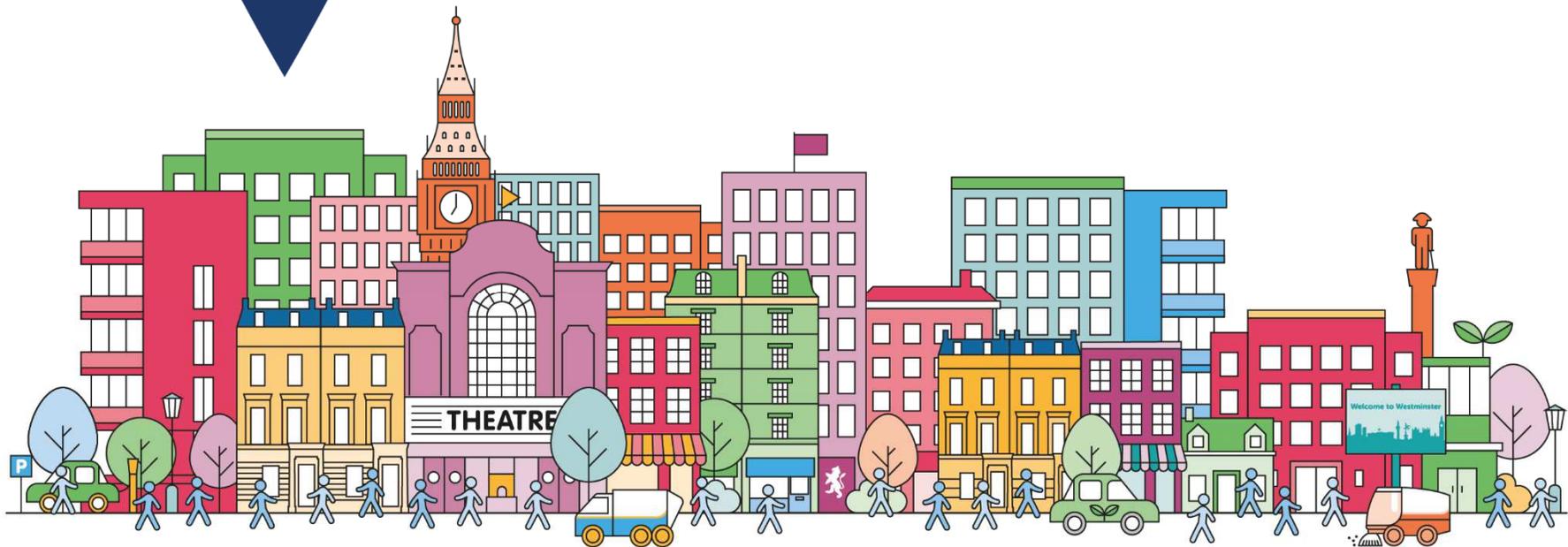




Appendix 1

Westminster Connects



1. Introduction



Overview of Service

Westminster Connects
Helpline

Westminster Connects
web pages

Service to contact and
support the shielding

Services to support
residents who were
shielding or self isolating
with shopping and
medicine deliveries,
and wellbeing support

Coordination of VCS
response

Place to connect
thousands of volunteers
with opportunities to
support the vulnerable



Who we help

- ▶ Shielding residents: 10,000 extremely clinically vulnerable residents who were advised by the government and by their GPs to stay at home from March-July
- ▶ Residents who were self isolating because they had Covid-19 symptoms
- ▶ Residents who were experiencing hardship as a direct result of Covid-19, and needed referrals to foodbanks
- ▶ VCS organisations wanting to recruit volunteers or promote their services to residents
- ▶ Residents who wanted to volunteer to help



Volunteers

- ▶ 3257 volunteers
- ▶ 27% with cars and willing to drive
- ▶ 40% bilingual (87 languages)
- ▶ 31% self disclosed DBS checks
- ▶ 89% Westminster Residents



Voluntary and Community Organisations

- ▶ 44 organisations supported with volunteers through Westminster Connects

Size	Number	Staff numbers
Micro	23	0-9
Small	16	10-49
Medium	4	50-249
Large	2	250+



Businesses

Highlights include:

- ▶ Priority access to supermarkets for 500+ volunteer shoppers.
- ▶ Donations of thousands of meals, food, vans and equipment to support the homeless, elderly isolating residents and low-income families.
- ▶ Financial donations from Lords, Shaftesbury, Chelsea Football Club, Bouygues and RMG to support food banks and food projects
- ▶ Easter eggs for the elderly gifted by M&S and Waitrose.
- ▶ The offer of Claridge's, the Berkeley Hotel, Puglia Restaurant, Capital Arches Group and the Grosvenor Hotel in supporting local food projects.
- ▶ Premises donated to support our volunteering projects at City of Westminster College and other charities – Abbey Community Centre.



2. Context



Covid-19 Initial phase

- ▶ Lockdown
- ▶ Managing the huge swell in volunteer support offers
- ▶ Supporting the shielding initially without complete lists and without clarity about the role of the council in food provision
- ▶ Food shortages and access to food for vulnerable and isolating residents
- ▶ Government directives to councils
- ▶ Frequent changes in advice and information to communicate to residents



Recovery and outbreak phase

- ▶ Established volunteer services – meal and shopping and medicine delivery, wellbeing chat, Connects as a platform
- ▶ Respond to desire to go beyond a Covid-19 response, and build on supporting the vulnerable
- ▶ Develop ways in which council services expand on volunteer opportunities to extend support to residents through volunteers
- ▶ Create a partnership between council, VCS and businesses through a connecting and enabling platform



3. Service impact & achievements



Needs Met

- ▶ 49,000 needs met – including meals delivered, shopping delivered,
- ▶ 5,500 meals delivered to elderly isolating residents in sheltered accommodation
- ▶ Twice weekly shopping and delivery service allowing priority access to shops for volunteers to pick and collect shopping for isolating residents, run in the north and the south of the borough
- ▶ 150 prescriptions collected and delivered



Volunteers Deployed

- ▶ 658 volunteers deployed into direct Westminster Connects services
- ▶ 353 volunteers deployed into VCS services
- ▶ 84 volunteers deployed to St Mary's Hospital
- ▶ 82 volunteers deployed to One Westminster check in and Chat service
- ▶ 43 volunteers deployed to North Paddington Foodbank
- ▶ 30 volunteers deployed to Age UK



Community Organisation Feedback

Following a call-out to support Octavia's befriending service, 50 volunteers stepped forward.

Octavia was delighted with the response and commented: "The response via Westminster Connects has been absolutely brilliant.

Our team is now working on matching existing applicants to befriendees, to reduce isolation at this critical time.

Westminster Connects has been really responsive since the crisis hit, so thank you to the whole team"



Feedback from volunteers

Really positive experience on the whole and I enjoyed chatting to the service users, and they said it helped, which is great

Dedicating my time as a volunteer helps me to getting to know my community. I made new friends, expand my network, and boost my social skills.

You can give as much or as little time as you have available. I don't feel pressured in any way and the backup is there when needed

Worthwhile services that have positive effects for residents and the effects are very obvious/people receiving services are very vocal about how grateful they are

It has shown me how easy and practical volunteering can be in my local area whilst helping those who need it the most.

I live with someone vulnerable. This has given me opportunities to help without compromising health - thank you.



Community Intelligence Forum

- ▶ Purpose of the forum was to share intelligence between the community, community organisations and the council, and to coordinate our response
- ▶ Weekly meetings held between March and July
- ▶ Open invitation to attend – 35 organisations participated
- ▶ Themed discussions: wellbeing, impact on volunteers, food needs, social isolation, digital access, impact on BAME communities, employment support services and needs, domestic violence, supporting young people, reopening centres in Covid secure ways, support for older people, dementia and autism, Westminster Connects services
- ▶ Feedback – very useful way to find out what is happening, good to be included as a small organisation, learned a lot about services from the council and from other organisations



Shopper Service

- ▶ Over 850 shopping requests lists delivered with an average price of single shopping list of £56
- ▶ Partnered with 4 local supermarkets; Waitrose & Partners, Sainsburys, Tesco Metro, M&S and ran the service twice weekly
- ▶ Bespoke shopping time for volunteers, dedicated check out till points and nectar cards with double points for our volunteers
- ▶ 2 operational service Hubs; 1 in Church Street and 1 in Pimlico
- ▶ 550 Volunteers deployed to the service and coordinated on both sites
- ▶ 620 Easter Chocolate Eggs delivered





Volunteers at South Hub, Dryburgh Community Hall

Volunteers delivering Easter Eggs to residents in Easter Bunny costumes



Shielding residents receiving Easter Eggs gift from WCC



Volunteers at North Hub, City of Westminster College



Food Network

What we've been doing to support the food needs of vulnerable residents?

Food Network – Set up weekly/fortnightly Food Network at the start of lockdown to bring together a network of food banks, community food projects, the Felix Project (Food Supplier) and council officers in Public Health, Housing, Children's Services and Economy, to help co-ordinate and manage work across Westminster to ensure people in need have access to food.

Food Projects included:

- North Paddington Food Bank
- Westminster Food bank
- * *Referrals to main foodbanks made via Westminster Connects helpline*

- Ebury Food Surplus – Homeless Britain
- Maida Hill Kitchen – Maida Hill Place Ltd
- Westminster Food for the Homeless – Unity Kitchen
- Westminster Emergency Food Parcels – Unity Kitchen
- WCC Berkeley Meals Service – Berkeley Hotel
- WCC Shopper Service – Westminster City Council
- The Avenues Food Project – The Avenues Youth Project

**Approx. 10 -15 other VCS organisations delivering food support across the borough*



Food Provision

Name of Organisation/ Food Project	Food Project Offer	Resident Target Group	Service Ends
North Paddington Food Bank	Provides food for individuals and families, responding to every urgent request via WCC Connects	Mainly residents in North of borough	Increasing capacity and level of service
Westminster Food bank	Provides food for individuals and families, responding to every urgent request via WCC Connects	Mainly residents in South of borough	Reducing capacity and level of service
Ebury Food Surplus, Homeless Britain	Provides food to anyone in need and other projects with food sourced from - FareShare and City Harvest London and local business donations of pre-cooked food	Open to anyone in need, do not need a voucher	Increasing capacity and level of service
Maida Hill Kitchen, Maida Hill Place Ltd	Provided 100 meals on as many days as possible to a hospital. Also provides cooked food to a number of isolated and vulnerable residents in Little Venice and Maida Vale Wards	Doctors, Nurses and Staff working on three acute wards at St Mary's Hospital (ICU, Cardiovascular and Paediatric Oncology plus vulnerable residents in Little Venice and Maida Vale wards	Reducing capacity and level of service
Westminster Food for the Homeless, Unity Kitchen	Provided Hot meals	The Homeless	Ended 26 th June
Westminster Emergency Food Parcels, Unity Kitchen	Provided Emergency Food Parcels	Emergency food requests	Ended 26 th June
WCC Berkeley Meals Service, Berkeley Hotel	The Berkeley hotel produced 250 meals a day, 7 days a week, focus in the south of the city	Residents in sheltered Housing	Ended 30 th June
The Avenues Food Project, The Avenues Youth Project	Provided 1 cooked meal a day for up to 100 families who were part of The Avenues project, many on free school meals. Plus provided food to a school who are looking after children of key workers	Members of the Youth project and their families	Ends 17 th July
WCC Shopper Service	WCC Connects volunteer led food shopper service launched 3 rd April	Self isolating residents, families not able to physically get shopping	Downscaled in June to a service for elderly residents who did not have care support due to social distancing and residents who had physical or Mental Health needs

Food intelligence Dashboard

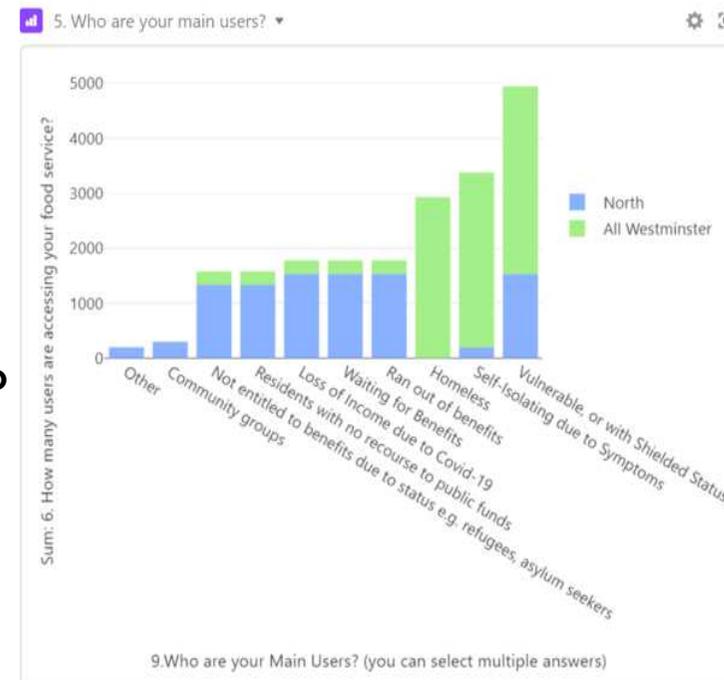
Food Intelligence Dashboard – Produced fortnightly dashboard to help us understand data across the food projects, respond to needs plus help inform a strategy going forward

Number of Users accessing these food services:

01/05 – 14/05 – **9287 Users** / 2284 Households
15/05 – 28/05 – 9092 Users / 1707 Households
29/05 – 11/06 – 7488 Users / 1237 Households
12/06 – 25/06 – 5042 Users / 1082 Households
26/06 – 09/07 – **2021 Users** / 1082 Households

The top 3 main users of these food services are those **vulnerable or with shielded status, self isolating due to symptoms** and **the homeless** mainly across the North And All Westminster

Main Users: Single people and families



*New top emerging cohorts of Users accessing these services are those with no recourse to public funds, not entitled to benefits due to status and those who have ran out of benefits

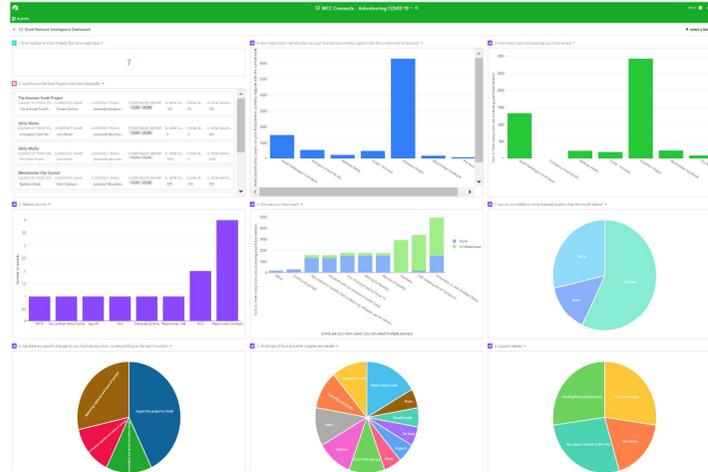


Food Network Legacy

Food Network

Outputs:

- Food Network Intelligence dashboard**
 To help us understand data across the food projects, respond to needs plus inform a strategy going forward.
- Food Network Tracker**
 To monitor and track operational and strategic issues across the food projects
- Food Provision list**
 For WCC Connects/ WCC staff to use as a referral tool for residents in financial hardship



Name of Organisation / Food Project	Name of Lead / Contact	Operational Issues	Strategic Issues
		29/05 - 11/06	29/05 - 11/06
THE AVENUES YOUTH PROJECT - THE AVENUES FOOD PROJECT	Fabian Sharp	None	Long term viability of the project w/ sustained income and food supplies purpose. Initial grants and donations may not last beyond the end of the holidays.
NORTH-PADDINGTON FOOD BANK - NPFB W9, W10, W18	James Quayle	Access to storage, office and distribution spaces.	Scaling up and planning the development organisation whilst responding to h
WESTMINSTER CHAPEL FOOD BANK	Heather Neuhville	Return to work for furloughed staff, continuing to provide a delivery service	Planning for a return to having clerks to collect food parcels
UNITY WORKS - EMERGENCY FOOD PARCELS and PRODUCING MEALS FOR THE HOMELESS	Denise Largin / Lynn Parker	None / None	Not enough bookings / Not enough Numbers are dropping
SHeltered HOUSING OFFER and BERKELEY HOTEL MEALS	Keith Cookson	Some challenges with volunteers returning to work and ending of parking waivers. Having insufficient bags for volunteers to carry the meals was an issue but has been resolved.	No significant issues - ending of se managing with Comms etc, but has through this ahead of original anticipated, no real concerns. Some of this may need alternative provision via food bank or Westminster Connect

Food services for people in financial hardship (6/5/20)

Food Banks

1)North Paddington Food Bank

Base: WECH

Satellites: Avenues, Greenhouse Sports

Serves people in financial hardship in Paddington, Queens Park church St, Maids Vale

Access: through Westminster Connects

2)Westminster Chapel Food Bank

Base: Westminster Chapel, supported by Trussel Trust

Serves people in financial hardship across the borough

Access: Through westminster connects

Emergency parcels of food

Other Organisations delivering food

1)Abbey Centre (30)

Deliveries of Hot/Cooked Meals

2)Age UK (30) -deliveries of food packages and shopping for people 60+

3)St Mary of the Angels

Delivering shopping to about 12 vulnerable people (Mixture of Wand C and Westminster residents)



4. Lessons learned



Shielding

- ▶ Decision to contact all the shielding by phone required the redeployment of large numbers of staff
- ▶ 25% were not contactable by phone and were only reached by letter
- ▶ 65% indicated that they were able to take care of their own needs themselves or with family and friends support
- ▶ 10% required help from the council for food support, shopping, wellbeing support, medicine delivery
- ▶ In the future use InteractiveVoice Recognition (automated calls) to directly reach those who need help and support



Volunteers

- ▶ Volunteers are able and willing to undertake multiple tasks and activities.
- ▶ Volunteers were registered in excess of the opportunities created
- ▶ Creating volunteer opportunities then drove service design ahead of efficiency, effectiveness and resident need
- ▶ Volunteers who were not used immediately felt let down
- ▶ Learn how to message and manage expectations with volunteers



Volunteer Survey Findings





Opportunities

- ▶ VCS welcomed the council role in coordinating information, volunteer referrals, and as a gateway for residents to services, and welcomes working more closely in partnership
- ▶ Companies looked for support in making contributions of skilled volunteers and funding to residents and community organisations and looked to the council to direct support to where the needs are.
- ▶ Food support – during the first two months of the pandemic our foodbanks quadrupled the number of households they were supporting and switched to a delivery model.
- ▶ The council supported them with practical problem solving – additional volunteers, vans, drivers; refrigerated storage; funding from companies; support to find venues to store and deliver food from, and prepare for collection; helpline administration of referrals to the foodbanks.
- ▶ This enabled a rapid escalation and downsizing of the food delivery service across the council, and a collective understanding of levels of food poverty and need in the borough.



Systems

- ▶ IT systems are vital to the delivery of services. The CRM and the volunteer and VCS Airtable system were both set up rapidly and developed dynamically as the needs and requirements changed.
- ▶ It was possible to agree quickly data sharing agreements which both protected individuals and shared data across organisations quickly and appropriately.
- ▶ Government and NHS databases were full of duplicates which required additional time and support to cleanse, and constantly changed our weekly reports because initial data sets were inaccurate.
- ▶ Setting up efficient payment schemes for the shopping service rapidly because of the inability to use cash because of covid-19 restrictions was a challenge. This led to some of the early shopping payments being unrecoverable (£6,000).
- ▶ This meant that the council made a donation of xxx meals to those shielding or self isolating early on in the pandemic, helping people to maintain self isolation and reducing the spread of Covid-19.
- ▶ In future shopping services will use supermarket systems like click and collect so we do not need to get directly involved in payments
- ▶ However, volunteers and our shopper service provided a valuable service for residents that were unable to get a delivery slot, were unable or unwilling to make card payment.



Council

- ▶ The council was able to mobilise staff to work outside of their normal roles rapidly and effectively
- ▶ We were able to see agile and responsive working across departments, and implement this during home working.
- ▶ Staff responded well to the urgency of the demand and to the level of direct contact with residents, and valued the experience of being able to make a difference to people's lives



5. Connects Vision



Connects: Enabling Role

- ▶ The Connects vision is to build on the remarkable response of the community to the Covid-19 emergency to build a better community. 5000 volunteers from the Westminster residents, council staff and companies will be engaged in impactful activity that makes a genuine and accountable difference to the community.
- ▶ The Council will take an enabling role – which ensures volunteers are match-made with community organisations and also the residents that need help at home. The programme will develop through partnership with community organisations, supporting their many community activities, and in partnership with companies who want to make a difference with their time and resources in Westminster. It will build on the many existing relationships and activities, and transform them into a vibrant force for good, working together to support the community.
- ▶ Our vision for Connects is to network in separate volunteering programmes which exist across the City alongside our own platform and activity to promote volunteering. This network approach will facilitate a better experience for volunteers across the City and support greater impact by working as 'One Team'.
- ▶ This will be enhanced by a platform which enables volunteers, organisations and businesses to connect directly, and innovative campaigns which demonstrate impact.



Aims

- ▶ Connects will be the way in which the Council enables the City for All plans to take root and bear fruit in the community. Volunteer opportunities will be developed that support the priorities:
- ▶ Greener and Cleaner – tackling the climate emergency
- ▶ Vibrant communities – making sure everyone has access to the opportunities of the City
- ▶ Smart City – digital access and skills



Objectives

- ▶ To match between volunteers who want to help with people who are vulnerable and want support
- ▶ To support the VCS to access resources which help them as organisations to transform the lives of residents
- ▶ To develop the capacity within council departments to extend tailored support to residents through volunteer roles
- ▶ To enhance and promote the social value added by companies through links with volunteering, funding and professional support to the VCS
- ▶ To promote the impact of volunteering through innovative campaigns and design
- ▶ To maintain the capacity to respond to changes in Covid-19 emergency response
- ▶ To link into the business volunteering community – and focus them on the most important projects in Westminster



How Will We Know If It Is Successful

- ▶ Residents supported by volunteer activities
- ▶ Volunteers registered, assigned, trained and actively engaged
- ▶ Number of volunteer hours
- ▶ Numbers of VCS and company organisations who are members of the partnership
- ▶ Council Services/departments with active volunteer projects
- ▶ Number and range of volunteer opportunities

