



Anti-Poverty & Inequality Committee Visit

Wednesday 8th March 2023

Summary

Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE)

ALL surplus from CFINE's enterprise activities supports our social and community support services for and with disadvantaged, vulnerable, low-income individuals, families and communities in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and in Moray and Highlands and Islands (FareShare only). **Accurate at time of writing, August, 2022.**

CFINE's Support Services (not in any particular order):

- **Community Food Outlets** (CFO) across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire making affordable produce accessible to disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, families, and communities.
- **300 volunteers, work placements and supported trainees** recruited, trained, and supported annually.
- **The Fruit Mart**, Skelton Street, Peterhead, supports 22 CFO's, sells fresh produce, up to 20 adults with learning difficulties in supported training.
- **FareShare Grampian, Highlands and Islands** where food is distributed to people in food poverty including through 330 'Community Food Members' across Grampian and Highlands and Islands. In 21/22, 890 tonnes of produce, saving 3,738 tonnes of carbon emissions, equates to 2,119,047 million meals; a value of £1,342,887.
- Lead partner in the 75 partners-strong **Food Poverty Action Aberdeen** (FPPA). CFINE represents, with others, FPPA on **Aberdeen City Council's 'Tackling Poverty Group'**.
- CFINE's own **food bank** distributed 23,937 emergency parcels in 21/22.
- 22 (41%) of 53 **employees** recruited from our priority communities.
- **SAFE** (Support, Advice, Finance, Education) in 21/22, supported 2,015 beneficiaries, securing £1,586,372 in benefits.
- **HOPE** project supports ex- offenders through work experience, SAFE, volunteering, employability.
- **'Cook at the Nook'** (CATN), community training kitchen provides free 'healthy cooking on a budget' training.
- **'Vegaronitooon'**, home delivery service of fruit and vegetables delivered with electric cargo bikes.
- Lead partner in **Sustainable Food Places Partnership Aberdeen** hosting Granite City Good Food; secured silver award.
- **Access to Free Period Products** - CFINE ran pilot on behalf of The Scottish Government, evaluating same, resulting in the roll out of a national scheme in Scotland (first country in the world).
- **Community Growing** supporting 14 community growing spaces and >80 community growers.
- 1 static and 2 mobile **Community Food Pantries** making affordable food accessible to low-income families.
- CFINE is a partner in Aberdeen's 'Food and Fun' programme providing food during the school holidays.
- Supported the Syrian, and now Afghan and Ukrainian, **refugees**.
- Individual and group **CBT sessions** improving mental health and wellbeing.

Enterprise Activities (activities to generate income - all surplus invested in our social/community support services (see above). Purchased locally, whenever possible, to contribute to the local economy and the environment.

- **Selling produce**, fruit, veg, eggs, pulses, healthy snacks (households and businesses).
- Selling **corporate volunteering and 'team building'** through 'Ready Steady Cook' type activities in CATN.
- **'Cook school'** classes and rental of Cook at the 'Nook.
- **Rental** of office space.

CFINE's Funders

CFINE is supported by a large number of corporates and the general public through financial and food donations plus through a number of grants.

Want more information? Please contact CFINE - 01224 596156 / info@cfine.org / www.cfine.org

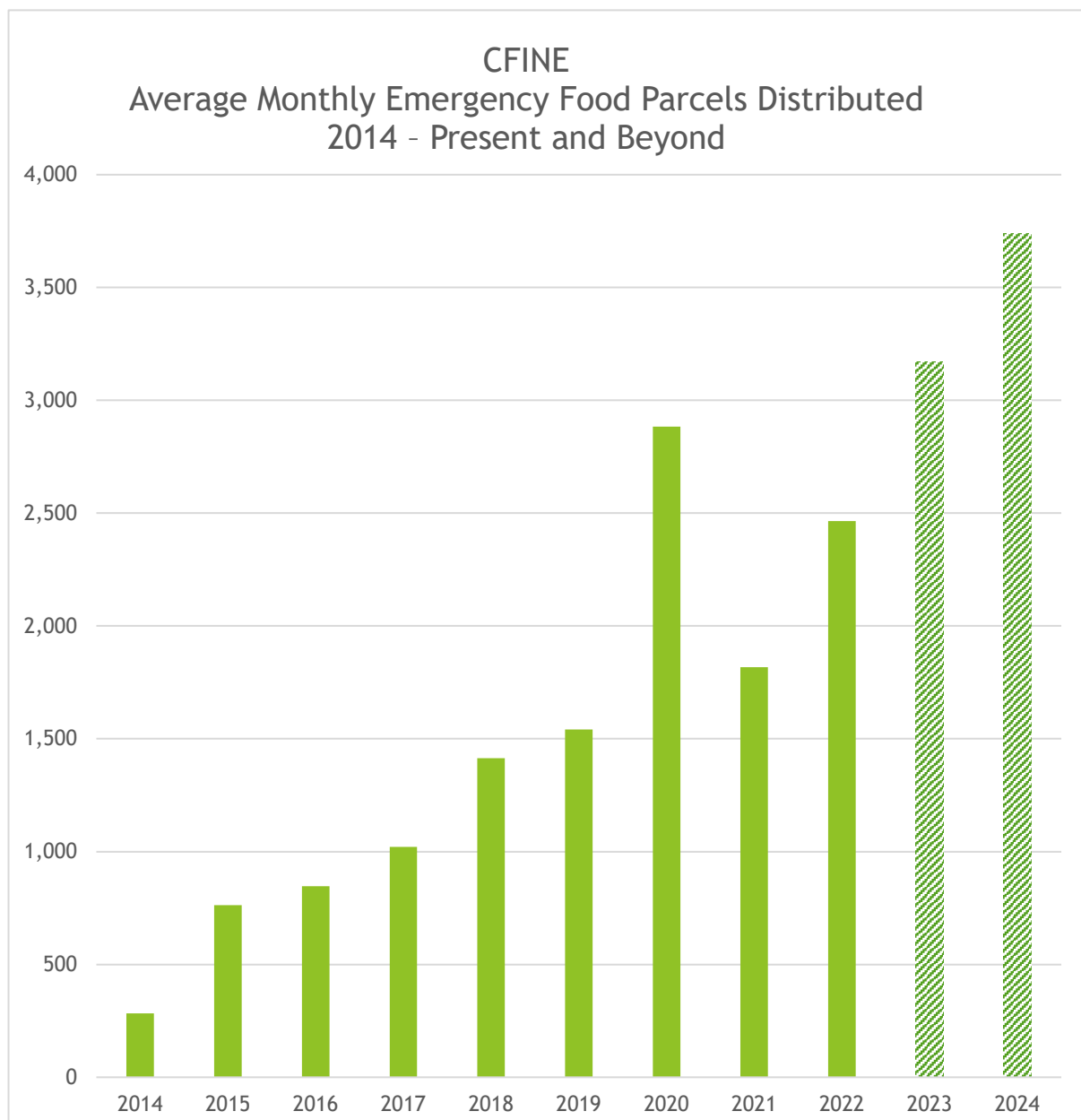
'Thank you for taking the time to read about CFINE, our support services and enterprise activities. Your support is greatly appreciated'

Fiona Rae, CEO



Overview – Cost of Living Crisis

- The current situation - increasing levels of demand for support services e.g. emergency food access, pantry memberships & SAFE support.
- (Need for) wrap-around support – more than food. Cash first approaches, maximising household income.
- Partnership approach (FPAA, network of Community Food Members, FAF partners)
- Looking ahead – anticipate continued increase in demand.



Wrap-around Support

- CFINE's position is that food banks in themselves are not helpful; they create dependence, erode dignity, and do not change the status quo, however they are essential when people have no other way of accessing food.
- It's crucial that wrap-around services are offered to tackle underlying causes of someone requesting emergency food and this approach is central to CFINE.
- CFINE uses food as a vehicle for community engagement and development.
- CFINE has for many years adopted a cash-first approach, maximising household income and ensuring beneficiaries have access to appropriate welfare benefits etc.
- Underpinning all is a commitment to person-centred inclusive support, eg supporting volunteers and beneficiaries from priority communities.

Importance of Partnership Working

- No single organisation can solve the significant problems associated with poverty.
- Working in partnership is critical in alleviating both symptoms and underlying causes of poverty.
- CFINE is lead partner of Food Poverty Action Aberdeen, which aims to coordinate responses to food insecurity in the city.
- CFINE has developed a network of Community Food Members, redistributing surplus food to support individuals and families.
- Strategic partnerships are key to CFINE's impact; Aberdeen City Council, The Scottish Government, FareShare UK, Granite City Good Food, the wider third sector, and many others.

Looking Ahead

- We anticipate a continued increase in demand for CFINE's services. The situation being faced by our beneficiaries is dire, and we will continue to support beneficiaries with wrap-around support.

What is needed (non-exhaustive)

- Strengthening existing and new partnerships across sectors.
- Increased capacity to manage demand increases.
- Further development of dignified access to food and access to wraparound services.
- Further raising of awareness of issues for policy-makers and others, capturing lived experience of beneficiaries to provide insight and information which can contribute to the development of solutions to the problems being faced.
- Comprehensive anti-poverty strategy with key stakeholder engagement to inform development and crucially delivery of actions to affect change.
- A range of further actions/interventions at local, regional, and national levels aimed at tackling the underlying causes of poverty.