

NEWS

Food bank set up in Bedford to cater for ethnic diets

23 March



HELEN MULROY/BBC | The Ethnic Food Bank will serve more culturally diverse diets for people in Bedford

A food bank has been opened to cater for ethnically diverse and cultural diets.

The **Ethnic Food Bank** in Bedford will supply foods eaten by people of Asian, African and Caribbean, Middle Eastern and Eastern European backgrounds.

It was created by a doctor after she saw a patient who "was reluctant to access the local food bank, because he could not get food he normally ate".

"So I thought, we should do something about it," said Dr Minaz Mazi-Kotwal.



HELEN MULROY/BBC | Dr Minaz Mazi-Kotwal set up the service after finding out a patient would not use regular food banks

After speaking with her husband, a consultant psychiatrist, and a work colleague, they set up the bank at Westbourne Community Centre and opened it on Wednesday.

Items offered included foods such as semolina flour, various lentils, ground plantain and soya chunks.



HELEN MULROY/BBC | Volunteer Esther McNeal said food was donated by local shops selling goods mostly bought by people from ethnic communities

One of 20 volunteers, Esther McNeal said the lack of culturally diverse food at other food banks was essentially due to them mostly receiving donations from mainstream supermarkets.

"What we have done is reach out to the local communities and local shops," she said.

"This does help the culturally diverse communities so that they can get the foods they actually enjoy eating."

The Ethnic Food Bank is also being supported by the local council, churches, mosques and gurdwaras.



HELEN MULROY/BBC | The food parcel donations will be given out to people referred to the centre by various organisations

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