

# CHEERS DRIVE



**THE FUTURE OF FOOD AID**  
BY CARING IN BRISTOL



**Caring in Bristol**

# Introduction

During the global pandemic it became clear that those without homes were extremely exposed to COVID-19 and represented a massive health vulnerability within Bristol and the UK. With this it became increasingly apparent traditional ways of providing emergency food provision to those in need had become unsafe, and out of date. From Monday 23rd March 2020 all those who were rough sleeping legally had to be provided with “self-contained accommodation spaces”, practically speaking that meant traditional emergency shelters in Bristol, including our 365 Shelter that ran a dormitory style system, were no longer safe. In an unprecedented show of collaboration the local authority and partner charities supported hundreds of Bristol’s community of people sleeping rough, and homeless in shelters to be temporarily housed in hotels, hostels and BnBs within the city.

Around 450 self-contained rooms were found in the city, across five locations and 280 people were moved into those rooms within a week. Whilst progress had been made to safely accommodate, the food provision had not been arranged. In March 2019, on any given day there would be a minimum of two pop-up voluntary food services for those rough sleeping, on good days it could be up to three or four.

These are provided by groups of volunteers, faith groups,

church halls, and community activists and usually involve large public gatherings and the simple act of a ‘soup-kitchen-style’ handouts or food packs passed over, one by one. In March 2020 the new laws in aid of flattening the pandemic’s curve, and the shielding of society’s most vulnerable meant that almost all of these food provisions disappeared, compounded by the need to physically distance and a lack of available PPE the remaining 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, this included 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 weeks. 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, made lovingly by one of Bristol’s best chefs. Josh Eggleton of The Pony and Trap, Shona Graham of Emmeline and Dom Borel from Pasta Loco.

Councillor Paul Smith, Cabinet Member for Housing said:

**“This is a really difficult time for everyone, and we are so proud that Bristol has risen to the challenge of making sure homeless people and rough sleepers have a safe and secure place to stay during the crisis.**

**The Cheers Drive initiative will be an additional lifeline, providing people with healthy, hot food and a wide security net across Bristol’s sectors.”**





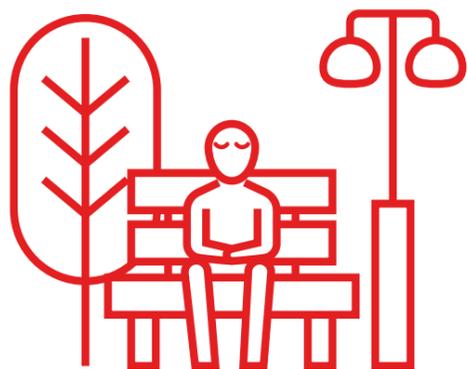
# Beneficiary Impact

Those without homes are some of the most exposed to COVID-19, not only because they do not have a safe home to self-isolate, but they are three times more likely to have a chronic health condition, and 60 times more likely to visit A&E. Conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS are found at high rates among the homeless population, sometimes three to six times higher than that of the general population. Physical distancing is near impossible given a combination of street living, shared close spaces and overnight dormitory style shelters amongst other insufficient communal arrangements.

Previously those currently sleeping rough, or homeless and not yet in contact with support, or placed into sheltered accommodation would be entirely supported by voluntary pop-up provisions scattered around the city. With volunteer groups and organisations self-isolating, working from home and staying indoors there was a dramatic and critical drop off in services for those on the street. Our clients were at serious risk of hunger, and the wellbeing support provided by these vital human interactions. Our Cheers Drive service moved with agility and professionalism to fill this gap, in a safeguarded and client-centered way.

Fortunately, very few cases of COVID-19 have been identified amongst the homeless community we care for in Bristol. Due in part to the efficiency of our project, aiding the community to self-isolate and the steps we take to ensure its hygiene. The social distancing protocols we have adhered to, as well as the processes we have adopted in the preparation and delivery of food, have allowed us to keep the project as sterile as possible. In addition, the use of PPE for staff and volunteers has prevented the spread of the virus between staff, volunteers and our beneficiaries.

**The delivery of meals has meant that our beneficiaries have not needed to venture outside for food, reducing their contact with other people and reducing their exposure to the virus. The impact of this has meant that, in the COVID-19 symptom checks we have given to beneficiaries when we deliver food, only two suspected cases of COVID-19 have been identified.**



Stats

# Beneficiary Impact

Number of locations delivered to:

**5**

COVID-19 symptom checks/health checks/wellbeing checks completed:

**12,134**

Number of individuals Cheers Drive has supported:

**716**

Total Meals delivered:

**79,813**



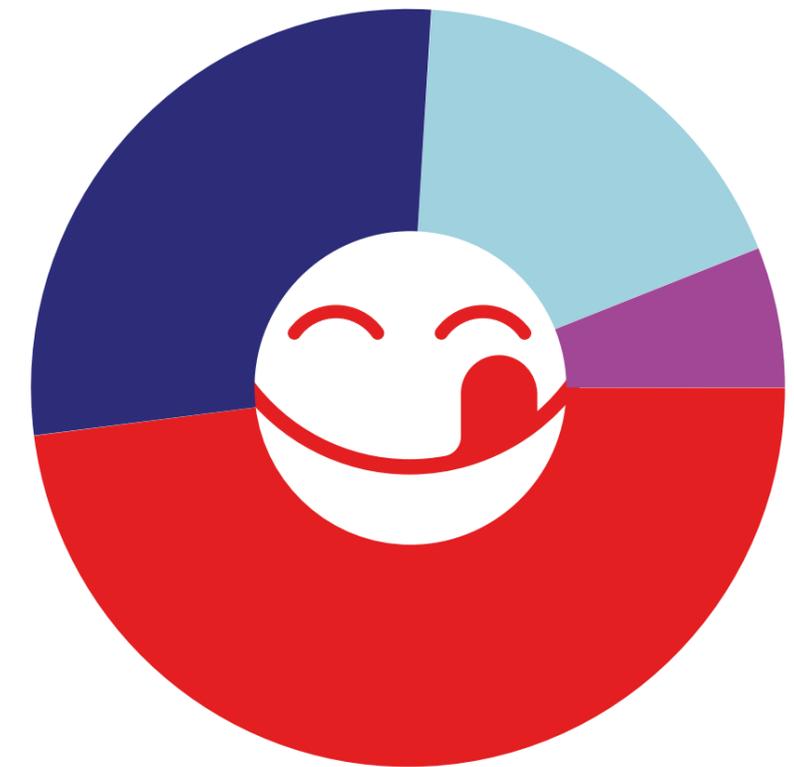
## Beneficiary Locations

**• 28%**

to those currently sleeping rough

**• 18%**

to those in hostels and shelters



**• 48%**

of meals are delivered to those temporarily housed in hotels in the city

**• 6%**

is delivered to vulnerably housed individuals

Quotes

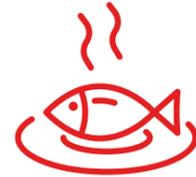
# Beneficiary Impact

"Thanks very much. Like the sausage sarnie."



"Brilliant!"

"You've kept me alive!"



"It's lovely, thank you"

"Good variety"



"Yesterday's rice and chicken was lovely!"

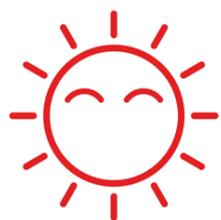


# Volunteer Support

Caring in Bristol's vision is a city empowered to solve homelessness. Our genesis story places volunteers at the very core of our work. Caring in Bristol was formed in 1987 by a group of ordinary Bristolians who were horrified by the sight of people sleeping rough on cold winter streets. The solution was simple - use as many volunteers as possible, source everything for free, and bring everyone together to make the biggest possible difference for people experiencing homelessness.

We've grown a lot since then, we've learned from our past, and our work is more informed and better reflects the complexity of the people we work with. But the charity is still powered by the same thing - an ever expanding group of community volunteers and supporters that care about the inequalities in our city.

Within Cheers Drive, our volunteers are once again taking on an empowered central role, and their dedication has contributed immensely to the success of the project so far. The project is only possible thanks to this team who are coordinated by Caring in Bristol staff and other collaborating organisations and restaurants.



Together they are providing high quality, nutritious food, and providing wellbeing checks and support daily. Since we began in March, 96 distribution volunteers and 52 kitchen volunteers have dedicated 9,121 hours of time to Cheers Drive. That's 1,831 hours of collecting ingredients, distributing food and cleaning, and 7,290 hours of prepping delicious meals.

Eve Russell Cheers Drive project manager says,

**"We have an amazing community of volunteers collecting, delivering and distributing the food to locations all across Bristol as well as personally delivering to individuals who are being housed in B&Bs or hostels.**

**We have been overwhelmed by the voluntary support from Bristol, and currently have around 150 volunteers working on the Cheers Drive project. We really couldn't created Cheers Drive if it weren't for their valued support."**



Stats

# Volunteers

Total Kitchen  
Volunteers

**52**

Number of hours  
volunteered

**9,121**

When surveyed our  
volunteers rated their  
experience volunteering  
with us as

**9/10**

Total number of  
volunteers

**148**

Total number of  
volunteer shifts

**2,918**

Total monetary value  
of volunteer hours if  
we paid them at the  
living wage

**£91,209**

Total Distribution  
Volunteers

**96**



# Volunteers



"I'm proud and delighted to be part of the team. Big ups our mighty selves!"

"I am retired from my 'proper' job, and only do a few hours admin work each week, currently from home, so I have plenty of time to volunteer. It's an important part of my week, and gets me out of the house with some human contact. I enjoy it! Thank you for the opportunity."

"The project is really well organised and coordinated and everyone works really hard. Everyone is also really friendly and nice."

"Good project; well supported. Happy to be a part of it."



# Food and Donations

Every homeless person who is placed by Bristol City Council into isolation accommodation is provided for by Cheers Drive. Each individual is receiving one Cheers Drive delivery per day, including one freshly cooked hot meal, as well as a packed lunch and breakfast, delivered to their door. People supporting the project are encouraged to buy a takeaway for someone who is homeless.

The Cheers Drive food is provided by the brains behind Bristol hospitality legends **Emmeline, Pasta Loco, Salt and Malt, Pony and Trap, The Hatch and Bianchi's**. Josh Eggleton of Pony and Trap, Salt and Malt and Channel 4 manages the three kitchens producing food for the project across Bristol, including his own at The Kensington Arms. He has help from Shona Graham of Emmeline and the Hatch at Spike Island alongside Dominic Borel of Pasta Loco. Ingredients have been provided by FareShare South West and local restaurant donations.

Donations are also being encouraged from the the Bristol public, Trusts and Foundations and local food producers. One of the innovative qualities adding value to Cheers Drive was its immediate support for the local hospitality industry, that has also been dramatically affected by COVID-19. Caring in Bristol are proud to work with these local stakeholders, and to further our meaningful partnerships. By supporting Cheers Drive, you're also supporting Bristol's hospitality scene.



## Quotes

# Food and Donations



### Josh Eggleton, Pony & Trap:

“Coronavirus has caused a massive shock to the hospitality industry. 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. In times of crisis it’s great to pick up relationships with people in the city and after working with Caring in Bristol at Christmas I was keen to work with them on Cheers Drive to reach as many vulnerable people as possible. We are doing so in the safest manner possible. Safe for our volunteers, staff and those we’re feeding.”

### Kat Caldwell, Caring in Bristol, Cheers Drive Operations Manager:

“Traditional food projects for those experiencing homelessness rely on large public gatherings, soup-kitchen style handouts and unfortunately, they are no longer safe, so we wanted to rethink the narrative about the quality of food people were served. Caring in Bristol were proud to partner with Bristol’s hospitality industry to create Cheers Drive that will deliver quality cooked meals daily from some of Bristol’s best chefs and restaurants, and also it’s great to support an industry that has always helped us in the past.”

### Shona Graham, Emmeline, Who cooks over 200 meals each day:

“It was a shock to have to close down like it was for everyone in the industry. In my cafes the focus is bringing joy & nourishment to the day with vibrant & wholesome food made & served with love. Now I’m hoping we can bring a bit of relief to the people who receive one of our meals. We are so proud to be helping Caring in Bristol to deliver food to vulnerable people in our community. Obviously, we have been overwhelmed by requests to help and with donations from the industry and from individuals- because that’s the brilliance of Bristol.”

### Dominic Borel, Pasta Loco, Who cooks over 200 meals each day:

“At the moment every day presents a different challenge which we are having to adapt to. We have gone from a city thriving in great food and support. The fact that now, our doors are closed does not mean we cannot steer this food and support in the direction of those that truly need it. When Josh asked us to work with Caring in Bristol it was great to see how we can pull together and help those that are vulnerable. In these uncertain times the only thing we are sure about is that people need help so we must do whatever we can to support them. Together.”



Stats

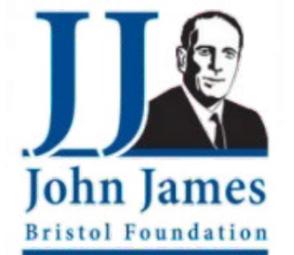
# Food and Donations



# Partners

Cheers Drive would not have been possible without the overwhelming generosity and commitment of many businesses and supporters.

To everyone involved, thank you.





# Caring in Bristol

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