has shone a bright spotlight on food insecurity and food poverty across the whole of the UK. Before Covid, nearly one in four children in Scotland were growing up in households with a low income, exposing them to the risk of food insecurity and food poverty.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately the crisis of Covid, has made this figure even worse, with more people and families struggling to afford or access nutritious food. An increased number of children reported that they or their families visited a food bank during Christmas 2020 compared to during the summer holidays.<sup>2</sup> Research suggests that eating a healthy breakfast has many long term health benefits. It not only provides our bodies with energy and vital nutrients but it has also been associated with helping to control body weight and improve brain function – helping both children and adults focus, learn and perform better at school and work.

During the Covid pandemic, I was inspired by the great work of Marcus Rashford, Mary's Meals and the dedication and commitment of local people helping those in need within their communities. I decided I wanted to offer something to help those who were struggling to feed their families. So instead of sending Christmas cards in December 2020 – I started to plan The Porridge Pot Project!

## Aims and Objectives

To raise awareness of the importance of eating a healthy breakfast especially targeting young children eating breakfast before nursery or school.

To raise adequate funds via a Porridge Pot Project - Just Giving page - to give others in the local community an opportunity to donate to help local families in need.

To provide local families with a breakfast pack including ingredients to make a healthy breakfast, as well as, story books and reward charts to encourage young children to read and learn about the importance of eating a healthy breakfast and looking after their teeth.

To use existing community assets and work in collaboration with local, national organisations local supermarket and two local emergency food aid providers to deliver a breakfast programme to vulnerable families in Bo'ness and Blackness.

To base the theme of the campaign around 'Scotland's own' porridge oats, encouraging the consumption of a healthy, versatile, wholegrain cereal - supporting environmentally sustainable recommendations of shifting towards a more plant based diet.

## Method

A Porridge Pot Project Just Giving Page was set up and the link was shared via Facebook. This gave details of the project, how it was going to be delivered and the opportunity to allow local people to donate even a few pounds to a local cause – to support families in Bo'ness struggling financially, to eat a healthy breakfast.

It was decided to use existing community assets and team up with the Bo'ness Food Pantry and Storehouse to help deliver this breakfast project, as they had already worked closely with the families most in need and were fully aware of the many challenges these families faced around food. Using this asset based approach and effective partnership working was a great benefit to the project.

Also working closely with a local supermarket, was a great advantage to the project. They helped promote the Porridge Pot Project by displaying marketing resources – posters, shelf wobblers throughout the store and collected donations of breakfast produce from local people.

Social Media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Tik Tok were used to connect, engage and inform local people of the project developments.

## What Next?

Support organisations and establishments to roll out The Project as a breakfast campaign, with a particular focus on deprived communities and neighbourhoods – target nurseries, early years establishments, emergency food aid providers and prison family centres.

Offer a package of training and resources to staff and volunteers. Support them to share key breakfast messages and porridge packs with families - could also run porridge making workshops and give away porridge packs and recipes to family members visiting people in prison.

Upload pictorial porridge recipes to the NHS Forth Valley, Community Nutrition Website – [www.nhsforthvalley.com/nutrition](http://www.nhsforthvalley.com/nutrition) - sharing these resources wider with all local food aid providers – so they can download free recipes and information to distribute with food and breakfast packs.

## Acknowledgements

Firstly I'd like to thank all those who donated money, porridge and other breakfast produce to the project. I'd like to thank staff and volunteers at the Bo'ness Food Pantry and Storehouse for all their support. I'd also like to thank Paul, the Store Manager at Bo'ness Tesco, for helping me collect food donations and also for the donation of porridge and bags. Thanks to my colleagues from The Public Health Nutrition Team and Oral Health Team at NHS Forth Valley. Many thanks to Parent Club and Bookbugs for your donation of resources, books and cooking utensils.

## The Porridge Pot Pack - What was included?

**Breakfast Ingredients** - Porridge Oats, UHT Milk, Dried Fruit, Tinned Fruit in juice.

**Cooking Utensils** – Wooden spoon, cooking pot, microwaveable breakfast cereal pot, baking tray.

**Books** – The Magic Porridge Pot Book and Porridge Pot Activity workbook for each child, other pre-school board books and a VegPower Activity book for older children.

**Recipes** – 4 easy to follow picture recipes – How to...Porridge (Hob) – How to...Porridge (Microwave) – How to... Overnight Oats – How to... Fruity Flapjacks.

**Oral Health Resources** -Toothbrushes, toothpaste for all the family as well as oral health resources, toothbrushing chart and details on how to access a dentist.

**Further information and signposting resources for financial support** – Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods, Social Security Scotland, Parent Club recipes.



## Outcomes and Results

**61** Donations from individuals and a local football team.  
**Total Received**  
**£1,070**

**Porridge Pot Packs**  
**60** Porridge Pot Packs were tailor made and delivered.  
**Donations of porridge and breakfast produce**  
Post on Bo'ness Natters, Facebook page received **46** likes and **5** shares.

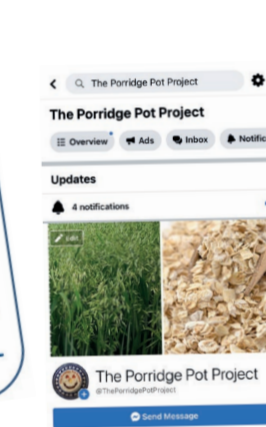
Resulting in **Over 200** breakfast items being donated including over **100** packs of porridge.

**9** Resources Developed  
**Social Media**

A Facebook Page was created - @ThePorridgePotProject - Page has **208** Followers.

Twitter was used to connect, thank and share partnership working - e.g. with @NHSForthValley, @ParentClub\_Scot and @Bookbug\_SBT. To reach a wider audience the following hashtags were used on some posts: #ThePorridgePotProject, #EndChildFoodPoverty, #FuelBeforeSchool

A Tik Tok account @Porridge\_Pot\_Project was used to create innovative videos with music – 1 video got **193** views.



## Feedback

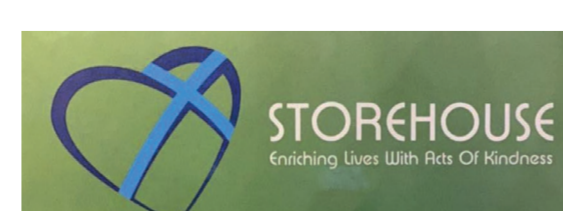
"The porridge pot project was a great addition to the Bo'ness food pantry and was a fabulous way of encouraging and enabling our users to take part in improving their breakfast regime and healthy eating."

"Thanks so much for our porridge kit. We really enjoyed making a breakfast we wouldn't normally think of. We now eat porridge at least a couple of times a week."

"We really enjoyed our porridge pack and the books really helped our children with trying something they hadn't had before. Really made a difference in how much they needed to eat later-no snacks till lunch!"



Partners



## References

1. Covid-19, child poverty and the need for urgent action, End Child Poverty, [https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/ECP%20core%20briefing\\_final.pdf](https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/policypost/ECP%20core%20briefing_final.pdf)
2. A Crisis within a crisis : The Impact of Covid-19 on Household Food Security (Mar 2020 – Jan 2021), The Food Foundation, [https://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/FF\\_Impact-of-Covid\\_FINAL.pdf](https://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/FF_Impact-of-Covid_FINAL.pdf)