

South West Probation – Dorset Lunch Clubs

[keywords: *community payback, skills training, nutrition*]

Overview

As part of our community payback provision we run three lunch clubs for vulnerable people in the Dorset area, two based in churches, the other in a community centre. The clubs, which have been running since 2021, are held weekly, with between 25 and 75 members at each, and more than 10,000 meals are provided in total each year. The food is prepared and served by people on probation (6 at each site) as part of their community payback hours. The organising groups provide the food and venues, and contribute £1000 towards incidental costs, including the participants' food hygiene certification, which they complete before starting on the project.

Its impact

The lunch clubs provide Dorset probation with another community payback option, for up to 18 people at a time, at minimal cost to probation; the clubs are highly popular with people on probation, who benefit by learning how to meal plan, budget, and safely store, prepare and cook food, and gaining a Food Hygiene certificate; and it provides clear benefits to the local community too – for many of the members it will be the only hot meal they will have that week, their only source of fresh fruit and vegetables, and for a good number, the only time they meet up with other people.

What's special about it

It's a simple, cost-effective idea with a significant and wide-ranging impact.

Wider applicability

We believe that there are similar clubs running in Manchester, and there may be others too, but we believe that this idea could be rolled out much more widely, at minimal cost, with the same wide-ranging benefits.

Further information

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See also: [KnowX.uk/SouthWest3-KBT24.pdf](https://www.knowx.uk/SouthWest3-KBT24.pdf) (flyer)