

SFP Bronze and Silver Awards Application Form 2024

This form is for completing an SFP Bronze or Silver Award application. **If you are considering applying for a Gold Award, please contact the SFP team at sfpawards@soilassociation.org to discuss the process.**



Before starting your application, please fully read this form as well as the following documents:

- SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants 2024](#).
- SFP Awards: Activity and Impact: [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact 2024](#)

Please do not alter the formatting of this form or redesign it and only return as a Word document not a PDF. This is essential for you application to pass the initial eligibility check.

SECTION 1: Information about your partnership and your place

Please complete the following (*= mandatory):

Name of your partnership*:
Nottinghamshire Sustainable Food Network
Name and contact details of person/people leading on this application*:
Kathy Holmes Kathy.holmes@nottscc.gov.uk
Andria Birch Andria.Birch@bcvs.org.uk
Marsha Smith ae1071@coventry.ac.uk
Geographic region which this award will represent*:
Nottinghamshire
Award you are applying for*:
Bronze

Please provide us with background information about your place (not scored) *: Advisory word limit: 400 words

This is to help the panel understand the context in which you are working. *You may include (but not limited to): Population and demographic information, location/geography & economic and social challenges.*

ANSWER:

Nottinghamshire is diverse in geography and communities. There are many natural assets within the County and a vibrant and active sustainable food movement providing opportunities for transformation and growth.

Nottinghamshire is a population of 824,800 people living in both urban and rural areas. In Nottinghamshire 20% (168,500) of the population are children (0-17 years old), 59% (489,800) are working age, 18-64 years old, and 21% (175,100) are over 65 years old. The population of Nottinghamshire is slightly older than the national average, with 21% aged 65+ in 2020 compared with 18% in England. ¹

¹ [Key facts about Nottinghamshire - Nottinghamshire Insight](#)

There are slightly more females than males living in Nottinghamshire. Black and ethnic minority populations are relatively low in Nottinghamshire, 4% compared with 15% nationally. Black and ethnic minority populations in Nottinghamshire generally have a younger age profile than the general population.

Disability affects a large proportion of the Nottinghamshire population. Approximately one in ten adults in Nottinghamshire aged 18-64 live with moderate/severe physical disabilities and approximately one in five people aged 65+ in Nottinghamshire are unable to manage at least one daily activity. With an aging population this is expected to increase.²

The county has a two-tier local authority system with the County Council and 7 district and boroughs. There are significant social economic and health inequalities across the area with highest levels of deprivation in Mansfield, Bassetlaw and Ashfield Districts. Nottinghamshire has 31 areas, known as LSOAs, in the 10% most deprived areas in England. There are also significant pockets of deprivation and inequality within all Districts and Boroughs and significant issues around fuel and food security in rural communities. In Nottinghamshire, it is estimated that the number of households experiencing food insecurity increased from 65,707 in 2021 to 110,000 in June 2023.³

Health and manufacturing are the largest industry sectors of employment in Nottinghamshire with 14% of jobs in each sector. In Nottinghamshire 8,000 jobs are in food manufacturing and 21,000 in services related to food and drink. Agriculture, forestry and fishing make up 1.4% of jobs in this sector.⁴ Nottinghamshire has 1,323 farm businesses ranging in scale and with a diverse range of routes to market. There are a diverse and growing range of community gardens and established allotment sites (as well as land with unmet potential) providing opportunities for growing fresh produce.

How have you considered equity, diversity and inclusion in the structure and work of your partnership (not scored) *?: Advisory word limit: 300 words

ANSWER

Tackling inequality and disparity within Nottinghamshire is essential to the work of the NSFN. The aim to target areas of need and underrepresented groups is embedded into the Food Charter as a pillar to increase the reach of our good food movement for all. The Good Food Nottinghamshire webpages and Food Charter are accessible for the visually impaired as the Network adheres to the accessibility protocol required of Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC).

The network steering group (NSFSG) understand the need for accountability and reflection on the principles and actions of the Network and aim to embed the learning from the Redi toolkit in a more structured way going forward.

The NSFN approach is to provide a welcoming, friendly environment where everyone is valued and can be heard, shape the agenda and challenge constructively. There are regular opportunities to showcase areas of work at meetings and shape the agenda, opportunity for feedback and task and

² [Key facts about Nottinghamshire - Nottinghamshire Insight](#)

³ [FINAL JSNA Profile Pack - Food Insecurity 2024 \(13\).pdf](#)

⁴ [Economy - UTLA | Nottinghamshire | Report Builder for ArcGIS](#)

finish group structures to enable expertise, knowledge sharing and strategic development both at place based and system level.

The NSFN is inclusive of all organisations to enable collaboration and transformation across the whole food system. The creation of the steering group and its relationship to the JHWP is intended to ensure voices are heard at strategic level and a strong feedback loop has been created. However, we recognise there is always more we can do to widen participation and ensure inclusion is front and centre of the sustainable food work in Nottinghamshire.

A core principle of the network is to embrace differences within our communities, recognise and value difference as a strength and have this reflected in the membership. The Network has co-designed and co-produced all strategic documents reflecting a broad range of views and opinions. All strategy and plans are informed by insight data which highlights issues of inequity for consideration in plans.

Work to involve sectors and organisations currently underrepresented is continuing and will be further strengthened by the planned Food summit Oct 2024 and inclusion in the 3-year food plan where grassroots organisations to senior strategic leaders will be present.

SECTION 2: Local food activity and impact

Please read SFP Awards: Guidance for applicants: [SFP Awards - Guidance for applicants 2024](#) before completing this section.

Please describe the activity and impact of local food work delivered in your place within the last three years against the relevant key issues (1-6) and action areas (A and B) below.

We advise that you keep answers to within 600 words for each action area (i.e., for each A and B under the key issues). Whilst you won't be penalised for going over this limit, this will help the panel focus on your main achievements. For sections C, 250 words is the mandatory limit.

For Bronze and Silver awards, there are mandatory actions for some key issues. These are laid out in *SFP Awards - Activity and Impact*: [SFP Awards - Activity and Impact.docx](#). This document also provides a broad benchmark for each award, rationale for SFP's inclusion of each key issue, and example actions for each action area.

Only submit additional documents for food action plans and strategies related to Key Issue 1 mandatory criteria. All other additional documents will not be assessed. You may add links to online documents but always check the links and permissions as we will not be requesting changes from you after submission.

Key Issue 1 Mandatory Criteria Checklist

NB failure to provide Key Issue 1, Action area B mandatory criteria will result in rejection at the eligibility stage.

- Bronze applications require a one-year action plan.
- Silver applications require a three-year action plan.

1. **Have you submitted a current food action plan or food strategy with an action plan?**
 - Yes / No
2. **How are you evidencing this action plan?**
 - Attachment as a Word, PFF, Excel document? Yes / No
 - Link to an only document? Yes / No
 - If a link place here as well under Key Issue 1
 - Action Plan link:
3. **Has the action plan less than 6 months to run?**
 - Yes / **No**
 - If less than 6 months to run what is happening after the action plan expires?
(100 words)

Key Issue 1: Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action

Action area A: Establish a broad, representative, and dynamic local food partnership

The Nottinghamshire Sustainable Food Network (NSFN) (formerly the Food Insecurity Network) was established in late 2020 and became a member of [Sustainable Food Places](#) (SFP) in January 2022. The Network is facilitated by Public Health (PH) at Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) and has over 80 members from across the food system including Feeding Britain, FareShare, County Council departments, Public Health, District and Borough councils, Housing Trust, ICS and VCSE organisations and Academic partners. The aim of the Network is to collaborate and collectively pool ideas, share good practise and aim for innovation and transformation of the Nottinghamshire food system.

This collaboration builds on previous work on the food environment in Nottinghamshire where Nottinghamshire County Council and district partners participated in the [National Childhood Obesity Trailblazer programme](#) (with a focus on food and early years). The development of the NSFN has been to harness the energy, experience and skill of local partners and build on previous work.

Partners working across the food system value the opportunity to collectively share experiences, voice challenges and identify opportunities to collaborate. These principles are defined in the Terms of reference. Stakeholders are regularly asked to reflect on the structure, content and management of the Network to ensure that all voices partners are represented. The Terms of reference (TOR) are updated annually. Whole network meetings are held quarterly with presentations identified by stakeholders and verbal

updates. There is an open forum for sharing information and although the meeting is facilitated by Public Health, the chair role is rotated where possible.

There are strong relationships with District and Borough authorities and VCSE's who are an essential component in planning and delivery of community activity. As the Nottinghamshire food infrastructure has developed five (of 7) Districts have local food security networks supported by Feeding Britain. All Districts have/ or are developing their own place-based plans aligning with county wide priorities and relevant to local needs. Equally, NCC funding has supported the development of Nottinghamshire Community Garden network and Nottinghamshire Social Eating Network (2022), both providing volunteering and learning opportunities, events and peer support in both community food growing and social eating spaces. Hosted in VCSE organisations, these are open to all community organisations working in these fields. This newly established Nottinghamshire food infrastructure and distributed leadership model has provided a framework for much of the community activity, ensures leadership and engagement at all levels and feeds into the regular NSFN meetings and communication channels.

The current NSFN Terms of reference were developed in 2022 (reviewed annually) to incorporate the role of the Strategic steering group, and an accountability to the Nottinghamshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Board (JHWB). The Strategic steering group has a separate TOR highlighting and both TORs reflect the relationship to each other. The Strategic steering group was formed to drive forward system transformation and enable direct line of communication with JHWB. This is important in order to escalate risks and opportunities at strategic level and create a feedback loop to the NSFN which widens active participation in strategic decision making for all stakeholders. (See section C). In establishing strong governance NSFN have become a valued stakeholder alongside Nottinghamshire County Council decision making and policy development. For example, the NSFN are the owning group for the published Nottinghamshire JSNA Insight pack on Food Insecurity.

Themed subgroups with a multi stakeholder approach have focused on identified areas of need to drive action. This has then been fed back at the main meeting so that all stakeholders are informed. Subgroups have included: financial resilience workstream; Funding workstreams (see key issue 2); JSNA Food Insecurity workstream (see key issue 3); schools and food education (see section c) and food supply.

Action area B: Develop, deliver, and monitor a food strategy/action plan

The vision for Nottinghamshire is to ensure healthy, wholesome, affordable and sustainable food for all. Everyone in Nottinghamshire no matter what their age and where they live should have access to healthy, tasty, affordable food which should also be

positive for the environment and the local economy. This vision has created the framework and the action plans for implementation. The initial action plan in 2021 -22 focused on food insecurity, was responding to immediate needs during the pandemic through building community resilience. The dynamic nature of the early years of the partnership meant that a flexible approach was adopted as the Network established itself. This early food plan was updated and informed the current plan 2022-24 (see attached) which aligns around the core themes of Sustainable Food Places and the aims and strategic framework of the [Nottinghamshire Food Charter](#). Key actions in the food plan have been completed including strengthening the local food infrastructure within the County and identifying the underpinning priorities for the District and Borough local activity. Local networks develop and deliver local plans and feed into NSFN. All partners feed into annual reviews of progress against the action plan making responsive adjustments to actions as needed.

Initially funded by County funding for a year, four District based Food coordinator posts have been mainstream funded by District Local Authorities. This allocation of resource shows the value placed on this work by District councils. The post hosted in the voluntary sector has now been subsumed into existing job roles as external funding was not found but also indicates the commitment to the agenda.

NSFN have looked to align with Countywide strategic drivers to be able to influence the wider system. Improving Food and Nutrition is a priority within the [Nottinghamshire Plan \(2021-31\)](#) and the [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(2022-26\)](#) ambition to create Healthy and Sustainable places. In January 2022 the Council passed a full council motion to support the [Nottinghamshire Food Charter](#). The Charter is aligned to the 6 priority areas of SFP, is framed around environment, economy and communities and a call to action around a shared vision. Updates are provided to the JHWB through briefing papers and chairs report to keep JHWB partners informed and engaged with NSFN developments.

Where possible this has also aligned with departmental County Council strategic drivers to maximise impact and influence eg. The Best Start strategy, Environment strategy, Net Zero Framework and Economic growth and development ambitions. This has enabled a role in influencing and developing positive working relationships reflected in membership of the NSFN. For all stakeholders this has enabled collaboration, information and development of their projects.

The Nottinghamshire Food Charter was launched at a Stakeholder engagement event for approx. 50 people in March 2023 and held at [Brooke Farm](#) bringing together multiple partners from across the food system. In the words of one local partner organisation BCVS, *'This is a strong example of integration in action where a system level network*

provides real additionality to place and locality. The success has been achieved through a truly collaborative approach which is driven by the commitment of key members of NSFN.'

The aim was to identify strategic priorities, hear the voices of stakeholders across the food system on challenges and opportunities and celebrate achievements in the county. Through this we were also able to identify partners not 'in the room' such as business and the farming sector to enable us to broaden into a wider food system approach. The event identified short medium and long-term priorities for a 3-year plan . Although the implementation of this has been delayed, it is intended that the Nottinghamshire food summit 16th Oct 2024 will further engage and target cross sector organisations in order further participation in the network and agree the Food plan with wider system partners previously not engaged.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

The NSFN has a good relationship with City based organisations, supported collaborative working where possible and is supporting the development of a Nottingham City Food partnership. City Council Public Health and Academic partners are leading this development and both partnerships are working together to align around shared themes to avoid duplication. There is the potential for collaborative opportunities with the East Midlands Combined Authority as it is established.

Relationships with Academic partners have substantially improved the local evidence base and insight around food systems which enables both influence at strategic level and resources at community level. Some of these referenced are in the process of publication.

A subgroup was formed to explore the role of Schools and improve co-ordination and opportunities to engage with families and practitioners. The network brought together key stakeholders including those working on the National Child measurement programme (NCMP), School Health Hub, Healthy Families Team and Health promotion specialists. This work resulted in a co-ordinated promotion within schools on Healthy Start, Free school meals and HAF and National Breakfast club scheme.

FareShare East Midlands raised the issue that reduced capacity threatened food delivery in Nottinghamshire. The subgroup decisions led to adjusted volunteer capacity and orders and these collective solutions maintained the service. Equally these conversations prompted community providers to unlock alternative local surplus sources such as wholesale, farmer and business surplus.

Key Issue 2: Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement.

***NB at Silver** we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. That the food partnership has created additionality. At Silver simply mapping activity is not sufficient. The 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.*

Action area A: Inspire and engage the public about good food

The Network recognised the importance of communicating the voice, aims and vision of the NSFN in order to build a good food movement, empower food leadership and community food activism.

To build public awareness a suite of [Nottinghamshire Good Food](#) web pages has been developed, is incorporated into the NCC public website and links directly to District, Borough and stakeholder web sites to ensure wider promotion and access. The Place based webpages provide localised information and events for community neighbourhoods. These pages also link into Feeding Britain and Sustainable Food Places websites which provide national context and learning and development opportunities.

The Nottinghamshire Good Food pages have a distinct brand, link to the Health and Wellbeing board and provide links to a variety of food system information. The logo and colouring identify the NSFN and can be used in all media platforms. This is in continual development and refreshed as new areas of food system work develops. There is a need for a more co-ordinated strategic communications plan, developing a social media presence, newsletter and promoting the NSFN brand. The Food summit aims provide the platform to openly display the branding to stakeholders and get the Food Charter on the map across all food sectors.

Partners have been central to co-designing of the Nottinghamshire Good Food webpages, Food Charter and branding and as such it is both accessible and engaging. NSFN also provides regular email communications to stakeholders, sharing wider partner information to cascade through media channels including national Campaigns and funding opportunities. As a central means of communication, the NSFN acts as a conduit for information sharing between stakeholders while the collective process of codesign both empowers partners in the collective food journey and vision.

Local Food partnerships such as [Bassetlaw Food Insecurity Network](#) co-ordinate communications on service, funding opportunities and community activity through web pages, regular newsletters, social media, events and presentations. The local networks such as this empower local activism through volunteering opportunities and ensure information is received by volunteers through a trusted and known source in their community.

Opportunities for promoting good food advocacy have been improved since the development of the NSFN through both provision of funding opportunities, public awareness and connection between services. [Feel Good Gardens](#) runs accessible weekly gardening sessions growing fresh produce, sessions to learn how to cook the affordable healthy food that has been grown and running craft sessions. *'Absolutely brilliant! There should be a Feel Good Gardens everywhere, it makes a difference to the lives of so many people'*. The Garden recognises the multiple health and social benefits of growing, cooking and eating together and have supported several neighbourhood community gardens to develop in some of the most deprived areas of Mansfield such as [Northfield Ave community allotments](#) . They also hold events such as Earth Day and training sessions which engage and encourage residents and other allotment growers to develop skills and understanding of biodiversity and environmental issues. Much of this activity is run by volunteers who empower new volunteers to take on active roles and become advocates in their own communities. Equally, Feel Good Gardens have established strong links with local social prescribers who regularly bring residents to the site and share experience and best practise with other health care professionals to encourage further referrals. This sharing of knowledge across different parts of this system strengthens and reinforces the food ecosystem and widens participation.

Action Area B: Foster food citizenship and a local good food movement

The NSFN aims to support and strengthen existing and developing networks / organisations to collaborate and recognises the additionality in acting together.

Nottinghamshire has developed a strong academic focus on food and [UON Food Systems Institute](#) brings together researchers from across disciplines and work with industry and policymakers to deliver solutions to transform the food system, from production and processing, through to transport, consumption and waste. NSFN partners have been at the core of the many research projects undertaken by Nottingham Trent University, Coventry University and University of Nottingham. Some of the examples below show the collaboration of academic partners and local organisations working to transform the food system and understanding of barriers and alternative solutions.

A Nottinghamshire [Social Eating Network](#) was formed to provide a forum of support for groups offering affordable healthy meals mostly using surplus. Existing and newly formed groups have used this forum for peer support, training, collaboration, and funding information. Many social eating groups developed during the pandemic realising the social and health needs of communities and food as an enabler to bring people together. These groups have also engaged with local research led by University of Nottingham to

explore diversification of the supply chain to support social eating models. [Understanding' more than food' meal provisioning to develop inclusive and adaptive supply solutions](#)

[Edible Campus](#) brings together both City and County organisations to fund and develop food growing spaces, distribution of fresh fruit and vegetable to both student and local communities. This broad partnership led model, has linked up local expertise, developed bespoke growing spaces and a Campus foraging map and will be holding community meals in summer 2024. Although targeting student populations primarily, this has some outreach with local communities, staff and families of overseas students.

Newark & Sherwood District Council have worked with Southwell Town council to introduce [Meat free Mondays](#). Working with local businesses and the local market in Southwell to promote healthy non meat products once a week and the recipes on the Town Council website. The council have also incorporated a range of sustainable food activities into their annual [Bramley Apple festival](#) which not only promotes the home of the Bramley apple but reinforces the role of retailers in the messages around local sustainable food. Both approaches have a significant reach and presence in the local community with a clear message and localised approach to foster engagement.

The NSFN has supported the development of the wider community food infrastructure by using its expertise to advocate and administer a small grants scheme with the County council. NCC allocated £800k to develop and support community food activity with a focus on sustainability and inequality. A steering group of Network members provided oversight on decision making and management of the grants scheme. The implementation of a small grants scheme enabled and strengthened 245 community led interventions to address food insecurity through building skills, knowledge and confidence in cooking and growing food: strengthening and expanding a food infrastructure through capacity building and improving access to affordable healthy food. This funding has increased the number and quality of existing community food interventions such as social supermarkets and pantries, food clubs, social eating spaces and community cafes.

Food provision that has provided support on finance, housing and welfare rights and helped families access food and fuel support have increased. The inclusion of County financial resilience partnership at NSFN meetings has enabled better connection of financial advice services at food hubs / pantries etc and access to online information such as [Cost of living](#) .

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

NCC's [Best Start Strategy](#) has embedded good food messaging for early years into its action to 'Develop key messages about health and wellbeing in the early years that are shared widely by a wider range of professionals and partner organisations' This action was developed from learning from the Childhood Obesity Trailblazer and has resulted in online resources to support families to adopt healthier eating. This is hosted on NCC [Notts Help Yourself](#) .

Key Issue 3: Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health and increasing access to affordable healthy food.

NB at Silver we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. That the food partnership has created additionality. At Silver simply mapping activity is not sufficient. The 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.

Action area A: Tackle food poverty

Food Insecurity has been primary focus for many Network partners since the Covid pandemic and the following cost of living pressures. The NSFN has provided both strategic and operational opportunities to improve food security in Nottinghamshire.

In 2024 Nottinghamshire JHWB produced its first a [Food Insecurity JSNA profile pack](#). The 'owning' group for this were the network strategy group who provided information, endorsed, and agreed recommendations for this important strategic countywide document. JSNA will be used widely as a key strategic evidence base for resource allocation for multiple organisations/groups across Nottinghamshire and as such the NSFN have both influenced and provided core policy in this field.

Understanding food assets and levels of food insecurity in Nottinghamshire is a recommendation in the Food insecurity JSNA. In 2022 mapping of food banks was completed by NCC, and mapping of community food growing, and social eating underpinned the early priorities of the NSFN. Currently a project led by UON Future Food, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council is mapping food insecurity over the City and County geography. This is being aligned with food asset mapping from within Public health and assessing an appropriate hosting tool.

National bodies such as [Feeding Britain](#) and [Sustainable Food Places](#) have provided training, webinars and in person opportunities for place based food co-ordinators and volunteers which ensures current information and best practise is always communicated to partners in the system. This has both empowered and enabled strategic and community co-ordination on food security in localities. This has been invaluable and enabled learning opportunities and inclusion in national campaigns around automatic enrolment for Free school meals (Mansfield and Ashfield), Healthy Start, resources,

information and Co-ordinator training. District networks are also able to hold information on Feeding Britain website with core demographic information on food Insecurity such as [Mansfield](#).

NCC have led a co-ordinated programme of work to increase numbers of eligible families accessing Healthy Start providing [webinars](#) for professionals and community organisations, a [Toolkit](#), resources, regular updates and data sharing through the NSFN. This has resulted in more families receiving Healthy start support across the County, especially in the most deprived areas such as Ashfield which has 73% uptake of eligible families (above the national average).

Nottinghamshire has developed a wide range of food redistribution models such as food clubs, food hubs, social supermarkets and pantries linking into hyper local crop distribution to supplement boxes with fresh produce and enhance the affordability and nutritional value available. Bassetlaw Food Insecurity Network (BFIN) [impact report](#) highlights that in 22-23 1960 people per week were accessing their food hubs and 81,000kg of food was saved from landfill.

NCC committed £1,460 000 to 3 food grants streams through the NCC Local Communities Fund between 2020-2025. The [Food Redistribution Fund scheme](#) saw £90,000 awarded to 14 groups and organisations across the county, including food hubs and churches, in the first year. Further funding has been committed by District councils (receiving UKSPF) to deliver local Food grants programmes which will support local food activity within their areas. In Ashfield £5500 has been distributed to 11 projects each receiving £500 through their Community Growing Grants scheme. These funding streams have enabled a diverse, needs led and evidence-based range of provision tackling food poverty and highlighting the need for a Food ladders approach (See key action area 3.c)

Ten of the Food Hubs established by BFIN were located in and run by local schools in the heart of the local target communities.

Where funding has allowed some food banks have developed multiple offers such as [Bassetlaw food bank](#) providing emergency parcels, a pantry and mobile shop and social eating. The mobile shop enables some of the more rural areas in that District to access affordable healthy food where there is known rural food poverty. Newark College site alongside its student food bank and social eating set up a [Community fridge](#) , [Social Action](#) hub also provides a range of community food and advice services for young people. In both of these cases the initiatives have been codesigned by young people and link into wider community food activity.

Action Area B: Promote healthy eating

The [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(2022-26\)](#) puts healthy eating as a core part of the Nottinghamshire approach to improving health and wellbeing. County and District and Boroughs promote national healthy eating campaigns such as [Better Health](#) and utilise the branding across all public health messaging in commissioned services and initiatives ensuring consistent messaging. Locally, [Your Health Notts](#), a NCC commissioned service has a range of services providing support on food and nutrition to organisations families and individuals through their Food Activity and Balance programme [FAB](#) .

Recognising that there was a current gap in knowledge and provision on food education, School of Artisan food (SAF) developed [Best Food Forward](#) (BFF) food education packages for healthcare professionals and secondary schools. So far BFF have supported over 4500 (4636) secondary school students through the programme. Self-perceived knowledge of healthy eating increased by 17%. Over 75% of the students reported using the staple box items, cook-along videos or recipes at home. This demonstrates that removing accessibility barriers is a valuable use of resources highlighted in this. [video](#). The Programme has supported 83 medic and healthcare professionals through the drop-down CPD accredited days, plus an additional 120 via group lecture-style training.

Other community educational courses to improve cooking skill confidence and knowledge are well subscribed across the county. [ATTFE](#) have provided a range of free courses using slow cookers and air fryers as well as a focus on use of seasonal produce such as Summer recipe and [Friday Fakeaway](#) cooking courses.

Recognition of the improvement to educational attainment in school is also reflected in the promotion of support for Breakfast clubs. A collaboration of partners (see key action I) working with schools resulted in a promotional flyer sent through school networks to raise awareness of the [National Breakfast Club programme](#) and other Breakfast clubs support mechanisms. The data collected around this has been used to target schools in low take up areas to understand the barriers to the application process.

Nottinghamshire has delivered a vibrant and engaging [Holiday, Activities and Food programme](#).(HAF) Local activity providers run face to face sessions that are free to children and young people aged 5 to16 years and receiving benefits-related free school meals with places available to families with low income and children and young people who may face social isolation without the support of HAF. In 2023 there were 12,133 total participants in the HAF programme. There were 25,458 attendances throughout the year with 1000 meals being provided to families through 'family day' activities. 8 out of 10 said they would book places for 2023 to 2024 and 100% of parents said HAF has helped with cost-of-living increases.

NCC delivery partner Youth Health Notts are delivering a pilot project called Food Explorers for families with children around 2 years old. This has been delivered in

partnership with Childrens Centres in identified areas and aims to empower families to engage with good food and become more confident in their relationship with food for their children. Results of the first stage of the pilot have been presented at the NSFN and resulted in its promotion by stakeholder and representatives of Childrens Centres and improved uptake and location of the service.

The NSFN have provided a platform for promotion for these valuable, transformative initiatives and enabled improved participation by communities or partner organisations.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

NSFN has incorporated the [More than Just Food](#) approach to understanding food as an enabler to improve social and economic building blocks of health and wellbeing. The network has also been involved in research led by Megan Blake to understand how organisations can implement a [Food Ladders](#) approach to best utilise different parts of the system and services in a synchronised method. This will result in a Toolkit that will support organisations to implement the theory. This focus on understanding the connection between groups and organisations, the collective ecosystem of food support underpins the NSFN approach and Megan Blake is a confirmed keynote speaker at the forthcoming NSFN food summit.

In 2022 NCC Public Health commissioned research to improve understanding of stigma and food. [JSNA Food insecurity p28](#) early finding highlight that universal programmes have greater benefits for deprived communities and barriers to food security are experienced in early childhood and inform choices in later life. Also, experiences of stigma are often compounded by other forms of societal stigma in marginalised groups and social power imbalances play a significant role in both increasing or mediating stigma manifestations. This is due for publication in autumn 2024 and will help to shape how services are delivered to ensure improved uptake and promoted.

Metropolitan & Thames Valley Housing have reported that *'Food has become an anchor for many projects, and its importance is now recognised across the organisation'* and due to involvement in the NSFN food has been embedded into policy and practice within the organisation. *'We now discuss food insecurity from a strengths-based perspective and have embedded positive language into our approach which has increased engagement.'*

Key Issue 4: Creating a vibrant, prosperous, and diverse sustainable food economy.

***NB at Silver** we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. That the food partnership has created additionality. At Silver simply mapping activity is not sufficient. The 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.*

Action area A: Put good food enterprise at the heart of local economic development

NSFN recognises that food enterprise is an area for development and engagement with the food business sector is beginning to gain momentum in the network. There are conversations with NCC Economic development teams, Business support and the Tourism and visitor economy which aim to open doors to a collaborative approach to support local food production and consumption. There is also current engagement with the private sector such as [Food and Drink Forum](#) and the [UON Haydn Green Innovation centre](#) to identify innovation and economic growth for food SME's (see section C). New and emerging, these areas will be defined in the 3-year action plan and the role of the network will be to have oversight of some of the existing good practise, identify gaps and actions and convene an improved relationship around economic development organisations and priorities.

Examples of innovative approaches working with the business sector and the role of NSFN can be seen below.

[Nottinghamshire Healthier Options Takeaway](#) (HOT) is co-ordinated by Public Health at NCC and Environmental Health teams (EHO) in the district councils and works with food takeaway businesses/ organisations that provide a takeaway option to increase healthier alternatives on their menus. Working with local businesses to improve the healthier food offer has seen a reduction in numbers since the Covid Pandemic and an approach to encourage more businesses to join the revised scheme is underway. The scheme has previously been showcased at PHE annual conference as a model of good practise and resulted in many local authorities throughout the country adopting similar schemes. Mapping the proliferation of takeaway food businesses in local areas using the [FEAT](#) tool has enabled targeted work by EHO in local areas and a focus on areas of greatest need.

The Nottinghamshire [Spatial planning and health framework](#) is currently being updated and discussions with Planners to embed food environment considerations into the framework are positive. This will ensure a systematic approach to planning and food and will influence aspects such as Hot food takeaway proximity to schools, and limitation of takeaways on high streets to avoid proliferation of unhealthy food businesses. Senior planners will be attending the Food summit to engage on the Food Plan.

Nottinghamshire County Council has been one of the first Local authorities to commission a feasibility study into developing a [Farmstart programme](#). The feasibility study is not yet published but is being considered as a programme that will enable SME's to grow at market garden scale and establish routes to market. The engagement and support for

the concept from public and organisations has been positive, and several partnerships across the region are looking to develop a similar model and have discussions progressing with anchor organisations such as Local authority Public Health teams.

Equally, a wider stakeholder group of NCC departments have been engaged in this work which has been helpful in establishing relationships on the food agenda across economic development, conservation and procurement. The Farmstart feasibility study highlighted issues around procurement systems and barriers for SME's and has contributed to a related academic led research study into sustainable dynamic purchasing (DPS) which is currently underway. (See key action area 5)

Action Area B: Promote healthy, sustainable, and independent food businesses to consumers

Although this area is a newly emerging focus for the NSFN there is a substantial range of action and opportunity across Nottinghamshire. The Network have started conversations with NCC Tourism and Visitor economy on how the 3-year Food plan can align with this Framework on the celebration and promotion of local sustainable food. That the food plan priority will include this theme has enabled a joint approach to the revision and updating of the [Let's go local Notts: food and drink toolkit](#). This was designed during the Covid pandemic to support SME's to navigate that economic period and promote local food and drink businesses. Engaging local food producers such as [Colston Bassett cheese](#) and [Thaymar Ice Cream](#) in the co-design of the toolkit supports local business need, promotion of sustainable food and celebrates local produce.

Alongside this there is a strong on line presence with [Visit Nottinghamshire](#) who promotes Nottinghamshire food and drink businesses such as award winning [Welbeck Farm Shop](#) and [Hanwell Wine Estate](#) across multiple platforms. These local businesses have collaborated previously to develop the NCC Toolkit and as such we will aim to build on this work to further understand the current needs of local food SME's.

Nottinghamshire has many Countywide and local Food and drink festivals promoting local produce and local businesses such as [Festival of Food & Drink 2024](#) and [North Notts Food Fest](#) which promotes and engages food and drink businesses across towns in Bassetlaw. This event brings over 3,000 people into the area to engage with messages on food, sustainability and healthy eating. A newly emerging relationship with [North Notts Bid](#) and other business umbrella groups is a valuable opportunity to develop work in this sector and promote sustainable local food in some of the counties most deprived areas.

Nottinghamshire has a strong network of skill building and business support which includes promotion to consumers. Nottingham College, West Notts College (Mansfield), Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and the University of Nottingham all provide extensive

training/learning opportunities in food and drink related disciplines. In addition, the Food and Drink Forum, a national organisation based in Nottingham, supports food and drink businesses, from start-ups to established operators, and the University of Nottingham's Food Innovation Centre provides leading scientific / technical advice to Food & Drink manufacturing businesses in the UK.

A representative from NSFN was selected as a panel member on the semi-final University of [Nottingham Ingenuity Business awards](#) 2024 **Improvement in Health** category. Environment and sustainability and communities are also categories all of which food businesses can apply for. The inclusion of NSFN demonstrates a recognition of the relevance of sustainable food in health improvement, empowering active participation and the role of the NSFN as an important convener of this conversation for innovation and transformation in this field. Winning SME's will receive startup funding and business support advice (including marketing and promotion) and mentoring opportunities.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

The Farmstart Feasibility study highlighted the need to engage with farming and landowners to understand and engage with current barriers and issues and the uptake of regenerative farming methods. This is planned as a workshop theme at Food summit and will build on previous presentations at the NSFN by Waste Knot. This innovative model promotes a collaborative approach between local farmers, food surplus organisations and SME's that can have positive impact for both and good for the planet. NSFN aims to showcase the co-benefits of a model that works with different elements of the food eco system rather than silo working. [Wasteknot](#) will be presenting at the Food summit to show how regenerative farming practises, redistribution of surplus and restaurants can ensure the use of high-quality seasonal produce and value the skill and development of trained restaurant staff. This collaboration between Ferryfast, WasteKnot and FareShare, hosted at Newark college in 2023 was part of the [Feeding Five Million](#) celebration. Between July 2019 and a 2023, 2,162 tonnes of fresh produce have been redistributed, totalling over five million meals for those in need. Throughout 2022 alone, FerryFast and WasteKnot have supported 3,084 charities, by redirecting 573 tonnes of fresh produce to create 1,365,265 meals.

Key Issue 5: Transforming catering and procurement and revitalising local and sustainable food supply chains.

***NB at Silver** we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. That the food partnership has created additionality. At Silver simply mapping activity is not sufficient. The 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.*

Action area A: Change policy and practice to put good food on people's plates

There is a high level commitment to producing a Nottinghamshire 3 year food plan both from JHWB and in the [Nottinghamshire plan 2024-2025](#). **Ambition 1 – Helping our people live healthier, more independent lives** which states 'Deliver on the aims of the Nottinghamshire Food Charter, working with local partners to adopt a Joint Food Plan.'

As part of the [Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Project](#) 2020-2023 The Healthier@Home Meal kit initiative aimed to test use of NCC supply chain by utilising the existing supply chains (an identified community food asset) to provide a meal box which included a recipe and ingredients for set meal which would be provided at low cost through children centres. This small-scale test and learn project highlighted the challenges and current limitations of NCC catering and procurement policy and procedure and has informed the current 'Roadmap to sustainable procurement' research below.

Academic research '**Roadmap to Sustainable procurement**' is currently underway into Dynamic Procurement Systems led by University of Nottingham working with University, City and County procurement and catering teams to understand barriers and challenges to enable shorter food chains, local purchasing and greater access to the system by SME's.

In 2023 Nottinghamshire County Council produced a [Sustainable Procurement Policy](#) and a Social Value toolkit to ensure commissioners to embed sustainability into the procurement process. Work is ongoing with procurement leads to ensure that Food procurement is highlighted within this policy area.

NSFN recognised early on the important lever that the free school meals play in tackling hunger and promoting healthier food. The [Nottinghamshire School Meals](#) service is a well promoted service and has achieved Silver [Food for Life](#) award. This means the procurement of local seasonal produce from local suppliers where possible to reduce food miles and ensure fresher produce. The NCC School Meals team are stakeholders in the Network and have engaged with national campaigns to adopt measures for an auto registration system.

Nottinghamshire Trading Standards and Public health teams are currently participating as a case study area in the **ECON - Co-creating healthy, sustainable and viable change in the convenience store sector** study to look at the retail of unhealthy foods (high in sugar salt and fat) in convenience stores and how current national policy levers (such as recent legislation on marketing of HFSS food in shops) and relationships with retailers can be

used to improved affordable healthy food in local stores. This work will importantly improve relationships with local retailers and the engagement in the wider food system and network. The recommendations based on learning from this study will inform how national policy especially on marketing of unhealthy foods is being implemented both by Local Government departments and retailers and its effectiveness to improve health.

Action Area B: Improving connections and collaboration across the local supply chain

The NSFN has recognised the wealth of activity across the food system and the importance in its role as a connector and convener of this wide and varied eco system. NSFN has been instrumental in bringing together partners to collaborate, share information across the local supply chain and find solutions to supply issues.

Local networks have been supported by Feeding Britain to explore and test out different models unlocking surplus in different parts of the food system such as wholesale supply, farmers and supermarkets. NSFN developed a sub group with Feeding Britain , other partners and [FareShare](#) (who provide much of the surplus to community organisations) to better understand risks and challenges to the food surplus supply and look at options for diversifying and transforming the current local system. This resulted in FareShare adopting a different model in line with volunteer capacity and costs to the organisation through a collaborative and engaged effort with community organisations who amended orders, delivery methods and timescales.

Improving the connection of provision and supply is highlighted below. The local food co-ordinator worked with local food support organisations to set up a twinning model. Independent storage hubs in Mansfield are located in several food provisions, Schools and allotments are twinned with these provisions and a map with localised information to improve access for residents. This idea was developed by the food co-ordinator while attending the [My Food Community](#) course, who supported the development and provided initial start up funding.

A [Meal Production initiative](#) was tested with a collaboration of partners from all sectors that utilised Council kitchen space, private sector investment and VCSE expertise and knowledge to source and cook bulk ingredients into ready meals which were then supplied at cost to community organisations. This innovative project tested out the current procurement, catering and facilities systems and pairing with the assets brought by the VCSE sector produced a costed model and ran for approx. 1 year. This initiative has provided an understanding of challenges and opportunities in a multi sector co-ordinated model and informed the current FareShare approach in unlocking food in frozen and tinned areas of the supply chain and are repackaging large bulk items which can be used by community organisations at low cost.

Another example of innovation in unlocking food in different parts of the food system is [This Bread & Butter Thing](#) who have operated in Newark for over a year providing access to a nutritious and affordable weekly food shop through a food hub. This has benefited 801 residents in year, provided 1,382 volunteering opportunities which equates to 1,140 hours. The hub has provided 3,251 bags of healthy produce and products equivalent to 100,571 meals.

'TBBT has helped me plan my meals better. I look at what I've got and plan meals around items. this helps me save money and in the long run, less waste and less impulse buying. My toddler eats better too, more fruit and veggies!' Newark food hub member.

Local [Abundance](#) and [Crop drop](#) models have enabled local fresh surplus supply and improved the connection with allotment growers, University initiatives and local farmers. These schemes have reduced food waste, food miles and nutritious fresh produce through community food support. Crop drops in Nottinghamshire have focussed on distributing surplus fruit and vegetables to local social eating, food clubs and social supermarkets. It is estimated that [Newark Crop Drop](#) distributed fresh produce to over 200 families per week. In 2022 Brackenhurst campus provided regular fresh leafy greens grown from their [Hydroponic and Vertical farms](#) to support local food hubs.

These different models highlight the need to incorporate diversity of approach and to look at transformative models to unlock diverse sources of surplus food across the whole system. These models and connections have been enabled and facilitated through the NSFN.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

The NSFN approach to connecting parts of the whole food system has influenced local funding streams and activity in communities. The connection between social eating and strengthening of communities and place has been made and highlighted within Shared Prosperity Fund activity as a result of NSFN and local networks. This is visible within one strand of levelling up work as highlighted within Community Grants projects in Bassetlaw successfully joining the dots between food insecurity and sustainability and wider pathways into Business and People and Skills priority interventions.

Key Issue 6: Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food & farming and an end to food waste.

NB at Silver we require evidence that your food partnership has catalysed, influenced or delivered activity. That the food partnership has created additionality. At Silver simply mapping activity is not sufficient. The 'value added' of the partnership must be demonstrated.

Action area A: Promote sustainable food production and consumption and resource efficiency

Throughout the development of the NSFN there has been an aim to align with environment and economic agendas in anchor organisations and recognition of the strategic levers to work alongside departments linked to food system work such as waste, school meals and healthy start and climate change.

Nottinghamshire County Council declared a [Climate emergency](#) in 2021 which has led to further policy developments such as NCC Environment strategy/ action plan; Net Zero framework and the Growth and Investment framework (both in development) readiness for the newly elected East Midlands Combined Authority beginning in May 2024. At District level all but 2 district authority declared a climate emergency prior to 2021 stating their commitment for Action. The Food Charter and NSFN are highlighted as core drivers for change within these documents.

A Climate Change JSNA is being developed by PH NCC and will include the impacts of climate change on farmers, growers and the food supply chain in cost and supply of different crops with recommendations for actions at strategic, organisation and individual action levels.

That NCC funded the Farmstart feasibility study (see section 4) also highlights the importance NCC has placed on looking at food and farming and the co-benefits across health economy and environment.

[The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Greener ICS Plan 2022-2025](#) (p.44) includes Food and climate change key themes including food procurement; reduction in food waste; strengthening connection with community food initiatives; and food as a central role in improving health and wellbeing. These strategic drivers have resulted in actions in NHS Acute Trusts in Nottinghamshire such as a Memory menu for patients and meat free Monday into staff restaurants. The [Hope Orchard](#) on site aims to '*link the importance of planetary health on human health*' through promoting the association of healthy food (fruit in this case) with health and the environment.

NCC delivered Carbon literacy training across whole council and wider JHWB partners organisations delivered by [The Carbon Literacy Project](#) . Over 100 members of the Council workforce have improved understanding of the impact of the food industry on climate change and pledged actions as individuals and organisations to reduce carbon emissions. Understanding the role that the food industry plays regarding climate change is essential to empower action and transformation at individual and strategic level. Alongside this there have been opportunities for discussion of sustainable food with cross council staff groups such as NCC Environmental Green initiatives Group in which there was a NSFN presentation

The Notts Community Garden Network NCGN began in 2022 to provide networking and training opportunities to established and emerging community gardens in Nottinghamshire NCGN pulling together community food growing across the county, providing training and peer support a repository of resources for members, events and showcasing good practise on sustainable food production such as permaculture , bee keeping, wormery set up and maintenance, biodiversity as well as sessions on Health & Safety , policy and procedure from setting up a community garden, therapeutic horticulture from [Thrive](#) and talk by Natural England. There are over 70 organisations and services from neighbourhood community gardens to Notts Wildlife Trust and Green social prescribers on the mailing list supporting approx. 40 different County projects. The group have attended large events such as the [Nottinghamshire County Show](#) and celebrating Earth Day.

Green Social prescribing has been championed and expanded through the [Green Social Prescribing Trailblazer](#) in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Community gardens have been integral linking social prescribers to regular food growing activities and health services. This has enabled better understanding of health benefits and improved relationships between community gardens and social prescribers and resulted in [The Big Green book](#) which includes County community gardens as nature based activity to improve mental health.

Action Area B: Reduce, redirect, and recycle food, packaging, and related waste

Nottinghamshire has a strong relationship with FareShare East Midlands in the redistribution of fresh fruit and veg surplus, working with farmers to deliver their surplus, misshapen fruit and vegetables to social supermarkets and other community food support organisations. In the East midlands in 2023 2,866758 kg of food was distributed to 342 charities resulting in 6825 750 meal equivalents. This local TV footage highlights the benefits to community and the importance of linking up parts of the food system to reduce food wastage. [Farm to fork](#)

The growth of neighbourhood-based Abundance and Crop Drops (section 5) has minimised wastage of fresh produce in public spaces at local level and often supports initiatives such as Food Cycle. [FoodCycle](#) have been operating in Mansfield since 2022. The project has so far saved 686KG of food from being wasted, has served 197 hot meals, and have an average guest number of 22 per week. FoodCycle is a member of the local Feeding Mansfield network and works collaboratively with other organisations across the area.

The Waste and Recycling team at NCC are members of the NSFN and along with partners Veolia promote [Food Waste Reduction](#) and recycling of food packaging through a variety of measures such as:

-WRAP's Food Waste Action Week campaign [Food Waste Action Week | Love Food Hate Waste](#) . Promotion occurs through social media sites and NCC emailme waste and recycling newsletter to reach residents and internally with NCC staff.

-NCC aim to improve understanding of food waste / packaging with visits to the recycling facility in Mansfield for the public and also data collection, analysis and sharing of current waste and what actions can be taken to reduce this.

-Annual Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Fund (run in partnership with Veolia) which aim to reduce waste. Recipients include [Now Church](#) who use redistributed food surplus into ready meals that are available at the community food hub.

It is recognised that although the messaging on reduction in food waste and recycling is embedded at many levels, there are opportunities to align further with NCC Food waste and recycling to enable more traction and maximise impact.

[The Urban Worm](#) is a CIC and provides advice and resource on vermiculture and has been a source of support for local groups to build their own wormeries and integrate vermiculture into their growing systems. Their interactive map shows the customer base across Nottinghamshire. Through collaborations, presentations and being sited on Farm Eco wormeries have proliferated across Nottinghamshire in schools, homes and organisations with a range of sizes from mall tub, wheelie bin and municipal wormery in larger organisations. In many funded projects the wormery has been built into the model. For example, in 2022 all primary schools in Newark and Sherwood were supplied with a modular growing bed, compost tools and seeds along with a wormery. This project was funded by NCC and collaborated with Newark college for making the raised beds, N&SDC for transportation and construction, schools developed parent led growing teams and many schools used the veg grown for social eating events for families or distribution to families or in school meals. Collaboration with NSDC has enabled to build on this further and in 2024 Newark & Sherwood hosted day of DIY mini worm farms community workshops for 60 children in activities over the half term holiday.

C: Other information: Other activities and context (Please see Section 2 above for guidance) (Mandatory word limit: 250).

The two examples below highlight different models in Nottinghamshire that promote and educate on sustainable food growing and the environment.

[Incredible Edible in Beeston](#) (IEB) is an example of growing on public spaces with a conscious approach to encouraging and educating on biodiversity while mobilising a community with a collective simple strategy. The aim of IEB to grow edible plants in area of high footfall to get the conversation started about where food is grown and how communal spaces are used. This group started in 2019 and have developed sites across the busy town with a growing number of regular volunteers and have built positive relationships with Broxtowe Borough council on use of sites and management strategies (such as verge spraying with pesticides) in line with protection of natural habitat and biodiversity.

[FarmEco](#) is a community farm in a rural area on the border of Newark and Sherwood and Rushcliffe Districts. The working Farm practises an agroforestry system to organic principles and conservation management. Protection and encouragement of biodiversity is an underpinning principle and messaging around reducing, repurposing and recycling are embedded with educational visits and group work. Farm Eco provide host educational visits, hosts many clubs and groups and have an established green prescribing function. There are several volunteering opportunities built into the model.

It is intended that Food for the planet toolkit will be embedded in the 3-year Food plan to enable clear actions and decision making on environmental issues.