



# Making Swindon a Fairer and Better Place Bulletin



May 7<sup>th</sup> 2025

## Citizens Advice Swindon

Don't forget their website...

<https://www.citizensadvicewindon.org.uk/>



## **Advice and Financial First Aid Team in the Community**

Please see below (and attached) where and when the AFFA team from Citizens Advice Swindon are out and about for residents to get advice and support in May.

Friday 9 <sup>th</sup>	- West Swindon Library Link Centre SN5 7DL	10am-11.30am
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup>	- Community Fridge Gorse Hill, SN2 1AA	11am-1pm
Friday 16 <sup>th</sup>	- Stratton Community Café, Meadowcroft Community Centre	10am-11.30am
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	- Park Library, SN3 2LZ	10am-12pm
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup>	- Buckhurst Family Fun Day, Buckhurst Field SN3 3DB	12pm-4pm
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup>	- North Swindon Library, SN25 4AN	10am-12pm

## **Citizens Advice Data Insights Event Exploring Child Poverty**



If you missed the session you can [watch it back](#), and you can view the [data slides](#). You can take a closer look at all our data on [our website](#) or on our [data dashboard](#). Want to catch up on a previous event? They've put all their recordings in [one place](#).

The next event is scheduled for **Thursday 26th June, 2-3pm** and will focus on Disability, keep an eye out for more information and event registration going live in the next few weeks.

Please find attached a poster shared by Ryan Herbert, the Volunteer and Engagement Officer at Healthwatch Swindon.

This is to be completed by residents of Swindon, Wiltshire, or Bath & North East Somerset (BANES) and who have experienced difficulties accessing enough or nutritious food and will take around 5 minutes.

This project aims to explore the health impacts of food insecurity and identify ways to reduce its effects. Food insecurity means struggling to access enough affordable, nutritious food. This will allow a better understanding on how this affects people's physical and mental health, especially in communities across Swindon, Wiltshire, and BANES.

Please do consider contributing to the survey and sharing the poster with the QR code with people that you are working with.

### Food (and Essential Items) Distributors Catch Up- (online)- Next Week

**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May- 2pm-3.30pm**

Thanks to all of you who have responded to the invitation.

The meeting will offer the opportunity to share ideas, questions, challenges and opportunities.

The meeting will focus on-

- Establishing and maintaining food supplies- including ways of working together
- Food Ladders- Offering support beyond food- share ideas and good practice, including a presentation from Angela Jones from the Money and Pension Service (MaPS) about [Money Guiders](#) which offers free training for anybody who has conversations around money and finances.
- Looking at ways of working together to reduce the need for emergency, crisis food support-
  - Discuss the feasibility of offering support to residents to access affordable food provision in the town
  - Establishing Citizen/Community Led Food Cooperatives in the town- If this interests you- please watch the Feeding Britain Webinar from earlier in the year. You will find it [here](#)

I have sent out invitations to the meeting; if you have not received one, but are interested in attending you can join [here](#)

## Swindon Financial Wellbeing

### **Financial Wellbeing Plan**

In order to move onto the next stage and get the ball rolling with the plan, we are looking to organise working/focus groups for each element of the plan:

- Financial Foundations- Financial Education
- Borough of Savers
- Credit Counts
- Access to Debt Advice
- Planning for the Future- Pensions
- Digital Inclusion

Please complete the form at <https://forms.office.com/e/HgsYKeQPXq> to share your interest and say which element you can contribute to.

Thanks to those of you who have already done so.

### **Financial Wellbeing Event**

Following on from our previous meeting, (thanks to all of you who were able to attend and contribute) we will be having another meeting on **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May at 1pm at The Civic Offices in Euclid Street**. (I have booked a bigger room this time!)

At the meeting we will finalise a date for an event in the Summer and discuss details; please do let me know if you are interested in coming along to the meeting or being involved in any event planned.

### **Ageing Well Festival at The Bowl**

#### **Old Town Gardens- Saturday 17th May, 1-4pm**

This is a free afternoon organised by SBC aimed at bringing older people and carers together to celebrate and explore activities that support mental health, wellbeing, and reduce isolation. See the attached poster for full details.

## Virtual Dementia Bus Experience, Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May



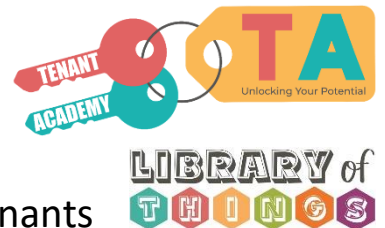
Many of you support the community of people living with dementia and their families. Please can I make you aware of the opportunity coming to Swindon and Faringdon, to do the Virtual Dementia Bus Experience. This is a scientifically proved experience which simulates what it is really like to have dementia. It is a great chance for carers (either family or professionals) or anyone in society wishing to gain a deeper understanding of what dementia is like. People who have previously done this experience say it has improved their awareness, understanding of behaviours and how they interact with those living with dementia.

Tickets are available for **£15 for Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May and in the afternoon at Swindon**. This is a not-for-profit rate. We have hired the bus to bring this enlightening experience to the local communities we are part of. Our Care Pro's will be available (at no cost) to entertain a loved one living with dementia to enable a family carer to complete the 1 hr session. See attached poster for full details and email [cat.attewell@homeinstead.co.uk](mailto:cat.attewell@homeinstead.co.uk) for queries or to book.

## Tenant Academy Courses and Library of Things

The Tenant Academy team is part of SBC's Housing Services.

Based at Enterprise Works, where they have fantastic, dedicated facilities to help residents, in particular, Council Tenants unlock their potential and develop valuable skills. By working with local partners, they offer support with:



- maintaining the home
- gaining qualifications
- becoming 'work ready'
- developing essential life skills

Follow the links to find out about their [Courses and training opportunities](#) and the [Library of Things](#) and their latest newsletter attached

## How Stopping Smoking Can Work Towards Greater Financial Wellbeing- Online Awareness Session

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May- 10am-10.45am**

Mike will offer an insight into how overcoming smoking, is akin to tackling financial hardship.

Look out for the invitation that I will send out soon or sign up [here](#)

## Swindon Affordable Warmth Strategy and Action Plan Refresh Workshop

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 10am to 1pm- Salvation Army, Gorse Hill**

The current Swindon Affordable Warmth Strategy and its Action Plan expire this year so there will be a workshop to review and refresh the affordable warmth plans. This is a Strategy and Action Plan for all partner organisations in Swindon, not just Swindon Borough Council, so your views on this would be valued.

The workshop will start at 10am but we have the Hall from 9:30am if you want to arrive in time to get a drink or chat with colleagues.

Input would be appreciated from anyone working with vulnerable people across Swindon or anyone who maybe struggling to keep warm in their homes and afford their energy bills. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch. If you would like to attend please email [dmiles3@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:dmiles3@swindon.gov.uk) and he will forward you the meeting invite.

### Feeding Britain Network Updates

Please find below the latest updates from Feeding Britain.



#### **Upcoming Webinar:**

**20<sup>th</sup> May 2025, 3.30-5.00pm - Preparing for Summer Holiday Programmes of Food and Fun.** This session may be particularly relevant for HAF coordinators, food network coordinators, and individual holiday clubs. - You can sign up to attend or receive a copy of the recording [here](#).

#### **Webinar Recordings:**

**Pathways from Poverty – Offering Expert Advice Services within Community Food Projects (25<sup>th</sup> Feb)** - You can view a recording of the session [here](#).

**The Children’s Kitchen Webinar: Making Food Sessions Accessible (13<sup>th</sup> March)** - You can view a recording of the session [here](#).

**Cooperation Town: An Introduction to Affordable Food Co-ops (18<sup>th</sup> March)** - You can view a recording of the session [here](#).

**B&NES Food Insecurity Toolkit (24<sup>th</sup> March)** - You can view a recording of the session [here](#).

**Collecting and using data to understand and address food insecurity at a local authority or food partnership level (1<sup>st</sup> April)** - You can view a recording of the session [here](#).

**Good Practice – Older People’s Food Security:** If you’re working with older people, or thinking about how you can support the needs of older people better, you may be interested in the following resources created as part of the **Older People’s Food Security report** which was commissioned by Leeds City Council’s Public Health team and produced by Leeds Older People's Forum.

The report includes:

- Factors affecting food security for older people and the food barriers that should inform our understanding of their needs, which are often complex
- What assets exist in Leeds to overcome these barriers and provide effective services.

<https://www.opforum.org.uk/resources/older-people-food-security-slides/>

<https://www.opforum.org.uk/resources/food-insecurity-and-older-people-a-report/>

<https://www.opforum.org.uk/resources/food-insecurity-webinar/>

Although the report is Leeds-centric, it could help you to make sense of the many agencies supporting the needs of older people, and to engage with them more effectively and to collaborate with relevant partners more easily.

**Jamie Oliver Group Updates:** Just to let you know that the deadline for the Jamie Oliver Good School Food Awards **has been extended until 7<sup>th</sup> May**. You can find out more information and nominate [here](#).

The Jamie Oliver Group team have also shared another opportunity with us that you might be interested in:

**On 1<sup>st</sup> July they will attempt to break the GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ title for the largest cookery lesson (multiple venues) ever.**

They have all the info [here](#) on their website, where people can sign up. The pasta recipes and event timings are also available there, but here are the key details:

WHEN: 11am on 1st July 2025

WHERE: Online – they will send you the link closer to the time

WHAT: A Jamie Oliver Cookery School lesson, making tomato pasta from scratch – any age and ability welcome.

HOW BIG: They need at least 15 people per class – as long as everyone ends up with their own delicious pasta dish, it counts.

## **Better Health Start for Life:**

This provides trusted NHS help and advice to parents and carers, on the key topics of pregnancy, breastfeeding, introducing solid foods, the home learning environment and parent-infant relationships. If you work with young families, you can order or download free print and digital resources on the [campaign resource centre](#) to support your work. Families can also sign up to receive Start for Life emails [here](#). Find out more about the email programme in [this video](#). You can also download and share the video to help promote the programme to your colleagues and service users.

## **Holiday Club Funding:**

We're pleased to share that Feeding Britain can invite holiday clubs in our network (*Swindon is in the network*) to seek additional funding toward provision in the Summer holidays and October half-term to support children from families on low incomes.

This funding is available to holiday clubs to expand their existing provision to provide places for children who are living in poverty but are not eligible for statutory support (e.g., the HAF programme or Free School Meals).

Holiday clubs must be able to offer enriching activities and a nutritious meal that meets School Food Standards, and all places must be offered free of charge to children and their families.

Organisations can apply for a maximum of £10 per child per day, and funding is available for either or both holiday periods.

This funding is only available in areas where Feeding Britain has an existing partnership as of 1st April 2025. If your organisation has previously received this funding from Feeding Britain, you are in a partner area and remain eligible.

All applications must be made through [this form](#). **The deadline for applications is Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May.** The application process includes a check of safeguarding policies and procedures.

If you coordinate the HAF programme for a local authority, and would like to coordinate an application for your area, please contact Anna on [anna.lopez@feedingbritain.org](mailto:anna.lopez@feedingbritain.org) to discuss your plans.

## **NHS Healthy Start Updates: There have been a few recent changes to the NHS Healthy Start scheme:**

The phone number for the NHS Healthy Start automated line changed from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. The new number to call for card related queries is 0118 338 5810. This number replaces the 0300 330 2090 telephone number.

Child Tax Credit (CTC) ended on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2025 as part of a phasing out of legacy benefits. People who were on CTC could still be eligible for NHS Healthy Start payments if they move to Universal Credit (UC) and have a monthly take-home pay of £408 or less. To continue receiving NHS Healthy Start payments, they need to apply for UC within 16 weeks of their CTC ending, and make sure all their children under four are listed as dependants and verified on their UC claim.

The NHS have updated their promotional materials to reflect these changes. All the materials are free to download and use, and can be accessed here: [NHS Healthy Start communications toolkit](#). You can access further updated resources here: [NHS Healthy Start communications toolkit](#) and [Retailer communications toolkit](#).

**The application process for people with no recourse to public funds is also changing from April 2025** and will be delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care:

From 18<sup>th</sup> April 2025, if someone meets the eligibility criteria below and would like to apply, they should email [healthystartNRPF@nhsbsa.nhs.uk](mailto:healthystartNRPF@nhsbsa.nhs.uk) and the NHSBSA will send them an application form.

People may be eligible for the scheme if they meet all of the following:

- they have at least one British child under four years old,
- their family earns £408 or less per month after tax, and
- they cannot claim 'public funds' for example benefits – either because of their immigration status or because they do not have an immigration status

Please note that not all children born in the UK are automatically British. People can check their British citizenship [here](#).

## **MyBnk Financial Education Sessions:**

[MyBnk](#), an organisation focused on financial education, are hosting another upcoming **free session for secondary schools and youth organisations covering online scams**, phishing, in-game scams and product scams on 26<sup>th</sup> June. Please see the attached flyer for further information and, if you work with young people and would like to ensure they are aware of the financial scams they could encounter online, you can register to attend here: <https://buff.ly/DpJTxqk>

## **First Steps- Council Support from Liberata**

Please find attached a poster highlighting the **First Steps** support offered by Liberata to those who are struggling to pay their Council Tax.

As the poster says, they are able to:

- Assist with bailiff issues
- Set up affordable payment arrangements
- Help budget for ongoing council tax bills
- Signpost to Citizens Advice or the Money Advice Service for help with other debt matters

You can contact the Team at [Firststeps.Swindon@liberata.com](mailto:Firststeps.Swindon@liberata.com) or 01275 885 082

## **Don't forget the range of online resources available**

### **Information and Advice**

<https://www.swindon.gov.uk/costofliving>   <https://padlet.com/SBCFood/food>

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>   <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

<https://www.worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/swindon>

<https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en>

**#BitebackSwindon-** <https://feedingswindon.wordpress.com/bitebackswindon/>

### **Updated Accessing Food in Swindon Leaflet**

<https://feedingswindon.wordpress.com/feeding-swindon-partnership-food-distribution-leaflet/>

### **Swindon Cooks and Eats-**

<https://feedingswindon.wordpress.com/swindon-cooks-and-eats/>

### **Feeding Swindon Presentations and Webinars**

<https://www.youtube.com/@FeedingSwindonPartnership>