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BMJ appeal raises £60 000 for the Independent Food Aid Network

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Food aid charities have bought personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff and volunteers and helped feed children during school closures as a result of the funds raised by *The BMJ*'s 2020-21 annual appeal.

The appeal raised £60 116 (€69 394, \$83 416) for the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN), a charity that focuses on the root causes of food poverty while supporting local organisations that work to tackle its immediate effects. The money enabled food banks and other food aid organisations to buy essential PPE to keep staff, volunteers, and clients safe and provided essential items for families living in food and fuel poverty.

Unity World Café in Glasgow was one of the organisations that used money provided through IFAN to supply PPE to staff. "We're a small and pretty much unsupported organisation, so these grants have been invaluable," Phill Jones, who helps run the café, told *The BMJ*. "We've managed to buy extra food to distribute, PPE equipment, and also make contributions to the premises we use."

Lifeshare, a voluntary organisation that helps homeless and other vulnerable people in Manchester and Salford, also used grants made possible by the appeal to provide essential PPE for staff, volunteers, and clients. New Forest Basics Bank used its grant money to help support children affected by school closures. And Neruka's Soup Kitchen in Leeds used its recent grants from IFAN to help provide a wider variety of food.

Sabine Goodwin, coordinator at IFAN, said that the charity was "immensely grateful" to those who had contributed to the appeal. "As a result of BMJ readers' generosity, our member organisations have been able to support increasing numbers of people unable to afford food," she said.

"What's more, we've been able to advocate for the changes that would end the need for charitable food aid in the first place. Unless decisive action is taken, the economic impact of the pandemic will continue to push more and more people into poverty and calls for a cash first response to food insecurity are needed more than ever."