

Cheers Drive Impact Report

May 2021, one year impact report



Thank you!

Cheers Drive could not have been possible without the generosity of funders, partners and donors.
A big thank you to:

Funders



Gane Trust

February Foundation

Partners

Pony & Trap
Pasta Loco
Emmeline
Fareshare
Coexist
Houria
Food without Borders
91 Ways
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Gallimaufry
Old Market Assembly
Lockup
Kensington Arms
Root

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Autolyne
Papadeli
Nanona's
Bristol Loaf
Easyjet



Introduction

What started as a humanitarian response to a crisis became a vital part of the city-wide effort to support large numbers of people to move away from homelessness. Like Caring in Bristol as a whole, Cheers Drive has continuously adapted and evolved to best meet the needs of our beneficiaries.

Through Cheers Drive, Caring in Bristol has established itself as an influential organisation within the world of food and homelessness and is a driving force for increased collaboration, improved communication, and a shift in culture across the sector.

We're excited to bring you up to date on our impact over the past year, our plans for the future and developments in the sector.

Your Impact at a glance

160,000

Meals delivered

93%

Client satisfaction rate

850

People supported through Cheer Drive

65

People who were self isolating were supported (included above)

*"To everyone at Caring in Bristol.
Thank you very much for your
kindness!! And the tasty food.*

*I appreciate your meal at the
hotel in Bristol greatly. I look
forward to six o'clock now!! It's
given me faith."*

Mr S, Cheers Drive beneficiary, April 2020





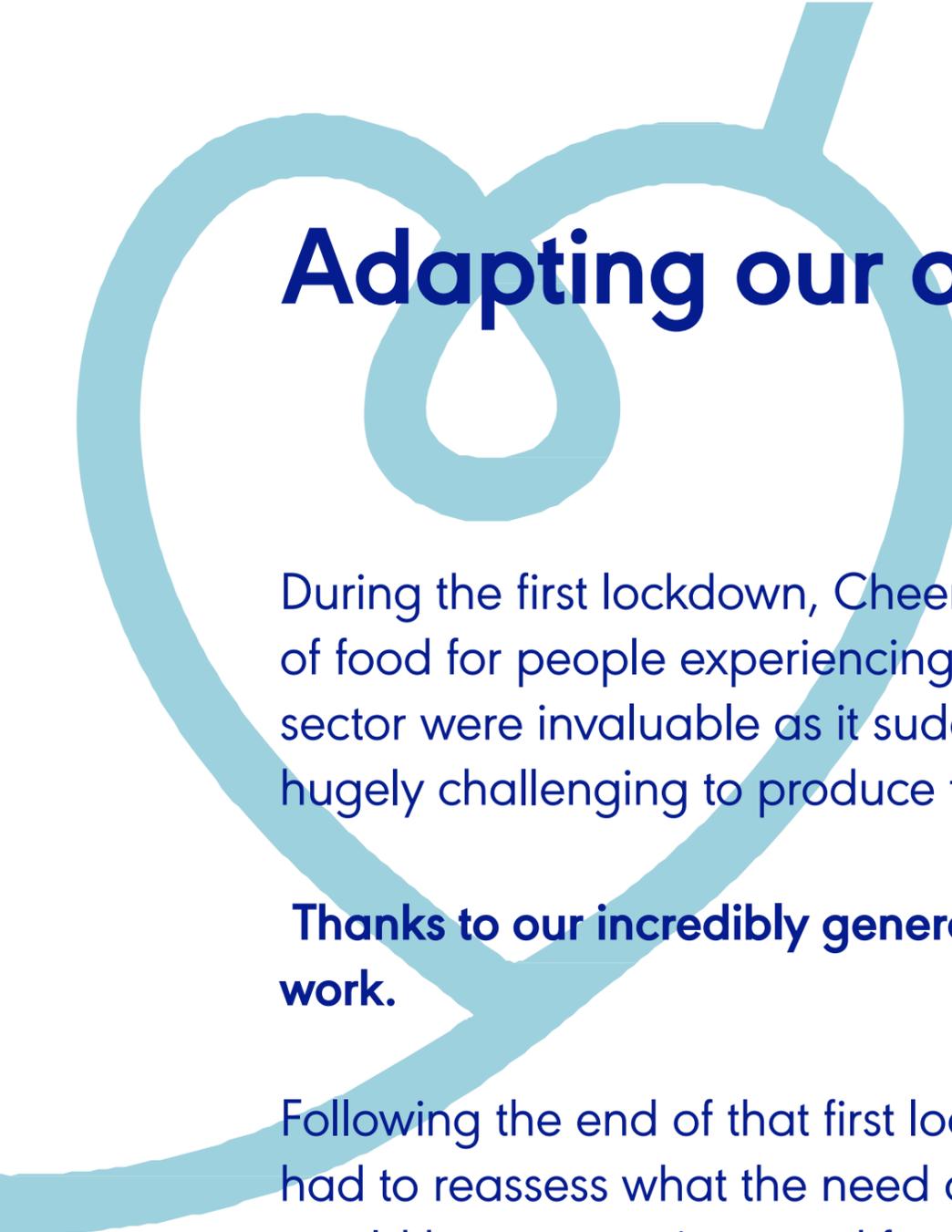
Tackling the challenge of Covid 19

The new laws aiming at flattening the pandemic's curve and the shielding of society's most vulnerable meant that because of the need to physically distance and a lack of available PPE the remaining food provision services were unsafe.

Remaining agile to the needs of our community and responding to the immediate concerns of our beneficiaries, we used our robust infrastructure from our pioneering Caring at Christmas project, a mailing list of over 4000 volunteers, and strong business partnerships within the community to set up Cheers Drive, the future of food aid, within days.

Styled like a takeaway delivery service Cheers Drive would 'deliver' food to those temporarily placed in hotels and hostels, alongside providing food for partner charities, shelters and vulnerably housed individuals in Bristol. Cheers Drive would feed up to 400 homeless and vulnerably housed people each day, with each delivery including a breakfast, lunch and a hot dinner.

A year later Cheers Drive is still going strong and has adapted to the rapidly-changing conditions of the pandemic along the way.



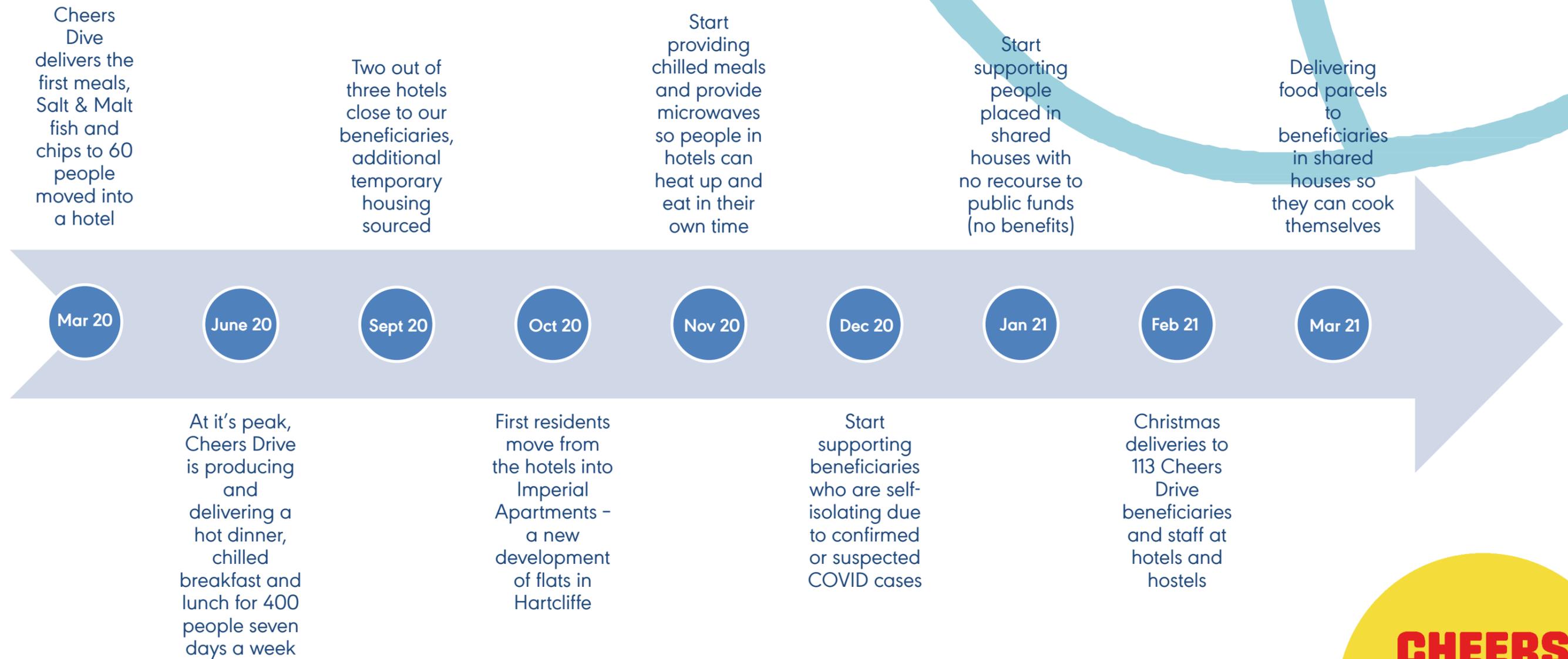
Adapting our operation

During the first lockdown, Cheers Drive quickly established itself as a key collaborator in the provision of food for people experiencing homelessness. Caring in Bristol's existing strong links to the hospitality sector were invaluable as it suddenly became difficult to source ingredients and packaging, and hugely challenging to produce the and deliver the required amount of food safely.

Thanks to our incredibly generous funders we were also uniquely positioned to be able to fund this work.

Following the end of that first lockdown, as businesses and communities began to open up again, we had to reassess what the need of our beneficiaries was and how best to meet it. It was clear there would be an ongoing need for food provision as the Everyone In scheme was extended and the sector worked hard to ensure there was no "return to the streets". It was also clear that there would be no immediate return to communal eating and that COVID restrictions and stringent health & safety requirements would remain in place for the foreseeable future.

Key milestones along the way



Your impact: providing safety and stability

Cheers Drive has been an integral part of the Everyone In scheme in Bristol.

Working closely with Bristol City Council, St Mungo's and Golden Key, Caring in Bristol and Cheers Drive were part of a city-wide initiative working not only keep people experiencing homelessness safe during the pandemic, but also supporting people to move away from crisis into stable accommodation.

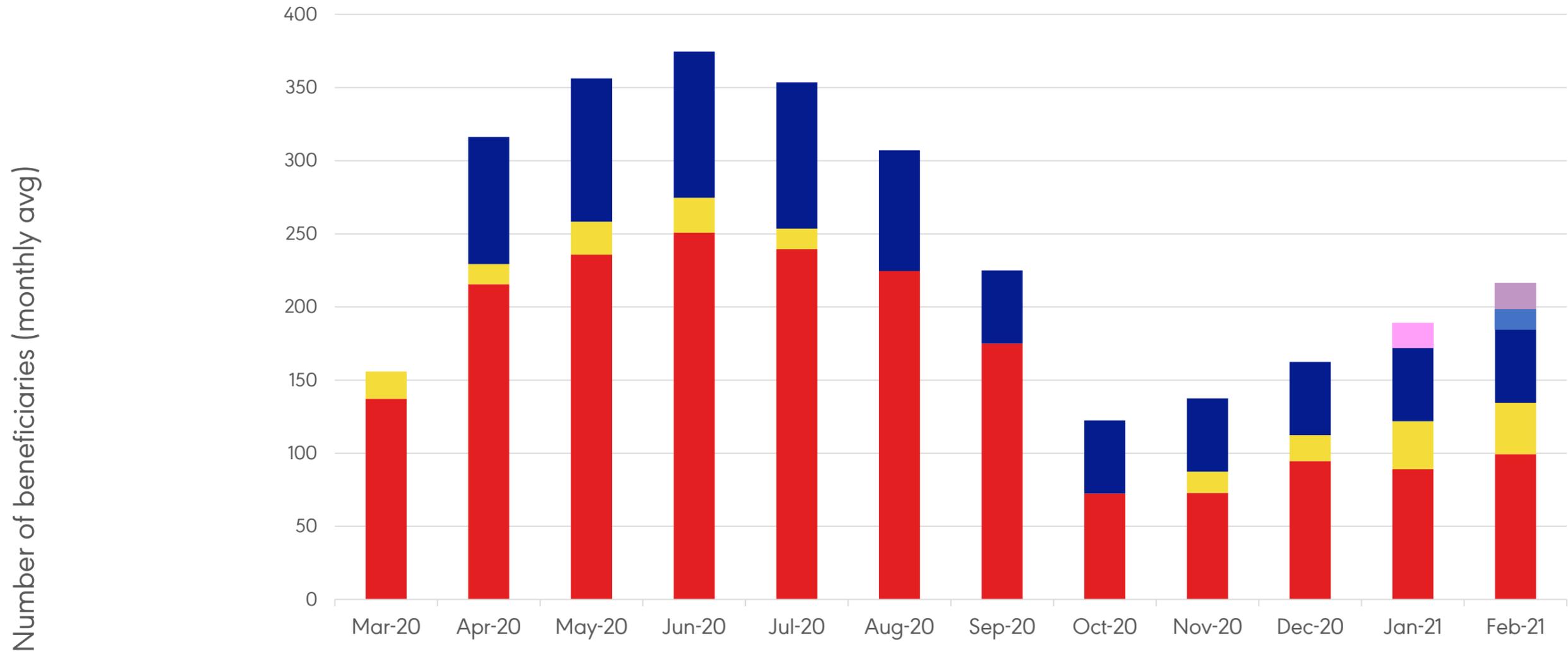
Food is one element of the support services that have been provided by multiple agencies and organisations from across the city.

Over the last year, there have been almost 2,000* placements provided through this scheme, and hundreds of people have moved on into long term accommodation.

*NB number of placements, not number of individuals; some individuals received multiple placements



Everyone in Scheme Bristol: Where our beneficiaries have been located



Hotels & hotels

Dispersed temporary accommodation

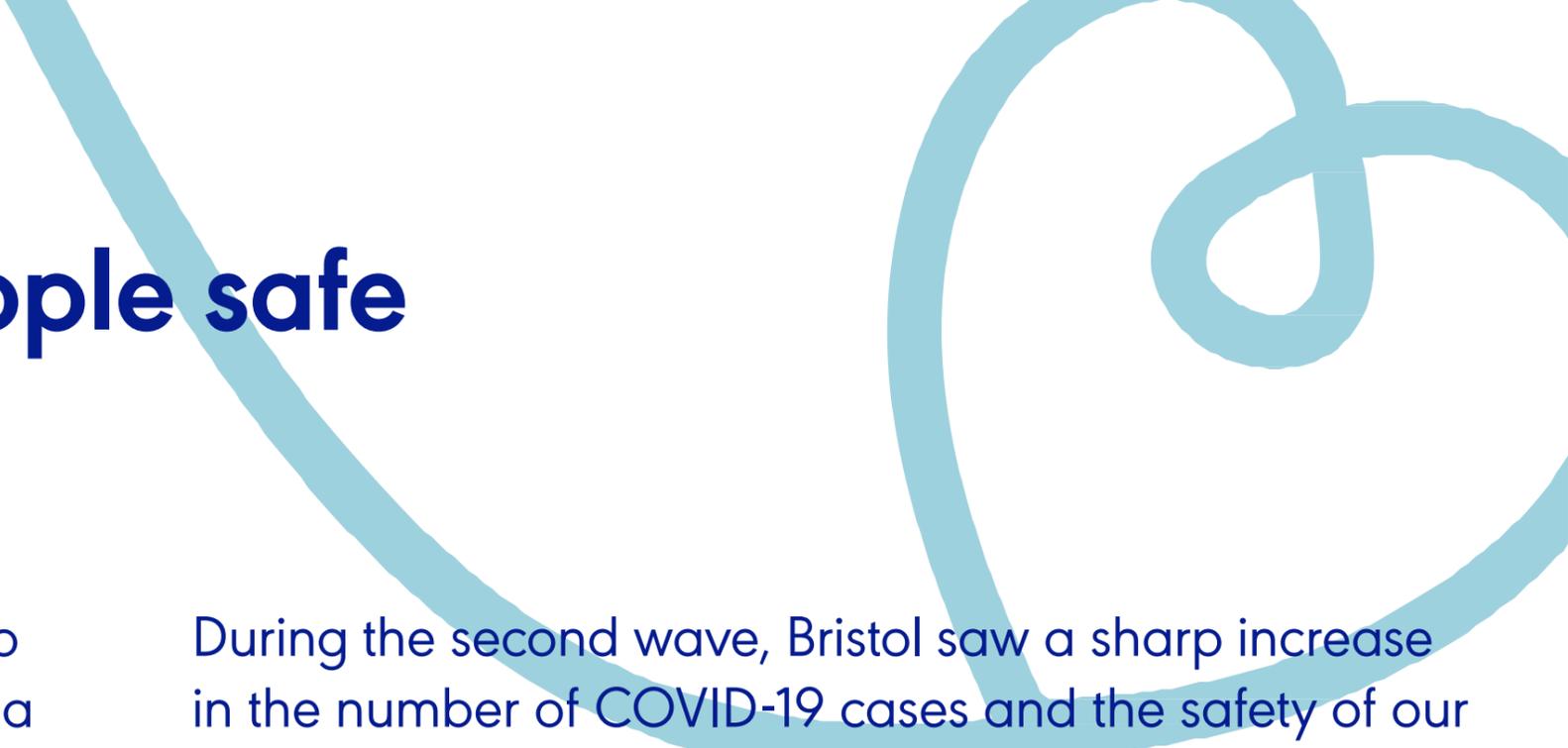
Street outreach

Help Bristol's Homeless

Women's housing project

Large self-isolating HMO

Your impact: keeping people safe



Those without homes are some of the most exposed to COVID-19, as they are three times more likely to have a chronic health condition, and 60 times more likely to visit A&E.

Our work, aiding our beneficiaries to self-isolate, and adhering to strict health & safety protocols in our operations, has helped keep the community safe throughout the pandemic.

Our volunteers checked with beneficiaries daily for COVID-19 symptoms, also checking on well-being and providing vital human contact.

Thanks, in part, to the swift and effective action of Caring in Bristol and partners, there were only a handful of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the homeless community up to September 2020.

During the second wave, Bristol saw a sharp increase in the number of COVID-19 cases and the safety of our beneficiaries, volunteers and staff was a top priority for Cheers Drive.

Our professional and responsive approach meant we could rapidly offer food deliveries to groups of beneficiaries required to self-isolate due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Your impact

20,000

Symptom checks carried out by volunteers

113

Cheers Drive clients received a visit on Christmas day along with gifts, cards and craft & activity packs

14

Independent restaurants involved



"Health anxiety makes it scary to go to crowded places or outside to food drops where loads of service users don't really believe or care about pandemic."

Hotel Resident

"Very easy to set-up, don't have to risk going outside, just have to be there once a day and all taken care of."

Hotel Resident

"Didn't have to leave the hotel room, feeling of safety was very important."

Hotel Resident

"The best bit was seeing beneficiaries under a roof and moving on to more permanent options."

Cheers Drive Volunteer

Your impact: social contact and well being

The lockdown has put a strain on the mental health of the nation, and the world, as our daily routines, stress reliefs, and social interactions have been restricted. Many of our beneficiaries have felt this keenly, going from hugely social daily routines to intense isolation in a single hotel room.

As well as meals and food parcels, delivered daily by our team of dedicated volunteers they also provided vital social contact.

This human contact and focus on beneficiary well-being is a fundamental part of the service Cheers Drive has provided. Partners, volunteers and beneficiaries have told us how valuable this has been. Our volunteers periodically supplied books, games and puzzles for beneficiaries to occupy themselves while staying safely indoors.

An important aspect of well-being for some clients is being able to maintain religious practices. Cheers Drive worked in partnership with Feed the Homeless to provide food after dark to beneficiaries observing Ramadan in 2020, so they could still eat a hot meal daily.

We supported clients with access to catering facilities to cook for themselves, allowing people more choice and autonomy. Our volunteers delivered kitchen packs including pans, utensils and crockery to people moving from the hotels to Imperial Apartments. We also provided food parcels rather than meals to beneficiaries in shared houses who preferred to cook for themselves.

Over Christmas, alongside meals prepared by some of Bristol's best chefs, volunteers delivered Christmas cards, gifts, craft packs and personalised gingerbread men to spread some Christmas Cheer.

Your impact

270

Food parcels delivered

160

Kitchen packs delivered to residents moved from the hotels to residential apartments

30

Beneficiaries received hot meals after dark while observing Ramadan in April/May 2020



I'm just so thankful to you all. I try and tell the volunteers every day. You're all just brilliant people."

- Hotel resident



"I genuinely think that without Cheers Drive I wouldn't have managed the last few months as I have done"

- Cheers Drive volunteer



"Excellent service - 10/10 - kindness matters!"

- Hotel resident



"It was lovely to see the guests looking clean, healthy and happy, and all the team are amazing."

- Cheers Drive volunteer



"The volunteers were really good, they were always very conscious of client needs, and also stayed positive when there were difficulties. The service was a lifeline for the clients at the hotel."

- St Mungo's staff member



"Many comments that the provision not only provided food but aided people's mental health during lockdown, as it meant there was always someone to meet with, and it was reassuring to know help was available."

- Methodist Centre staff member



Your impact: high quality, nutritious food

From the beginning we wanted the trademark of Cheers Drive to be restaurant-quality, delicious and nutritious food. With access to food severely restricted for our clients and the length of the first lockdown unknown, it was important to provide healthy, varied and tasty meals together with fruit, snacks and drinks. Despite being ravaged by the lockdown, Bristol's independent hospitality sector pooled their resources and used their networks to support Cheers Drive and our beneficiaries. Josh Eggleton, Dom Borel and Shona Graham ran kitchen teams across 4 sites, producing hundreds of meals every day, for seven months. We were overwhelmed with donations from restaurants and suppliers including a weekly fruit and veg donation from Total Produce worth £1,000.

A challenge our chefs thrived on was providing a variety of healthy meals that people from different cultural backgrounds would enjoy. Our clients told us they loved the classics: roast dinner every Sunday, cottage pie and lasagne. Other favourites included jerk chicken, burger & chips and fish pie. From November 2020, production of meals was outsourced to local independent restaurants including the Gallimaufry, the Lockup and Old Market Assembly. We also began partnering with several social enterprises including Houria and Food without Borders, who offer training and employment to migrant and refugee women; and Coexist Community Kitchen, who donated almost 1,000 meals.

Cheers Drive has partnered with Fareshare throughout the last year, sourcing tonnes of surplus and donated food at a hugely discounted price. As well as providing ingredients to use in our meals, working with Fareshare has enabled us to provide food parcels for clients who can, and want to, cook for themselves.



"Hospitality is all about feeding and serving people, and we're going to work together, to support each other and as many people as possible."

Josh Eggleton, Pony & Trap

"This project had over 20 clients that required vegetarian and non gluten, the meals were delivered with a great deal of amazing variety."

- St Mungo's staff member



"Nutritious meals, and a good variety of different meals"

- Hotel resident



"Sunday roasts were fantastic. Thank you, really kind"

- Hotel resident



"All the clients with NRPF benefited hugely - with no access to benefits, and with most other sources of food not available, these clients would have been really stuck without Cheers Drive"

- St Mungo's staff member



"We'd have been living off pot noodles and cuppa soups if it wasn't for you lot"

- Hotel resident



"The best bit is... hearing the positive feedback from clients about the quality of the food they get. That's a real tribute to the chain of brilliant people who make Cheers Drive work"

- Cheers Drive volunteer



£84,161

£46,326

23.5 tonnes

£14,000

1,000

Value of food donated in total

Saved by sourcing food from
Fareshare South West

Food diverted from landfill

Worth of fresh produce donated

Individual meals provided for
free by Coexist Community
Kitchen

“[Volunteering has given me] a sense of pride in myself and my community... An inspired vision of what is possible”

Cheers Drive volunteer

Thank you volunteers!

Within Cheers Drive, our volunteers have once again taken on an empowered central role, and their dedication has contributed enormously to the success of the project.

As the project evolved and adapted to meet the needs of our beneficiaries, so have our volunteers. Along the way, hundreds of people have collected and delivered fresh ingredients, cooked delicious meals and distributed them door-to-door, packed up food bags and parcels, washed up and cleaned kitchens and packing rooms, and much more.

The adaptability, commitment and skill of our volunteers is humbling. We want to say a huge thank you to each and every one of them.

Volunteer feedback

Our volunteers are the backbone of our operations at Caring in Bristol and an essential part of how we create a city empowered to solve homelessness. We invest in our volunteers because we know how important they are and we can't achieve our vision without them.

We surveyed our volunteers twice in the year to get their feedback and ideas for development of our services.

Our volunteers also told us they would like training opportunities and wanted to know more about what's going on with our beneficiaries. We now offer regular free training including boundaries and safeguarding, mental health awareness and managing difficult situations.

Our fortnightly volunteer newsletter keeps people informed about our work and developments in the wider homelessness sector.



92%

Volunteers rated their experience on Cheers Drive at 92% and told us they felt well prepared and supported. We listened to their feedback and improved our operations based on their suggestions, for example, streamlining the door-to-door delivery process in hotels.



From a volunteer to a new career

For Fiona Ribes-Renshaw, volunteering with Caring in Bristol was a steppingstone to a new career in the homelessness sector.

Fiona moved to Bristol from Spain shortly before the first lockdown in March 2020. She hadn't found work yet and signed up to volunteer on Cheers Drive.

Fiona was a Team Leader on our hotel delivery shifts and dedicated an incredible 158 hours between April and September 2020, completing 79 shifts. She helped us develop and streamline our processes at the hotels, trained new volunteers and liaised with the St Mungo's staff team at the hotel.

We met regularly with Fiona, providing support in her role as Team Leader, and insight into working in homelessness in Bristol. Fiona is now working for St Mungo's and based at one of the hostel sites where we deliver meals.

By engaging with Caring in Bristol and gaining an understanding of how homelessness affects people and the work required to end it, Fiona was inspired to dedicate herself fully to the cause.

Better food support for Bristol

In November 2020 Caring in Bristol, together with inHope, commissioned a piece of research into Food Support and Homelessness in Bristol. Maurice di Rosso, former director at Feeding Bristol, produced a report which highlighted that, within all the fantastic work that is being done, there are clear areas for improvement around data sharing and communication.

The report also identified a gap in food-related services which are aimed at supporting newly housed people to maintain their accommodation.

The Food in the Homelessness Sector Steering Group formed in January 2021 following close collaboration between food and homelessness organisations in Bristol in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Group aims to improve communication and increase data and information sharing within the food and homelessness sectors. Our goal is to identify and evidence best practice of the use of food as a tool for permanently moving people away from homelessness and to accelerate cultural change in this direction across the sector.



If you'd like a copy of this research report, please email info@caringinbristol.org.uk

A new direction for Cheers Drive

Food provision was a new area of work for Caring in Bristol in 2020. Through delivering Cheers Drive for the last year and based on the findings of the Food and Homelessness Report, an opportunity has been identified to develop and refocus this work into a long-term sustainable service.

We know that people continue to access free food services once they are housed, and there are multiple reasons for this including social contact. A major factor is barriers around budgeting, shopping and cooking for themselves on top of the other responsibilities of running a household.

When people experiencing homelessness are housed, a lot of the support previously available falls away. This is a crucial point in the pathway to independence where people may struggle to adjust and can fall back into a cycle of homelessness. There is a lack of food-specific support available in the city, meaning many people continue to access crisis support and experience the negative associations and impacts of that.

As a result of the pandemic, hundreds of people experiencing homelessness in Bristol have moved into more stable accommodation.

Caring in Bristol is developing services that support people to move towards food independence, have an increased connection with their community, and maintain their accommodation. This work will focus on ensuring people can access healthy, nutritious food where they are and without stigma, and improve their cooking, nutrition and budgeting skills.

Caring in Bristol is working on plans for these services, getting input from our beneficiaries, building local connections and talking to partners. We'll be working closely with Team Canteen, a CIC created by our partners on Cheers Drive: Josh Eggleton, Shona Graham and Team Love, with a mission to create inclusive food projects and spaces, where people connect and knowledge is exchanged.

The best of Bristol

Cheers Drive is one of many city responses to the pandemic which demonstrate what can be achieved when collaboration and ambition come together.

We're proud to play our part and hope you feel the same.

With sincere thanks to everyone involved.

" One of our clients has been able to break free from the cycle of street drinking and drugs since being in hotel accommodation and has gained five stone in weight through eating healthy, nutritious meals from Cheers Drive. He looks and feels amazing!"

Bristol Outreach Services for the Homeless



Caring in Bristol

The Night Shelter • 14 Little Bishop Street • St Pauls, Bristol, BS2 9JF • Tel: +44(0)117 924 4444 • info@caringinbristol.org.uk
Registered charity in England and Wales Number: 1151645 • Company Number 08419424 • Registered Office: Caring in Bristol Ltd