



SPRING

COMMUNITY HUB

IMPACT REPORT 2023



CONTENTS

1. ABOUT THIS REPORT	1
2. INTRODUCTION	2
3. CONTEXT	3
a) Food insecurity	3
b) What causes this?	4
4. WHAT ARE THE OTHER BARRIERS?	7
5. HOW SPRING COMMUNITY HUB WORKS	8
6. THE IMPACT OF OUR WORK	9
a) Manage the immediate crisis of food insecurity	9
b) Overcome the barriers	12
c) Address the causes	16
7. LOOKING FORWARD	21



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This impact report has been developed to understand and communicate the effectiveness of Spring Community Hub's services. The report addresses the challenges guests at Spring Community Hub face, the barriers that prevent them from moving beyond their situation, and the organisation's approach and effectiveness in supporting guests to make positive changes to improve their situation, managing the immediate crisis and tackling the root causes of food insecurity. The report was developed using data collated from:

- Face-to-face discussions with senior management.
- In depth face-to-face interviews with 7 guests, recorded and transcribed.
- In depth face-to-face interviews with 3 staff members, recorded and transcribed
- Observations from 2-day in-person visit.
- Case logs and testimonials from guests

As we move forward, we endeavour to extend and improve our impact measurement tools to further demonstrate the impact of the projects.

INTRODUCTION

Spring Community Hub, originally Central Southwark Community Hub, was established in 2017. Our principal activity is the prevention of food poverty and food insecurity by offering culturally appropriate food, fresh fruits, and vegetables, as well as dietary and religiously appropriate food. We run our food bank five days a week for local people for as long as they need to address the underlying cause.

As we have grown, we have been able to provide increased, wraparound support to further address the underlying factors contributing to food poverty. These include Holiday Clubs for children, youth groups, a clothing bank, our women's group 'Spring Up', and the Back2Work team. Through the variety of services we offer, we help people in both the short and long-term.

OUR VISION

To tackle food insecurity and hunger before people find themselves in crisis. We want to see equality in our communities and be a vehicle for positive and lasting change in our clients so that they never need a food bank again.

The demographics of our guests are diverse, and 76% of the guests at Spring Community Hub are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups.

34%
Latin
American

31%
Black
African

11%
Black
Caribbean

35%
Refugees and
Migrants

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Through a 'Community Hub' and full activity programme, local people in or at risk or crisis will be supported along their journey to move on and achieve full social, economic, and emotional independence to live healthy lives in a community which supports each other'

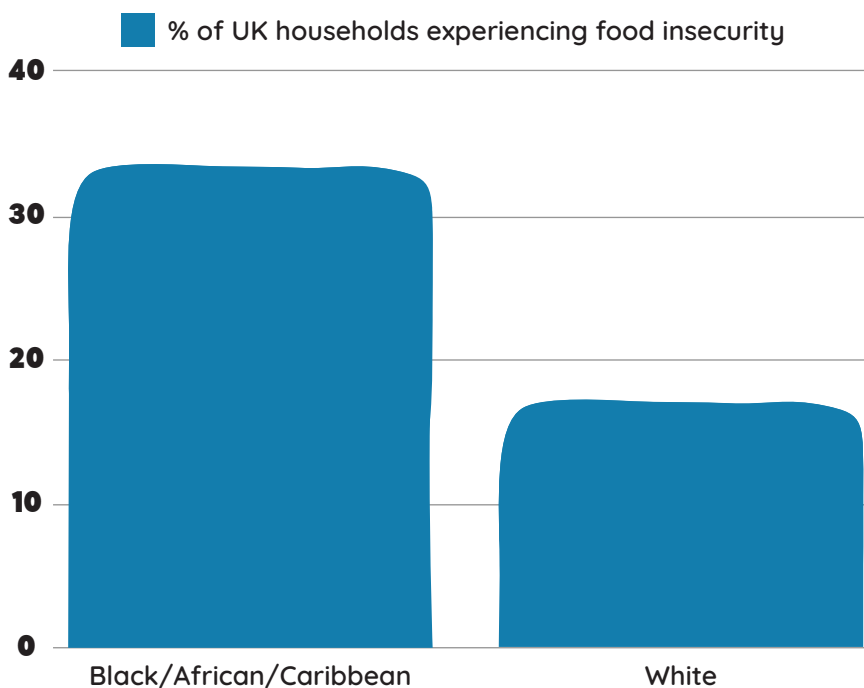
CONTEXT



When trying to resolve an immediate crisis, such as food insecurity, the underlying causes can be overlooked. A full understanding of all the factors that may lead someone into an emergency situation is vital to breaking down the building blocks of poverty.

FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity can be defined as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Factors are intersectional, and rates across the country have increased since the cost-of-living crisis.



17% of UK households classed as food insecure June 2023

This is almost double what it was in January 2022

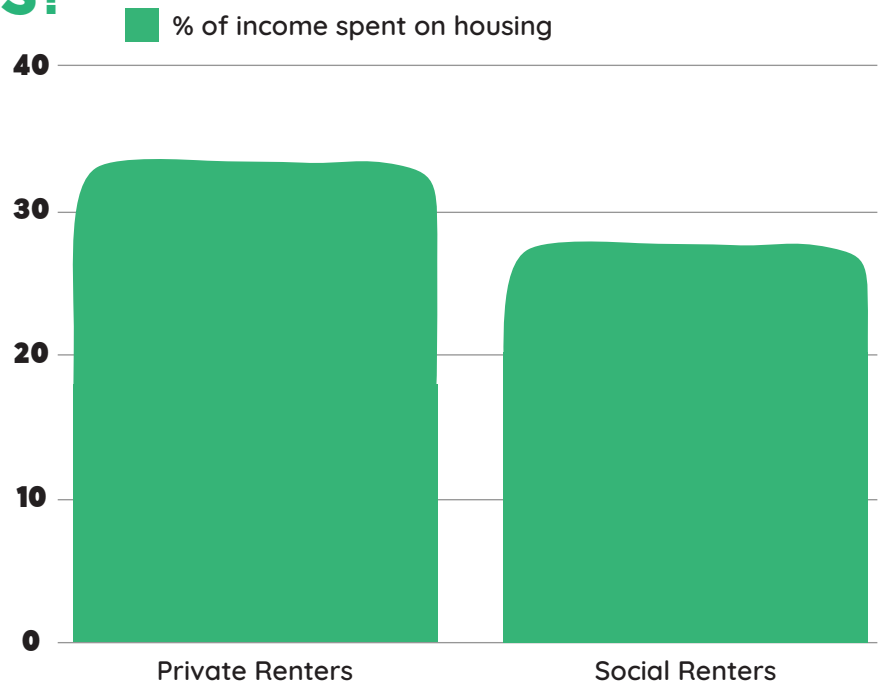
WHAT CAUSES THIS?



HOUSING

Rent takes up a significant amount of household expenses.

When housing costs are factored in, poverty rates for Londoners almost double – a much larger difference compared to the rest of the country.



Housing security is an essential factor in financial security; a fixed address is often required for a job and for a bank account. Most private renters live on Assured Shorthold Tenancies, where a landlord can end a tenancy without a given reason.

Poor living conditions, such as overcrowding, damp, and mould, can also influence both physical and mental health. This can then affect other areas of life, impacting financial situations. Additionally, inadequate space can restrict a family's ability to store, prepare, or cook sufficient meals.



IMMIGRATION

Immigration status can affect someone's right to work and whether they can access government benefits. Having to wait for documentation to come through before being able to secure work, benefits, or housing leaves people stuck in limbo.

People who are 'subject to immigration control', and thus have the NRPf (no recourse to public funds) condition applied to their status, are particularly affected. The immigration system and process being so long and complex means other elements of life can be deprioritised, including food. Even if the right to work is granted, low wages often translate to working longer hours, resulting in a lack of time and energy to cook the food they want or need.

Asylum Seekers without the right to work have an allowance of just **£47.39** per week for essentials



WELLBEING

It is no surprise that experiencing hardships such as food insecurity can cause stress and impact mental health. However, wellbeing can also obstruct the required stability and safety lives to prevent crisis.

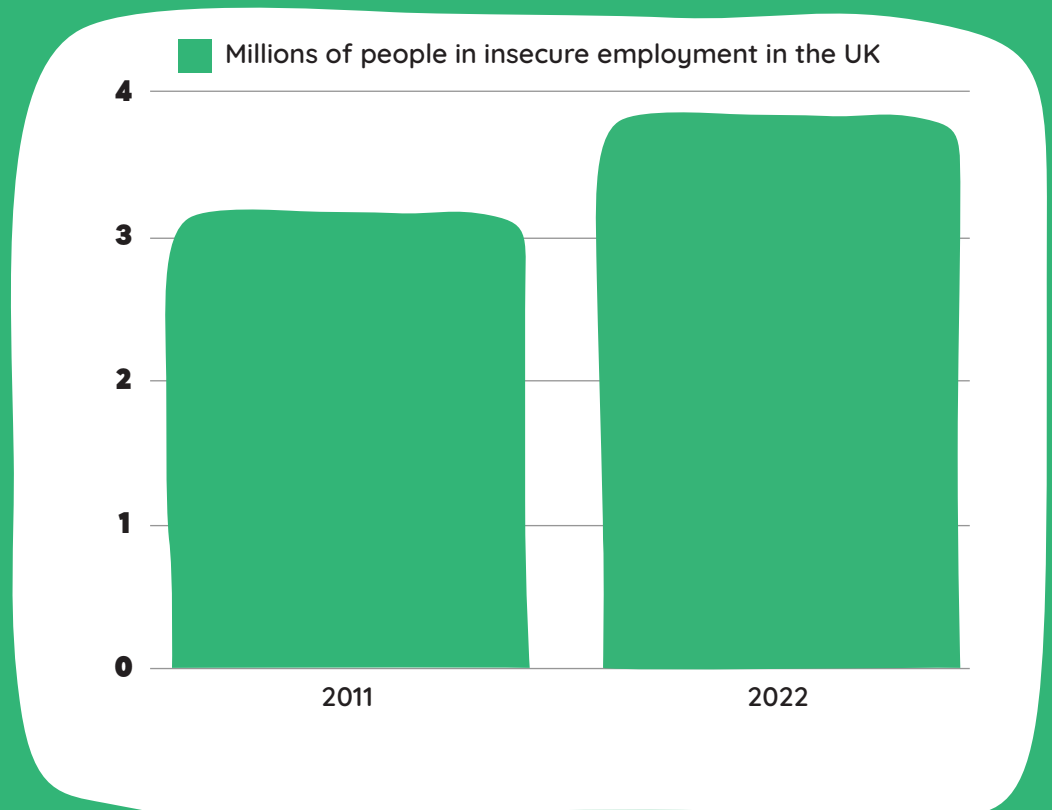
Mental health issues can make it harder to retain employment, or people may face stigmatisation in the workplace. In addition, higher frequencies of common mental disorders are associated with low educational attainment, further restricting employment opportunities. These can factor into a poorer financial state, increasing the risk of food insecurity.

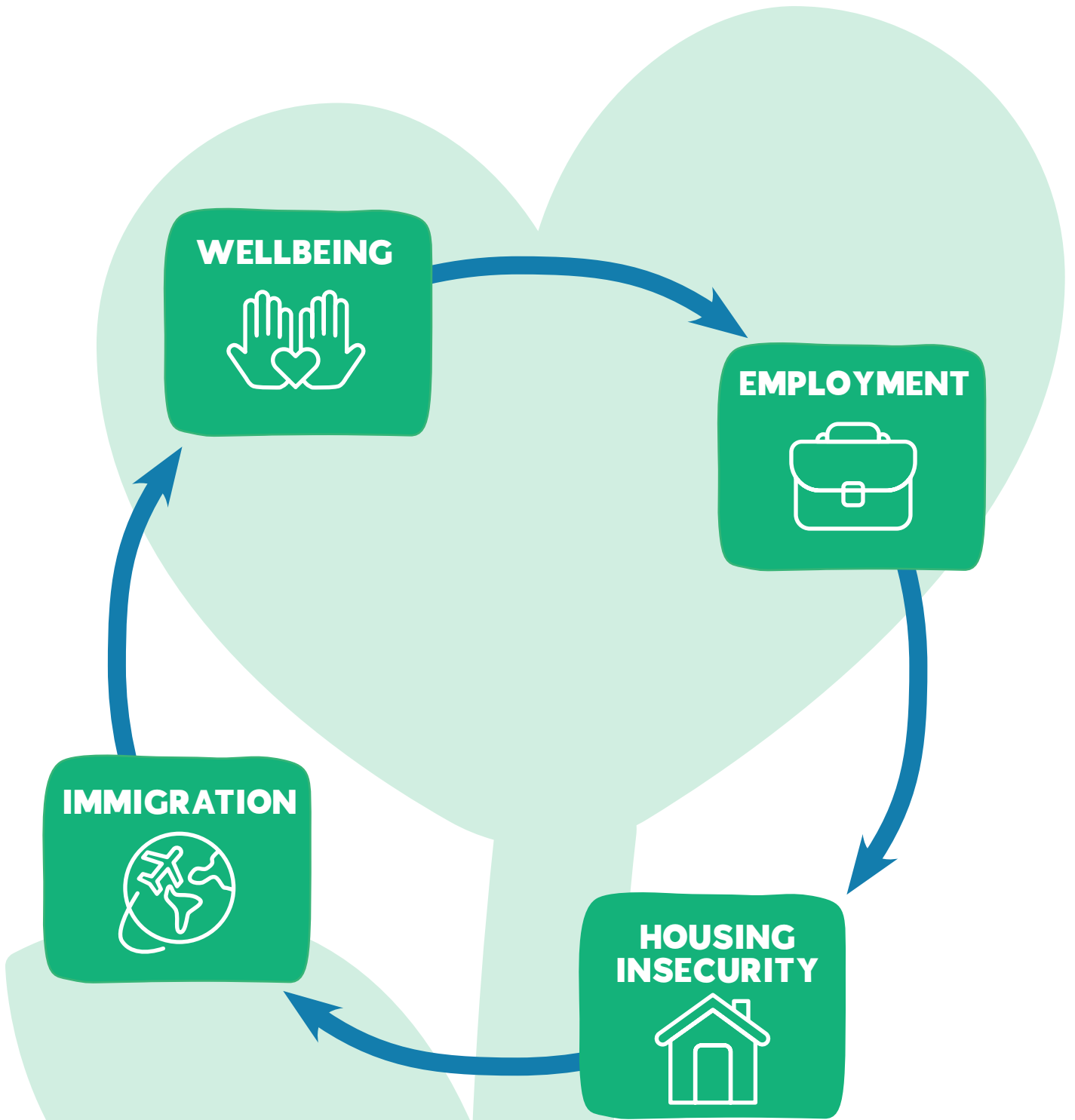


EMPLOYMENT

Just under 15% of working adults in the country experience food insecurity. The likelihood decreases for those working full-time rather than part-time, but geographical location bears a greater effect.

Insecure employment, such as zero-hour contracts or agency work, is also becoming more prevalent. Without knowing what each month's pay will look like, people are unable to effectively budget for expenses, including for essentials such as food.





ALL THESE FACTORS, AND OTHERS, OFTEN WORK TOGETHER IN A CYCLE, MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO BREAK OUT.

WHAT ARE THE OTHER BARRIERS?

We know that getting help is easier said than done, and we see lots of barriers preventing our guests from escaping food insecurity.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

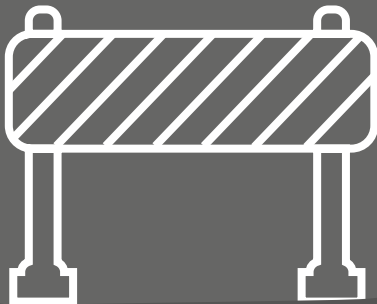
Whilst help is available to address elements of these issues in the form of government benefits or dedicated charities, there are different factors that make it harder to access. These could be language barriers, not having access to the technology required, or being overwhelmed by the amount of information.

LACK OF SUPPORT SYSTEM

When someone has to dedicate all their time and energy to coping in a tough situation, reaching out to others can end up at the bottom of the priority list. Not having that connection or knowing someone is there can severely impact mental wellbeing and can make it difficult to address other challenges.

NOT FEELING IN CONTROL

Feeling alone can leave people feeling unvalued and unworthy. Motivation can be harder to muster and leaves people believing they can't make a change.



UNEXPECTED EVENTS

Illness, family emergencies, childcare issues, and all those unpredictable things that come up in life can derail focus and make it difficult for people to address their challenges and see past their current situation. Changes of circumstance can also reset the vicious cycle right to the beginning.

STIGMA

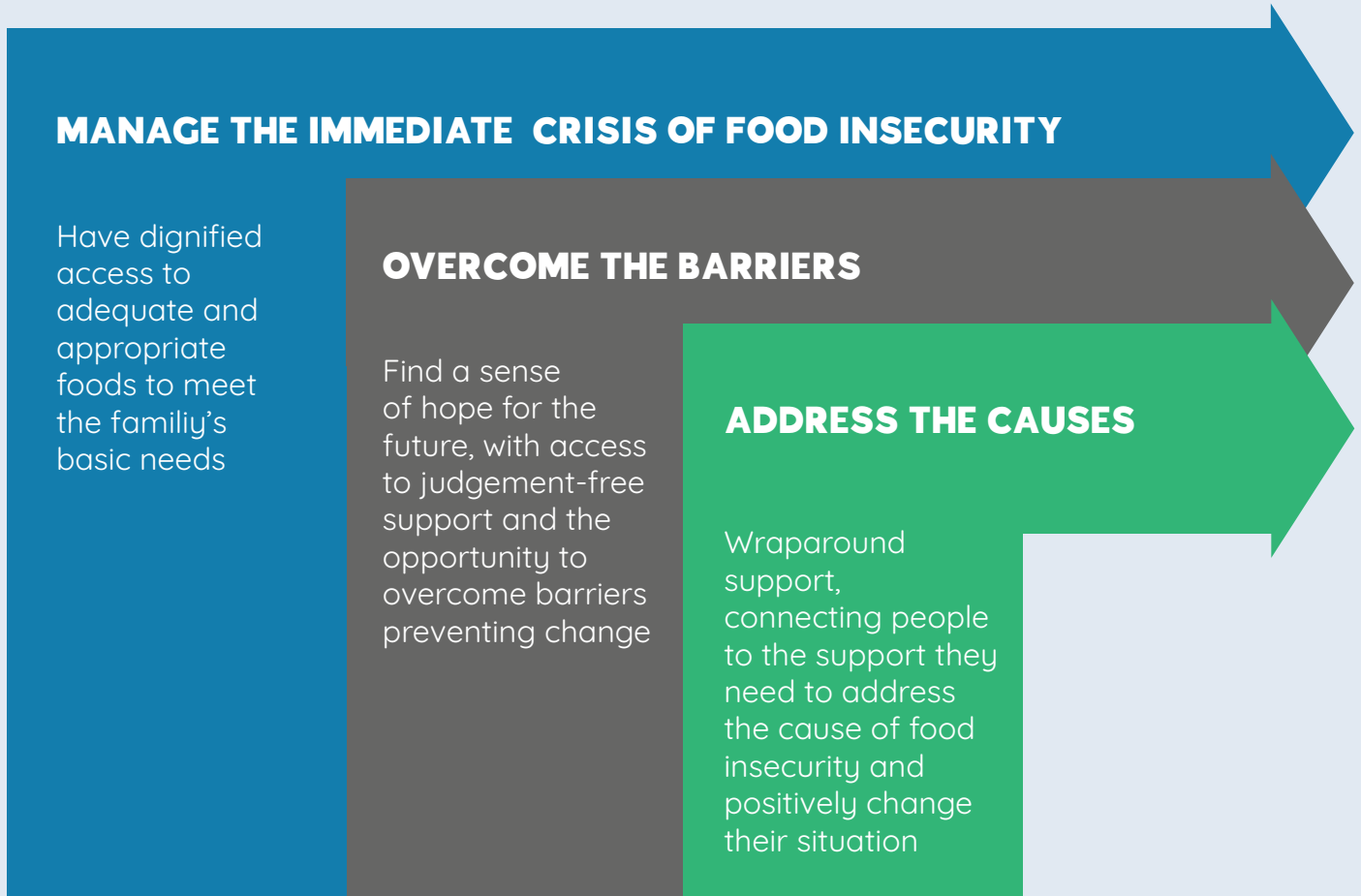
Stigma can contribute to people feeling negative and helpless, and their negative self-view can hinder their ability to improve their situation. There can be a stigma attached to Food Hubs; a negative view of food hub use can leave people feeling that they will be judged for using them.

MINDSET

When you live with food insecurity, it can feel like an indefinite situation. Though not realistically sustainable, guests may believe it's not possible to change and that they can continue coping as they are – despite negative consequences.

HOW SPRING COMMUNITY HUB WORKS

At Spring Community Hub, we support people in the community on their journey to improving their lives by helping them to manage the immediate crisis of food insecurity, overcome the barriers that are preventing them from changing their situation, and ultimately address the causes of their food insecurity.



FOODBANK

Food provision by referral in a dignified space

SOCIAL SUPERMARKET

A free membership model for reduced cost groceries

BACK2WORK

Targeted advice and support to improve a guest's situation

HOLIDAY CLUB

Activities for children and their families when school is out

SPRING KITCHEN

Hot, healthy, and school standard meals for our projects and beyond

SPRING UP WOMEN

Various sessions and workshops for women in our community

THE IMPACT OF OUR WORK

We help our guests to move towards a future where they can live with dignity, make the most of opportunities, and feel positive about their future.

1 **MANAGE THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS OF FOOD INSECURITY**

2 **OVERCOME THE BARRIERS**

3 **ADDRESS THE CAUSES**

We're not just a food bank – we're a food bank with a difference, that's one of our slogans. We offer them a way out of the poverty they're in.

SCH Staff

1 **MANAGE THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS OF FOOD INSECURITY**

Have dignified access to adequate and appropriate foods to meet the family's basic needs.

CRISIS PROVISION

Our Food Bank runs sessions five days a week across four centres. On average we see 120 people per week. Our guests have the choice of culturally appropriate foods and can take home a parcel of food to last seven days.

5,742

Individuals referred
in the last year

2,980

Parcels distributed in
the last year

34

Referral Partners

HELP IN THE HOLIDAYS

Our Holiday Clubs are open to all, with an easy QR registration process. Many holiday clubs don't have the facilities to provide meals and require families to bring in packed lunches, which can prevent those in the most need from attending. We provide holiday learning, food, and play for families in every school holiday, including half term. Through our Spring Kitchen, we provide hot, nutritious, school standard meals for children who may not be able to eat well at home.

13

Holiday Clubs

1,109

Children Supported
in 2023 so far

4,375

Meals Provided in
2023 so far

I do get told on a regular basis how grateful people are just to have a service where they can just walk up the road, no bus fare included, no lunch money included you know, their kids are occupied for a couple of hours and fed.

SCH Staff



To address the food insecurity many families were experiencing during the holidays, Spring Community Hub initially provided food vouchers in the absence of free school meals. However, we soon realised the need was greater. Financial concerns of entertainment outside of school meant children stayed at home, bored and unengaged. Our Holiday Club exists as a place for both children and parents to go where everything is already accounted for.

This year has seen the introduction of two new Holiday Clubs catered to children of working parents. Running from 7am-6pm, parents can save money on childcare costs that can then be used for other essentials such as food, clothing, and bills.

We've got two working parent clubs and that is like a godsend, childcare costs at least a grand a month for most families.

SCH Staff

A SAFE SPACE

In the current cost-of-living crisis, children are affected; not just in the obvious context of higher prices for food and energy bills at home, but also seeing the impact of pressure on their parents – especially those who were already struggling. Our Holiday Club provides a reprieve from the stress for the whole family.

I feel like it's a safe space where we can all come together

SCH Guest

It's fun, it helps us socialise and it's so it helps us with like speaking skills that will be valuable to us in the future.

SCH Guest

We do yoga, fitness, we also do lots of arts and crafts, and we can go to the park, and they give us nice food to eat.

SCH Guest

If you're at the same place over and over again it gets boring, so they go ahead and take us outside, makes us feel better.

SCH Guest

The beach trip – some children have never been to the beach; some children won't get a break this summer.

SCH Staff

With a variety of activities on offer, catered to different age groups and needs, children's enrichment is maintained outside of the classroom, reducing the 'Summer Slide' – the loss of knowledge from the school year over the holidays. It also gives them the chance to develop social skills and make new friends when time out of school could previously lead to loneliness and isolation. Activities are chosen according to what children want and need, including gardening, jewellery making, technology workshops, and everything in between.

Children highlighted trips out as a prominent part of their time at Holiday Club, emphasising the need for children to see new places and have new experiences. Visits range from theme parks to cultural venues such as the National Gallery and Tower of London, and the summer club always culminates in a day out to the beach.



1

MANAGE THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS OF FOOD INSECURITY

2

OVERCOME THE BARRIERS

Find a sense of hope for the future, with access to judgement-free support and the opportunity to overcome barriers preventing change.

MORE THAN A FOOD BANK

The way that we provide support is just as important as the support itself. Despite increased prevalence of food insecurity, stigma remains both internally and in society. By creating a safe, welcoming space, guests at Spring Community Hub feel better about walking through the door.

When people walk through the door, the way we nurture them, it's very key, the way we will make them feel welcome, the way we make them feel comfortable for them to open up. Because if they don't open up, we'll not know what the underlying cause is, we'll just give them food and go.

SCH Staff

A judgement-free zone allows a guest to be truly nurtured. Knowing they will be listened to and supported, guests are enabled to tackle issues beyond immediate crisis. Barriers that have prevented change before can be examined and worked through together.

It's the client that drives the way we go so we need to just always go back [...] why is the car not moving.

SCH Staff

Since coming to Spring, I've just voiced my opinion more and just had fun without feeling like somebody's judging me.

SCH Guest



A lot of people come here because people tell other people about this place and then, when they hear it, everyone comes.

SCH Guest

We are your friends; we are Spring Community

SCH Staff



Meeting new people from different backgrounds in life increases understanding, furthering social skills and confidence of our guests. They can then take these skills and apply them to other parts of their life, helping to break out of negative cycles.



[You get] to know people in general because you get to experience many people's views and their cultures and the way they think stuff so it's just nice to have a variety of different people [...] makes you like realise that you can still all get along even being different.

SCH Guest

Helps my social life [...] helps me have friends with my age and also older ages and also younger ages as well and it just makes me feel very comfortable and it makes me feel like a big community.

SCH Guest

A TRUSTED PARTNER

People come to us with a whole host of different circumstances and issues. Spring Community Hub partners with various other groups and organisations so we can point people to the help best for them. A platform that listens to them and is easier to approach than other services: signposting coming from a friendly face means guests can trust they will be receiving the support they need.

Our partners include:

**CITIZENS
ADVICE**

**SOUTH LONDON
REFUGEE
ASSOCIATION**

**SOUTHWARK
COUNCIL**

**WEA -
WORKERS'
EDUCATIONAL
ASSOCIATION**

Partnership is key because obviously some of the services are out there, it's not like we are replicating what is out there already. We are just collaborating just to speed up people's process.

SCH Staff

We help to ease some of the frustrations our guests have with other services, especially when there is a long waiting list for support. We provide people with immediate support and a listening ear, as well as easing the process to access other services, for example by holding sessions from Citizens Advice and South London Refugee Association in-house at our Hub.

Our partners also benefit from our collaboration. We have been able to provide existing holiday clubs with food, whilst they give us the spaces to branch out and reach more of the community. Our Spring Kitchen chefs, who cook all of our holiday club meals, have worked with many other groups, such as Southwark Arts, to showcase diverse ranges of food and creating further awareness of our projects.

It's a process that works

SCH Staff



HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Guests who arrive at Spring Community Hub often feel that they are stuck in an indefinite situation of food insecurity and hold a lack of hope for the future. Some guests are also fearful that changes to their situation, for example by entering employment, will leave them without the support that they currently rely on. Our aim is to show our guests that it is possible for them to make positive changes to improve their situation. We help them to discover and develop their skills so that they can feel positive about themselves, developing a sense of hope for the future.

They help engage you, and through that process you kind of discover the kind of talent that you have.

SCH Staff

It's helping them to improve

SCH Staff



1

MANAGE THE IMMEDIATE CRISIS OF FOOD INSECURITY

2

OVERCOME THE BARRIERS

3

ADDRESS THE CAUSES

Wraparound support, connecting people to the support they need to address the causes of food insecurity and positively change their situation.

REACHING THE ROOTS

In collaboration with our partners, we aim to provide our guests with the wraparound support they need to address the causes of their food insecurity so that they can move positively beyond their current situation.

We help by providing support specific to the guest's circumstance. All staff and volunteers have access to a growing library of resources to cover many different issues.

The key areas we help our guests to address include:

EMPLOYMENT



IMMIGRATION



HOUSING



WELLBEING



EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Many people who come to us have struggled with employment for a long time. Even when a job is found, there are further hurdles to clear such as secure hours, a liveable wage, and having the skills and confidence to succeed in the role. Beyond this, individual circumstances can restrict available opportunities.

104

Guests Receiving Employment Support (Apr '22-Mar '23)

Our Back2Work scheme helps guests to improve their employability, by providing practical support through employability and CV workshops, assisting with job applications, advising on educational and training options, and providing guidance to accessing English courses. We also support our guests to develop skills and experiences that will support their future employment prospects.

We also have lots of volunteering opportunities and guests can gain valuable experience helping out with our projects!

Some parents [...] they've ended up being volunteers. [They have been] given responsibilities and taken them on amazingly.

SCH Staff

IMMIGRATION SUPPORT

Immigration status can complicate the pathways to support. Having to wait for documentation to come through before being able to secure work, benefits, or housing leaves people stuck in limbo. Irregular immigration statuses can also prevent people from seeking any help at all, unsure of how or if the government and other services will be willing to support them.

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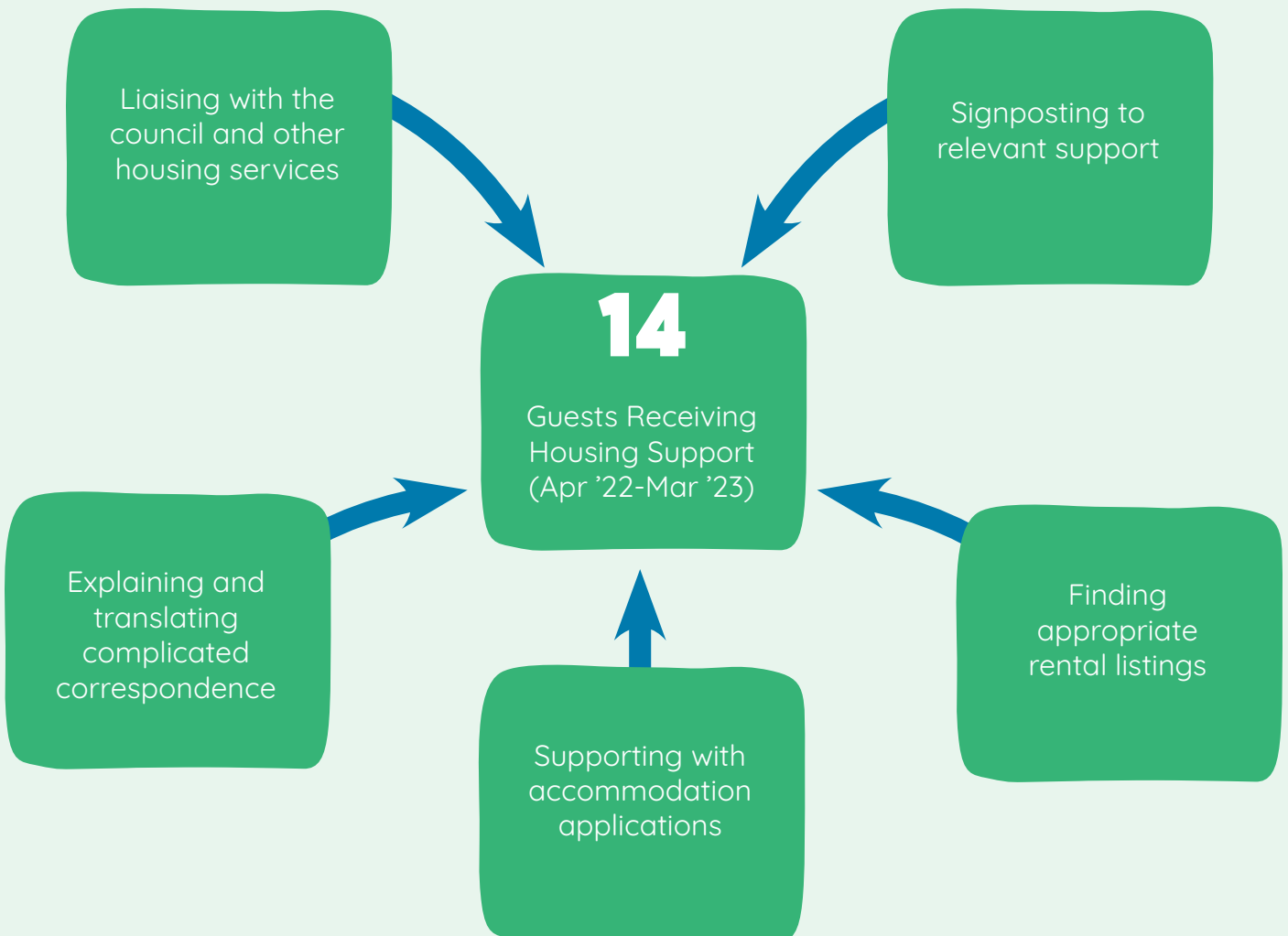
Guests Receiving Immigration Support (Apr '22-Mar '23)

We had gone through all the channels, it was a long process, it's not like it happens overnight, but the fact that she's got her papers now [...] that is the end result, that's it, she never needs a food bank again.

SCH Staff

HOUSING SUPPORT

Whether living in privately rented accommodation or social housing, people's living situations can be insecure and sometimes the conditions they live in may fall short of their basic needs. Many people we help live in temporary accommodation, or don't have any fixed address at all.



WELLBEING SUPPORT

Mental wellbeing is hard to maintain when your focus is on survival and overcoming day to day challenges. Managing long-term health conditions or difficult family dynamics can add even more strain to a tough situation, especially in cases that put someone's safety in jeopardy such as domestic violence or being at risk of being deported.

We provide emotional support by being a consistent contact and a listening ear, helping each guest focus on their individual needs and making sure they understand their worth.

32

Guests Receiving Wellbeing Support (Apr '22-Mar '23)

Cassandra* was initially helped by us regarding employment. She worked directly with our volunteers to improve her CV, and we guided her to specific applications suited to her career goals. Cassandra was applying to vacancies when a close family member was unfortunately admitted to hospital with Covid-19. Our volunteers were there to reassure her as she was worried about how this would delay her progress. She was able to continue with her job search for a short time before she fell pregnant and began suffering complications, meaning she would be unable to work. As money became tighter, her stress increased, and eventually surmounted to panic attacks. She called us and the volunteer was able to guide her through breathing and relaxing exercises. After being signposted to her GP, Cassandra started receiving further mental health support and mentioned how she had been using the techniques we taught her to manage her anxiety.

* Story of a Back2Work guest, developed from case notes and testimonial. Name has been changed to protect their identity

The process was really fantastic, the Hub were very helpful checking on me all the time, when I was down, they always call back, really there for me.

They were ever caring; I had the thought that someone is there.

SCH Guest



We're doing something different [...] we're trying to help them. To not be dependent on a food bank. [...] We offer self-defence classes, we do sewing classes [...] give them confidence in themselves.

SCH Staff

I feel like everything they give us is tendered to what we need in terms of in our society.

SCH Guest

We wrote down what we want and she tailored it to what we actually need [...] most of the things we want are actually there.

SCH Guest

SPRING UP WOMEN

Spring Up Women is our women's group, was created out of the need identified through our guests.

Different sessions and activities run under this umbrella, from domestic violence awareness workshops to ESOL courses to sewing classes.

INCREASING INDEPENDENCE

Our aim at Spring Community Hub is for everyone to live an independent and healthy life. We help people develop the skills, resilience, and confidence to enact change themselves.

Many of our projects focus on what our guests tell us they want or need, rather than us assuming for them. Making their voices heard from the very first day encourages the agency we continue to foster throughout the lifespan of our support.



Last year, we did domestic violence awareness. A lot of our women they wouldn't know they have that kind of issue.

SCH Staff

We've got the sewing club which has been very popular [...] they learn how to use a sewing machine, how to repair their own clothes and how to make things from brand new, which is a good thing because they know they can get things from the second-hand market or from a clothes bank and they can adapt it to for their children.

SCH Staff

SUSTAINED SUPPORT

Though independence is the goal, we are still a **community**. With a wide range of projects, support is available at every point of a guest's journey out of food insecurity and beyond.

You're still welcome to take all those courses as well [...] this is you enhancing yourself, enhancing your skills you know enhancing your creativity as well.

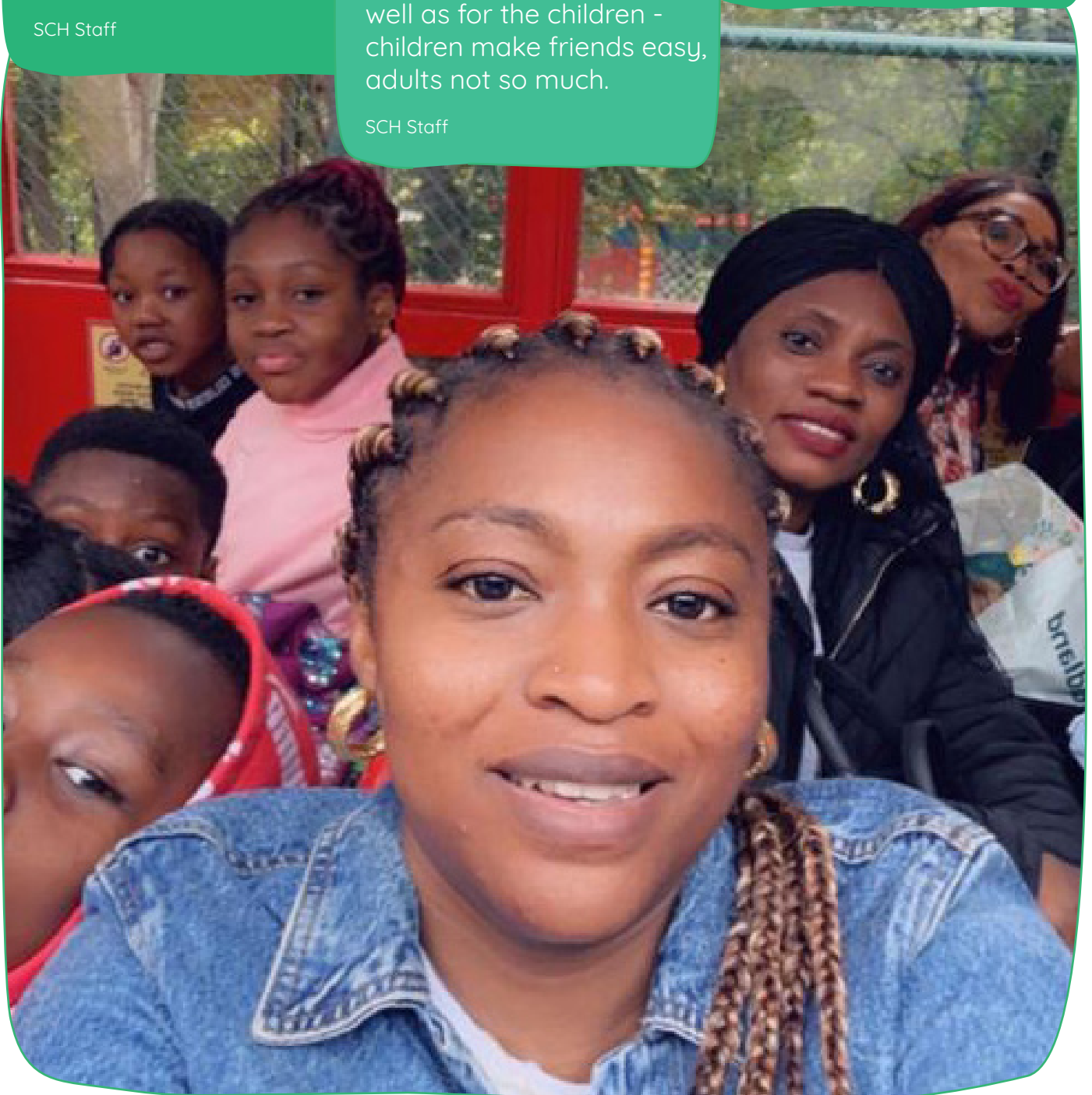
SCH Staff

We're not just a holiday club, we're here for you [...] come down, make friendships, speak to me, speak to my volunteers, you know we want this to be a social space for the mums and carers as well as for the children - children make friends easy, adults not so much.

SCH Staff

It's not just giving her food; she has a family, so she has benefitted from all of our previous projects.

SCH Staff



LOOKING FORWARD

Our work doesn't stop here. We have lots of plans to continue and expand the services we offer our community. One new element we're really excited about is our Social Supermarket!

A Social Supermarket aims to offer longer term support for those in need of food provision.



**FREE
MEMBERSHIP**



**STOCK
DISCOUNTED
AT UP TO 40%**



**WORKING
WITH EXISTING
PARTNERS**



**CONNECTING
WITH LOCAL
GARDENING
GROUPS**



**HELPING
SUPERMARKETS
NOT WASTE
SURPLUS FOOD**

Working alongside partners such as The Felix Project and Fareshare, local supermarkets, and community gardening groups, the Social Supermarket will focus on cultural, religious, and dietary suitability for our diverse community.

