

LOVE CHICKPEAS

A MEAL KIT INNOVATION IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

**A Practical Toolkit for
Community Meal Kits
– Learnings from
the Food Systems
Equality Project**



**BRIGHTON & HOVE
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PART 1:

INTRODUCTION TO FOODSEQUAL AND OUR TOOLKIT

Introduction to FoodSEqual

This toolkit is based on our learnings from the [Food Systems Equality project \(FoodSEqual\)](#).

FoodSEqual is a five-year project led by Professor Carol Wagstaff at the University of Reading as part of the consortia of the £47.5M UKRI-funded “Transforming the UK Food System for Healthy People and a Healthy Environment SPF Programme”.

FoodSEqual’s vision is to provide citizens of culturally diverse disadvantaged communities with choice and agency over the food they consume, by co-developing new products, new supply chains and new policy frameworks that deliver an affordable, attractive, healthy and sustainable diet¹

FoodSEqual recruited and trained Community Researchers (CRs) across four sites in Reading, Plymouth, Tower Hamlets and Brighton and Hove. CRs provided vital links between academic and community member participants and were active at all stages of our research.

This toolkit draws on learnings from our meal kit design process in Brighton and Hove, led by the University of Sussex (UoS) in collaboration with the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership (BHFP). We designed a meal kit as part of our research to assess the suitability of meal kits as an intervention to make it easier for people in Brighton and Hove to use chickpeas more often in their cooking.

1. University of Reading, 2025.

Aim of the Toolkit

This toolkit is designed for schools and community organisations such as local food hubs and community markets interested in developing a small-scale meal kit scheme (15-30 kits) with a view to scaling up. It is based on insights from our FoodSEqual research with members of the [Affordable Food Networks](#) in Brighton and Hove (“the community”).

The participants in our study told us they wanted to eat more beans and pulses but faced barriers such as lack of time and fear of failure to prepare beans correctly. They identified chickpeas as an ideal choice as they are affordable, high in protein and fibre, and a staple in many cultures. To address these barriers, we co-produced a chickpea meal kit with participants in Moulsecoomb, a suburb on the outskirts of Brighton and Hove.

This toolkit provides practical guidance on how to co-design, assemble, and distribute a meal kit scheme in two simple stages:

➤ [Stage 1: Planning and Preparation](#)

➤ [Stage 2: Assembly and Distribution](#)

Our community-generated recipes can be used as an ‘off-the-shelf’ resource co-design your own recipes, sharing insights on the considerations for different groups (particularly those with unique sensory and processing needs).

UoS and BHFP developed this toolkit with academics at the University of Reading, Cranfield University and the University of Kent. Our community-generated recipes can be used as an ‘off-the-shelf’ resource or you might like to co-produce your own recipes.



Why distribute a meal kit? What the community told us

Meal kits contain all the ingredients needed to make a freshly prepared meal. Our research assessed the suitability of meal kits as an intervention to help people use chickpeas more often in their cooking. Our findings reveal that meal kits have the potential to:

- **Introduce people to new foods:** the kits provided a low-risk way for people to try new ingredients and expand their diets.
- **Cater to unique sensory and processing needs:** our research highlighted the importance of language and clear instructions for people with alternative thinking patterns (neurodivergence). The recipes were adapted to be simple to follow, with suggestions for modifying dishes to suit individual and family needs.
- **Promote inclusion:** by focusing on ingredients like chickpeas that are common in global cuisine, the kits helped introduce diverse flavours and tackle a sense of unfamiliarity with other cultures.
- **Foster connection:** sharing recipes created a strong sense of community and pride.
- **Can alter family food dynamics:** many parents and guardians experience a positive shift from cooking being a chore to a collaborative family activity.
- **Build confidence and cooking skills:** for some, meal kits offer a no pressure way to learn basic cooking techniques.

How can this toolkit help schools and community organisations?

Our evidence-based toolkit presents a case for funding co-produced meal kits to support food systems transformation. Practically, it presents resource considerations for designing and distributing a meal kit scheme.

This toolkit is presented in three main sections. **Section 1** presents the aims of the toolkit and introduces you to the participatory research design we used to co-produce our meal kit. **Section 2** provides a practical guide for building and distributing meal kits in two stages:

Stage 1:

▶ **Planning and Preparation.**

During this stage, your organisation will secure funding, plan storage/preparation space and staffing, choose your recipes and suppliers.



Stage 2:

▶ **Assembly and Distribution.**

During this stage, your organisation will assemble your kit, distribute it, and gather feedback from your service users. Kits should be provided free of cost in schools and at a subsidised cost in local community organisations.



We share our learnings from bringing members of our community together for recipe co-design. **Section 3**, developed by academics at the University of Kent and Cranfield University provides supply chain and pricing recommendations for running your meal kit scheme, including considerations for scaling up.

Meal Kit Co-Production: Overview of Our Participatory Research Design

We co-produced a meal kit as part of our qualitative, participatory action research involving community researchers (CRs). Our CRs are, or have been, users of affordable food networks in Brighton and Hove. Few academic studies had attempted to co-design meal kits with users of affordable food networks, with the exception of Olive and Worosoz's (2024) community-based research with low-income families in the US. We recognised the need to help people overcome some of the barriers they faced in relation to cooking with beans and pulses and work with the drivers they told us about. Our participants suggested that a meal kit, similar to BHFP's earlier 'In the Bag' scheme, would be a way to address some of these barriers. **We co-produced our meal kit in three main phases:**

1. Exploration of commercially available meal kits
2. Community co-design workshops,
3. Piloting phase.



Phase 1: Exploration of commercially available meal kits

During phase 1, the CRs unboxed several well-known commercial meal kit brands including Hello Fresh, Gousto and Riverford Organic boxes. The CRs removed the ingredients and critically evaluated the contents of each kit and the resulting meals. The CRs evaluated these kits based on criteria discussed in marketing studies of meal kits, including: 1) ease of instructions, 2) freshness of ingredients, 3) packaging, 4) quality of the meal, 5) price, and 6) preparation time, raising considerations for how we might develop and evaluate our meal kit.

Phase 2: Co-design workshops

Between October and December 2024, we conducted three research workshops with members of the community in Moulsecomb, Brighton, to generate recipes for our meal kit and explore people's experiences of using meal kits. Each workshop was 3 hours long.

We asked our participants to share their chickpea recipes with us and the stories behind them. We prepared these recipes and gave everyone the chance to vote for their favourite recipe, based on criteria generated by food scientists at the University of Reading. We explored different recipe cards and gathered feedback on their layout, accessibility, and overall presentation. We discussed packaging options and unboxed some commercially available kits together, exploring their ingredients, packaging and price point.

Key Learnings from the Co-Design Workshops

- Neurodivergence shapes preferences for recipe card design and layout, as well as food texture and taste. Our participants wanted to know ways to adapt dishes to suit their individual and family's needs.
- Participants wanted clear advice on how to store leftovers.
- Locally sourced ingredients were preferred, and the community exhibited a preference for the kit to contain some fresh ingredients.
- Participants had specific preferences for the look and feel of the kit. They wanted sturdy but minimal packaging, clear instructions and realistic food photography.

Drawing on these learnings, we developed our kit collaboratively with the CRs. FoodSEqual food scientists generated the nutritional information for our chosen recipes.

Phase 3: Piloting phase

Between April and June 2025, we ran a small-scale pilot of our meal kit with 12 people in Brighton and Hove. In total we distributed 36 bags with three different recipes. Participants completed food diaries as part of the pilot, and we used their feedback outlined below to develop the recipes further according to the community's preferences.

Key Learnings from the Pilot

- Participants liked the quality and freshness of the perishable ingredients.
- The parents in our study reflected on how they made the kits with their children and how they made them excited to cook.
- They liked the simplicity of our recipe cards but suggested that different formats could be offered to suit individual preferences and learning disabilities including dyslexia.
- They found the kits convenient but preferred collection over delivery so they could use the kits when it suited them.
- Participants liked having full-size items of oils and spices in their kit because they can replicate the recipes and explore other dishes with the spices.
- They suggested we use sturdy bags, particularly for distribution through schools, to make it safe for children to transport the kits home.

Summary

This section has introduced you to our toolkit and chickpea meal kit research design. We used a research-informed design process however you needn't use academic research methods to bring people together for recipe co-design. In [Part 2](#) we share key learnings from our meal kit pilot including assembly and distribution and key reflections for facilitating recipe sharing.



PART 2:

PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR BUILDING AND DISTRIBUTING MEAL KITS

Introduction - Building Your Meal Kit

Part 2 offers an evidence base for funding and practical advice for creating and distributing about 15 to 30 meal kits in your community. In this section we share our learnings of planning, assembling and distributing meal kits using our co-designed recipes. Under the heading **Co-Creating Recipes**, we share our key methodological principles for bringing people together to facilitate recipe sharing.

You can build your kit in two simple stages.

Stage 1: Planning and Preparation

Securing funding

Making a case for funding requires a compelling evidence-based case showing a direct link between the project and the funder's mission. Connecting the project with funder outcomes such as addressing food security and health, building community and social cohesion and promoting sustainability are useful approaches.

Table 1 addresses common food system goals and how this project can address them.

Table 1: Summary of common funder goals and how the recipe kits address them.

Funder Outcome/Food System Goal	How these recipe kits address it	Key quotes from our community
Promoting sustainability	The focus on plant-based recipes and portioned ingredients reduces the environmental impact of food consumption and food waste at home. Specifically, the use of beans (chickpeas) is key as they are excellent for soil health and are a carbon efficient water source.	<p>"The produce should be locally sourced like the markets provide. We expect too much of everything."</p> <p>"You don't get the waste because it's all portioned out. I don't always have the freezer space so it's nice knowing you've got a meal that's portioned out if you don't have the room".</p>
Positive physical health outcomes	Chickpeas are high in fibre, low in saturated fats, a source of protein and they are versatile. The UK population in general needs to improve on these areas of their diet.	<p>"Chickpeas are something we can add to a stew, or possibly a salad ... they are very, very tasty. We continue to use them as an occasional food, always. We do tend to use the tinned ones ... as part of something else".</p> <p>"Chickpeas during Ramadan are good for energy and diet".</p>

Funder Outcome/Food System Goal	How these recipe kits address it	Key quotes from our community
Co design/ co-produced approach	Local residents have been directly involved in the design and testing of these kits. This ensures that the solutions are relevant.	<p><i>"There's a good handful of us who were here when it was just an idea to then coming up with recipes, tasting it, to now receiving the kits and giving feedback and now possibly seeing this go into the community and making a difference. It's really nice to see it come together".</i></p>
Wellbeing	Participants told us the action of taking time to cook for themselves, in an easier way that relieves some mental load, was a beneficial 'wellbeing' activity.	<p><i>"I did enjoy doing it all, especially taking it out of the bag. I found that really exciting, 'oh what have I got'".</i></p> <p><i>"Meal kits can be relaxing, they can feel like a treat".</i></p>
Building community cohesion	The process of coming together to co-design recipes, and subsequent recipes work towards building community cohesion	<p><i>"It makes you feel that there is love in the community".</i></p> <p><i>"I am sure if I saw your faces I would be like 'oh I recognise you' whereas before I wouldn't. So it's more of a community feel and getting to know your neighbour".</i></p>
Addressing Food Insecurity	<p>Indirectly, these kits can address food insecurity in a number of ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical provision of food (including larger packets of higher value ingredients like spices) • Easy low-cost repeatable recipes 	<p><i>"It's a complete kit. It's one meal you've got on standby, and you haven't got to think about it - it's there. You've got everything".</i></p> <p><i>"That's one less meal to worry about. If you've got a complete meal in a bag every week, that's one meal of every week that you don't need to worry 'what am I going to have'. You've got the whole kit there".</i></p> <p><i>"It has been nice with the spices, which I've used on loads of dishes since then so that's been great".</i></p>
Benefiting local economy	Ideally, local producers/ suppliers and independent retails (such as Infinity foods) should be used, providing local economic benefits.	<p><i>"The kits should use local produce and market goods. You can have organic or non-organic as optional".</i></p>
Whole school food approach	The kits provide a fun, hands-on learning tool that delivers life skill and compliments formal classroom education on food and nutrition.	<p><i>"I loved the pastini. That's great for kids as well, because they love pasta. It would be a great dish for kids as well and I think it's nice that children would enjoy cooking it with you. So, something to teach them".</i></p> <p><i>"The recipe was exciting. My children - one is 8 years old and one is 7 years old - they love cooking. The children were happy with the bag. I said what would you make with this".</i></p> <p><i>"Working with secondary schools that have food tech, you could teach the kids how to make it. You learn about community in the process. You could do it as a yearly thing, for the curriculum".</i></p>

Finding funding opportunities:

- Join local networks such as the Brighton Hove Food Partnership's [Emergency Food Network/Affordable Food Network](#) and local organisation [Community Works](#) to learn of guidance, resources, and funding opportunities.
- Local authority and public health funds may have full grants available for projects that align with their health and food strategies.
- Corporate partnerships – local businesses are often keen to support small projects such as this.
- Crowdfunding can help raise awareness and financial support for your project.

Storage/preparation space and staffing

To run your meal kit scheme, some storage space (e.g. a walk-in cupboard), a refrigerator (domestic size) and preparation space (2 to 3 standard size tables) will be needed. You can find our specialist food safety, storage and handling advice at the end of this toolkit. Dedicating a person(s) time to order food, receive deliveries, do any top up shop that might be needed (in case of lack of availability in deliveries), print resources and pack the kits is a critical resource consideration (see section 3 for further advice).

Choose your recipe*

We developed three recipes with members of the Brighton and Hove community:

- Bhaji Burger
- Chickpea Rigatoni
- Chickpea and Tomato Curry

Community members Mary and Paula are the faces behind our three recipes. You can read more about them [here](#). If you would like to create your own recipes with your community/ service users, see our “Co-Creating Recipes” section to learn how we facilitated recipe sharing.

Choosing suppliers

As shown in **Table 2**, we used two main suppliers for ingredients for our meal kit pilot. However, depending on location and connections it may make sense to consider other suppliers on a site-specific basis. BHFP has an up-to-date [list of local and ethical](#) suppliers.

***Checking allergens:** All recipes should be labelled with the ingredients and allergy information. We have provided printable resources for labelling the bags in the resource section.

Table 2: Summary of Suppliers Benefits and Drawbacks

Supplier	Benefit	Drawbacks	Other considerations
Infinity Foods	Local business, ethical supplier delivers locally and nationally. Offers wholesale prices (orders over £150)	Does not currently deliver fresh produce but is planning to in the future. A separate shop or order will be needed for each kit, which may not meet the minimum delivery order cost. Other suppliers have lower prices.	This is the best supplier to use if thinking about the recipe kit intervention as a food system intervention a whole. Using quality, sustainable ingredients was popular with recipients and made them more likely to cook the food
Sainsbury's online	Easy ordering and delivery All ingredients for the FoodSEqual recipes can be sourced via this supplier	This cannot be seen as a local sustainable food source.	Sainsbury's has the best reputation for the fewest substitutions in deliveries (overall saving time on top up shops).
A combination of Infinity foods and Sainsbury's online	This is a compromise between the sustainability benefits of Infinity Foods and the convenience of Sainsbury's.		This combination enables bulk buying from Infinity foods, working towards sustainability goals. With the convenience of fresh produce and chilled items being delivered within a one-hour timeslot.

Stage 2: Assembling and Distributing Your Kit

Assembly

It is important to ensure that each kit has the correct ingredients. Organising the boxes/bags and systematically adding one ingredient at a time using a checklist is effective. In secondary school settings/youth clubs tasking the young people to “shop” for their own kit from tables of the ingredients can be an engaging and efficient way to assemble the kits.

Distribution

Schools and community organisations are central hubs for the community and well placed to be a central distribution point for people to collect kits from. In our pilot we delivered the kits by van due to timing restrictions. However, the participants in our study indicated that they preferred collection over delivery. Delivery may be necessary in a few circumstances if accessibility is an issue (see also [Part 3](#) for further suggestions).

Sourcing packaging

Cardboard boxes were preferred compared to paper bags as our participants reported that our paper bags felt insecure. Sustainability and practicality should be at the forefront of your decision making. Companies such as [Kite packaging](#) offer a good selection of box sizes in packs of 30 minimum. An ideal size for the meal kit box would be 406 x 356 x 203 mm.

Monitoring and feedback

Building in a mechanism for monitoring and feedback is an important factor to consider. Feedback is helpful for determining what works for your recipients, and ensure people feel part of the project rather than simply receivers of food. Gathering quantitative and qualitative data will facilitate future funding bids.

You can use our downloadable feedback form, or you can create your own. Creating your own feedback form will enable you to monitor metrics that are appropriate for your organisation. You can offer paper feedback forms in your kits. Alternatively, using an online platform e.g., Microsoft Forms, can give people the option of following a QR code and completing on a device.



Bringing Your Community Together – Co-Creating Recipes

Introduction

In Brighton and Hove, we used chickpea recipes that were shared by our participants. However, you might like to create your own recipes. In this section we share our key methodological principles for bringing people together to facilitate recipe sharing.

Planning and Advertising

- Book a venue that is familiar to those you are looking to involve (we used a community hall which hosts a weekly market).
- We advertised our events through a variety of channels. We also recruited in-person at community events local to our chosen venue.
- We found that BHFP were a trusted organisation within the community which helped us recruit participants.
- We found that the timings of our workshops restricted participants slightly. Creating different options could work well for widening participation in the recipe sharing.
- We worked with near enough the same group of people for our longitudinal research, which meant they got to know one another (and us) over time. The group also became more relaxed at sharing their experiences and views. For this reason, we recommend working with the same groups as much as possible.
- We recommend 2-3 hours for each session. We scheduled regular breaks so everyone had a chance to socialise, which facilitated further sharing of experiences and food knowledge.

Principled Space and Active Listening

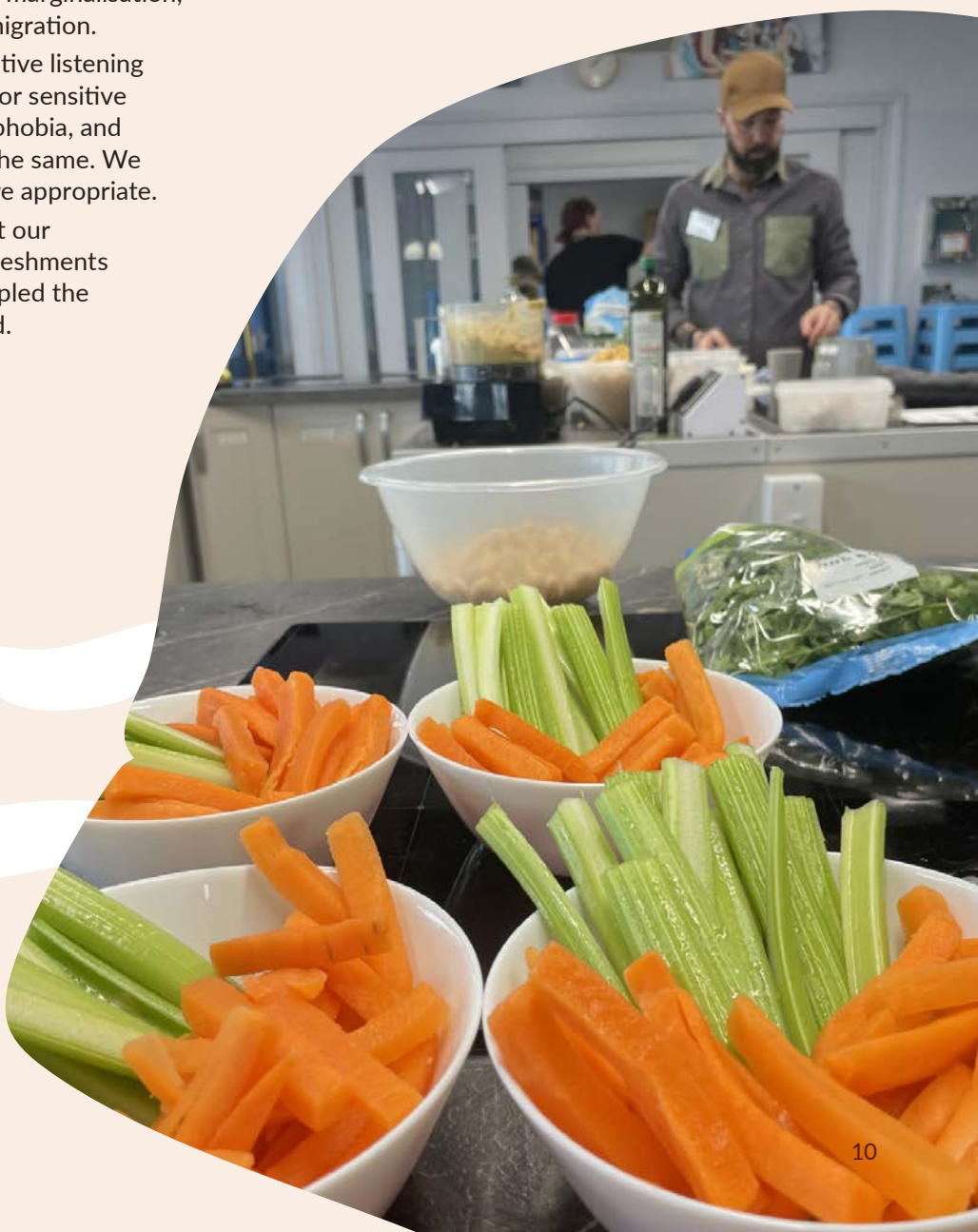
- We worked with Community Researchers (CRs) to plan and facilitate our workshops. CRs are “peers” of the groups being researched in participatory research.
- You could recruit CRs or community champions to be involved in the recruitment and facilitation of the workshops. They must be compensated for their time. We think it is good practice for community champions to have some connection with the venue where you are holding your workshop or the community you are involving. However, we don’t suggest that community champions straightforwardly represent the groups you are working with due to complex power dynamics, including those created by facilitation.
- We were a team of all white British facilitators. One of us had lived in India for a time and was able to bring her cultural knowledge of some Indian cuisine (there are historic links between India and Bangladesh which were profoundly altered by British Colonisation and the 1947 partition of India. Yet we remained attentive to the fact that none of us have lived experience of certain types of marginalisation, including on the basis of race and migration.
- Cognisant of the above, we used active listening during our workshops particularly for sensitive topics, including racism and Islamophobia, and we encouraged participants to do the same. We recommend using a translator where appropriate.
- Food was a big part of hospitality at our workshops. We made sure that refreshments were available throughout and sampled the recipes that participants had shared.

Maintaining a Dialogue

- Participants commented on the connections they had made with us and one another.
- We aimed to maintain a dialogue with participants outside of the workshops.
- We were realistic about what we could implement as a result of the workshops based on our funding restrictions.
- If you are planning to use community-generated recipes in your kits, you will need to generate allergy information ([see here for advice on allergies](#)).

Summary

This section has provided an evidence-base for funding, assembling and distributing 15 to 30 meal kits in your community. We shared methodological principles for creating recipe sharing. In [Part 3](#) of the toolkit, we present supply chain and pricing recommendations to help you plan your meal kit scheme and strengthen your funding applications.



PART 3:

SCALING UP – SUPPLY CHAIN AND PRICING CONSIDERATIONS



Introduction

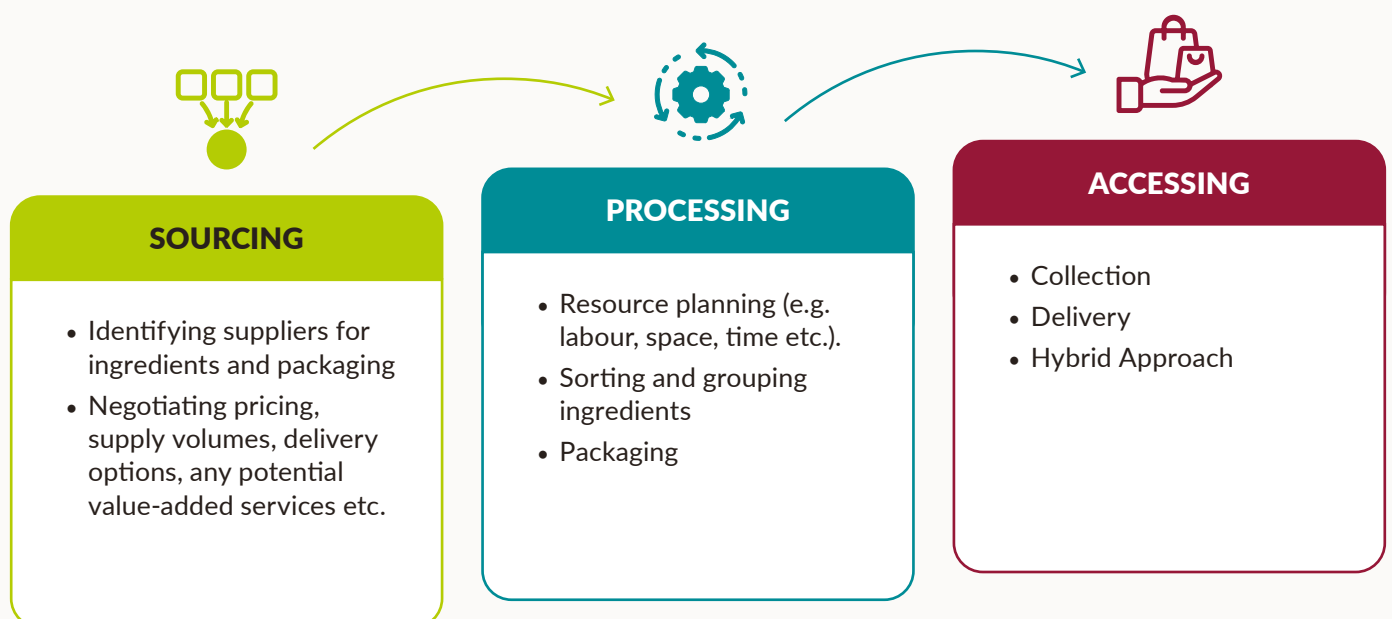
In section 2 of the toolkit, we provided practical guidance for planning, assembling and distributing meal kits in your school or community organisation. Here, we draw on supply chain and pricing insights from academics at Cranfield University and the University of Kent and present recommendations for scaling up. You can use these insights to help strengthen funding applications for your meal kit scheme.

Logistics & Supply Chain Considerations

Supply Chain Structure

The supply chain for a meal kit scheme is a simple three-stage chain with three actors: suppliers, processors and consumers (see **Figure 1**). Considerations for each stage of the supply chain are discussed below.

Figure 1: Simplified supply chain for meal kit



Sourcing

In deciding which suppliers to use, trade-off decisions will have to be made depending on your organisation's goals and priorities.

In terms of ingredients, a supplier capable of delivering all, if not most of the ingredients, may be preferable.

Having fewer suppliers could mean it would be:

- Easier to negotiate for better pricing and economies of scale.
- More efficient as less administrative and logistics processing would be required.
- More sustainable due to fewer deliveries, meaning fewer food miles travelled.

✓ **Top tip: If multiple organisations are undertaking this project within the same geographical proximity, they could consider joint procurement where organisations buy together for cost and delivery efficiencies. This could be facilitated by the town/city's food partnership.**

Other considerations include ethical and sustainability issues. Ensuring a supplier is ethical (in terms of worker wages, working conditions, practices, etc.) is important. This ethicality should not only be restricted to their organisation but also include their supply chain as well:

- Investigating where the food is sourced from may be an important consideration, particularly when seeking to contribute to local food system transformation.
- Sourcing from a local supplier does not necessarily mean sourcing locally produced food, as such suppliers sometimes source from overseas. Similarly, sourcing from a major supermarket does not mean longer food miles.
- Each ingredient must be investigated individually if an organisation is truly interested in the origins of the ingredients being sourced.



✓ **Top tip: Schools may align school meal procurement with meal kit sourcing to leverage economies of scale wherever possible. They may also offer school meals based on recipes and provide the meal kits alongside.**

Processing (Meal Kit Assembly)

The project organisation is the "processor": your school or community organisation will be responsible for sorting and packaging the meal kits for onward delivery or purchase by end users. You will require labour and storage space. If storage space is limited, you may consider working with suppliers to deliver within a specific time window when you have access to space and labour to sort and pack.

You may consider sourcing from suppliers that may be able to deliver pre-packaged meal kits that require only a little more processing. This may be more feasible in instances of large procurement levels made possible through joint purchases – probably done through a local food partnership. Large retailers already provide online shopping for individual customers.

✓ **Top tip: With schools looking to undertake a similar project, labour may be a significant challenge. Innovative approaches, including student-led meal kit assembly, student clubs, and teacher-student collaborations, may be useful.**

Accessing

You need to decide whether your kits will be available through deliveries or collection. We recommend collection from schools. Deliveries introduce an added logistics challenge as the project organisation may have to source a logistics service provider or recruit additional labour to facilitate this.

✓ **Top tip for community organisations: We recommend a hybrid approach, where most customers collect, for example as part of their usual shop at the community market, but deliveries are made for a minority of customers. For smaller deliveries, delivery bikes and other types of carrier cycles could be used to deliver the kits sustainably.**

Logistics

If your supplier is unable to deliver, you may have to contract a logistics organisation to collect purchases. Sustainability considerations may include the type of vehicles used for deliveries (e.g., electric vehicles), routing (finding the best route that will result in the least carbon emissions possible) and reducing the total number of trips needed to deliver. Similar transportation considerations may be made for deliveries to customers.

Funding

There are opportunities in logistics, sourcing, processing and accessing to show funders carefully thought-out social and environmental sustainability decisions and potential for project impact. For example, working with a supplier that sources locally produced food products could be used as evidence for a short food supply chain, while sourcing from a supplier capable of delivering all ingredients, particularly if at discounted rates, could be used as evidence for environmental stewardship and responsible fund usage.

Considerations for Scaling Up

Piloting batches of up to 30 kits may serve as a useful “stepping stone” towards scaling up meal kit production. It will enable you to gather insights from your recipients and evidence of impact for future larger funding bids.

You can use these supply chain insights to help you scale up. Scaling up the numbers of kits produced and therefore possible impact of the kits may require a different approach depending on the resources (space, time, capacity) of your organisation. We recommend working together with other organisations to pool resources. For example, in the past BHFP have formed a central food hub run primarily by volunteers (as has been done by [Britebox](#)). There may already be a food hub in your area.

Pricing Considerations for Local Food Hubs

We recommend that kits distributed through schools be provided free of cost to recipients. On the other hand, we found through our research that participants would be willing to purchase a community-generated meal kit at subsidised cost from local food hubs.

Our pricing recommendations are drawn from research conducted by FoodSEqual’s pricing team at the University of Kent. The team studied healthy food prices and interviewed 26 community members who are based in Brighton and Hove, Reading, Plymouth, and Tower Hamlets. Their research aimed to understand a) how the community perceive and evaluate different food prices; and b) the characteristics of a fair-price for healthy food.

Why “savers” and “savvy” are the right target segments for the kit

We identified five community profiles in relation to prices (habituated, frugal, savers, savvy, and habitually organic). **Savers** and **savvy** community shoppers are the most relevant segments for the kit because the former are willing to spend time checking prices to save money, while the latter excel at “price evaluation” to buy/find the best deals. For them, a price is “fair” when (a) the price is equivalent to the cost of ingredients in nearby discount stores such as Aldi and Lidl, (b) the seller earns a reasonable profit margin (up to 30%), and (c) the product offers good value in both quantity and size for its price. Our meal kit brings together these values for the community. This is a kit for savers and savvy shoppers.

Pricing Recommendations for your Meal Kit

Savers and savvy understanding of prices provide the basis for our meal kit’s fair-pricing strategy. We recommend positioning the kit as a “luxury-healthy” product to drive demand among the community and alleviate stigma. We recommend a strategy that blends dynamic-and-cost-based approaches as a fair-pricing strategy for your meal kit. This strategy would allow your organisation to cover the basic cost of the kit (cost-based) while maintaining a modest, flexible profit margin (dynamic) that reflects microeconomic fluctuations. Community organisations should:

- ✓ Maintain a low profit margin of no more than 10%.
- ✓ Match the price of ingredients with nearby retailers.
- ✓ Remain below competitors’ prices such as HelloFresh.
- ✓ Include voucher subsidies to stimulate demand for premium healthy products.
- ✓ Align with a generous portion size after cooking.
- ✓ Display one price and refrain from using price promotion.

Summary

This section of the toolkit presents supply chain and pricing recommendations for community organisations and schools wishing to run their own meal kit scheme. If you wish to reference our toolkit in your funding applications, or academic work, we recommend the following reference:

Taylor, S., Horne, J., Magee, C., Fricker, R., Moore, E., Sawyerr, E., El Shamandi Ahmed, K., Sawyerr, E., Tsikritzi, R., Ghanimi, A., Bradbeer, J., Lowe, B. and Bourlakis, M. (2025). Love Chickpeas: A Meal Kit Innovation in Brighton and Hove. A Practical Toolkit for Community Meal Kits – Learnings from the Food Systems Equality Project. FoodSEqual, University of Reading: UK.



REFERENCES & RESOURCES

Olive, L., & Worosz, M. R. (2024). Better Than Blue Apron? The Dominant Nutrition Framework Packed in a Community-Based Meal Kit. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 20(1), 101-123.

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➤ **Brighton and Hove Food Partnership:**
bhfood.org.uk/about-us

➤ **University of Reading. Food Systems Equality:**
research.reading.ac.uk/food-systems-equality

Downloadable Resources for your FoodSEqual Meal Kit

Our recipes:

- [Chickpea Rigatoni recipe card \(pdf\)](#)
- [Chickpea and tomato curry recipe card \(pdf\)](#)
- [Bhaji Burger recipe card \(pdf\)](#)

- [Introduction to Mary and Paula](#)
- [Recipe Costing Template \(xls\)](#) (to enable easy successful funding applications)
- [Feedback form for your meal kit scheme](#)
- [Recipe Card Template](#)
- [Allergy labels](#)
- [Food safety guidance](#)

Learn more on the FoodSEqual homepage

- See also BHFP's blogs on FoodSEqual work. To learn more about the UKRI Transforming UK Food Systems funding, please visit the [UKRI webpage](#).

Toolkit benefits and alignment with the Brighton Hove Food Strategy Action plan 2025-2030

- ✓ **Championing public health (aim 1)** – supports BHCC's Public health aims by promoting healthy eating and preventing diet related ill health through accessible recipes
- ✓ **Enhancing school food** – tangible resource for BHCC's whole school food approach
- ✓ **Preventing food poverty (aim 2)** – affordable accessible recipes building cooking confidence creating 'food ladders' towards greater food security and nutritional safety net
- ✓ **Boosting sustainability (aim 4 & 7)** encourages efficient ingredient use and meal planning supporting a "food ruse not food waste city" and indirectly promotes local sustainable produce

Contributors

Our meal kit research was led by the University of Sussex in collaboration with Brighton and Hove Food Partnership (BHFP). The University of Sussex is a research-intensive public university, founded in 1961. BHFP is a non-profit organisation helping people learn to cook, access a healthy diet, grow their own food and waste less food (BHFP, 2025). BHFP is known for its cross-sector work around food and initiatives to address food insecurity including **distributing meal kits to low income households**. University of Sussex and BHFP collaborated with teams across the wider FoodSEqual project to produce this toolkit. The contributors include:

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