

# The Meeting Place Project: Learning and Guidance for Community Groups



# Executive Summary

<p><b>Meeting Place Principles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be Welcoming</li> <li>• Utilise a Trusted Community Venue</li> <li>• Be Relational</li> <li>• Provide Accessible Advice</li> <li>• Focus on Wellbeing</li> <li>• Promote Dignity in Practices</li> <li>• Share Food</li> <li>• Adapt.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Key Achievements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of a set of principles for community food provision</li> <li>• Enabling people to access advice, specifically those who are less likely to seek advice outside community settings</li> <li>• Creation of a broad partnership-led support network</li> <li>• Greater engagement with the offers of community venues</li> <li>• Impact on strategy development for partner organisations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing conflicts and different cultures in close communities</li> <li>• Developing a supportive relationship whilst encouraging self-reliance</li> <li>• Support volunteers to change their behaviour to reflect principles</li> <li>• Securing sustainable funding for staff</li> <li>• Managing the COVID-19 pandemic and re-opening safely</li> <li>• Supporting people with economic and wellbeing issues post COVID-19</li> <li>• Capturing outcomes and collecting data</li> <li>• Responding to a chronic crisis in a sustainable way.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Areas for Exploration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further fostering of dignified practices</li> <li>• Supporting local farmers</li> <li>• Meeting Places as social enterprises</li> <li>• Implementing Meeting Places across the borough</li> <li>• Partnering with community mental health support providers</li> <li>• Options for supporting rural areas</li> <li>• Developing campaigning infrastructure.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transferability</b></p> <p>Meeting Place principles that can be implemented across a broad spectrum of community food provision projects.</p> <p><b>Guidance for Setting up a Meeting Place</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have gentle opening chats in communities</li> <li>2. Visit other projects</li> <li>3. Build up an appropriate network</li> <li>4. Identify a trusted community venue</li> <li>5. Secure necessary funding</li> <li>6. Adapt continuously.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Tools to Evaluate and Monitor Progress and Impact, and Share Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting Places Progress Reporting tool</li> <li>• Regular staff and volunteer meetings</li> <li>• The Beans on Toast group as an advisory board</li> <li>• Collaborative informative concise videos on each of the principles</li> <li>• Collaborative webinars</li> <li>• One-to-one conversations between people with lived experience and volunteers.</li> </ul>