

Leicester Ageing Together – Vegetable Seed Drive

The vegetable seed drive formed part of our **#DistantSocialising** campaign, aiming to reduce social isolation and loneliness amongst adults during Covid-19 lockdown.

We purchased sunflower seeds, and other vegetable seeds were given to us by Public Health, via The Conservation Volunteers (TCV). Part of our seed drive strategy was to divide the seeds into small packets so that we could provide to more people with vegetable seeds. It was also important for us that people had a positive growing experience and we wanted to make the activity inclusive to as many people as possible. Therefore, we created easy to follow ‘how to grow’ guides for some of the more popular varieties of vegetable seeds, which we also made available in Arabic, Gujarati, and Punjabi.

The campaign has been a huge success and, to date, Leicester Ageing Together, through its #DistantSocialising activity packs, has distributed over 1,607 packets of vegetable seeds to local organisations, charities, and groups including:

Mosaic Foodbank, Wesley Hall, E2, Christ the King Foodbank, City of Sanctuary, Project Hope, The Peace Centre, Wolsey Building, Belgrave Social Group, Christ Church Thurnby Lodge, Sanatan Mandis, Adher, Anita Jane Lodge, Belgrave Cancer Group, East Midland’s Langar Society, Leicestershire Fibromyalgia and Arthritis Support Group



In addition, over 150 vegetables seed packets have been posted to individuals and families across the City. We also experienced a great up-take of the different translations for the ‘how to grow’ guides and this has been very positive, with over 400 given out; 325 in Gujarati, 60 in Arabic and 30 in Punjabi.

Over 25 hours of volunteering time, by local people, have been gifted in supporting the seed drive.



The vegetable seeds have also helped to support a growing project in Thurnby Lodge and, although the project is in the early stages of development, local volunteers have managed to sow and grow lettuce, beetroot and carrots to feed local needs.

As part of their quest to tackle school holiday hunger, the Mosaic Foodbank runs, every summer holiday, a club name 'ROOT'. This club provides arts and crafts activity packs with additional food to families living with food poverty who have primary school aged children who receive a free school meal.

Through the scheme, vegetable seed packets and the 'how to grow' guides have been distributed to over 30 children of families with limited resources living in local area.

The response has been amazing, and we have received great feedback from some of the people who have participated.

"Across the board, families were very enthusiastic in having a go at growing their own vegetables and were very keen to take up the opportunity that they normally would not do"

Mary Kerwin, Mosaic Foodbank



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"People are looking forward to planting and seeing the seeds grow and to be able to eat what they have grown"

Bharti Mistry, Leicester Ageing Together - Community Connector

"It was such a lovely opportunity for people to do something positive in lockdown. The growing guides really helped to encourage people to grow their own food"

Shali Bullough, Leicester City of Sanctuary