



Local strategies to challenge the institutionalisation of food banks:
Early insights from an action learning intervention in Scotland

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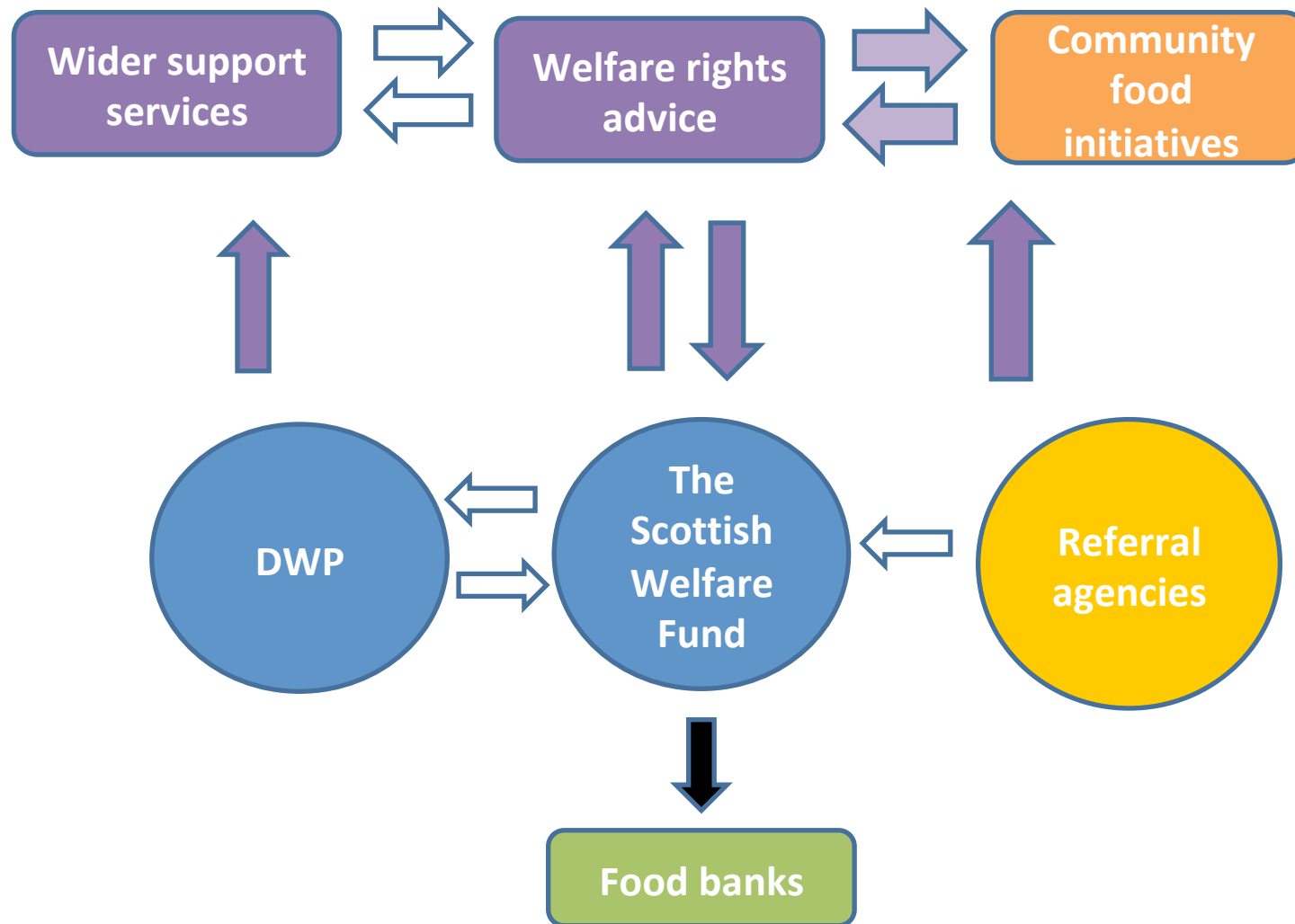
We want to prevent food banks becoming a permanent part of Scotland's social security system.



A project in four parts



- 1. What can be done now and locally in Dundee, Fife and East Ayrshire?**
2. What are the short and longer-term outcomes for people experiencing acute food insecurity?
3. What best practice can be shared across Scotland and the UK?
4. How can we use all the learning, analysis and evidence to change government policy and practice?



our vision of change: improving the crisis response

Evaluation approach

Quantitative (referral routes; referral reasons)

Survey of all action learning set members

Survey data gathered over 4 weeks at project start:

- Scottish Welfare Fund (Crisis Grants)
- Food banks (2 of 3 Trussell Trust food banks withdrew)
- Welfare rights advice services
- Job Centres

Qualitative (nature of crisis response; reasons for referrals; barriers to preventative action):

Interviews with service providers working in each area

Interviews with people with lived experience of food crisis





The current crisis response: key challenges

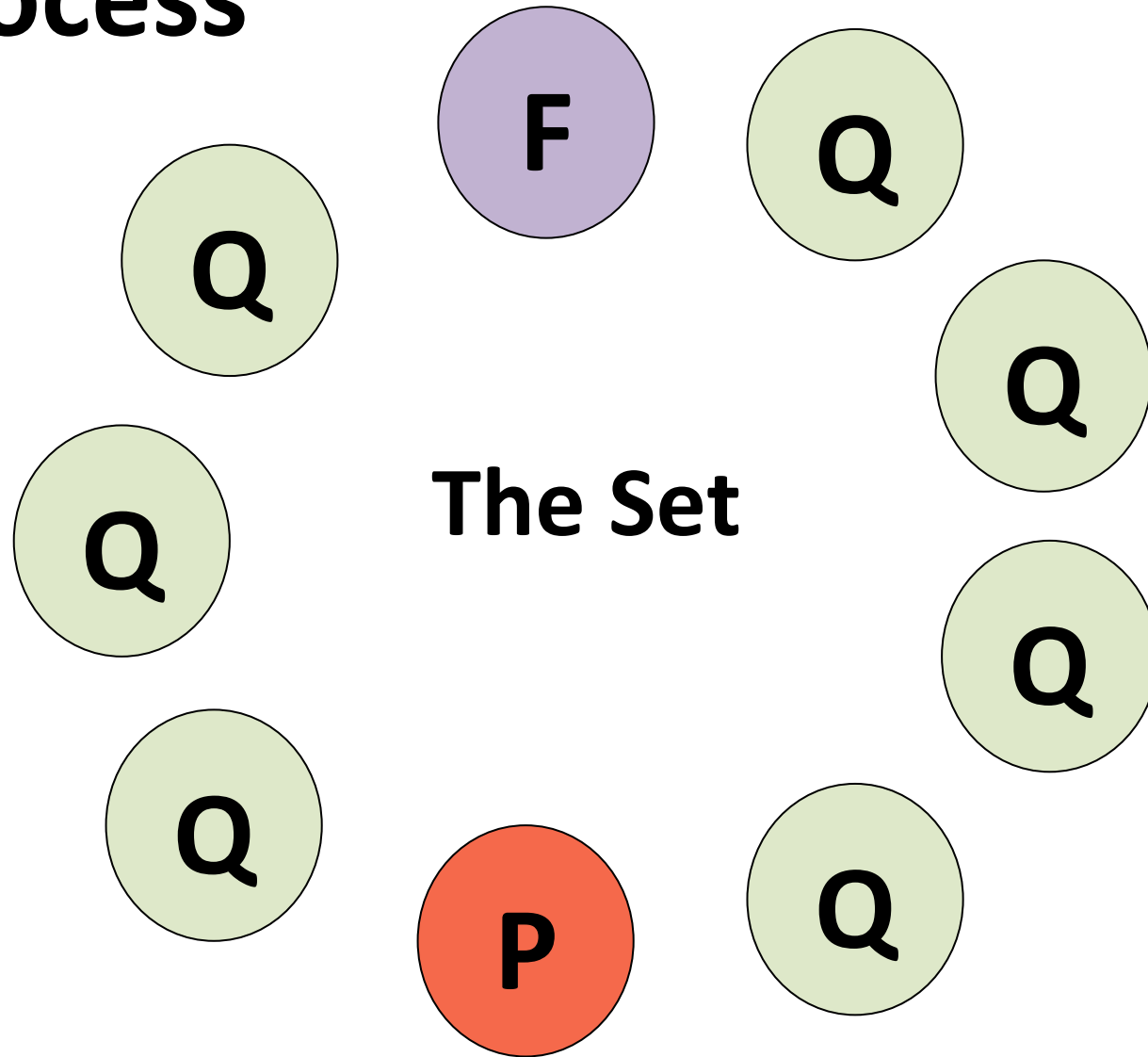
- High rates of food bank referrals from organisations without knowledge or capacity to connect clients with other services
- Physical and social barriers to accessing preventative services
- Limited availability of advice services, particularly in rural areas
- Inconsistent application of Scottish Welfare Fund guidance
- Problems with communication between Job Centres, clients and other services

Action Learning Sets (ALS)

- Aim: Identifying local solutions to local problems
- 12 monthly meetings
- 9-10 set members
 - Service providers: multi-disciplinary and multi-level
 - Individuals with lived experience of food insecurity
- Informed by lived experience advisory groups



S Process



CASH RIGHTS FOOD

- Arriving Round
- Bidding
- Presenting
- Questions
- Action
- Reflections
- Group Actions
- Process Review

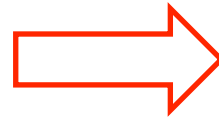
Action Learning – selected interim results



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Problem Raised

Non-specialist staff lacking knowledge and capacity to refer to services other than food banks



Action Identified

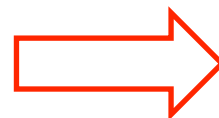
Produce a flow chart of available crisis support

Letter notifying of a failed SWF application had no further information for other options



Review SWF decision notifications to maximise support available to claimants

Concerns that full circumstances not taken into consideration when people are agreeing to claimant commitments



Sanction case studies to evidence whether claimant commitments are adequately tailored to individual circumstances

Reflections on the ALS Methodology for local practice change



- Benefits
 - Local stakeholder identify issues that are timely and relevant
 - Structure supports reflection and constructive engagement with the issues rather than simply discussing problems
 - Supportive *and* challenging of each other
- Challenges
 - Securing buy-in from relevant stakeholders
 - Attendance and continuity
 - Highly dependent on participants' engagement

Next steps – pilot projects



Modest investment to take forward concrete actions to address local problems of food insecurity: >£10k grant

Projects are grounded in practice and real experience

Projects should be replicable elsewhere



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