



*Placeholder logo- we don't have an
official logo yet!*

Bromley Anti-Poverty Alliance

VSSN- 08 September 2026
Bromley Borough Foodbank - Ray Dickens

Intro to Bromley Borough Foodbank (BBF)

Ray Dickens- Community Mobilisation Coordinator/BBF Staff.

My role is to work closely alongside people with **lived experience of food poverty and financial hardship** to help create meaningful opportunities for them to **shape the decisions that affect their lives.**

We are a **referral-based foodbank** and work with **over 90 active referral partners**, including schools, churches, GPs, advice services and community fridges. We also work closely with **Citizens Advice Bromley** to help people maximise their income and tackle the root causes of financial hardship.

We're always happy to onboard organisations as referral partners. If your organisation supports individuals or families on low incomes and want to issue foodbank vouchers directly, come chat to me afterwards!

As part of the **Trussell Foodbank Network**, we believe that people experiencing poverty are experts in what it means to live on a low income. Their skills, knowledge and perspectives are **equally as valuable as professional and organisational expertise.**

That said, central to our work at BBF is **listening to and amplifying lived experience voices.** We do this by creating flexible/practical ways for people affected by poverty to play a key role in shaping the services, systems and decisions that affect them— **which is a big reason as to why the Anti-Poverty Alliance was created.**

What is the Anti-Poverty Alliance (APA)?

The APA is a voluntary network that brings together **local decision-makers, organisations and people with lived experience of financial hardship** to strengthen collective voices, build partnerships and support a more joined-up response to poverty across Bromley.

The APA aims to provide a constructive space where members can:

- **Share knowledge, intelligence, experiences, and celebrate progress**
- **Identify gaps and emerging challenges**
- **Respectfully challenge systems, policies and practices** that contribute to poverty or create barriers to support
- **Bring the VCSF and public sector together** to collaborate, consult and develop more joined-up ways of working
- **Co-produce and shape local responses** that improve outcomes for Bromley residents experiencing poverty and financial hardship

Why the APA Started

The idea for the Anti-Poverty Alliance grew out of Trussell's *Guarantee Our Essentials* **mass lobby event, which we attended alongside Citizens Advice Bromley, Living Well and XbyX.**

In preparation for the lobby, our organisations we spent time gathering data, case studies and frontline experiences to present to MPs. **What became clear from the evidence gathered was that each organisation sees a different aspect of hardship in Bromley.** And bringing these perspectives together gave us a much richer picture of the challenges facing residents.

The discussions also highlighted some common issues:

- **People with lived experience are often missing** from decision-making processes and conversations
- **Knowledge and information can be fragmented**, with some organisations aware of changes to services and hardship schemes while others are out of the loop
- **Consultation and co-production opportunities** can sometimes be difficult to find or access

The APA was created to build on this learning — bringing different perspectives together, sharing knowledge and **creating a stronger link between frontline experience, lived experience and local decision-making.**

What is the APA Aiming To Do?

The APA is aiming to make sure that **people affected by poverty and frontline organisations have a voice in shaping policies, services and support from the earliest stages.**

We want to create opportunities for **lived experience, frontline insight and evidence to shape local priorities from the start** — whether that's co-designing and delivering services or thinking about how support is delivered in practice.

The APA is **independent, voluntary and non-party political**. It may **identify barriers, highlight concerns and advocate for changes** that strengthen support for people experiencing poverty and financial hardship.

Any advocacy will be **evidence-based, informed by lived experience and focused on practical solutions** — working with partners to make better use of the resources and expertise already in the borough.

The APA **is not here to replace existing partnerships or decision-making structures**. Instead, we want to add to them — bringing together lived experience and frontline insight to ensure different perspectives are represented and have a chance to contribute.

What is the APA Working On?

The APA has met **four times since it started in April** and is now preparing for its first **Steering Group meeting next week**. So far, we've identified some key areas we want to focus on:

- Building strong working relationships with the Council
- Sharing evidence and frontline insight, and creating a place for that knowledge to live and grow
- Creating opportunities for learning and collaboration with lived experience partners
- Establishing governance that keeps the Alliance inclusive, practical and non-bureaucratic

We're in the process of developing **two connected ways to get involved: Networking Alliance & Steering Group**.

Networking Alliance- share information and updates, build connections and partnerships, hear from guest speakers

Steering Group- Decision making, evidence gathering, developing action proposals, involving people with lived experience leading on agreed advocacy where appropriate

The two groups will **feed into each other**, with members able to get involved in the ways that work best for them.

Market Place Event- 23 September

As part of our focus on **building strong working relationships with the Council**, APA members from **Bromley Homeless** have teamed up with the **Housing Options Team** to organise a **Marketplace Event on 23 September at Civic Centre (12pm-2pm)**.

It's an opportunity for organisations working in the poverty sector to **meet local councillors, council officers and other organisations to share signposting material and connect into services more easily** — hopefully helping to build connections and make referral pathways clearer.

Registration closes this Thursday 10 September, so there's still time to sign up for a stall or come along and connect with colleagues from across the borough.

Come and speak to me after the session if you're interested in signing up!

Interested in APA?

The APA is still in its **early stages**, and we're working out what membership and participation will look like as the Alliance develops.

For now, the best way to get involved is simply to **reach out to me for a chat**. We can talk about your organisation, your connection to the work and take it from there.

We're keen to hear from **organisations and statutory partners** who share the APA's aims and want to contribute to a more joined-up response to poverty and financial hardship — including people with **lived experience**.

If you're interested, or know someone with lived experience or an organisation that might be a good fit, tell them to drop me a line!

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