

Chantelle Norton

From crisis to stability – what the CRF is trying to make possible

"I can't describe how much of a mess I was in. But the produce…and then being able to give back to others, has really helped. I start a new job next week."

JB Young widow, former service user and now volunteer

How communities can operationalize to reduce the need for charitable food aid

Offer Cash First Support

- Support to maximise income through a **cash-first** approach, working with partners, e.g. Citizens Advice
- IFAN member - ending the need for charitable food aid

Supporting individuals build financial resilience

- Offer a variety of supported volunteering opportunities
- Reduce need for long-term crisis support
- Consider opportunities for reciprocity / skills building



Vision for the long term

Improving Access to Good Food for All

- FiC is a pioneer in community-powered food redistribution: cafes, classes, events, food share groups
- Promote social inclusion whatever a person's income
- Help create an ecosystem of community access points

Multiple access points…
“Come for food: leave with advice, connections and opportunities”



Food banks are already managing high demand with limited resources

What the Crisis & Resilience Fund is asking all of us to do

'Authorities are encouraged to think creatively about new approaches to building sustainable food landscapes, which draw on established best practice and support people to *transition away from crisis support* to building their *financial resilience*'

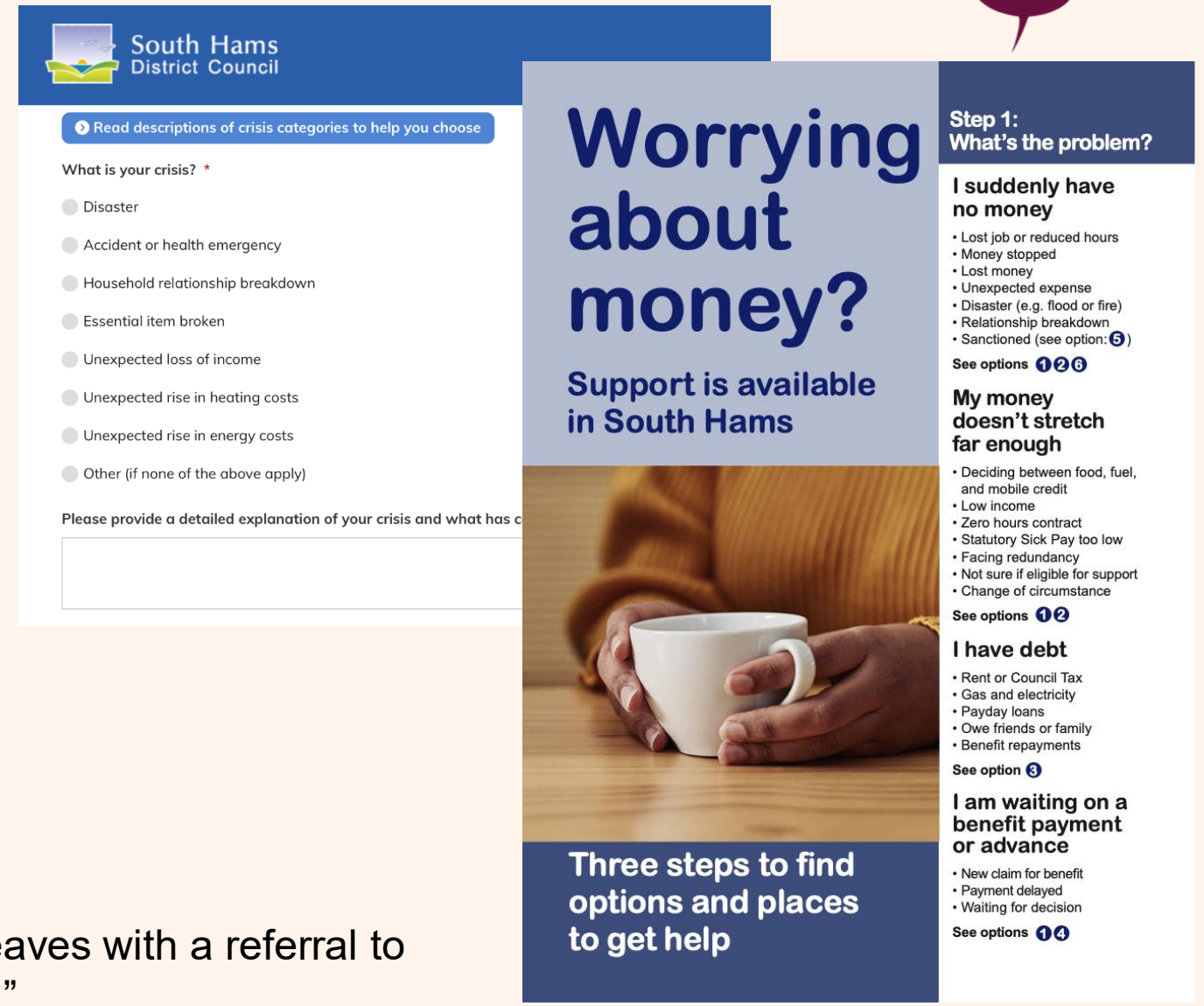
CRF Guidance, January 2026



From crisis → Stability → Volunteering → Employment → Long-term Financial Resilience

Food in Community and building financial resilience

- Help create an ecosystem of trusted local access points
- Help people to access CRF crisis payments through local Councils
- Support income maximization (benefits, debt advice)



"Often someone messages asking for food and leaves with a referral to Citizen's Advice for assistance with their benefits."

Wider wraparound support to help people build financial resilience

People who are most likely to return in crisis sometimes need more than just crisis payments



We help by

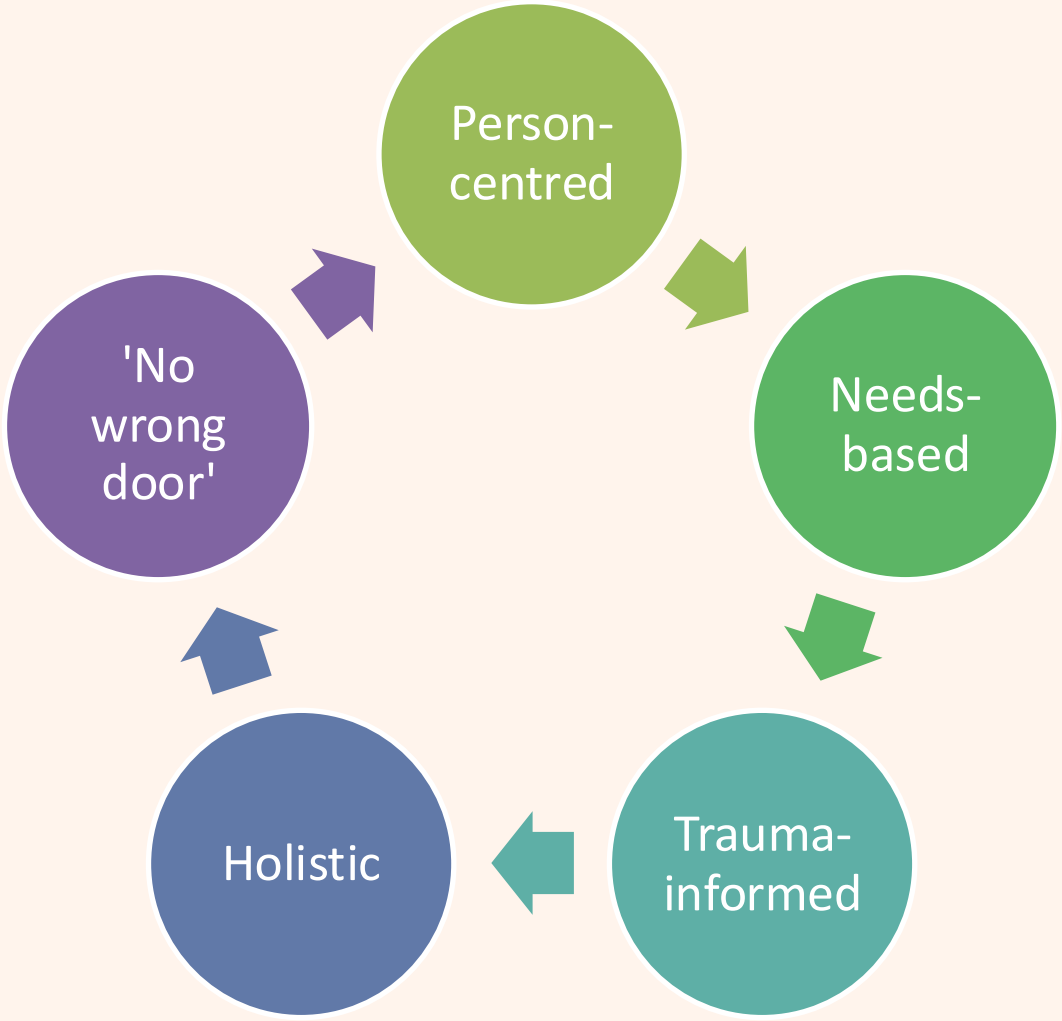
- Provide continuity & relationships
- Offer skills development & a reference
- Inclusion for people with complex needs or fluctuating capacity
- Support people with health, disability, integration, or in their caring roles

CRF not just about payments, it's about stability

This is What CRF Principles Look Like When Delivered Locally



Bridging statutory and community sectors



By building stronger, connected communities, fewer people reach crisis point

FOOD IN COMMUNITY

What This Means for Food Aid Coordinators



- More people accessing cash support earlier – less pressure on food banks
- Reduced repeat crisis demand over time – cash first helps address the drivers
- Stronger local partnerships
- Food banks remain a widely trusted “door” for community access

- CRF a positive step towards a longer-term transition to adequate secure incomes



We are not dividing people by need.
We are designing different ways for people to access and contribute to the same good food system.

@foodincommunity
https://foodincommunity.org/