

**Nationwide support for older
people living at home**



Holyrood elections 2021

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About Food Train

Food Train makes life better, safer and easier for older people living in their own homes in Scotland by providing a range of practical, social and emotional support.

Our charity, established in 1995, brings people together through food, ensuring that by eating well, they live well. We do this through specialist targeted services which address specific needs in our communities, from grocery deliveries and meal-making to jobs around the home and social events. Our service areas are: Shopping, At Home, Friends, Library, Eat Well Age Well, Meal Makers and Connects.

We are committed to making a real and sustainable difference in our communities, working with others to achieve this. We aim to expand the reach of our work to ensure that older people have the support they need - when they need - while also tackling the causes of malnutrition in Scotland and acting as a champion for older people's needs.

Find out more at www.thefoodtrain.co.uk

The issues

Unacceptable numbers of older people across Scotland are at risk of malnutrition - as many as 30%, according to our data. They suffer because of food insecurity. Many of those same people also suffer due to social isolation. Food insecurity in adults below pension age is largely as a result of financial poverty. Food insecurity in older people is multi-faceted and driven by reduced mobility and transport, reduced food access, social isolation, bereavement, dementia and frailty.

Following years of cuts to social care provision, there exists an unjust postcode lottery of support across Scotland for older people to access food. Real, meaningful action is required to understand the reasons behind food security and to tackle them. Issues surrounding the fundamental right to food - and the worrying number of older people across Scotland not having that - need to be more widely recognised and better understood. Malnutrition among older people is too often overlooked in favour of more dominant public health messages surrounding diet and obesity.

This puts an unnecessary strain on the NHS and social care services through the increases in frailty and falls that malnutrition causes, not to mention the mental health issues caused both by this and social isolation. Successive governments have ignored medical evidence supporting how vital food and nutrition is to our survival and health.



The Covid-19 pandemic created unprecedented demand for Food Train's shopping service - with a 70% increase in older people being supported by our volunteers at its peak. Our numbers remain 51% higher than this time in 2020. But, while one of the consequences of coronavirus has been to increase demand for Food Train's services, the outbreak did not create the problems that exist in this respect. They simply shone a spotlight on them - and the need for them to be solved.

The solution

A Scottish Government-funded national shopping service to support older people, tackling inequality and ending the postcode lottery of service provision across the country.

The recently-published Social Renewal Board Report - *If Not Now, When?* - pointed to the essential social purpose that such action would address, not least in ensuring older people have rights to basic goods and services and in creating a fairer society. It rightly reinforced the fact that food security was a significant concern before Covid-19.

Crucially, one of the calls to action is for Government to ensure everyone has access to nutritious, culturally appropriate, and affordable food. The work of Food Train features as a case study.

The report highlighted the need for Government to work alongside anchor organisations to engage with older people who can often miss out on "standard" approaches with overlook various issues and stated: "To overcome non-financial barriers to accessing food, particularly for older and disabled people, there is a need to invest for the long-term in local shopping and meal delivery services."

Our ask

We are urging all political parties to pledge in their Scottish Parliamentary manifestos to:

- Ensure local food access, supported by national infrastructure - a universal service with secure investment which would allow opportunities for older people to eat, shop or cook with others. The services, rather than the provider, are the critical point at this stage. However, to help assess costs, we estimate that rolling the Food Train model currently operating in nine local authority regions to all 32 would require:
 - An estimated £3m-a-year to fund and operate the rollout.
 - A transition programme of funding for those 7 local authorities who already commission our charity's services.
 - For a long-term funding programme to be committed to in order to give this service the chance to make a difference.



- Commit into policy a mandatory requirement for community screening to detect early signs of malnutrition in older people living at home for all statutory agencies with a role in supporting older people, with accredited and approved training on malnutrition and unintentional weight loss embedded into basic requirements for all health and social care professionals.
- Pledge to ensure all policy practice and research needs take account of the fact that food poverty and food insecurity are not the same for vulnerable older people as it is for other age groups.
- Commit to ensuring all older Scots have the right to food that supports their health and wellbeing.

To find out more

We would be pleased to speak to your party, your leaders and candidates to discuss the difference that Food Train can make in all of Scotland's communities. Please email michelle@thefoodtrain.co.uk or call 01387 270800 / 07732 974480 to arrange.





www.mealmakers.org.uk

www.thefoodtrain.co.uk

www.eatwellagewell.org.uk

www.foodtrainconnects.org.uk

Dumfries & Galloway

**Hestan Southwest, The Crichton, Bankend Road, Dumfries, DG1 4TA
Tel: 01387 270800**

Dundee

**Unit 9, Attic Floor, Balgray Works, Balgray Place, Dundee, DD3 8SH
Tel: 01382 810944**

Glasgow

**Unit 13 Govanhill Workspace, 69 Dixon Road, Glasgow, G42 8AT
Tel: 0141 423 1722**

**Refrewshire & East
Renfrewshire**

**Unit Studio 53 Old Embroidery Mill, Seedhill Road, Paisley, PA1 1TJ
Tel: 0141 887 255748**

**Stirling &
Clackmannanshire**

**Office 18, John Player Building, Enterprise Park, Stirling, FK7 7RP
Tel: 01786 450536**

Scottish Borders

**Overhaugh Street, Galashiels, TD1 1DP
Tel: 01896 751750**

West Lothian

**2A, 3 Michaelson Square, Livingston, EH54 7DP
Tel: 01506 413013**

Meal Makers

**2/6A, Brook Street Studio, 60 Brook Street, Glasgow, G40 2AB
Tel: 0141 551 811**

Eat Well Age Well

**111 Oxfangs Road North, Edinburgh, EH14 1ED
Tel: 0131 447 8151**

Connects

Tel: 0800 304 7924 Email: connects@foodtrainconnects.org.uk