

In the Bag: a summer 2020 food-insecurity initiative, funded by the Sussex Cricket Foundation and run by the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership

Over 1,200 recipe and ingredient bags were given to families experiencing food poverty in Brighton & Hove during the summer holidays 2020.

Background: The Covid-19 crisis has thrown food insecurity into particularly sharp relief: before the pandemic, the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership members were distributing around 400 food parcels a week; at the height of the pandemic this rose to over 3,000, and in summer it remained around 2,000.

Over six weeks of the summer holiday, Sussex Cricket Foundation worked with the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership to address the urgent issue of 'holiday hunger', which is experienced by many families who rely on free school meals to feed their children and has been highlighted in a national awareness-raising effort by Marcus Rashford MBE. In The Bag ran over six weeks of the summer holiday, **distributing a total of 1,247 bags and reaching at least 305 families.**

In The Bag was funded with £4,000 from the Sussex Cricket Foundation (raised through Together Through This Test, a national fundraising effort) and designed and delivered by the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership.

In The Bag was part of SCF's ongoing efforts to tackle the repercussions of Covid-19 across the county, along with the Tea4Two initiative (which encourages players and spectators at local cricket games to donate food for local food banks, in lieu of cricket tea).

Partners: In The Bag kits were distributed by organisations with whom the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership has a track record of working. These five organisations already have trusted relationships with the targeted families: some organisations distributed all six weekly recipe bags and some were involved for only some of the weeks.

- [Chomp](#) – a holiday hunger club – distributed all six kits of an average of 50 families each week.
- Childrens Centre Food Banks is the local Children's Centres working together during Covid-19 to offer a city-wide food bank service for families with children under five: it delivered all six kits and reached an average 150 families per week.
- [WASP](#) usually runs an afterschool club in Whitehawk, and distributed the bags to 55 families as part of its one-week summer fun club.
- The Phoenix Food Hub supports families living on the Phoenix Estate in Central Brighton, and delivered all six kits to an average of 30 families.
- Woodingdean Food Bank supports people living in Woodingdean and provided kits to an average 20 families.

All but WASP and Woodingdean delivered the kits directly to families' doors.



An In The Bag thermometer to keep track of the total number of kits – drawn by a volunteer

The In The Bag kits were put together at Hove Park School (the food hub) by a team of 12 Food Partnership volunteers, and were then driven by two volunteer drivers to the projects delivering them to the families. Each round of In The Bags took approximately one day to make. The volunteers told BHFP that they loved working on this project, which they could see offered families experiencing poverty and isolation a real treat at a very difficult time.

What was In The Bag? Each of the bags contained recipe kits, including the recipe itself and all the ingredients needed to make the recipe apart from salt/pepper and oil. The ingredients were ready-weighed-out for ease, but recipes included amounts so that the families can make them again if they wish. The Food Partnerships aimed for healthier recipes that included veg and/or fruit. Based on its extensive experience of teaching cookery, the Food Partnership chose recipes that were easy to make, that are known to work, and provide options for children's involvement.



One of the drivers was accompanied by her six-year-old daughter

The recipes included: Cup A Noodle (a veg -packed homemade version of a pot noodle), Super Spaghetti (with or without tuna), Potato Logs with Boiled Eggs and Mini Fruit & Chocolate 'Pizza'; Savoury Rice; and Fruit Scones (including a cookie cutter for each bag).

Most of the ingredients were bought with Sussex Cricket Foundation funding, although the scone mix was surplus donated when a workplace canteen closed and the water biscuits that formed the base of the 'fruit pizza' were donated by Fareshare.

Also In The Bag: Each week, information and activities for the families were included. These included Veg Power 'Eat Them to Defeat Them' activity packs (veg-themed masks, colouring, word searches etc.), Waste Less Save More information booklets and fridge thermometers, and toothbrushes and toothbrushing advice, provided by the Dental Health Team at the local Council.

Feedback

The Food Partnership sought feedback from the coordinators of the projects, all of whom said that the families had enjoyed the recipes and wanted to know if they were going to happen again.

- The Children's Centre staff and the volunteers from Chomp both said that recipients liked how simple the recipes were: some people have low levels of confidence with cooking but also because many had limited time due to pressures of work / family care.
- Woodingdean Food Bank told the Food Partnership that one family was very touched that other people cared enough about them to make up such nice bags of stuff.
- The Phoenix Food Hub reported that families said how much they enjoyed the recipe bags because it provided something additional / slightly different to the usual food parcel.
- And the leader from WASP simply said THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!!

Profile and coverage

- **Traditional media:** Two blogs were sent via two newsletters to the Food Partnership's 7,300 subscribers, there were articles in *The Argus* and *Brighton and Hove* news, an interview with SCF chair Jon Filby on BBC Radio Sussex, and Katy Cooper (SCF trustee) was interviewed on internet-radio cricket channel Guerilla Cricket during the tea break in an England v. Pakistan Test Match.
- **Social media stats:** Brighton & Hove Food Partnership posted eight social-media posts across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, which had over 18,000 views and 475 engagements.

Looking ahead

Sussex Cricket Foundation hopes that In The Bag can be an annual initiative, providing support to families local to the 1st Central County Ground in summer 2021 and beyond, and looks forward to working with the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership in the future.

The Partnership has provided some helpful feedback on the process, on which we can build in future years to improve the impact of In The Bag:

- **Develop mechanisms for feedback from the families that receive the kit:** the partner organisations requested but did not receive feedback/photos from the families in 2020. However, a prize draw for returning feedback or for photos of them making the dish might incentivise this. The Food Partnership had planned to design a short questionnaire to include in the penultimate bag, but this coincided with moving the food to a new venue, so this was not possible. The mechanism for returning the questionnaires will also need to be decided upon; an online /text survey might work better if the partner organisations are able to send it out in a way that meets GDPR requirements.
- **More time at planning stage:** inevitably given the circumstances, the project went from idea to delivery very quickly, which meant that there was not enough time to get information on opportunities for children's involvement in cricket included in the packs until the final week.
- **Active involvement of the SCF team in making up the bags:** this would have been greatly welcomed by the Food Partnership, but of course Covid-19 restrictions and furlough made this hard in 2020.

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership says:

'Working with Sussex Cricket Foundation on this project was a really positive experience for us. Your enthusiasm for this project was heartening and we appreciated that you trusted us to deliver this project. Over 300 families experiencing food poverty in the city had a nutritious meal a week for six weeks thanks to this project.'

The funding also allowed us to trial an idea (a sort of Hello Fresh for community food), which we now hope to adapt for other groups (for example isolated older people or people with mental health issues) as well as repeat for families. We are very happy to provide anything else you need.' – Vic Borrill, director, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership

Sussex Cricket Foundation says:

'We are very grateful to the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership for enabling Sussex Cricket to support our local community through this crucial project. Food security is very much in the news at the moment, and Sussex Cricket will continue to work with the great people at the Food Partnership to help to ensure that children don't go hungry in our city.' – Jon Filby, chair, SCF



SCF branding was on all the bags and recipe cards, noting that SCF funded the bags

Super Spaghetti (with or without tuna)

- Equipment – 2 x large pans, wooden spoon, knife, sieve or colander
- This recipe will serve 4-6 people but you can always cook less spaghetti and keep some of the sauce for later if there are less people

Ingredients in the Bag	Method
<p>1</p> <p>1 clove of garlic 1 – 2 teaspoons of mixed herbs 1 onion 2 x 400g tins of tomatoes 1 x courgette Small tin tuna (if eat fish) 1 pack of spaghetti</p> <p>You will also need</p> <p>Oil Salt and pepper to taste</p>	<p>Preparation</p> <p>Peel & chop or press the garlic. Chop the onion into small pieces Wash and chop the courgette into cubes Drain the water from the tuna (if using) You want approx. 75 g of spaghetti per person 2 = 150g or just over one quarter of the pack 4 = 300g or approx. two thirds of the pack 6 = whole pack Break the spaghetti in half (fun job for children)</p>
<p>2</p> <p>1 tbsp oil Onion Garlic</p>	<p>Place the oil into a large pan on a medium heat. Add the garlic and onion and fry for around 2 minutes, or until lightly golden. If the onion is browning too quickly turn down the heat and add a pinch of salt</p>
<p>3</p> <p>2 x 400g tins tomatoes Mixed herbs</p>	<p>Add the tomatoes, squashing and breaking them up slightly with a wooden spoon. Add a splash of water to the empty tomato tins, give them a swirl and pour into the pan. Add the mixed herbs and stir</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Bring to the boil, then turn the heat down to low and simmer* for around 25 minutes or until thickened, stirring occasionally. *Simmering means there are just a few bubbles</p>

Ingredients in the Bag	Method
<p>5 Tuna (if using) and chopped courgette Salt and pepper</p>	<p>Add the chopped courgette and tuna. Stir and leave on the heat for another 5 minutes Have a taste and season with a tiny pinch of salt and pepper Turn heat off and leave with a lid on the pan (or if you don't have a lid put a plate on top of the pan)</p>
<p>6 Water Spaghetti</p>	<p>Bring a large pan of water to the boil (either in the kettle or pan with a lid) Carefully add the spaghetti Cook without a lid on for 10 minutes Taste and check the pasta is cooked Drain the water from the spaghetti using a sieve or colander</p>
<p>7 Sauce in pan</p>	<p>If you are making less put some of the sauce aside in a bowl / pan for later Add the spaghetti to the sauce and mix well Ready to eat</p>

This is a useful basic sauce and can be used in so many ways. Instead of using as a pasta sauce you could use it to make a casserole by adding beans, vegetable and potatoes.

In the Bag is possible thanks to funding from



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