



providing crisis packs for those in need

# Appendix 1

## Feedback from user agencies

2018

## Users Comments Annual Report 2018

Porch boxes have really helped so many families out in a time of need. It is a brilliant service that delivers to the office. An amazing service that we rely on to support the many disadvantaged families in Bury.

**Rebecca Johnson**

**Family co-ordinator SCIL Team (Supporting Communities Improving Lives)**

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We work with care leavers from the Bury area. Once living either independently, or semi independently, some of the young people are only in receipt of basic benefits which is £57.90 per week. This has to cover bills, food, toiletries, travel, clothes etc. Obviously this is a struggle (I'm not sure I could live on that amount!) and receiving a food parcel can ease some of the financial pressure that these young people face. We have many care leavers who have no family contact or support and literally have no one else to turn to. It's easy for people to say 'why don't they just get a job' but it isn't always that straight forward when you have had a traumatic childhood.

We are very, very grateful for the food parcels that we are able to get from you and they really do make a difference to our care leavers, who are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society.

Thank you very much to you and all the volunteers and best wishes to you all for 2019.

**Lorna Through Care Team Bury**

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We have only good things to say about your excellent service. We can send an e-mail anytime and a delivery is here with us within a couple of days. We can ask for specific goods, i.e. sanitary goods, washing/shaving goods. We've also asked for items for people with specific dietary requirements which have been met without any problem.

This service can make a complete difference to the well-being to some of our customers, a lot of them with mental and physical difficulties. Whilst this service we provide, with

your help, is a short term solution, it helps our customers who maybe going through a temporary crisis, and is of great value to our social workers helping these customers.

**Nigel Roberts      Locality Teams Administrator   -   Adult Social Care**

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Porch Box has been a life line to the families we work with. The universal credit has had a massive impact on our families benefits and without porch box the consequences for some of our families would be that social services might have had to intervene. Nothing is ever to much trouble if we need items, like buggies and cots, etc. if they are available. We also send any items we have been donated that we do not need at that moment in time, so that they could be used by other services.

If Porch Box get a donation of fresh goods, they will ring to ask if we have any course going and bring the fresh goods for the families on the courses.

We have also used the service of lending toys for our sessions so that the children have a good variety of items to play with when visiting. Our outreach workers also go to collect items of toys for their families, which are always well received.

Nothing is ever to much trouble and is a much needed service. Keep up the good work, it is amazing what you do.

**Zoë Riddell      Bury East Children's Centres**

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Porch boxes are an invaluable service to the residents of bury. We work with the most vulnerable residents in the borough and Porch Boxes are only a phone call away, supporting the families and children with valuable resources. An excellent much needed service.

**Vicky Lucas      Family Co-ordinator SCIL Programme**

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In Radcliffe the Children's Centres regularly request Porch Box support. All requests are dealt with promptly and the contents of the boxes are substantial and dietary/specific needs are always taken into account.

Obviously there are periods of high demand but the instant response and provision is second to none and the families receive the requested support when they need it the most. As mentioned above the content of the food provision is excellent and all dietary needs are respected. Families have fed back that the support has been invaluable and has often stopped situations escalating into further hardship.

Not only have the Porch Box supported with food but also with books, baby toys and gifts as well as necessary equipment for babies and young children. It is truthful to say that we could not carry out our roles in supporting the families we work with without the help and support of the Porch Box service and team.

As the Manager I can assure you that all staff believe in this valuable, worthwhile and often overlooked support.

All the staff at Radcliffe would like to offer a huge Thank you for all you support and kindness.

**Radcliffe Children's Centres.**

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Our service would just like to thank you and the other Porch Box team members for the continued support you have offered over the 4 years we have been in operation.

Your service has been an invaluable life line to many of the vulnerable families we have worked with and will continue to work with, but returning to our jobs as Health Visitors.

We have had many issues this year with clients transitioning on to Universal credit.

Delayed payments have caused so much stress for families in having money to buy even the basics of need. I know we have requested more formula milk and nappies as well as food this year.

We have also worked with more families who have had to move homes due to local policy on bedroom tax, as well as private landlords providing poor quality homes or increasing rents.

Your service has also managed to source more household goods such as crockery, cutlery, cooking utensils, bedding, safety gates to help families when the need has arisen.

Without the service you provide I have no clear idea of how some families would have managed without great hardship, debt or the involvement of social services. You are all providing an amazing resource and it is with great thanks that we celebrate all you do.

**Karina King Family Nurse**

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I just wanted to take the time to say a huge 'thank you' for all your support with porch boxes and much more!

I really do not know what we would do without having access to this hugely beneficial scheme. It really does help the families we work with massively. The volunteers go above and beyond for our families and helping the team.

Thank you so much to everyone involved truly serving a wonderful cause. Thanks for all your donations and time spent sorting it all out.

Greatly appreciated.

**Jillian Wilson    Family Coordinator SCIL Programme**

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Thank you for the fantastic service you provide.

Here at Bury Probation the weekly deliveries we receive are there when they are needed to give help and much needed support to our clients who use our services. Some are homeless, waiting to receive their benefits etc so providing them with food bags can help them through a difficult time.

Without the voluntary help of the Porch Boxes the above people would go without.

**Lynne Price**

**Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service    Bury, Rochdale and Oldham**

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Just a quick note to say how "very grateful" we are to have such a great Community Food Bank and amazing volunteers who go out of their way to help our service users in their hour of need. We are thankful for the amount of donations we receive from Porch boxes.

Our service users are very appreciative and your kind donations and hard work makes their lives easier & better.

A **HUGE** thank you to all the volunteers who give up their time to put the boxes together and deliver them weekly. Our service users couldn't survive without you. We ask a lot and never get knocked back - you are a wonderful organisation.

**Fran    Bury & Bolton Probation Service**

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I have been very fortunate to be able to access support from the Porch Box scheme to help families in the Bury area.

The scheme has provided families with essential items such as food, children's toys and on occasion furniture. These items have improved the lives of the whole family especially the children

**Family (A)** have just been granted leave to remain in the country; their benefits were delayed due to the change in Universal Credit. The parent did not know where to turn. The staff at the scheme were able to help provide the family with essential items of food, washing powders, and toiletries.

When it came to Christmas the parent did not have funds to buy presents for her child. The child was very concerned that Father Christmas would not know where she was. Porch Boxes went above and beyond to ensure that they could meet the demand of the many agencies relying on them to provide toys and food hampers for local families. The parent said "her daughters eyes filled with happy tears" as she did not expect to have any toys.

**Family (B)** a young mum of two children who was struggling due to her payment method being changed. The parent had to phone to ask for help to feed her children. The scheme helped by providing tinned goods so the family could have hot meals.

**Family (C)** the family moved to Bury from London, they do not have any friends or relatives in the area. The family are not entitled to benefits as Dad works. The added cost of moving, renting left the family struggling financially. Porch Boxes were able to provide the family with essential items of food as well as nappies and wipes for the younger children. The parents were very grateful and this relieved some of the stress they were experiencing.

**Family (D)** parents with three children came to ask for help both parents were struggling with their mental health. They were appealing against a decision to stop one of their benefits. They did not have money to provide presents for the three children. Mum said "anything will help". The team at Porch Boxes sourced toys for all three children, which was difficult as the children were older. The team continue to work extremely hard in unsuitable cold conditions to bring a light, a glimmer of hope and a smile to faces of families who are in need.

I am eternally grateful to the wonderful team who do wonderful work

**Bernadette Thomson                      Parent Support Adviser**

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As you know I am always reluctant to ask Porch for help knowing how many Organisations you help. However ! Whenever our shelves are getting bare and I am not able to pick up any food - then I ask for help and am never disappointed! Sometimes your contributions have

made the difference as to whether we would have been able to continue that particular week. It's great too when Frank calls in unexpectedly with surplus fresh food..... Our Food Pantry in Radcliffe has grown to sometimes 30 a week - with our visitors coming in for all sorts of reasons. I do respond to crisis in between too. We are happy to be linked in with the 'Drop in' on one side of us and the 'Hub' on the other. Thank you for being there and for making it so easy to make a request for help.

**Sister Joan Caritas**

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We have seen an increase of women needing food parcels, due to universal credit, waiting for benefits, women struggling when benefits are withdrawn, health issues and PIP appeals.  
Many thanks for your on going support.

**Dawn Women of Worth**

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**Here are some examples of the help we have received from Porch Boxes**

The client was very grateful for the food given, this provided them with food until their benefits were next paid.

The client struggles to leave home and this helped him until he was able to get into town to pick up food from the food bank.

It is a wonderful service that can make such a difference to a person or family who are in crisis.

People who are unable or embarrassed to access food banks have benefitted from your generous donations.

Support allows people in financial difficulty to use what money they have on gas/electric during colder months as they don't have to worry to the same extent about food.

Assists in improving physical and mental health for those who find themselves with money to buy food for whatever reason.

Support is given to families and individuals facing hardship due to changes in welfare benefits/loss of employment/other changes in circumstances.



**Julie Evans**

**Operations and Policy Development Manager**

**Stepping Stone Projects Generic Floating Support**

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Bury Councils Resettlement service has benefitted from receiving support from Porch Boxes for many years now. The support we receive enables our service to offer food and toiletries to some of those that needs it the most

Large amounts of food are being delivered to our office as often as needed and distributed to those who find themselves without money or food. Lately we have seen more people waiting for a newly made benefit claim to be processed leaving families and individuals without any income for up to five weeks - regular bags of food and essentials becomes real lifesavers for some of the customers of the resettlement service. The help is needed on a short term basis and often only as a "one off" donation

The food from Porch Boxes is also aiding a small group of very vulnerable adults, some who are street homeless and/or are suffering with addiction and mental health issues struggling engaging with professional bodies and keeping regular benefit/income coming in.

Customers has described the food parcels as "lifesavers" and "the difference between going without"

**Signe Johansen Resettlement Worker Community Resettlement Service**

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The Eagles Wing is a mutual support group for asylum seekers and refugees living in Bury

As such we meet 4 times each week for a variety of activities, ranging from English Classes, Parents support and dancing...we also administer the Red Cross Destitution project and each week we give out cash to more than 12 destitute individuals. Over the past 2 years we have helped 295 destitute and homeless asylum seekers or refugees, about half of whom have been dependent children



As part of this regular support, with the help of Porch Boxes we have been able to offer our members parcels of food, toiletries and other household items. Being destitute is a terrible thing, but the friendship and practical help we offer makes it a bit more bearable.

Solidarity is a sister organization which plans monthly social activities, from parties to Day Trips, for asylum seekers and refugees. Over 100 friends join us at our Solidarity socials each month. Again we are enabled to offer second hand items, clothing and non perishable food at these social events, thanks to organisations such as Porch. In addition, we requested Christmas Food Hampers from Porch to give out to our refugee and asylum seeker families. This year the hampers were particularly special, with treats of chocolates and other presents in addition to the lovely tasty food. Our drivers always report how excited and pleased the children and families are to get a visit near to Xmas with such gifts. Thank you Porch Boxes for not only meeting the very basic needs of our friends, but also for appreciating the special pleasure of receiving treats! Thank you so much

**Sue Arnall, Treasurer for the Eagles Wing and for Solidarity**

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'Thank you both so much! I'm amazed at what you've done for me and in the cold and late on at night - it's very much appreciated. we're very very fortunate to have groups like yours ...if I can ever help yourselves or the organisation don't hesitate to ask as I'll gladly lend a hand I'm amazed. Thank you so much'..

**Anonymous xx [Individual]**

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Thank you so much for all the lovely luxury gifts in the boxes as well as the staple food to tide us over, and for being so patient with us!

For me the treat was to see the pleasure on the faces of our friends and the kids in particular, when they knew we were bringing a Xmas Treat for them too!

Thanks for all the thought you put into it and for being there for us. It's really appreciated

**Sue [Eagles Wings ]**

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**Feedback from families at the Summer Family Food & Friendship weekly sessions:**

- Lovely idea. The kids have had a great time and Mum has had a nice break.
- We all had an amazing day. Thank you very much
- We have had a lovely afternoon. Many thanks
- Lovely few hours. The kids loved the games and crafts. Food was good. Thank you Frank for letting the older boys play football.
- I think that this should happen more often during the holidays as the children love it. No matter what the weather they get to play. Had a great time
- Wonderful idea. Just what the community needs.
- I loved it, it was really nice, everyone was so helpful and nice. I really appreciate it.
- We have really enjoyed today. It was nice meeting new people and having a little break while the children played. The meal was beautiful with a great choice. I would love to come again and both boys agree.

**Family Food and Friendship @ Bolton Road Supported by Porch Boxes  
[Ending holiday hunger]**

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We had a family that had come to the Children Centre to a Play session and whilst there disclosed that she was suffering from Domestic Abuse through her family. Throughout the morning we had to put into place a protection plan to ensure mum and her daughter were safe. For this to happen we had to immediately remove the family from the family home due to the potential danger that the family were under. A lot of services were involved with the family during the morning and they were found a refuge home out of the area for their safety and protection. Due to the sudden removal of the family (they had arrived at the Play session literally wearing their clothes) we needed to get the mum and her 2 year old daughter some emergency supplies. We rang Porch Boxes to ask for this and within 1 hour they had arrived at the Children Centre with a Porch Box which contained food, toiletries such as nappies and baby wipes and baby items and selection of clothes and basic things to help the mum and daughter at this very emotional time. We were then able to transport the family to the refuge with these items which would help them at this very difficult and emotional time

We can't thank the generosity of this service who were able to support us so quickly which made this delicate and sensitive time a little better for this very vulnerable family.

**Jan Dixon Programme Support Worker Bury East Children Centre**

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**Feedback from families receiving help from Porch boxes**

We received a safety gate and food. At first my husband wasn't happy as he had lost his job through no fault of his. He felt worthless, but after the outreach support and the safety gate and food, he understood we are not the only people in this situation. He is a fab Dad!

I received 2 mattresses both my children have additional needs and their Father doesn't support us. Having the new mattresses means their bedroom doesn't smell of wee anymore- it is a much healthier place for them to play and learn. I feel like a much better Mum even though I couldn't buy the mattresses.

We wouldn't have managed, we are very grateful. Having a cupboard of food means my husband could take some food for his lunch at work and not have to wait until he came home to eat. It made me feel less anxious, one less thing to worry about in a pool of lots at the moment.

I didn't have the funds for a safety gate but now my daughter is much safer. I have mental health - anxieties and depression. Although I am married my husband lives in another country and lives with his parents so he has no money to support us. It may seem like a very simple thing but I can assure you - YOU ARE WONDERFUL !

**Bury East Children centres**

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