

# Invitation to Tender (ITT) for evaluation of the Nourishing Norfolk programme

Norfolk Community Foundation  
March 2024

**Deadline: 12 Noon, Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

## 1. Summary

For the past two years, the Nourishing Norfolk programme, led by Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF), has been working with local partners to develop food hubs in Norfolk's most deprived neighbourhoods. Nourishing Norfolk brings together partners from all sectors, providing support and advice to help combat food insecurity and signpost people to wider support.

Through the generous support of the National Lottery Community Fund, we are able to commission an external evaluation of the programme, which aims to understand:

- The difference that the programme has made to people and communities in Norfolk.
- The opportunities that exist to further develop the programme to meet existing or emerging needs.
- The value and impact of support leveraged through the programme.
- What we can learn from the way that the programme has been set up and delivered to inform NCF's wider work.

We are looking for an experienced research team to partner with us to undertake this evaluation.

## 2. Project timescales

<b>Project timescale</b>	Approximately 12 months from June 2024 to May 2025
<b>Primary contact</b>	Katy Rutherford, Director of Insight and Innovation
<b>Deadline for tender proposals</b>	12 noon, Thursday 18th April 2024
<b>Interviews to be held</b>	Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2024
<b>Notification of decision</b>	By Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024
<b>Approximate budget</b>	£80,000

## 3. Background to Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF)

Norfolk Community Foundation is a charity dedicated to building stronger communities and improving the lives of people in Norfolk, with a focus on tackling inequalities and providing support and opportunities to those who are disadvantaged or under-represented.

We do this by:

- Encouraging local giving and using our unique local insight and knowledge to direct support to where it is most needed.
- Providing funding for community projects designed and led by local people.
- Brokering skills support and pro bono professional services to support local organisations' resilience and growth.
- Acting as a voice for Norfolk's charitable sector to raise awareness and unlock investment.
- Creating networks, relationships and partnerships to tackle key community challenges through collaboration and achieve wider impact.

#### **4. Background to the Nourishing Norfolk programme**

Nourishing Norfolk's mission is to make sure no one in Norfolk goes hungry. Through 24 food hubs situated in Norfolk's most deprived communities, people can put together a basket of affordable food that is typically 40% cheaper than the average budget supermarket, as well as accessing wider support to address any issues they may be facing.

Providing members with a range of foods to purchase separates food hubs from emergency food provision models, where people are given food without the option to choose what they receive. Shopping in food hubs ensures people have dignity, choice and control.

If a member needs support which is beyond the capacity of food hub staff, they can be signposted to other services. Across the food hubs, these include services such as Citizens Advice Bureau, debt advice, job clubs, and budgeting courses. The relationship that is built between staff and members means that the referral to other services is done by someone who is trusted by members. The ability for food hubs to do a trusted referral is especially important for people who might not have the confidence to contact an organisation on their own or is reluctant due to their previous experiences.

The hubs are established and run by people in their local communities. They decide the design of the hub and the approach to reaching communities is determined by these local teams. This has resulted in varying delivery models – from a hub based in an existing community centre on a housing estate in Great Yarmouth to a mobile food store on a bus which supplies food to rural villages throughout Breckland – which are highly tailored to the needs and preferences of the local community.

Beyond food support, Nourishing Norfolk's food hubs have become central points for communities to come together to support each other. Across the programme, over 160 volunteers give over 1,500 hours per month to contribute to the hubs in different ways, from greeting people at the door and serving at the tills, through to cleaning and restocking shelves.

The hubs also help to connect people to each other, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation and helping to build confidence.

Some of the voluntary and community groups involved in the programme have used the food hub as a springboard for building other community assets within the local area. For example, the Swan Youth Project, which runs the food hub in Downham Market, has supported a group of young people to set up a second-hand clothing project, enabling them to access fashionable clothes on a budget.

To date, Nourishing Norfolk has supported over 28,000 people (10,000 households) through 24 food hubs across the county.

## **5. Evaluation specification**

Through this Invitation to Tender (ITT), we are looking for a partner to work with Norfolk Community Foundation to carry out both a process and impact evaluation of the Nourishing Norfolk programme.

The overall research objective is to understand the impact of the Nourishing Norfolk programme on people and communities and what we can learn from the way that it was delivered to inform our future work at Norfolk Community Foundation.

Our research objectives are:

### **1. To understand the difference that the programme has made to people and communities in Norfolk.**

- Who uses the Nourishing Norfolk food hubs any why? Where have they heard about it, where have they come from?
- To what extent does Nourishing Norfolk meet its core objective of preventing people from going hungry?
- Does Nourishing Norfolk act as an alternative to food banks and/or support from statutory services?
- Has Nourishing Norfolk helped people to access other support services? If so, what are these and what has the impact of this support been? Which services are most in demand?
- What impact does Nourishing Norfolk have on people's wellbeing, confidence and feelings of agency?
- What impact does Nourishing Norfolk have on people's physical health?
- Have the food hubs had an impact on people's feelings of connection to the place where they live and/or people in their local community?
- Do people feel that they received the support they needed at the right time?
- Does Nourishing Norfolk help people to overcome food insecurity? Do people move on from food hub support or do they return and why?

### **2. To quantify the value and impact of support leveraged through the programme.**

- What are the social benefits generated through Nourishing Norfolk and can these be quantified?
- To what extent does Nourishing Norfolk help to reduce demand for statutory services?
- Can the downstream benefits of the programme be quantified?

### **3. To understand what opportunities exist to further develop the programme to meet existing or emerging needs.**

- What are the limitations of the support provided through Nourishing Norfolk?
- What are the emerging needs of people using the food hubs?

- What more could be done to support people living in poverty/food insecurity to improve their health and wellbeing?

**4. To gain actionable insights into the way that the programme has been set up and delivered to inform NCF's wider work, from the perspectives of food hub staff and volunteers, the core NCF team and our partners.**

- What has worked well in the way that the programme has been set up and delivered?
- How could our approach to developing and delivering the programme be improved?
- What are the key learning points and success factors that can inform our future work and be shared with others?
- How has the community-led design of the food hubs impacted on service users' decisions to visit and seek further help?
- What have been the benefits and challenges of centralising food distribution?
- What has been the impact of taking a networked approach to delivering the programme?
- What has been the impact of specific funding streams, for example, for volunteer co-ordinators or for thematic activities such as work around literacy?

In all cases, the sub-questions listed above are not exhaustive, and we would seek to finalise our research objectives and questions with our evaluation partner.

## **6. Methodology**

We anticipate that this evaluation will be a mixed methods study, involving both qualitative and quantitative research.

Suggested evaluation activities may include:

- In-depth interviews with food hub staff and volunteers.
- In-depth interviews with people accessing the food hubs.
- Ethnographic fieldwork/observational research in the food hubs.
- Training and support to local people to act as trusted communicators and peer researchers in capturing people's stories and experiences.
- Other creative and participatory methods.
- Analysis of statutory service data and financial modelling.
- Mapping of service users to understand where they come from and which services they are most likely to access after visiting the food hub.

We are open to proposals suggesting additional or alternative methods to obtain information to help meet the objectives of this evaluation. We strongly welcome proposals that support a participatory/collaborative approach and demonstrate how people with lived experience and other stakeholders (e.g. volunteers, food hub managers) can be involved in research design, delivery and interpretation.

## 7. Outputs

The key deliverables for this project are:

- A written report setting out findings from the evaluation, including the impact of the programme and insights into the delivery approach.
- Evaluation findings in a concise and accessible format.
- A slide deck with key findings and recommendations for local and national stakeholders.
- Online briefings for Norfolk Community Foundation, Nourishing Norfolk food hubs, and wider stakeholders to share findings.

We welcome creative ideas from the evaluation partner on how we can use the evaluation findings for the benefit of the Nourishing Norfolk communities and stakeholders.

## 8. Expected experience

In addition to experience of carrying out similar evaluations using relevant methods, we are particularly interested in proposals that can demonstrate:

- Experience of mixed methods research and evaluation.
- Knowledge and practical experience of supporting peer-led research.
- Understanding and experience of working sensitively and empathetically with communities experiencing poverty and/or food insecurity.
- A positive, asset-based approach that offers value to the communities involved as well as NCF, our funders and supporters.
- A strong ethical framework for the project.

We are open to applications from partnerships/consortia that can bring different skills and experience to the evaluation.

## 9. Indicative timetable

The proposed project timetable is as follows:

Dates	Timetable
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	ITT published
12 Noon, Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Proposals submitted to Norfolk Community Foundation
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2024	Invitation to interview
Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2024	Interviews with shortlisted suppliers at Norfolk Community Foundation
By Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024	Notification of decision
3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2024	Project commencement
31 <sup>st</sup> May 2025	Proposed project end date

## 10. Milestones and indicative budget

Payments will be released in stages alongside agreed milestones, providing these have been met. Milestones will be developed and included in the contract with the evaluator, based on the successful proposal.

The proposed budget for the evaluation is up to £80,000 including all expenses and travel costs (including VAT).

## 11. How to apply

Please submit your full proposal by 12:00 (noon) (GMT) on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April by email to [katyrutherford@norfolkfoundation.com](mailto:katyrutherford@norfolkfoundation.com).

Please include the following, which will be used as selection criteria for this work (see Annex 1 for more details):

- How you propose to deliver our requirements, including details of approaches and methodologies you would use.
- How you will engage with the Norfolk Community Foundation team - including how you will manage the burden of data collection for the Nourishing Norfolk food hubs.
- An overview of the relevant skills and expertise you/your team can offer.
- Indicative timeline of activities and breakdown of days spent on each.
- A proposed budget including day rates and expenses.

Shortlisted applicants will need to attend an interview on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May at Norfolk Community Foundation or online.

If you have a specific question not answered above, please email [katyrutherford@norfolkfoundation.com](mailto:katyrutherford@norfolkfoundation.com).

## 12. Annex 1: Evaluation of Proposals

We will evaluate bids according to the criteria and weighting below:

Evaluation criteria	Weighting
1. Understanding of research aims	10
2. Strength of proposed methodology and evidence of understanding NCF's requirements	30
3. Experience of evaluation team	25
4. Experience of conducting research with people experiencing poverty/food insecurity	10
5. Understanding of Norfolk communities and the local context	10
6. Value for money	15
	100

The following scoring methodology will be applied to responses:

<b>Score</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
1-3	Response provides NCF with a poor-weak level of confidence in the supplier's ability to meet its requirements
4-6	Response provides NCF with a moderate-good level of confidence in the supplier's ability to meet its requirements
7-8	Response provides NCF with a very good level of confidence in the supplier's ability to meet its requirements
9-10	Response provides NCF with a high-excellent level of confidence in the supplier's ability to meet its requirements