York and North Yorkshire Covid Recovery Insight Project

Food Insecurity Research

The efficacy of different food access models

Final Report March 2023

"People who are struggling don't want to feel different."

SKYBLUE
RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Contents

1.0 Summary

1. Taxonomy of food access models

Over 50 types of food access models have been identified in York and North Yorkshire. Desk research has enabled a new taxonomy to be formed around 11 groupings, each explored in detail by this study. This enables any reader to have a definition of each model and their key characteristics alongside examples of practice in the UK.

2. The efficacy of food access models

A rapid evidence assessment considered over 1,400 sources of literature filtered down to 72 'strong' methodological studies enabling the researchers to consider the efficacy of the 11 models and present these in a form that allows any reader to better understand the outcomes typically associated with these models; whilst also shining a light on any enablers and inhibitors to those food access models. The study is not designed to compare each model or for investors to view them as competitors to one another, rather to reveal the potential for each model to produce a desired intended result more consistently.

3. Outcomes

Outcomes from the food access models were observed for individuals/households, communities, food aid/access providers/organisations/partnerships, the environment and the state. This study focuses on the benefits for individuals/households, food access models and communities and identifies outcomes across the domains of health, wellbeing (including for volunteers), improved household income, strengthening communities, strengthened local economy/investing in community as well as strengthened community resilience and social infrastructure. Providers have typically benefited in terms of their capacity and confidence to meet local need as well as work with others in emergency response.

4. Key messages and opportunities

The study identifies 5 key opportunities. This summary seeks to explain their rationale in a distilled fashion, whilst a dedicated website makes a suite of supporting resources available to readers in order to explore granular detail to inform their practice and local conversations.

1	The opportunity to invest in place-based collaborative food access models e.g., networks, partnerships, alliances, taskforces to improve co-ordination with options to position them in areas where disparities / food insecurity is greatest or at higher risk.
2	The opportunity to invest in / nurture mixed income models rooted in communities.
3	The opportunity to pilot cash-first approaches in York and North Yorkshire.
4	The opportunity to invest in / nurture 'more than food' models linked to wrap around support, advice, signposting and / or connection to other services and community assets.
5	The opportunity to invest in the convening power of food including 'food and education' (to grow, share, celebrate and encourage community enterprise, resilience and social capital).

2.0 Context

Prior to this research there has not been a definitive study classifying the different food access models and typologies identified; nor a systematic review that reveals their efficacy. This research goes some way towards filling this gap in the hope that people with lived experience of food insecurity and commissioners and policy makers can come together with confidence to design a food security landscape / system that produces desired outcomes in York and North Yorkshire.

What is clear is that different models play an important role in helping individuals and / or families experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity. The literature reviewed finds a host of outcomes are possible from the different food access typologies, for individuals[1]/households, communities, the environment, the partners/providers of each model and the state (some of which have just been described). It is less evident whether one model delivers 'more' or 'better' outcomes than others, but the study concludes the wider potential of '**mixed income'** community-based / led food access models and **'more than food'** models which provide access to wrap around support and services – the latter, because they offer opportunities for addressing the root causes of food / insecurity.

The literature reviewed has been stronger in terms of describing:

- Benefits for individuals/households – particularly the health and wellbeing benefits.
- Benefits for the environment (in terms of food waste avoided/food surplus redistributed).
- Benefits for two collaborative models – food partnerships and food poverty alliances.

The literature (and evidence) is becoming stronger, but still emergent in describing:
- Benefits for communities.
- Benefits for partners / providers of each model.

The literature is weaker in terms of:
- Providing a definitive assessment of the efficacy of individual or combination 'more than food' models e.g., food + welfare / advice / support / wider community activity.
- Providing assessments of the long-term impact of different models i.e. the extent to which an individual becomes sustainably food secure (one measure tracked by some but not all models was the reduced use of food banks over time)
- Providing an assessment of the preventative outcomes of food access models.

Literature about models that are successfully sustainable, enterprising or viable in communities rather than dependent on (solely) grant income are referred to as **'mixed income models'** and there are some promising examples found in the main report.

Literature about lived experience of food insecurity is available, particularly linked to people's experience during COVID-19, however, there are no authoritative studies that identify personal journeys and approaches that help develop a greater understanding of how individuals can successfully progress from a position of severe to moderate insecurity to mild insecurity to security. This may be a gap that academic leads in this field could seek to fill in future.

Lived Experience

The Steering Group for this Project has meantime commissioned some participatory research with the LIFE Group in York to explore this and other themes. 'Efficacy' viewed from the perspective of lived experience is an important ingredient to embed in future policy making or decisions about how to make any local 'food security' system better, indeed should have implications for the way in which decisions about local welfare assistance and wider national support could be deployed to best effect.

Food insecurity levels in York and North Yorkshire

Food insecurity after all is a symptom of wider insecurity and that needs addressing at its root if we are to improve on the situation where **in May 2022 an estimated 15.5% of households could be food insecure – equivalent to 43,000 households in North Yorkshire and 7,500 households in York.**
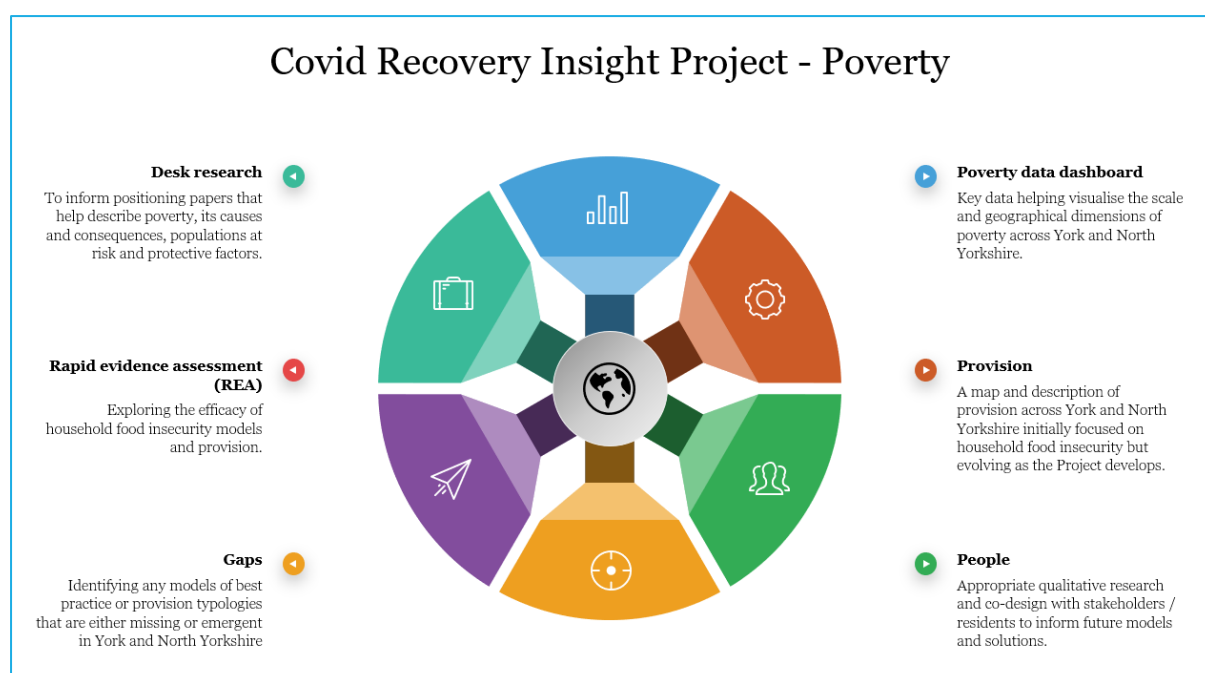
3.0 Introduction

This research report forms part of a multi-strand insight project relating to 'poverty' commissioned jointly by North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council between April 2022 and March 2023. It focuses on food access models and typologies rather than being a discourse about the causes or consequences of food insecurity or who is at risk / affected most.

Project ambitions

1. Understand what kind of food security models/provision is available in York and North Yorkshire.
2. Undertake desk research to understand the efficacy of different food models/provision and explore the outcomes/benefits they can deliver.
3. Use data, insight, and evidence to understand the scale of the food insecurity issue now and in future e.g., considering the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.
4. Improve approaches to short-term action planning, longer-term strategy development, commissioning and grant deployment that could contribute to a reduction in food insecurity in York and North Yorkshire.

Associated ambitions

1. Start to understand how lived experience can increasingly be placed at the heart of longer-term strategy development and an improvement in systems with models/provision that have the characteristics of dignity and choice.
2. Engage with stakeholders though a mix of conversations, formal interviews, surveying (now and or in future) and events that can help identify what works well, what is missing in the landscape ('gaps') and what better could look like.
3. Identify practical resources and toolkits that are used elsewhere to save time or effort reinventing models/provision thought to derive the kind of benefits that the partners desire in York and North Yorkshire

Covid Recovery Insight Project - Poverty

Desk research
To inform positioning papers that help describe poverty, its causes and consequences, populations at risk and protective factors.

Rapid evidence assessment (REA)
Exploring the efficacy of household food insecurity models and provision.

Gaps
Identifying any models of best practice or provision typologies that are either missing or emergent in York and North Yorkshire

Poverty data dashboard
Key data helping visualise the scale and geographical dimensions of poverty across York and North Yorkshire.

Provision
A map and description of provision across York and North Yorkshire initially focused on household food insecurity but evolving as the Project develops.

People
Appropriate qualitative research and co-design with stakeholders / residents to inform future models and solutions.

4.0 Definitions and measurement

Language matters and it can be complicated.

Key sources to learn about the language associated with this topic:

- Food security: What is it and how is it measured? (parliament.uk)
- Food poverty: Households, food banks and free school meals - House of Commons Library (parliament.uk)
- What is food poverty? | Sustain (sustainweb.org)
- Sustainable Development Goals in the UK follow up: Hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity in the UK
- What is household food insecurity? | ENUF
- Chapter 2. Food security: concepts and measurement[21] (fao.org)

Figure 1: Key definitions

Food poverty: 'The inability to afford, or have access to, food to make up a healthy diet.'[1]

Food insecurity: 'Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.'[2]

Food aid: Refers to a range of support activities aiming to help people meet food needs, often on a short term basis, which contribute to relieving the symptom of food poverty and insecurity.[3]

[2]

Sustain suggests reframing is necessary:

'Food poverty, food insecurity, food vulnerability, household food insecurity, food justice and hunger. These are just some of the terms used by organisations, businesses and individuals when talking about people being unable to afford, access or prepare a healthy meal. All these terms have their uses but can we use them to reframe the narrative to drive positive change?[3]'

'Food insecurity is defined as not always having the economic, social, and physical resources to shop, cook, and eat in order to ensure a sufficient supply of nutritionally appropriate food'.
(United Nations 2012)

This research suggests that there is a good argument for framing policy around the term **food security / food insecurity**. Despite no single definition of food poverty[4], there appears to be some consensus about food security and therefore insecurity though leading academics are calling for improvements to the way in which this is routelinely measured in the UK.

Household food insecurity: A household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Households are considered food insecure if they experience 'severe' or 'moderate' food insecurity as measured by the Household Food Security Survey Module[5]. **Household food insecurity** 'A lesser-known phrase in the public realm but increasingly popular amongst charities, academics and public sector organisations. The group agreed that this was the best term for capturing the fact that people fall into poverty because of a small change to their circumstances. This can tip people over the edge into food poverty at any point, as evidenced by the many individuals and families seeking food support for the first time ever as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This could therefore be a good alternative to food poverty in a policy context[6]. **What is household food insecurity?** Most simply, food insecurity is a lack of the financial resources needed to ensure reliable access to food to meet dietary, nutritional, and social needs. It can be acute, transitory, or chronic, and ranges in severity from worry about not being able to secure enough food to going whole days without eating[7]. '**Food insecurity** is exactly what it sounds like: when a person is without reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious, healthy food.[8]'. **Verdict: A good option, perhaps best for a policy context. Leading academics we interviewed confirmed a similar sentiment.**

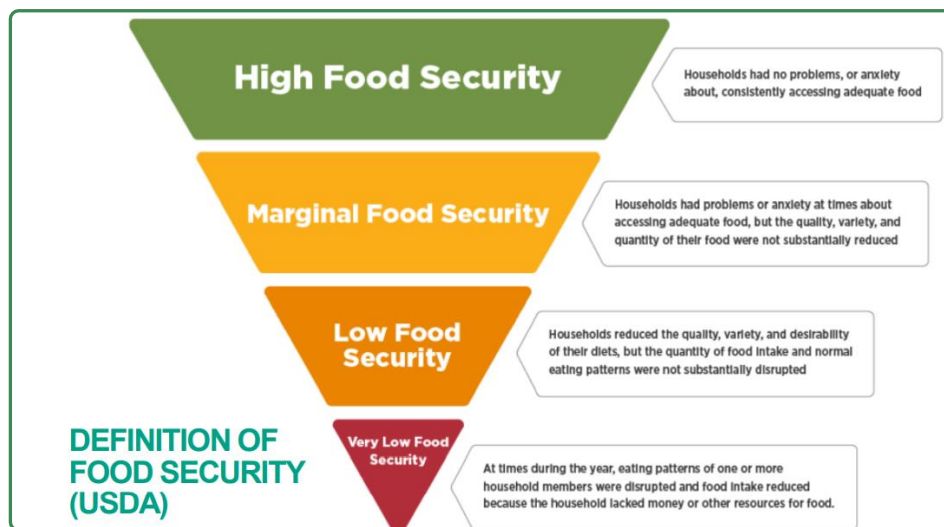**How is household food insecurity measured in national surveys?**

Routine monitoring in a national household survey is important for quantifying the scale of food insecurity in the population, tracking how the problem changes over time, and identifying vulnerable groups. Scales capturing self-reported experiences of food insecurity have been validated in different populations around the world. A commonly used scale, and variations of it, is the USDA Household Food Security Survey Module. This is used routinely in the U.S. and Canada and has also been used in population-based surveys in the UK, including the Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey and the Food and You Survey.

Why should we measure food insecurity and not just poverty?

Similar to the way that other measures of material hardship, covering housing conditions, bill and rent arrears, and the ability to heat one's home are an important part of measuring and tracking well-being in the population, so too is food insecurity. Lacking in basic essentials is a sign that income and other financial resources are not sufficient to meet basic needs. Compared to income-based poverty measures based on annual income, **household food insecurity is a more dynamic measure of poverty**.[9]

Different scales of measurement appear to be used currently.

DEFINITION OF FOOD SECURITY (USDA)

High Food Security — Households had no problems, or anxiety about, consistently accessing adequate food

Marginal Food Security — Households had problems or anxiety at times about accessing adequate food, but the quality, variety, and quantity of their food were not substantially reduced

Low Food Security — Households reduced the quality, variety, and desirability of their diets, but the quantity of food intake and normal eating patterns were not substantially disrupted

Very Low Food Security — At times during the year, eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake reduced because the household lacked money or other resources for food.

'Low' and 'very low' food security

'Low food security' means the household reduces the quality, variety, and desirability of their diets.

'Very low food security' means household members sometimes disrupt eating patterns or reduce food intake because they lack money or other resources for food.
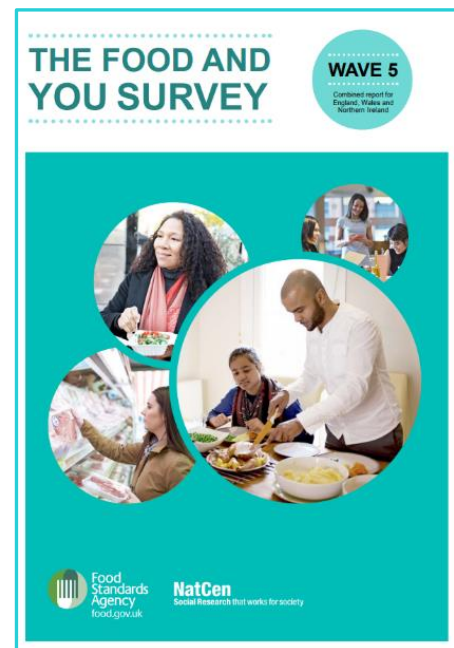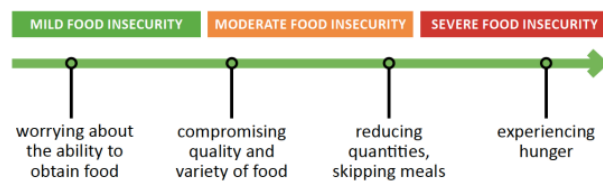

What is food insecurity?

Being food secure means being sure of your ability to secure, at all times, enough food of sufficient quality and quantity, to allow you to stay healthy and participate in society. Food insecurity is defined as:

" Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (e.g. without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies)[1]

Food insecurity has varying degrees of severity. Early stages involve worry about whether there will be enough food, followed by compromising quality, variety and quantity of food. Going without food and experiencing hunger are most severe stages (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY?

MILD FOOD INSECURITY   MODERATE FOOD INSECURITY   SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY

worrying about the ability to obtain food | compromising quality and variety of food | reducing quantities, skipping meals | experiencing hunger

THE FOOD AND YOU SURVEY

WAVE 5
Combined report for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Food Standards Agency food.gov.uk   NatCen Social Research that works for society

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Key sources to learn more about this topic:

- United Kingdom Food Security Report 2021: Theme 4: Food Security at Household Level - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Food Insecurity Tracking | Food Foundation
- Department for Work and Pensions' Households Below Average Income survey
- Family Resources Survey

Household food security and insecurity levels in the UK

House of Commons Briefing published September 2022

The increase in the cost of living has increased household food insecurity. In June to July 2022, of the 91% of adults in Great Britain who reported an increase in their cost of living, 95% saw the price of their food shopping go up, and 44% had started spending less on essentials including food. A YouGov survey by the Food Foundation found that in April 2022, **15.5% of all UK households were food insecure** (ate less or went a day without eating because they couldn't access or afford food). According to the Department for Work and Pensions' Households Below Average Income survey, in 2020/21, **4.2 million people (6%) were in food insecure households**. Among the 10.5 million people in relative poverty, 16% were in food insecure households, including 17% of children. People in relative poverty live in a household with income less than 60% of contemporary median income[11].

Household food security and insecurity levels in North Yorkshire (May 2022 estimates)

Topic	Definition	Prediction	Impact for NY
Food insecurity	Whether households have sufficient food to facilitate an active and healthy lifestyle. Low food security: The household reduced the quality, variety, and desirability of their diets, but the quantity of food intake and normal eating patterns were not substantially disrupted Very low food security: At times during the last 30 days, eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake reduced because the household lacked money and other resources for food.	The Family Resources Survey (DWP), Department of Work and Pensions found that 7% of households experienced food insecurity in 2020/21. The Food Foundation survey found similar levels of food insecurity in Aug 2020 to the government data but data shows that since then food insecurity levels have increased to 15.5% in April 22.	If food insecurity nationally was 7% of households and this was applied to North Yorkshire household projections data, then : • 19,140 households were food insecure in 2020/21 If food insecurity nationally increased to 15.5% of households and this was applied to North Yorkshire household projections data, then : • 42,937 households will be food insecure in 2022 **Approximately an additional 23,000 households experiencing food insecurity**

Household food security and insecurity levels in York (July 2022 estimates)

Food Insecurity

Definition	Prediction	Impact for York
Whether households have sufficient food to facilitate an active and healthy lifestyle. Low food security: The household reduced the quality, variety, and desirability of their diets, but the quantity of food intake and normal eating patterns were not substantially disrupted Very low food security: At times during the last 30 days, eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake reduced because the household lacked money and other resources for food.	The Family Resources Survey (DWP), Department of Work and Pensions found that 7% of households experienced food insecurity in 2020/21. The Food Foundation survey found similar levels of food insecurity in Aug 2020 to the government data but data shows that since then food insecurity levels have increased to 15.5% in April 22.	If food insecurity nationally was 7% of households and this was applied to York household projections data, then: 6,123 households were food insecure in 2020/21 If food insecurity nationally increased to 15.5% of households and this was applied to York household projections data (ONS 2018-based subnational population projections), then: 13,607 households will be food insecure in 2022/23 **Approximately an additional 7,484 households experiencing food insecurity**

Using a different analytical approach to provide local authority estimates[12] of 3 different measures of **adult food insecurity** the following assessment was provided in September 2022

Measurement in York & North Yorkshire 'Hungry', 'Struggle' and 'Worry'
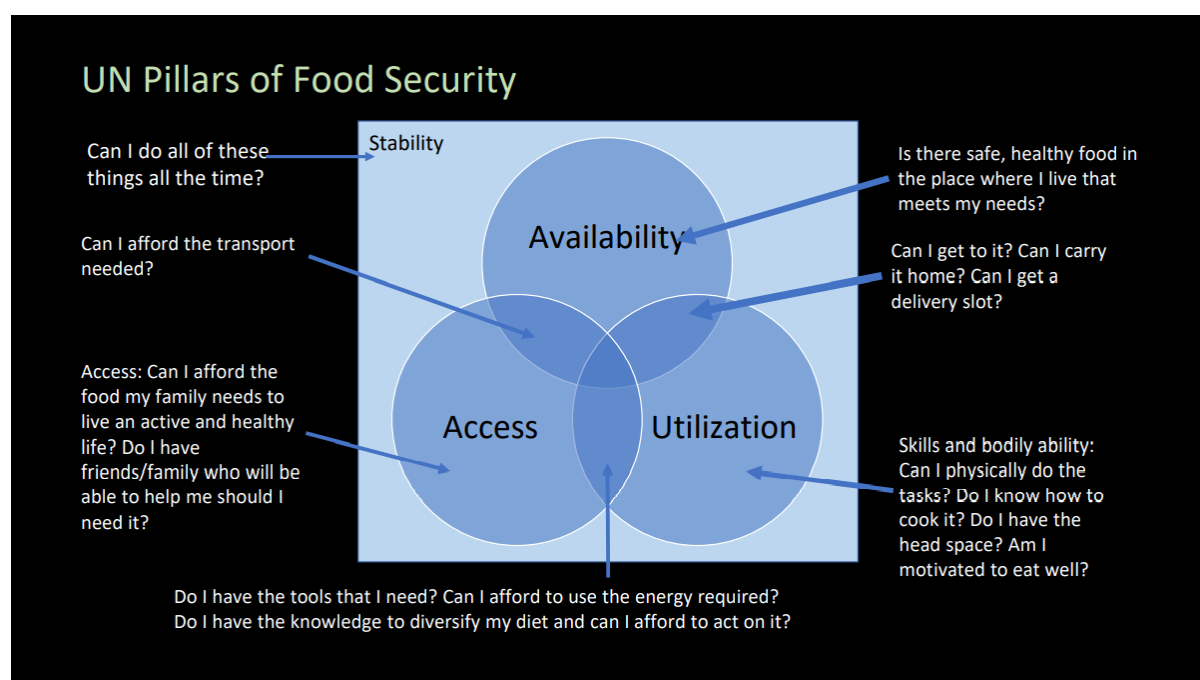
Data Dashboard developments

- Access to new data thanks to Dr Megan Blake, Sheffield University - Adult Food insecurity at Local Authority Scale based on Food Foundation data January 2021

	Hungry	Struggle	Worried
Selby	7.84	14.77	7.85
Craven	6.07	10.08	7.27
Scarborough	5.64	11.36	9.44
Richmondshire	4.7	9.87	8.19
Ryedale	4.29	9.71	8.17
Hambleton	4.21	9.32	7.83
Harrogate	3.3	8.59	7.62
York	2.81	7.54	9.5

- **'Hungry'** is defined as having skipped food for a whole day or more in the previous month or indicated they were hungry but not eaten because they could not afford or get access to food.
- **'Struggle'** is defined as a positive response to at least one of the following: Sought Help accessing food; Skipped or shrank meal; Gave a reason for not having enough food
- **'Worry'** is defined as choosing very worried or fairly worried about getting food.

The wider context around food security

UN Pillars of Food Security

Can I do all of these things all the time?

Stability

Is there safe, healthy food in the place where I live that meets my needs?

Can I afford the transport needed?

Availability

Can I get to it? Can I carry it home? Can I get a delivery slot?

Access: Can I afford the food my family needs to live an active and healthy life? Do I have friends/family who will be able to help me should I need it?

Access

Utilization

Skills and bodily ability: Can I physically do the tasks? Do I know how to cook it? Do I have the head space? Am I motivated to eat well?

Do I have the tools that I need? Can I afford to use the energy required? Do I have the knowledge to diversify my diet and can I afford to act on it?

Courtesy of Dr Megan Blake, University of Sheffield

5.0 Research Methodology

Following scoping with the Steering Group a range of search terms were agreed for the first part of the secondary research process which aimed to identify the context for food poverty / insecurity.

Drivers	Motivations	Needs	Provision
Barriers	Values / behaviours	Co-design	Solutions

The Steering Group considered topics they felt would be relevant for the Project.

Poverty / food / child	Social determinants	People at high / risk	Characteristics / profiles
Protective factors	Risk factors	'Tipping point'	Income
Cost of living	Cost of housing	Inflation	Fuel debt
Credit unions	Benefits	Universal credit	Public health
Workless households	Families	Older people	Children
Financial hardship	Causes of food / poverty	Working poor	Barriers
Enablers to break cycle	Levers – to prevent	Levers – to alleviate	Dependency
Campaigns[13]	Scrap the Cap	Social inclusion	Deep poverty
Destitution	Homeless	Benchmarks[14]	Solutions
Provision	Social supermarkets	Food banks / network	Local food solutions
Food poverty alliance(s)	Food cooperatives	Community fridges	Community larders
National food strategy	Local food strategy	Food partnerships	Food re-use / recycle
Food education	Prevention	Early intervention	Financial management
Budgeting	Advocacy	Debt management	Food poverty indices
Poverty stigma	Food in/security[15]	APPGs (thematic)	Diet / nutrition
Hunger	Malnutrition	Inequality	Mapping
Education	Evaluation	Best practice	Time series data / trends
Comparative geographies	Poverty proofing[16]	Payment for participation[17]	Lived experience/stories

Based on an overview of what is already happening in York, North Yorkshire and elsewhere further search terms and connections were identified to seek out relevant literature.

Food insecurity	Food resilience	Food banks	Supply chain
Food Partnership	Food network	Trussell Trust	Housing teams
Social teams	WhatsApp groups	Food justice alliance	Food poverty alliance
Co-ordination	Action Lab	Future scenarios	Social imagination
Deprivation	Food education	York Learning	Recipe cards
Stigma	Efficacy	Virtue signalling	Fridges / Pantries
Poverty Truth Commission	Social inclusion	Financial inclusion	'Un/deserving poor'
Recovery	Poverty dashboard	Food landscape	Food waste minimisation
Food access	Hardship	Social supermarkets[18]	Revenue models
Sustainability for VCSE	Neighbourhood solutions	Talk to people	Talk to providers
Framework for investment	Know what to measure	Different models	Reality picture/snapshot
On the ground set up	Social settings	Combat social isolation	Meet basic needs
Troubled families	Early intervention	Holiday Activity Fund	Trusted organisations
Radio York[19]	Health	Addiction	NYLAF[20]
Disability	Single parent	Mental health	YFAS[21]
On benefits	Fuel vouchers	Supermarket vouchers	LACs[22]
Emergency hubs	Abuse (of system)	Food parcels	Shopping
Referral systems	Financial assessment	Dependencies	Defra[23]

Household Support Fund	Community food projects	Warm & well vouchers[24]	Citizens Advice Bureau
Upskilling	Community hubs	Accreditation scheme	Volunteer response
Free school meals	Council tax benefit	Housing benefit	Partnership conference
Map of provision	Meals on wheels	Meal delivery	Supper collective[25]
Choose 2 Youth[26]	SIGNAL[27]	Levelling Up	Child poverty
Family resource survey	Older people poverty	Fuel poverty	Digital poverty
Lived experience	Food conversations	Asset map[28]	Climate change[29]
Shared understanding	How to describe reality	How we can action plan	Prevention
Who claims what?	What's the provision?	Where and what?	LGR
What's the future?	Who do we need to serve?	What services?	What investment?

These initial searches identified a need for **clear definitions** – is food poverty the same as food aid, the same as food insecurity, hunger, malnutrition or are there important differences in this language?

The second phase of the desk research was to inform work being undertaken to develop a 'data dashboard' for the Project. This included consideration of how and where to seek out relevant statistics. Relevant topics were identified to help streamline that data research process.

Cost of living	Material deprivation	Relative poverty	Absolute poverty
Persistent poverty	60 per cent under median household disposable income	Disposable household income	Household tenure
Disability	Workless	Child poverty metrics	Family resources

Key data sources[30] were then sourced, analysed and shared with NYCC and CYC data specialists in order to inform Management Board papers from May 2022 suggesting the size of the problem e.g., how much food poverty there was 'now' and projected into the future by modelling the potential impact of the unfolding cost of living crisis.

Data dashboard ideas

NYCC DoPH report: 'Want'[31]	IMD	Income (NOMIS)	Access to services
Level of education	Employment	Health	Free school meals
Claiming benefits data	Holiday Activity Fund	Household Support Fund	NYLAF / YFAS
Domestic abuse	Zero hours contracts	YNYLEP social inclusion data	ONS data[32]
Levelling up capitals framework[33]	Warm and Well NY	CAB data	DEFRA data
JRF State of Nation data	Child poverty data	SIGNAL tool metrics	**Priority Places for Food Index (new)**

The third phase of the desk research process was to identify **a taxonomy of food (poverty / insecurity) models and provision.** It became clear very soon into this process that no agreed, single taxonomy currently exists. Over 50 discrete models were identified and over time the researchers have been able to group some of them together into a more manageable number of 11 grouped 'families' presented in this report.

Initial food aid[34] / food poverty / household food insecurity[35] [36] [37] solution typologies

'Help yourself' food aid provision	Meal services
Food banks[38] e.g., Ryedale Food Bank	**Targeted meal services** e.g., ready-made nutritious meals for people returning from hospital
Social supermarkets[39] / community groceries e.g., Resurrected Bites	**Meal delivery services[40]** (hot / ambient) e.g. meals on wheels; someone delivering food 'in a van'
Community fridges e.g., Selby Community Fridge	**Food shopping and delivery**
Community pantry/pop up pantries e.g., Open Pantry in Upper Wensleydale Benefice of Churches	**Food parcels** including emergency food delivery services; **shopping and delivery** e.g. Hambleton Food Share, Scarborough Salvation Army
Community kitchens[41] e.g., Ryedale Next Steps	**Supermarkets** gifting food to local charities
Faith organisation-led food provision typically based on donations	**Supermarket gift cards** issued by VCSEs to residents in need
Community shop[42]	**Hampers** for those in need organised by VCSEs
Collective measures	**Community food initiatives/ programmes[43] / projects**
Food Alliance e.g., Whitby Food Alliance	• Cooking on a budget • Cooking packs for families • Soup rounds
Food Partnership / Support Networks e.g., Craven Food Partnership	**Community gardening** / growing projects e.g., Age UK
Community fridge network e.g., Selby Big Local	**Community recipe book**
Fareshare Food Scheme	**Community cafes** e.g., Gallows Close, Colburn Hub and Café
Food support group e.g., Ryedale Food Support Group	**Luncheon clubs** e.g., Edgehill Community Association
Food Poverty Alliances – e.g., York FPA before changing to the York Food Justice Alliance	**Charitable Breakfast Clubs and Holiday Hunger Projects[44]**
Pantry Network development	**Community events** e.g., Food for Thought
Food infrastructure	**Food education**
Funding for food **storage / freezers / premises**	**Food information packs**
Kitchen equipment e.g., into emergency accommodation settings	**Learning and educational materials** delivered with 'every food parcel'
Funding for VCSE capacity building e.g., staffing, deputy manager to co-ordinate staff, volunteer assistant; **CIC set up costs** e.g., Community Start Ryedale	**Finance and food education**
	Cooking demonstrations in the community
Transport e.g., van for deliveries	**Cooking buddies** 'fridge on the road' e.g., Selby Big Local
Volunteer fuel costs to enable delivery service	Targeted **life skills** interventions
Contributing to **Fareshare** membership costs for VCSEs	
Food services linked to wider support	**Institutional feeding / free meals to individuals**
e.g., access to / signposting on to welfare, housing, benefits, 121 support, befriending, debt advice, employment, health, wellbeing, family support, emotional help, other practical services and signposting to help elsewhere[45].	**Free school meals**
Pastoral care / conversation models delivered by volunteers with people seeking food aid	**Free breakfast club / nursery meals**
Food banks operating as part of a community food centre offering benefits counselling with a caseworker, debt counselling, cooking classes or fuel vouchers, or participate in community kitchens or community gardens	

Ongoing desktop review identified further typologies, models and provision as follows around the world. Red text denotes that either a different typological descriptor and / or new model of provision not included in the previous table.

- food provided as part of community care[46] (for example 'Meals on Wheels')
- food stamps or vouchers[47]
- building-based food provision (where food is prepared and eaten onsite e.g., day centres; lunch clubs, provision to children e.g., in day care nurseries);
- and non-building based provision (where hot or cold food [soup / sandwich] is taken away for consumption, e.g., drop in centres, soup runs)
- Organisations running food aid projects also running other food initiatives such as community cafés, cook-and-eat clubs, purchase co-operatives at the same time[48].
- Institutional feeding most commonly through schools[49]
- Supplementary feeding i.e., for infants, young children or new mothers[50]

- Emergency feeding i.e., in refugee camps or following a natural disaster or provided as part of development aid
- Food rations[51]
- Food-for-work[52]
- Food stamps
- Community food programmes - teaching skills to make limited household food budgets stretch farther, provide access to places to grow food (e.g., mobile, low-cost fruit and vegetable markets, fruit and vegetable box drop-off programmes, or community or allotment garden spaces for people to grow food) or provide cheaper access to food, through community shops, market voucher schemes or food box programmes.
- Community food security activities
- Community farms
- Community orchards

The fourth and final phase of the desk research process sought to identify reports / studies / evidence that could provide insight about the efficacy of the different models identified.

The research team adopted a Rapid Evidence Assessment methodology for the literature search. They refined the search terms – see appendices. Eight databases[53] were selected and searched with preference for studies since 2012, written in English and where there was a strong methodology employed e.g., Random Control Trials. Noting the lack of RCTs (very few and mostly in the USA) other (less reliable) study methodologies were included where 'impact' was described in their narrative. Different combinations of the search terms returned between 630 (e.g., efficacy of food insecurity interventions) to 1,403 (e.g., efficacy of food banks). Tight filters were used on some sites permitting it e.g., Medline provided 13 returns for 'food insecurity UK' reducing to 10 if exploring random control interventions only. Abstract titles were reviewed, and filters applied to meet the criteria described. The research team have included 72 studies that satisfied the criteria and completed full text analysis and captured using this framework https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6892251/Poverty-REA-2022.

Topics explored in each report / study selected and reviewed

Once selected for full text analysis, each member of the research team was encouraged to identify and extract data, insight, evidence and opinions as follows for consistency.

The name of the report / study / abstract / review along with author and date of publication

The abstract / study focus / hypothesis being explored in the report / study

The Type(s) of evidence considered

- Primary research - which empirically observes a phenomenon at first hand, collecting, analysing or presenting 'raw' data.

- Secondary reviews - which interrogate primary research studies, summarising and interrogating their data and findings

- Theoretical or conceptual studies - which focus almost exclusively on the construction of new theories rather than generating, or synthesising empirical data

- Expert opinion gathered in a structured manner

- Something else

Are any of these themes covered in the report / study?

- Household food insecurity / food poverty / food aid / hunger / malnutrition

- Fuel poverty

- Child poverty

- Older people poverty

- Digital poverty

- Poverty - other / wider / all-encompassing

- Other

Topics explored per report / study where available

- Typologies / models / solutions / provision / interventions

- Definitions

- Drivers of the model / solution / provision

- Ingredients of the model / solution / provision

- Economics of the model / solution / provision e.g., who pays, what, is it free, how is any food / overheads funded, is there a membership, what eligibility etc?

- Examples of good practice, their location

- Examples of strategy / action plans / themes / workstreams

- Owners of the models / investors / partners / funders and investment insights

- Impact of interventions - evidence / evaluation findings

- Efficacy

- Measurement approaches / results / outcomes measured over time

- Sustainability / financial viability

- Root causes (of food / fuel / child / poverty etc) / market failures

- Consequences / effects of 'xxx' poverty / insecurity

- Who is affected most - population segments / characteristics, most at risk and why, protective factors?

- Gap analysis: what is missing to address the causes and consequences of food insecurity

- Involving people in poverty in research and co-design - methods, good practice, lived experience, payment for participation, survey examples / questions asked

- Food summit / symposium / event / conference exemplars with a focus on addressing food insecurity (who / where / topics covered / stakeholders involved)

- Reviewer top level summary of the key learning from this document - aim for 3 key points

Methodological Considerations

- Has the research been published and / or peer-reviewed?

- Research Method Summary (including any sampling information)

Review of robustness against each measure (strong = 3, OK = 2, weak = 1, not relevant = 0)

- Specific questions and hypotheses are addressed

- Related existing research or theories are acknowledged

- Sources of funding and vested interests are declared

- The methodology used is clearly and transparently presented

- The method reduces bias

- The method is appropriate for the research question and the conclusions reached

- Assumptions made are outlined

- The geography and context of the study is clear, with a discussion of how relevant findings are to other contexts

- The methods used for measurements and analytical techniques are reliable

- Measurements and analytical techniques have been validated and verified

- Conclusions are backed up by well presented data and findings

- Links between existing research, data, analysis and conclusions are clear and logical

- Limitations and quality have been discussed

'Snowball' References - full report title, author, and date and Follow up to other things of interest

e.g., practical things happening in communities, local authority areas or any resources that are described to help us set up, plan, deliver, monitor, evaluate household food security interventions - please list contact information, names, websites, anything practical so we can follow up.

The dataset exists as an important product of this project which can be used time and again to search any of these topics where they have been identified by the reviewers.

Exploring efficacy and impact in this report

The literature reviewed, particularly evaluations, offer some methods for assessing the efficacy of the models. One, in particular, the Lewisham Homes' Community Food Stores Impact Evaluation 2022, applied an evaluation matrix that has part-inspired this research team's approach to reviewing the literature more widely though achieving a consistent assessment is not possible presently owing to the variability in approaches taken by report authors.

LEWISHAM HOMES' COMMUNITY FOOD STORES
IMPACT EVALUATION

January 2022

Effectiveness | **Impact** | **Relevance** | **Sustainability**
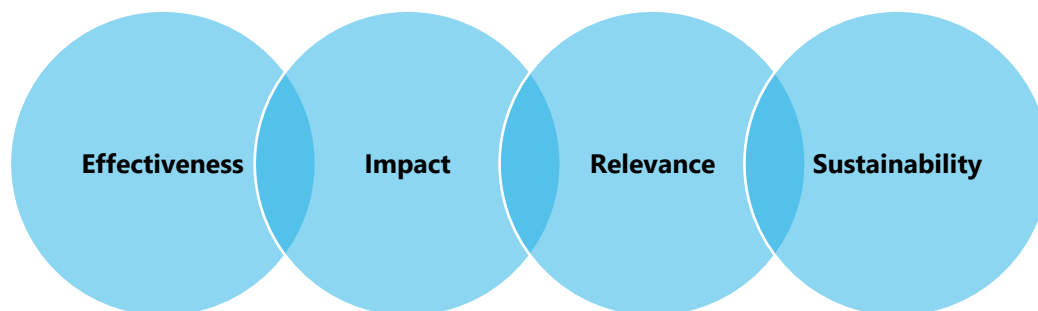
Effectiveness – How effective [is the model / are the community food stores]?

Impact – What positive and negative impact do activities have on [stakeholders / members, families and volunteers]?

Relevance – Are activities relevant to the context and needs of communities?
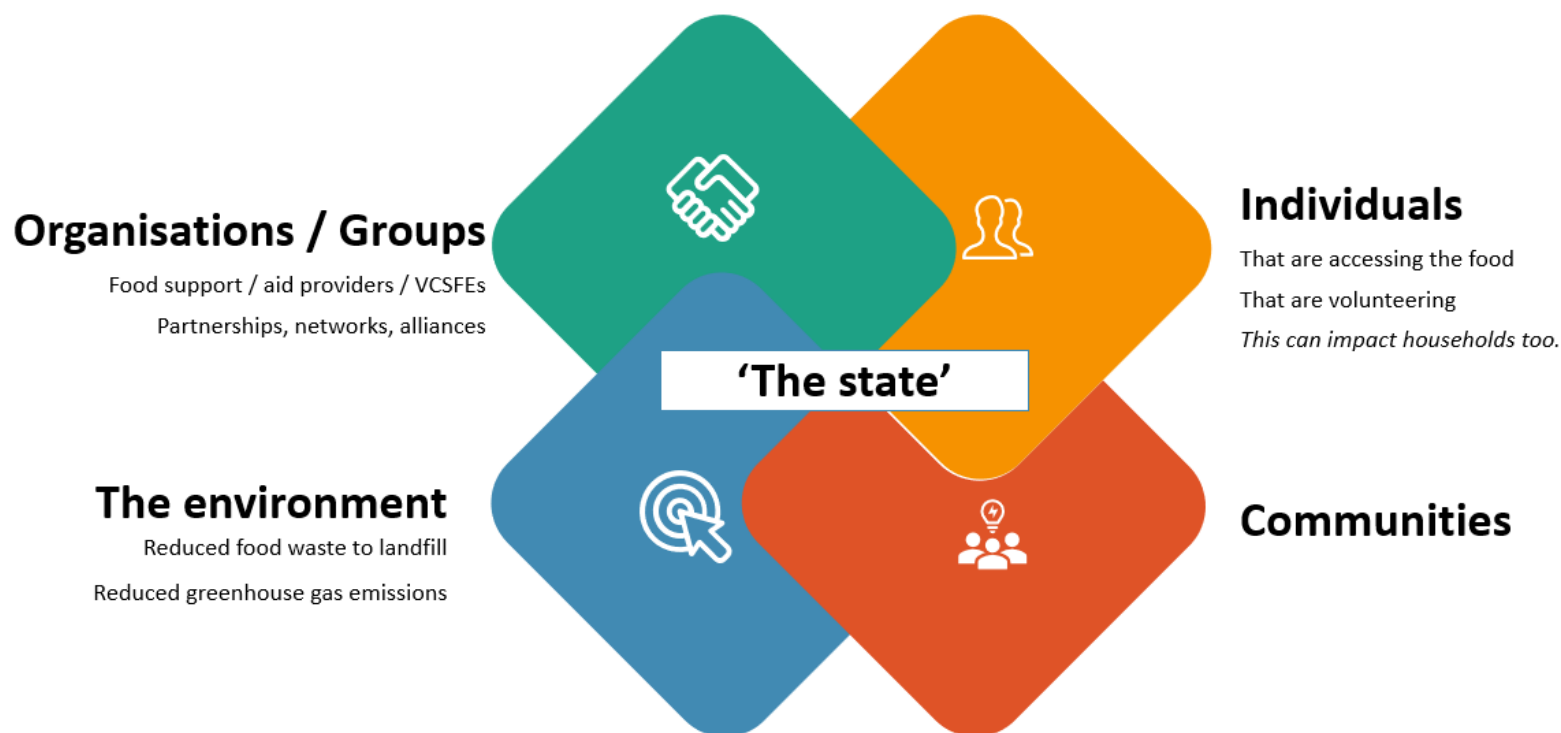
Sustainability – To what extent do activities have long-lasting and wider impact?
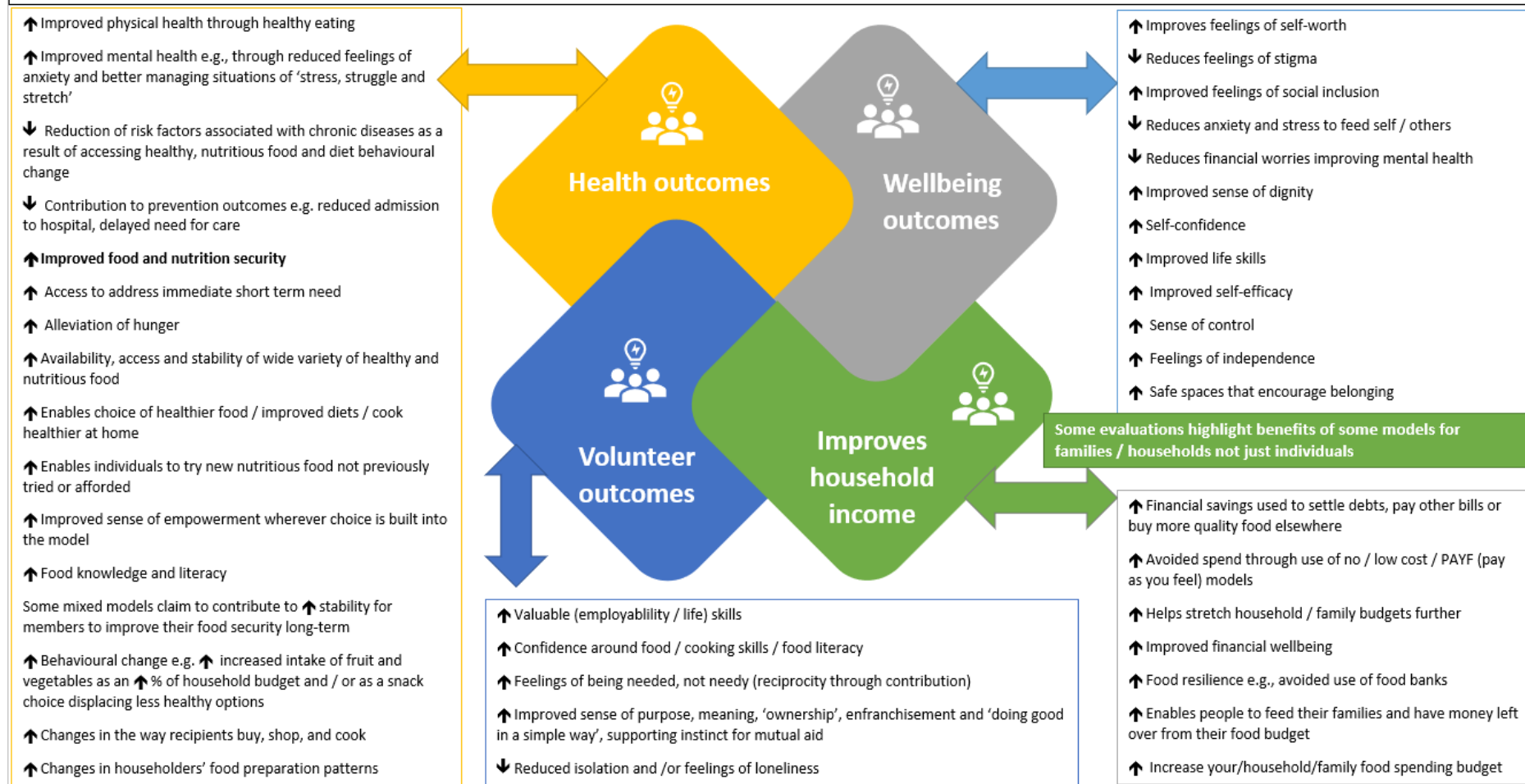
Perhaps these 'criteria' could form a useful framework to guide commissioners, policy makers and those with lived experience in any future design of or investment in food access models in York and North Yorkshire in future?

6.0 Outcomes from different interventions
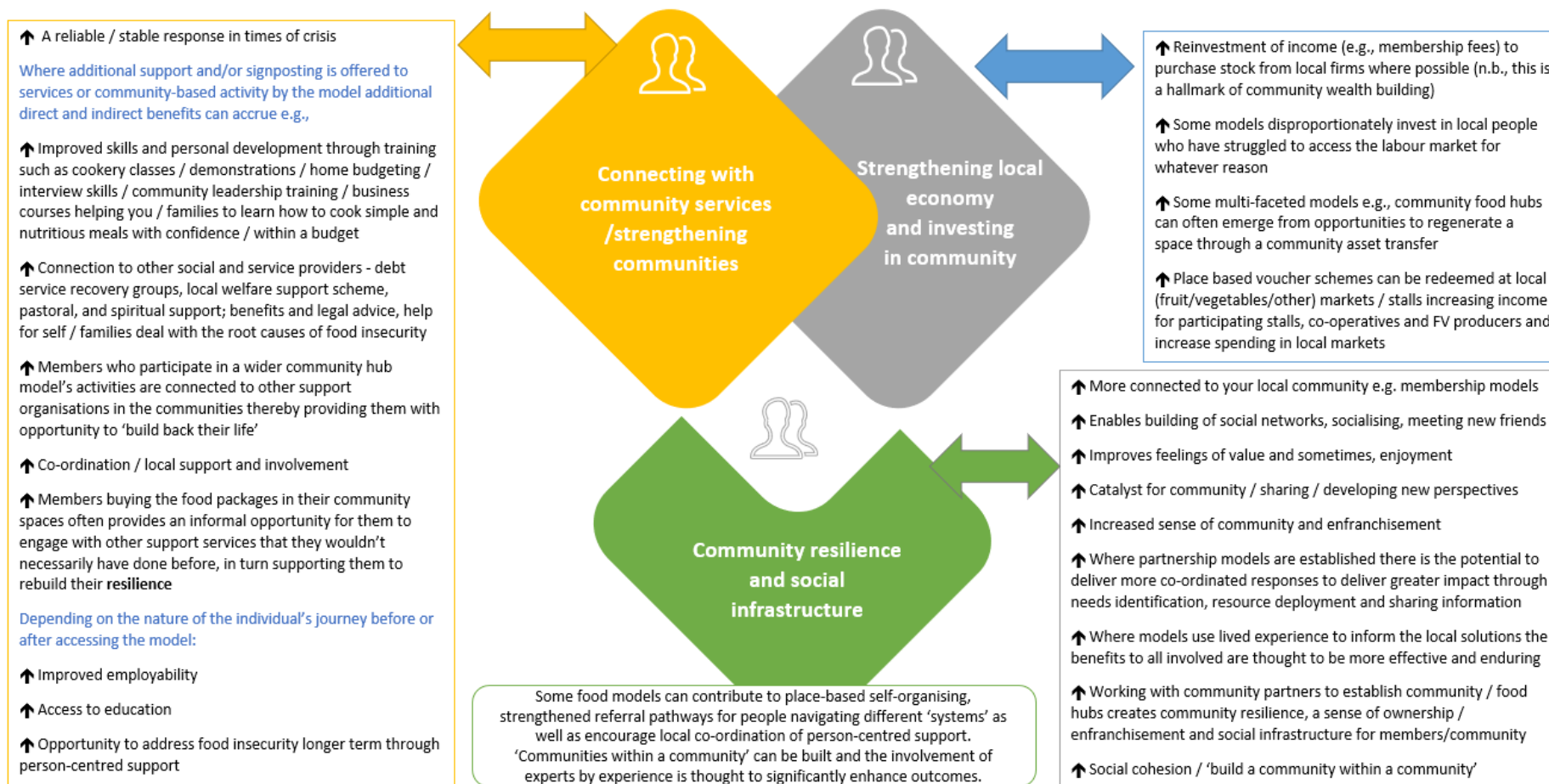

Outcomes / Benefits of Food Security Interventions

Organisations / Groups
Food support / aid providers / VCSFEs
Partnerships, networks, alliances

'The state'

Individuals
That are accessing the food
That are volunteering
This can impact households too.

The environment
Reduced food waste to landfill
Reduced greenhouse gas emissions

Communities

Outcomes / Benefits of Food Security Interventions for Individuals

Health outcomes

↑ Improved physical health through healthy eating

↑ Improved mental health e.g., through reduced feelings of anxiety and better managing situations of 'stress, struggle and stretch'

↓ Reduction of risk factors associated with chronic diseases as a result of accessing healthy, nutritious food and diet behavioural change

↓ Contribution to prevention outcomes e.g. reduced admission to hospital, delayed need for care

↑ **Improved food and nutrition security**

↑ Access to address immediate short term need

↑ Alleviation of hunger

↑ Availability, access and stability of wide variety of healthy and nutritious food

↑ Enables choice of healthier food / improved diets / cook healthier at home

↑ Enables individuals to try new nutritious food not previously tried or afforded

↑ Improved sense of empowerment wherever choice is built into the model

↑ Food knowledge and literacy

Some mixed models claim to contribute to ↑ stability for members to improve their food security long-term

↑ Behavioural change e.g. ↑ increased intake of fruit and vegetables as an ↑ % of household budget and / or as a snack choice displacing less healthy options

↑ Changes in the way recipients buy, shop, and cook

↑ Changes in householders' food preparation patterns

Wellbeing outcomes

↑ Improves feelings of self-worth

↓ Reduces feelings of stigma

↑ Improved feelings of social inclusion

↓ Reduces anxiety and stress to feed self / others

↓ Reduces financial worries improving mental health

↑ Improved sense of dignity

↑ Self-confidence

↑ Improved life skills

↑ Improved self-efficacy

↑ Sense of control

↑ Feelings of independence

↑ Safe spaces that encourage belonging

Volunteer outcomes

↑ Valuable (employability / life) skills

↑ Confidence around food / cooking skills / food literacy

↑ Feelings of being needed, not needy (reciprocity through contribution)

↑ Improved sense of purpose, meaning, 'ownership', enfranchisement and 'doing good in a simple way', supporting instinct for mutual aid

↓ Reduced isolation and /or feelings of loneliness

Improves household income

Some evaluations highlight benefits of some models for families / households not just individuals

↑ Financial savings used to settle debts, pay other bills or buy more quality food elsewhere

↑ Avoided spend through use of no / low cost / PAYF (pay as you feel) models

↑ Helps stretch household / family budgets further

↑ Improved financial wellbeing

↑ Food resilience e.g., avoided use of food banks

↑ Enables people to feed their families and have money left over from their food budget

↑ Increase your/household/family food spending budget

Specific models claim to contribute to prevention outcomes such as reduced admission to hospital, the delayed need for care, reduced hospital stays, reduced risk of hospital admission, suicide. Some encourage independence and, when evaluated at an aggregate level, support the reduction in health inequalities and disparities.

Outcomes / Benefits of Food Security Interventions for Communities

↑ A reliable / stable response in times of crisis

Where additional support and/or signposting is offered to services or community-based activity by the model additional direct and indirect benefits can accrue e.g.,

↑ Improved skills and personal development through training such as cookery classes / demonstrations / home budgeting / interview skills / community leadership training / business courses helping you / families to learn how to cook simple and nutritious meals with confidence / within a budget

↑ Connection to other social and service providers - debt service recovery groups, local welfare support scheme, pastoral, and spiritual support; benefits and legal advice, help for self / families deal with the root causes of food insecurity

↑ Members who participate in a wider community hub model's activities are connected to other support organisations in the communities thereby providing them with opportunity to 'build back their life'

↑ Co-ordination / local support and involvement

↑ Members buying the food packages in their community spaces often provides an informal opportunity for them to engage with other support services that they wouldn't necessarily have done before, in turn supporting them to rebuild their **resilience**

Depending on the nature of the individual's journey before or after accessing the model:

↑ Improved employability

↑ Access to education

↑ Opportunity to address food insecurity longer term through person-centred support

Connecting with community services /strengthening communities

Strengthening local economy and investing in community

Community resilience and social infrastructure

↑ Reinvestment of income (e.g., membership fees) to purchase stock from local firms where possible (n.b., this is a hallmark of community wealth building)

↑ Some models disproportionately invest in local people who have struggled to access the labour market for whatever reason

↑ Some multi-faceted models e.g., community food hubs can often emerge from opportunities to regenerate a space through a community asset transfer

↑ Place based voucher schemes can be redeemed at local (fruit/vegetables/other) markets / stalls increasing income for participating stalls, co-operatives and FV producers and increase spending in local markets

↑ More connected to your local community e.g. membership models

↑ Enables building of social networks, socialising, meeting new friends

↑ Improves feelings of value and sometimes, enjoyment

↑ Catalyst for community / sharing / developing new perspectives

↑ Increased sense of community and enfranchisement

↑ Where partnership models are established there is the potential to deliver more co-ordinated responses to deliver greater impact through needs identification, resource deployment and sharing information

↑ Where models use lived experience to inform the local solutions the benefits to all involved are thought to be more effective and enduring

↑ Working with community partners to establish community / food hubs creates community resilience, a sense of ownership / enfranchisement and social infrastructure for members/community

↑ Social cohesion / 'build a community within a community'

Some food models can contribute to place-based self-organising, strengthened referral pathways for people navigating different 'systems' as well as encourage local co-ordination of person-centred support. 'Communities within a community' can be built and the involvement of experts by experience is thought to significantly enhance outcomes.

Outcomes for organisations in receipt of Defra / North Yorkshire County Council food-related funding during the pandemic

1 Increased profile in the community

2 Increased capacity and resource

3 Reinforced VCSE status as a locally trusted organisation

4 Increased know-how

5 Confidence

6 VCSEs have realised their wealth of knowledge

7 Financial benefits

8 Stronger partnership working

Further descriptions of the outcomes for organisations in receipt of funding for food provision

- **Increased capacity and resource**:- to tackle demand resulting in more / effective services, wider reach of services in more areas

- **Increased know-how**:- VCSEs felt better able to identify areas of risk and need and individuals in most need of support e.g. enabling new targeted deliveries to meet specific family needs.

- **VCSEs have realised their wealth of knowledge** on nutrition, growing food and craft:- this has inspired some to think how they could run a similar course in future whereas this was not a priority / organisational focus previously perhaps.

- **Stronger partnership working**:- between VCSEs, statutory authorities, businesses resulting in support mobilised more quickly and effectively.

- **Increased profile in the community**:- leading to further referrals and, further funding from local businesses

- **Reinforced VCSE status as a locally trusted organisation**:- becoming a contact point on a weekly basis for emotional wellbeing support in the community ('more than food')

- **Confidence**:- to try new things; and to apply for funding for a similar project / thematic 'purpose'.

- **Financial benefits**:- reduced strain on small VCSEs and enabling time to explore self-sustainability and organisational resilience through a combination of members' contributions, grant support and local donations.

7.0 Food access typologies

In the absence of an accepted framework of food access typologies or models, inspired by the COVID-19 food vulnerability research[54] across the UK, we have developed the following 11 groupings that are then investigated in turn through this report. In practice, some of these models overlap or combine into mixed models depending on the community context, need and drivers for its creation and / or maintenance. A golden thread across most models is the sourcing of surplus food and redistributing it for free or at low cost rather than it going to waste or landfill.

Activities supporting food access: a suggested taxonomy

Free Food	Low-Cost community food retail	Cash-based approaches
Direct food provision	Community hubs, food hubs and clubs	Collaborative models
Other resources for food response	Tailored food aid provision	Wrap-around support
Food and education	Community food initiatives / projects	

Please see the following report sections for an overview of the kinds of food access models included in each grouping along with

- Definition(s)
- Outcomes that can emerge through these models (based on evidence reviewed)
- Efficacy illustrated through selected examples of the model(s)
- Customised narrative relevant to the ambitions of the research e.g., around the sustainability of the model(s), enabling or limiting factors, any good practice.
- Questions arising – to encourage improved practice and investment approaches.

7.1 Free food typologies

This section is based on a detailed review of 17 of the most relevant studies. Models considered include food banks operated by the Trussell Trust, independent food banks (part of the IFAN network) and community fridges.

Definition – food bank

> *"Food banks are run by charities and are intended to be a temporary provision to supply emergency food. There are no official statistics on food banks, but there are around 1,300 Trussell Trust food banks and 1,034 Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) food banks in the UK.[55]"* (April 2021 estimates, House of Commons Briefing)

> *"Food banks are run by volunteers, churches and charities. A food bank is a charitable resource which distributes food to those in need of it at least once a week.'[56]* (House of Commons Briefing)

Food banks source food from public donation at local collection points, surplus food donated by businesses and redistribution community schemes, as well as procurement via their own funds. Food banks largely depend on philanthropy from individuals, local businesses, charitable trusts and foundations, but also raise monies through fundraising initiatives.[57]

The term 'food bank' can refer to one of two types of service: a large redistributor of rescued food to smaller charities that provide cooked and/or uncooked food to food insecure populations, or a service that provides grocery items directly to clients. For the purpose of this review, food banks will be referred to as the latter, direct services only, which are sometimes called 'food pantries' or 'food shelves' as the former 'food banks' rarely work directly with community members in need.[58]

Models

In 2020-21 the Trussell Trust supplied more than 2.5 million three-day emergency food parcels, an increase of 33% on the previous year. Around 40% of these went to children. IFAN, meantime, reported a 126% increase in the number of emergency food parcels distributed between February 2020 and May 2020.

The Trussell Trust is an anti-poverty charity that operates a network of food banks across the UK while campaigning for the end of their necessity. It is the primary source of data on food bank use in the UK. It provides food parcels to people who meet certain requirements and are referred to it by professionals such as doctors, health visitors, social workers and the Citizens Advice. The Trussell Trust gathers its administrative data from the referrals required to access its support, and generates a wide range of analysis from it, including the numbers of adults and children receiving food aid and their reasons for needing it. The Trussell Trust runs over half of the UK's food banks, and has a long archive of published data, but this data should be considered incomplete as independent food banks have also operated across the whole of the UK.

Similar to The Trussell Trust food bank model, many food banks in IFAN, the Independent Food Aid Network require potential clients to have a referral from a third-party agency. Significantly, 39.5% of food banks did not require referrals from third-party agencies (i.e., accepted self-referrals).[59] IFAN is increasing the amount and range of data and analysis it produces.

The majority of food banks have eligibility criteria to target those most in need – for example claiming benefits like Universal Credit or Free School Meals.[60] Published eligibility criteria were not found, but it is possible to piece together the likely components[61] and insights from the Trussell Trust's Yorkshire and Humber Regional Manager later in this chapter add further understanding to their approach with people requiring free food aid.

Eligibility for food banks and other approaches such as food pantries are not well understood by those who use or need to use them, creating what is referred to as a 'messy space'. A contact from Citizens Advice Service describes how eligibility "is dealt with on a case-by-case basis."

Research from 2020 found there was a significant overlap (94%) between people who met at least one of two criteria to define destitution and those being referred to food banks.

> *"People were defined as destitute if they lacked two or more of the following six essentials over the past month because they could not afford them (the 'destitution on essentials' criterion), or their income was so low (less than £10 per day for a single person AHC) that they were unable to purchase these essentials for themselves (the 'destitution on income' criterion)."[62]*

In the example below, a 2019 survey of independent food banks describe both the approaches taken by Trussell Trust food banks and independent food banks. A key (although not universal) distinction is that working people use independent food banks far more than Trussell Trust alternatives.

> *"Some food banks operated quite similarly to Trussell Trust food banks, with regularly scheduled times when clients can pick up food, receiving referrals from local third-sector agencies, and limiting how often food parcels can be received. However, a number of food banks did not resemble the typical Trussell Trust food bank model at all; allowing self-referral or using other intake procedures, not placing any restrictions on the number of times someone could receive food parcels, and/or offering delivery services alongside regular pick-up times.*
>
> *These characteristics might increase accessibility for people who are not connected to referral-type agencies and also amongst people experiencing chronic food insecurity. This may explain why some food banks reported having a large number of clients with characteristics rarely seen in Trussell Trust food banks (e.g., people in work, people with no recourse to public funds)."[63]*

There is greater variation in how independent food banks accept requests for help and the extent to which they use eligibility criteria. The example below provides a pandemic snapshot:

> *"During COVID, referrals approaches were adapted. 69 organisations, or 69% of our data set, have seen an increase in the number of self-referrals or have started to accept self-referrals (15%). Although telephone and internet-based systems have replaced some referral services, these are not necessarily accessible to people living with no or low income. Of the 69 organisations reporting to have started to accept self-referrals and an increase in self-referrals, 46% reported supporting people unable to access referral agencies. 19 of these 32 organisations had supported up to 40 households in this situation.[64]"*

Where third party referrals are not required, service users are often required to bring some form of documentation to substantiate their claim; from proof of income or emergency / crisis. People may be required to complete a questionnaire at the food bank before a parcel is provided.[65]

The characteristics of people using Trussell Trust food banks is also changing. By September 2022, one in five (20%) people referred to food banks in the Trussell Trust network were in working households.[66] There has also been a greater increase in rural rather than urban areas since the pandemic.[67]

Post pandemic the infrastructure to support food banks has changed. There is very limited evidence of food banks changing their model. In 'Food vulnerability during COVID-19 (2022)' one example was cited:

> *"We also learned of an existing food bank in Bradford that was transitioning to a low-cost model at the time of data collection. Whilst these developments in low-cost community food retail models were generally perceived to be positive, participants also highlighted that there may always a need for some free food aid: "But I think there's always a need for food banks, free food, as well." (Partnership workshop, Bradford).[68]*

It is interesting to note that statistics on how many people are referred out of food banks, be it Trussell Trust or independent were not found in the published literature.

Who uses food banks?

Free food models such as food banks primarily exist to support people and households experiencing financial barriers to accessing food. This report does not explore food bank usage but there are many published sources of information that reveal who does or is at highest risk of using food banks and the reasons behind their usage. There are useful House of Commons Briefing Papers about this topic and the Trussell Trust produces a range of useful research reports that explore the populations that access their food banks, and how they feel this can be changed over time through shifts in cash-first policies.

Definition – community fridge

Community fridges are independent community assets, set up, owned and managed by not for profit and community organisations. All community fridges must register as a food business with their local authority and are responsible for their own food management systems and building relationships with any local businesses. Typically, a publicly accessible fridge is for the use of the whole community. The primary focus is on reducing food waste. In practice, community fridges have become an important source of food, particularly fresh food, for those in need.

Evidence

Hungry? Food Insecurity, Social Stigma and Embarrassment in the UK (2015)

- It has been argued that the growth in food bank use has been driven simply by the increase in the number of food banks. Lord Freud (2013) said that 'food from a food bank the supply is a free good, and by definition there is an almost infinite demand'. Language used to describe food bank users seems predominantly located in a discourse of blame.

The role of food banks in addressing food insecurity: a systematic review (2016)

- While some international literature has identified food banks as a valuable source of food assistance for food insecure populations, because of limited choice, and poor nutritional quality and quantity of donated food, there is some concern relating to the ability of food banks to prevent or remedy food insecurity and hunger.[69]
- This meta review identified 14 studies examining food security, 13 nutritional intake, and 24 considering clients' needs and choices in relation to food bank use. On effectiveness, Martin and colleagues (2013) used a randomised controlled design to determine the effectiveness of a food bank intervention in promoting food security and found a decrease in food insecurity as a result of case management and food bank choice.[70]
- While food banks may not be able to resolve all client needs, they do have a role to play in reducing the impact of food insecurity. This review found three key reasons that food banks are facing difficulties in resolving these client needs: 1) The number of food bank clients is increasing; 2) Donations are not increasing with demand, or donations received are not appropriate; 3) Food bank staff are not highly enough trained around nutrition to provide advice and education to clients.

FareShare network; The Wasted Opportunity: The economic and social value of redistributed surplus food; the current and potential cost avoided by the UK public sector resulting from FareShare's work (2018)

- An analysis of operational characteristics of food banks in The Trussell Trust network has found that the number of hours they operated and the number of distribution centres giving out food were both associated with volume of food bank usage. These relationships interacted with indicators of need, suggesting that where food bank distribution centres are less available, there is lower use for a given level of need.
- Other factors such as the use of referrals, religious affiliation, and poor transportation may also limit access to food banks.

- Patterns of usage across the country using aggregated area statistics highlighted that food bank usage was higher in areas with higher unemployment, higher numbers of sanctions applied to benefit claimants (these stop benefit payments for a minimum of 4 weeks), and deeper reductions in spending on benefit entitlements under the Coalition Government from 2010[71]

A survey of food banks operating independently of The Trussell Trust food bank network. (December 2019)[72]

- 44% of independent food banks imposed no restriction on how often people could receive food parcels, and 17.5% allowed access to food parcels 18 or more times in a year. Over 30% restricted access to food parcels to 6 or fewer times over a year.
- About 45% gave out food parcels with more than 3 days' worth of food per person, and an additional 10% did not restrict food parcel content.
- Almost 60-65% aim to provide fresh fruit or vegetables and/or meet healthy food guidelines, and 45.6% aim to provide Halal goods (if requested).
- 72% reported purchasing foods from their funding sources. Half of food banks received donations of surplus foods from supermarkets or other food enterprises.
- Interestingly, though over half indicated that their food bank was the core or main function of their organisation. Just over 56% were part of a faith group. These figures contrast with the Trussell Trust, which remain mostly church-based projects
- Just over half had paid staff but 47% had no paid staff. Almost 75% relied on five or more volunteers each week, and 21% relied on 20 or more volunteers each week
- Over 60% of food banks offered other services in addition to food parcel distribution. In addition to the provision of food parcels, almost all indicated they provided signposting to other services or assistance, and 60% offered other services in-house. Other services were classified into 6 main groups (affecting the kind of outcomes that might therefore arise in each model observed):

  1: Practical services   4: Social support
  2: Educational   5: Pastoral
  3: Communal / social activities   6: Health/well-being

- Similar to The Trussell Trust food bank model, 15.8% independent food banks always require potential clients to have a referral from a third-party agency while 44.8 will make exceptions. Significantly, 39.5% of food banks did not require referrals from third-party agencies (i.e., accepted self-referrals). The majority of these indicated that referrals were often received from third-party agencies as well, even though formal referrals were not a requirement.

Hubbub (a community fridge network)[73]

- Over 3,100 tonnes of surplus food redistributed, equivalent to over 7.5 million meals worth of food saved. Electric vans and cargo bikes created a reliable service taking surplus food directly to organisations who can redistribute it locally.

Community fridges in the UK: an exploratory study (June 2020)

- Emphasising the environmental angle was felt to normalise community fridge use.[74]
- Cooking classes or events such as picnics for the whole community increase footfall and value/benefit.
- Investment is needed to enable community-led change: evidence of success of community projects, yet instability in short-term project funding and an over reliance on volunteers and small VCSE organisations that struggle to access appropriate support when required. *The Co-op is investing in the expansion of the fridge network to 2023.*

Frome Community Fridge Impact Assessment (2019)

- Records from just one week show that 1,780 individual items plus 134.5 kg of fresh produce collected, saving around 90,000 food items a year from going to waste.
- The impact of the fridge can be quantified in terms of its prevention of greenhouse gas emissions. There are two aspects to this: the prevention of additional emissions through decomposition in landfill; and the avoidance of emissions from additional production (to replace that which was wasted).
- Key is the notion of enfranchisement, ensuring that everyone feels that they 'own' it as a part of the community. By existing in a public space and being open to public use, the fridge breaks down the clear-cut relation between 'business' and 'consumer'. The community fridge is a catalyst - for community, for sharing, and for developing new perspectives. It taps into the instinct for mutual aid that is all too often subverted by the mainstream organising principles of the economy and society.
- It's clear that the community fridge is more than simply a container for the storage and collection of food, and that it's positive impact goes beyond the facts of feeding people and avoiding food waste. The fridge is a part of the community - it's a hub and a meeting place, an event in the day for many people, even something to look forward to. As well as nourishing food it offers the respite that comes with a chat over a cake or a sandwich that some of us take for granted - for some the conversations that occur while waiting for the fridge to be filled may be their only interactions in a day.

Food Insecurity: Understanding local delivery, impact and innovation in the North East Riding (2021)

- Community fridge use increased stigma-free access to food; provided some solid volunteering experience for those at some distance from employment
- Success factors: supportive local community; passionate and committed volunteers; strong local partnerships and positive working relationships with stakeholders; sharing data and best practice with others; building on local assets and taking a co-production approach to project design and delivery; communication - with beneficiaries, partners and wider stakeholders.

Food bank use surged during the pandemic but they can rarely provide all the help people need (2021)

- A review of the evidence on food banks and other community food programmes in high-income countries found that the services' ability to meet the needs of people

experiencing food insecurity was limited. There was little evidence of these services reducing food insecurity. Cash transfers and food subsidies were far more effective.

The impact of novel and traditional food bank approaches on food insecurity: a longitudinal study in Ottawa (2021)

- The majority of people who were food insecure at baseline remained food insecure at the 18-month follow-up, although there was a small downward trend in the proportion of people in the severely food insecure category. Conversely, there was a small but significant increase in the mean perceived mental health score at the 18-month follow-up compared to baseline. This study found significant reductions in food insecurity for people who accessed food banks that offered a 'Choice' model of food distribution and food banks that were integrated within 'Community Resource Centres'.
- Perceived physical and mental health scores showed gradients across food insecurity levels, such that health scores decreased as the severity of food insecurity increased.

Outcomes. The outcomes below are derived from the following 17 sources:

1. A survey of food banks operating independently of The Trussell Trust food bank network. (December 2019)
2. Community fridges in the UK: an exploratory study (June 2020)
3. Eating with Friends, Family or Not at All: Young People's Experiences of Food Poverty in the UK (2018)
4. Evaluation: Pilot Project. Advice and Food Banks making a difference to people in food poverty (2015)
5. FareShare network; The Wasted Opportunity: The economic and social value of redistributed surplus food; the current and potential cost avoided by the UK public sector resulting from FareShare's work, NEF Consulting (2018)
6. Feeding Hungry Children, The Growth of Charitable Breakfast Clubs and Holiday Hunger Projects in the UK (2018)
7. Feeding the food insecure in Britain: learning from the 2020 COVID-19 crisis (May 2020)
8. Food bank use surged during the pandemic, but they can rarely provide all the help people need (2021)
9. Food Insecurity: Understanding local delivery, impact and innovation in the North East Riding (2021)
10. Hungry? Food Insecurity, Social Stigma and Embarrassment in the UK (2015)
11. Interventions to address household food insecurity in high-income countries (2018)
12. Life in times of change - health and hardship in North Yorkshire Annual report of the Director of Public Health for North Yorkshire – 'Want' (2019)
13. The impact of novel and traditional food bank approaches on food insecurity: a longitudinal study in Ottawa, Canada (2021)
14. The nutritional quality of food parcels provided by food banks and the effectiveness of food banks at reducing food insecurity in developed countries: a mixed-method systematic review (2022)
15. The role of food banks in addressing food insecurity: a systematic review (2016)
16. Walking the breadline (2013)
17. Which types of family are at risk of food poverty in the UK? A relative deprivation approach (2017)

Food banks

- Food security at times of crisis
- Improved diet
- Improved physical health
- Improved mental health
- Increased awareness / connection to other types of support
- Volunteers feel sense of purpose
- Social benefits arise from interactions between users and with staff/volunteers
- Reduced household expenditure
- Reduced food waste to landfill
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions

Community fridges

- Reduces stigmatisation by using community fridges
- By providing access to fresh foods, community fridges may provide healthier options and opportunities to try new foods
- Increased sense of community and enfranchisement

For supermarkets / food providers:

- Improved CSR for supermarkets
- Reduced cost of food disposal

Examples

The nutritional quality of food parcels provided by food banks and the effectiveness of food banks at reducing food insecurity in developed countries: a mixed-method systematic review (2022)[75]

Evaluation evidence on food banks that are taking more innovative and/ or enterprising approaches was not identified in the published literature reviewed. It is too early for example to understand the effectiveness of the new Trussell Trust strategy. This example, albeit generic and not UK-specific, was selected as it recognises that food banks work best as part of a wider system of support. Food banks are a lifeline, which improve dietary intake and food security in times of crisis. However, as a sole intervention, food banks do not eliminate the heightened food insecurity and poor diets of food bank users. Their efficiency is defined as the total weight of food items distributed by a food bank. However, the effectiveness of a food bank is defined by how well the nutritional needs of users are met by the service provided.

Food parcel quality and dietary quality were positively correlated and visiting food banks over once-per-month was associated with significantly higher dietary quality scores, compared with visiting less. Mousa and Freeland-Graves (2019) found over 40% of nutrient and food group intake was attributed to food parcels. Improving the nutritional quality of food parcels by adding

fruit and vegetables and removing nutrient-poor snacks, significantly improved fruit and vegetables, vitamin C, and potassium intake. Food banks struggle to meet individual health, social, and cultural dietary needs in socially acceptable ways. Positive outcomes from diabetes-specific food parcels highlight the advantages of tailoring parcels to meet individual needs and preferences.

Trussell Trust, Yorkshire and Humber and York Foodbank

Laura Chalmers, Area Manager Yorkshire and Humber and Adam Raffell, York Foodbank Manager

There are 16 foodbank 'franchises' across Yorkshire and Humber, in turn comprising 88 foodbank centres. In York, there is one foodbank (managed by Adam) with 6 centres (typically churches). Each franchise includes distinct traits such as all of them using the Trust's data collection system; and all work on a referral system with referrals coming from social workers, teachers indeed 'any professional'. There are strong connections to people who refer individuals owing to their mental health difficulties too. Models vary with some being stand-alone foodbank charities, and others having a foodbank element to their wider charity purpose. The York Foodbank is a CIO and has a board of Trustees and 6 centres that between them are open 6 days a week. Interestingly, Adam, as the York Foodbank Manager says there are no criteria for referrers but notes the importance of having referrers / referring agencies they can trust.

> *"The referral process is there to start an initial intervention to help. We encourage referrers to use their discretion. If they feel someone they know well, someone they have been working with long-term, who has a need, then the food is there for them. If that person has a need for multiple uses – such as 3 vouchers in a 6-month period – we would regard that as a point, a flag, of escalation and we'd be back in contact with the referrer to see why the person is still having these needs. We recognise that a food parcel doesn't solve anything in of itself, it's part of someone working with families. We want to be part of a holistic package of support. The referrers are so important as they are someone to go back to if an individual has been to a foodbank multiple times. We signpost people back to referral agencies."*

Adam and Laura also explained that foodbank 'sessions' and activities are often available during the opening times such as life skills courses or sharing a hot meal together which can act as a further catalyst to encourage people using the foodbank to other support. Some people are coming because 'they just need the food', but even then there is information available about other support re: income, debt and employment. Volunteers at York Foodbank have been trained to ask open-ended questions and take any cues from an individual to identify opportunities to connect them to relevant support. Two of the foodbank centres in York run models with the features of a community hub and a community café too, meaning there is space and the conditions for encouraging conversations between people there – more than a transactional exchange of a voucher for a food parcel.

In a recent development the Trussell Trust has been focusing on financial inclusion, and has made a significant multi-annual investment in any foodbank to access via its national strategy

and funding. This is enabling a local safety net of advice and support to be put in place at each foodbank.

> *"All but 2 of the foodbanks in Yorkshire and Humber have a Financial Inclusion Project, mostly enabling them to buy in the time of qualified Citizens Advice staff. This means that there is an advisor either in session when the foodbanks are open, or for some of the more rural foodbanks, a hotline service. The investment has also enabled the Trust to employ Financial Inclusion Managers. This investment started in 2022 and data so far suggests that the model is empowering for those foodbanks taking advantage of the opportunity."*

Different perspectives about this model would be extremely valuable over time, from foodbanks, volunteers working alongside the advisors, the advisors themselves and of course people using the foodbanks. The Trust has also clearly put a great deal of thought into its training approaches with its volunteers who should each have learned about active listening, god rapport, keeping boundaries and how to manage challenging conversations – similar to the motivational interviewing observed across the North Craven Food Pantries incidentally.

> *"We're clear though that our volunteers don't give advice – we're not insured for that" but, we encourage them not to forget the social signposting, that local knowledge they have about parent and toddler groups and those local social activities that help connect people to one another. The Financial Inclusion Project has also developed something called 'The Step App' for signposting purposes."*

The Trust has ensured that Local Area Coordinators (LACs) and Social Prescribers are aware of foodbank operating times and may sometimes do drop-ins as part of the sessions.

> *"Whilst we want an end to foodbanks we do foresee a legacy where it's not about a massive distribution of food, rather it's about spaces where people connect around food. We want to see community spaces operating in their own right. Our goal is for food provision needs to reduce and more people access the foodbank centres to address problems or causes of insecurity earlier. The reality is that people don't have enough money – it's not about not having enough food. Other models, pay as you feel, social supermarkets, they only ever relieve symptoms like foodbanks. We need to focus more on financial inclusion and cash-first policies and support. Someone coming to a charity for food is not dignified however holistic the support on offer."*

There are a range of outcomes arising from foodbanks Laura observes including:

- Project Managers were previously foodbank users so in these instances their lives have been changed
- The Trust's model 'pushes participation' around food, mental health and suicide prevention
- Some foodbanks – and / or the charities that operate them - are seen as cornerstones of their communities thus providing safe spaces to attend / visit

- Volunteers and foodbank managers are in the front line collecting stories from people using the facilities providing valuable data and insights to help shape the Trust's strategy

As far as Laura was aware there had not been a published impact report relating to their foodbanks, and it would be interesting to learn if there are any plans to evaluate the Financial Inclusion Project nationally, regionally or locally to inform future food + wrap around support service models. Looking to the future Laura doesn't think there will be an increase in foodbanks across Yorkshire and Humber, in fact, only one (franchised model) opened in the last 5 years.

> *"Every area has a Trussell Trust or IFAN foodbank, so we won't increase the franchise unless an IFAN shut down and a gap is left in a place. However, existing foodbanks are having to look carefully at capacity as they have experienced a 90%-100% increase in demand in the past 6 months. To achieve the same experience that foodbanks have been able to offer such as 2 hour sessions, 'stay as long as you like' approaches or 'come and see an advisor' is a challenge with such high demand. It means longer opening times. It's worse than COVID. It's (the system) creaking. We've just done a big winter appeal so that we can get £5,000 for each foodbank."*

Regards funding, Laura explains that the Trust gives grants to each foodbank for strategic projects and their operation relies on local donations and givers and 'diverse income streams'. The Trust is less inclined to encourage their foodbanks to seek funding from the public sector.

> *"Our foodbanks shouldn't ever rely on local authority funding. Moreover, from a policy standpoint, we want to be able to make local welfare systems better so on that basis it's hard to advocate for that unless we reject council funding for foodbanks."*

The emphasis nationally and locally therefore is consistent. In putting an end to foodbanks for emergency food provision there is a need to invest in cash-first approaches instead or as a clear partnership goal for the future as can be seen in this example in Leeds.

Cash-First pilot in Leeds

Laura reported that after two years of collaboration the Trussell Trust held a launch event of its cash first pilot with Leeds City Council in late 2022 with 245 attendees (including 56 Councillors) and 8 people from DWP. This pilot includes Leeds North and West, Leeds South and East and Wetherby Foodbanks alongside the Trust and Leeds City Council, the latter confirming recently that they have decided to keep the cash-first element of their local welfare scheme long term. Documents about the pilot and a recording of the webinar are found here: How we're working with local government - The Trussell Trust

Watch the Leeds Cash First Pilot evaluation webinar

RESPONDING TO FINANCIAL CRISIS WITH CASH GRANTS INSTEAD OF EMERGENCY FOOD

An evaluation of the Leeds Cash First Pilot, commissioned by the Leeds City Council and the Trussell Trust; conducted by by Liz Lipscomb and Dr Cat Walker (Vantage Point Research)
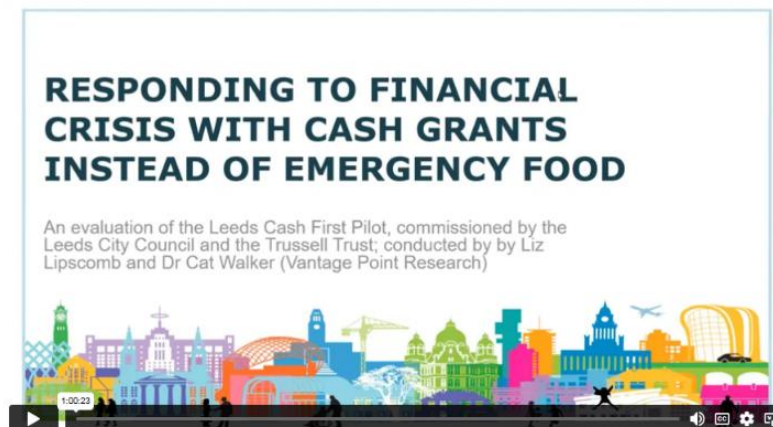
For further information about the results of this pilot and the learning from its external evaluation please read the 'Cash-First approaches' chapter of this report (section 6.6)

Financial inclusion

Laura explains: "Our vision is for a UK without the need for food banks. Financial inclusion work can be at the heart of achieving this vision by supporting individuals to move forward with their lives without the need for ongoing reliance on your services. Over time, the benefit system has become increasingly complex, and more and more people find themselves in situations where their benefits have stopped or reduced, or they are not claiming their full entitlements without realising.

In the 2018/19 financial year, it is estimated that a staggering £15 billion went unclaimed, with this being likely to be a significant underestimate of the true figure. Many people are also unaware of the support available to help with managing debts and so find themselves prioritising unsustainable repayments leaving them unable to afford the basics. This is reflected in the fact that, sadly, the number of people requiring support from food banks is on the rise. There were over 2.5 million food parcels distributed in our network during the 2020/2021 financial year, which is a 128% increase to what it was five years ago. According to Trussell Trust research, more than half of those accessing emergency food in early 2020 had experienced a problem with their benefits in the last year. There is hope however, and financial inclusion is part of the solution, helping to address these underlying issues, empowering individuals, enabling people to take control of their finances and move forward with their lives without the need for food banks."

Other useful resources

- Map of Trussell Trust and IFAN foodbanks available from **Feeding Britain**[76] and useful insights from its 'What Works Centre' about pilots including 'Affordable Food Clubs'
- Find out more about The Trussell Trust's Together for Change strategy - Together for Change - Trussell Trust.

Selby Community Fridge

Selby Community Fridge opened during the pandemic, and in its first 6 months, distributed 2,435 bags (to June 2021) of surplus food to around 650 local people.

> *"Despite COVID-19, the Community Fridge has been a resounding success, allowing those struggling with food insecurity to access free, fresh food, no questions asked.[77]"*

Selby Community Fridge was created as a response to a tangible need in the local community for an accessible source of free, fresh food, without the need for referrals from a local authority or other agency. Developed by Selby Big Local with start-up funding from the Defra Food Projects Fund and support provided by Selby District AVS, Selby Community Fridge was conceptualised through consultations with residents. This community fridge is now open three afternoons a week. The Fridge is open later on a Wednesday to make it more accessible. Day to day running is largely carried out by a group of 10 passionate volunteers. The Fridge's social media presence is a vital part of its continued success, providing an accessible platform to communicate changes in opening times, community events and generally create a space for community engagement. The project has developed useful links with the wider food support ecosystem:

> *"We have a positive working relationship with Selby Food Bank, who will often make referrals to us to compensate for a lack of fresh foodstuffs in the food parcels they provide. Links with other agencies, such as Citizens Advice, means that Fridge visitors can be referred to additional support as needed."*

There is currently a distinct lack of non-perishable goods being donated. That the Fridge is not means tested has led to frustrations where visitors are thought to have taken too much. Feedback from users of the Community Fridge has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the importance of the non-judgemental attitudes of the volunteers and just how critical the service provided by the Fridge is.

Learning

Enablers / barriers: The literature identifies a range of enabling factors, alongside challenges for these types of food model to address food insecurity.

Enabling ingredients

- ✓ Located in areas of high deprivation with access to food distribution centres.
- ✓ Offer more than simply food[78].
- ✓ Food banks that exist within a wider system of support are likely to be more effective e.g., working alongside other partners e.g., developing the cash-first response pilot in Leeds
- ✓ Entrepreneurial and ethical[79].
- ✓ Motivated volunteers.

Challenges

- ❖ There is criticism that food banks can be stigmatising with the effect being that many who are very food insecure do not use them despite needing them most.

- ❖ Resilience of smaller, independent food banks – thereby reducing the efficacy and reach of the food support system overall.[80]

- ❖ Variability of approach and models may result in different effects (positive / negative).

- ❖ Insufficient quality food, funding, adequate refrigeration and storage.

- ❖ Take up: while services such as food banks provide marginal help, they are ultimately limited in scope often leaving people still in dire situations. Food banks are still only used by a minority of low-income families, largely due to difficulties accessing the services, e.g., Trussell Trust food banks are typically only open for short periods of time during weekday working hours. Many people facing hardship avoid using these services because of stigma related to seeking this kind of support, as well as issues with fulfilling people's desired food needs.

- ❖ Evidence on the value of UK food banks is judged to be 'scarce' by academics.

- ❖ Associated, additional support linked to food banks require clear aims that are understood by staff and volunteers.

- ❖ The use of eligibility criteria raises a number of questions, and can undermine the dignity of users and act as a barrier to take up.

- ❖ Families participating in research for the Child Poverty Action Group charity "overwhelmingly" thought direct payments were better options than vouchers or food packages.

- ❖ Stronger networks, funding and policies to support food assistance programmes were suggested to support the development of needs-driven models.

The graphic overleaf also points to the limitations of food banks and their ability to reach those who are food insecure.

Food insecurity beyond the use of food banks

- Most people who are food insecure are not using a food bank (**Source: Food Standards Agency Food & You: Wave 3.**)

Food insecurity and food bank use in past 12 months (June 2021) - England, Wales, NI

13% worried about and/or running out of food/not eating well

15% eating less/hungry but unable to eat/going without food

Food insecurity not seen in food banks

Hunger not seen in food banks

4% used a food bank

Source: Food Standards Agency Food & You 2: Wave 3. Data from April-June 2021. *All food insecurity questions ask about a lack of money for food.
Graphic: Dr Rachel Loopstra, Department of Nutritional Sciences, King's College London

A potential enabler for the future are campaigns to raise public awareness / change minds and reduce stigma about food poverty.[82] The policy landscape suggests that there is a 'need to end food banks' and to focus on more upstream (social security / cash-based) responses in order to address the causes rather than the symptoms of food insecurity.

The case for free food typologies?

'Everyone's experience of poverty is different, and it's vital that people receive tailored, dignified support.'[83]

While the pressing need from both non-working and working families for free food persists until mid-2023 at least[84], then there is a case for food banks / free food models to continue to make a positive contribution to the support ecosystem in place. An inclusive food support ecosystem will, however, ideally include a blend of interventions, adapted for the communities they work in.

While cash-first approaches should have primacy, those with a responsibility for food systems and communities should consider how best to involve food banks / community fridges as part of a wider objective to *"promote and embed a wide approach to support household food insecurity focusing on inequalities.[85]"*

Rather than viewing this type of provision in isolation, there is an opportunity for partners to more effectively use their expertise and to develop stronger links to provide pathways out of food bank usage – which implies a systems approach to tackling insecurity as a whole, recognising that this is at the root of many social issues. It is too early to tell if the Trussell Trust's new strategy – aiming to remove the need for foodbanks – is showing any evidence of progress. However, while the profile of the Trussell Trust has both advantages and disadvantages, their entrepreneurial spirit is one which should be supported and adapted by others. In particular, partners may wish to work with the Trussell Trust to encourage food banks to evolve and change their provision where this is considered in the best interests of those communities.

Questions arising

- Rather than reducing their role, to what extent can partners make better use of the expertise from the Trussell Trust and independent food banks to enhance provision[86], *better still, to develop person-centred ways of tackling the root causes of food insecurity*?
- Partners may wish to commission further research to first identify, then consider in detail whether outcomes in areas without food banks are different from where this type of support is in place?
- How to explore the efficacy of the Trussell Trust's new Financial Inclusion Strategy approach which has seen national investment to enable advice work to be more formally connected to the food bank centres (i.e. evaluation of any pilots in York and North Yorkshire?)
- How to understand, and support, any food bank to be connected into a wider system of support in York and North Yorkshire places, resulting in better preventative and wrap around interventions that help individuals towards a pathway of 'good help'.
- The extent to which the sponsorship model that the Trussell Trust uses, and which has both admirers and detractors, is one that other food models could include.
- What is the role, if any, of local authorities in supporting any further expansion of community fridges in communities of York and North Yorkshire given Co-op's planned investment with Hubbub - how can we identify what these plans mean for Y&NY?

7.2   Low-cost community food retail

Definition

'These are variously called local or community pantries, larders, or fridges, social supermarkets or food clubs. Though they often also rely on redistributed surplus food, they differ from food banks because people usually pay a small amount either as a membership fee or on a per-use basis and then get to choose from the selection items available. Making fresh foods available are also usually a feature of these models[87].' For the purpose of this report we have included pantries, larders and social supermarkets (sometimes called Eco Shops or Next Step Shops in parts of the country) and community shops/stores in the definition. Fridges appear to be a free food access model (see 6.1) whilst food clubs are found in the community food hubs and clubs report section.

How they work

Though they often also rely on redistributed surplus food, they differ from food banks because people usually pay a small amount either as a membership fee or on a per-use basis and then get to choose from the selection items available. Making fresh foods available are also usually a feature of these models. In one of the earliest studies exploring this phenomenon from Austria in 2011 it was reported that 'social supermarkets (SSMs) play an increasingly important role in the Austrian retail scene. They sell food and consumer goods which they receive for free from manufacturers and retailers at a 70 percent discount rate to people at risk of poverty.' The unique characteristics of SSMs and their classification within the spectrum of retailers with a social mission confirm that SSMs can be regarded as a new type of retailer.

Evidence

Research in 2021[88] reported that there was evidence of an increasing appetite for and use of low-cost community food retail models and development of this kind of provision during 2020-2021 including a rapid growth in pantries. In Leeds, for example, there had been the development of 18 food pantries, 12 with Family Action, 1 with Church Action on Poverty and 5 with Health for All. One participant described the pantry model which they were trialling in Moray: "On a more practical level, we're trialling pantries, which is zero waste. It'll be open to everybody for a very small fee. So, you pay £2.50, but you're getting £10, £15 worth of food, but we would also have some free food there, as well. It's just trying a different way to give people the choice and the access to food and taking away the stigma around it as well." (Charitable food aid workshop, Moray). As well as new low-cost community food retail models being set up, the report referenced an existing food bank in Bradford that was transitioning to a low-cost model. Whilst these developments in low-cost community food retail models were generally perceived to be positive, participants also highlighted that there may always a need for some free food aid

Although there are distinctions between low-cost community food retail and food banks, often on membership, cost, eligibility criteria and referrals, one participant noted that the distinction

between food banks and food pantries may not be well understood including by their target groups, creating a "messy" space: "Part of the consultation [we did] with the Food Family's Network across Edinburgh, which Food Power supported, was [asking] what is the difference between a food bank and a food pantry? And people just- they don't know, they don't know. They just know it's a place for food, so it's a bit messy at the moment, to be honest with you." (Charitable food aid workshop, Edinburgh)[89].

Emerging evidence for social supermarkets – Eco Shops in Middlesbrough

'*The review of social supermarkets in the UK by the research team concludes that the evidence is sparse*[90].' Further research[91] is therefore being completed in the UK in 2022 that may generate an evidence base for those wishing to develop these models, for example, a proposed project with evaluation to help secure funding for ongoing Eco Shops in Middlesbrough. This is a social supermarket model being coordinated by Middlesbrough Environment City with support from South Tees Public Health.

Eco Shops are referenced in the Food Power Evaluation (2017-2021) where local food poverty alliances are credited with encouraging models of this nature:

'Alliances have been encouraged by Food Power to focus on working to tackle the root causes of food poverty and have taken a range of approaches to this, including cash first, healthy eating, education, co-creation, mutual aid, and community participation models. A good example of Food Power's influence in this regard is the **Eco-shops in Middlesbrough**. These were created by combining the alliance's local knowledge with learning from Sustain's sustainability guidance and Food Power's anti-poverty resources to create Eco-shops that address unmet need for affordable healthy food:

> "Probably the biggest change we've made is the ability to develop Eco-shops, a stigma-free poverty intervention. We're massively proud of it. [...] people tell me how invaluable it's been. And how much they're supported. And that's what it's about. And them not feeling lesser of a person for it. That's the biggest achievement from Food Power" (Middlesbrough Food Partnership representative)."

Building on this narrative from 2021, Eco Shops are thought to help achieve Public Health related outcomes and are described as fundamental to the ongoing work of Middlesbrough Food Partnership (MFP) and Food Power Alliance (FPA). The evaluation of the Eco Shop model will help secure financial support. In 2022, the research aims to understand how food insecurity and stigma can be reduced and whilst improving access and availability to healthier foods in socially and economically deprived communities. The objectives of the research are to explore how social supermarkets are used throughout the UK; determine the availability and accessibility of social supermarkets across the North-East and North Cumbria; understand how people in the North-East, specifically Middlesbrough, use and perceive them; and explore ways of encouraging customers to buy and use healthier social supermarket items. There are proposed methods for public involvement.

1: Resource development: Within this project, we will work alongside members of The Middlesbrough Eco Shop Task and Finish Group (TFG) to develop a survey, interview questions and other project materials to ensure that it is fit for purpose and applicable to the population.

2: Peer researchers: We will recruit and involve peer researchers in the data collection process, empowering and engaging with communities in a more impactful way.

3: Steering group representatives: Representatives from both the TFG and peer researchers will be invited to steering group meetings to ensure they are involved throughout the duration of the entire project.

Findings will be taken forward by the TFG to help develop, mobilise and embed strategies deemed most acceptable and those with future potential.

Outcomes

Key sources where the outcomes (below) were evidenced for this section of the report

- Social Supermarkets: Typology within the spectrum of Social Enterprises (2011)
- East Riding Food Poverty Project Alliance Report (2021)
- Food Insecurity: Understanding local delivery, impact and innovation in the North East Riding (2021)
- Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 September 2021).
- Community social supermarkets: understanding how they shape access and availability to healthier foods in food insecure communities (2022)
- Working in collaboration - Leeds Food Insecurity Taskforce (2022) and the Food Resilience Toolkit
- Lewisham Homes' Community Food Stores Impact Evaluation (2022)
- Food Power, Final Evaluation Report (2021)- Eco Shop references
- Interim Evaluation Report: Community Food Hub in Foleshill, Coventry (2021)
- The Food Ladders Project - Mapping the Geographies of Food Provision in Sheffield (2022)
- Navigating Storms: Learning from Covid-19 food experiences 'Food Vulnerability During Covid-19' Participatory Panel (2021)
- Releasing social value from surplus food Evaluation Final Report (2020)
- FareShare network; The Wasted Opportunity (2022)
- Community supermarkets could offer a sustainable solution to food poverty Demos (2015)
- Synthesis of food pantry and community shop/store outcomes by Dr Megan Blake, University of Sheffield (2022)[92]

The most notable outcomes referenced in the literature include:

- Community empowerment through a process of developing a local social supermarket
- Increased resilience / less dependency e.g., not reliant on food banks as much as before
- Less worry and stress by being able to stretch budget; less spent on food = more on other bills
- Improved sense of belonging, dignity / reduced stigma by accessing a model that is open to the whole community
- Choice / individual empowerment
- Access to healthier, fresh food options not typically available in food banks
- Opportunities to volunteer build skills and confidence, and these roles are often taken by people who are/were struggling themselves and seek to give back
- Reciprocity
- Self-efficacy – planning the cooking of food with greater confidence (especially where the model includes an education / cooking together element). *Please also see 6.8 an example of self-efficacy being improved through a novel food pantry model in Hartford, America.*

A synthesis of outcomes derived by **food pantries** has been included below for a slightly deeper dive into this model. The benefits include saving money on grocery bills, saving food for landfill, enhancing nutrition and food variety, knitting neighbourhoods together and developing employability.

Benefits to members (individuals and households)

- Improves food and nutrition security: Pantries provide availability, access, and stability of wide variety of healthy and nutritious food to their members. The weekly access to more fruits and vegetable, protein (such as fish, meat, and eggs) means members can choose to eat more healthier food and less process food with more members trying new nutritious food which they could not previously afford. Pantry membership, both the financial savings and the food on offer through the pantry, play important role in helping families experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity
- Improves Wellbeing: improve self-worth and reduce stigma, there is no stigma attached to using the service. Being able to buy good quality food at reduce prices improve self-worth. Provide opportunities for members and non-members alike to volunteer, thereby building confidence and gaining valuable employable skills. Members also build their confidence around food/cooking classes.
- Health outcomes: Being a member /user of the pantry improves mental health and reduce anxiety – reduces financial worries. Reducing people's anxiety of being able to feed themselves help improves their mental health.
- Improves household income: For a household visiting a local pantry once a week could save £780 a year. A typical food basket of pantry is valued at £20 saving members over £15 a visit. Thus, improves members financial wellbeing – savings are used to settle debts and pay other household bills, or buy more quality food from the supermarkets (food they could not afford before)
- Reciprocity: Food pantries operate often by asking for something in return. In this model, for a small fee, people select or receive a greater value of groceries than what they could purchase at the supermarket for the same amount.

Community benefits/outcomes:

- Community resilience and social infrastructure: Pantries play an important role in developing and strengthening local communities. Members feel more connected to their local community through being a member of pantry, enabling members to build social networks -socialising and meeting new friends and felling valued as pantry members.
- Investing in community: Pantries can also play a part in strengthening the local economy. Several Pantries reinvest their membership fees to purchase additional stock, taking care where possible to support local businesses with their purchases.
- Connecting with community services /Strengthening communities
- The pantries act as a food hub by offering additional support (skills and training – cookery classes/demonstrations) to members, which help members to learn how to cook simple and nutritious meal. They can connect members to other social and service providers (debt service recovery groups, local welfare support scheme, pastoral, and spiritual support; benefits and legal advice), and are therefore able to help members to deal with the root causes of food poverty.

7.2.1 Social supermarkets

Examples of social supermarkets, sometimes branded or interchangeably called pantries, Eco Shops or next stop shops[93], are found in the literature. Some models are highlighted next.

Lache Larder in West Cheshire where it was reported via Cheshire West Communities Together that developing the Larder was a strong example of community empowerment: - 'massive impact on empowering residents to set up their own neighbourhood groups and social supermarket, including opening a shop/cafe in their area[94].' This same study contains many examples where community led provision ensures that it is 'fit for purpose' for a community, and not something which is 'parachuted' in to meet an actual or perceived need. Additionally, when it is run by and for local people there is a sense of people being 'in it together' whether they are volunteering or accessing the provision, or sometimes both at the same time. It is important at a time of crisis people can turn to trusted venues and people in their community, this is positive for the person who needs the support as well as empowering for those who are providing it.

A case study about the development of a social supermarket in the East Riding provides useful learning about how to position this model successfully in a locality. The **Southern Holderness Resource Centre**, (more commonly known as the Shores Centre) is recognised a key community hub throughout the South East Holderness community. As a charity serving the area for over 15 years, they have extensive experience of supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals by providing a wide range services, resources and facilities that positively contribute to health, economic development, enterprise, employment, financial and social inclusion.

The key question was - How can we develop something that has a local impact for individuals, deal with future emergencies and be sustainable? Therefore, they took the social supermarket model and developed a social supermarket bespoke to the needs and wants of their local community. Shores offer their members a weekly shop at a fraction of what it would normally cost and in a social, positive, community setting. The money then helps provide stock for the store/food bank and 5% of the revenue goes into an emergency crisis pot that they can use. The Social Supermarket model allows Shores to refer clients from their food bank to their social supermarket to prevent dependency on the food bank and help enhance financial management skills. Since opening they have begun to see a decrease in the food bank members and an increase of social supermarket membership. It also prevents waste especially with fresh/chilled and frozen produce that they are unable to make use of at the foodbank. It has enabled access to healthier food options at a much lower cost. It has been more financially viable for organisations/businesses to redirect their food waste into social supermarkets and reduces landfill impact and costs. It has created access to an affordable broader range of products such as lifestyle essentials for personal hygiene and household cleanliness. It has helped remove the stigma of using a foodbank and welcomes the community as a whole.

> *"There was a need for a more community focused food project within our local community and if anything the pandemic has highlighted the need for food systems to be more community-led, resilient and sustainable. The Social Supermarket has been a hub for the Withernsea community during these difficult times allowing access to affordable food, offering volunteering opportunities to local residents and preventing social isolation. They allow 3 emergency food parcels for individuals and families once they have been referred to the food bank and then allow them to take the next step to food security by having access to the social supermarket on a banding system. Band A – resident could be employed, no current receipt of benefits. Band B – universal credit pension etc attracts a 20% discount off the shelf price. Social Supermarkets enables empowerment for the individuals as they are making a financial contribution and have a degree of choice within food provision."*

Good practice (innovation)

- They have made very strong relationships with other food banks in the region and helped advise them with developing a similar model e.g., helping The Peoples Pantry and Two Rivers Community Pantry with the opening and planning of their Social Supermarkets in the Market Weighton and Goole areas.
- Shores have used this as a trading opportunity to generate income to invest into the food bank for food parcels if emergency helps is needed.
- They have developed an emergency response fund that gives them a safety net for future emergencies and crisis response. At the end of the financial year 5% of surpluses generated go into this fund.

- They have developed educational tools and community inclusion with our recipe idea cards called - **Take it, Make it, Eat it**.
- Steps to Food Security model – this enables Shores to help clients move from food bank support and become more financially independent.
- They have developed something that is relevant in size to the community that they are serving and they have let it organically grow.

Other examples in the database of literature include social supermarkets forming part of a mixed model called 'Lewisham Homes' Community Food Store; and similarly, a social supermarket adapted (see Saxena & Tornaghi, 2018) and incorporated into a mixed model found in the Foleshill Community Hub in Coventry. At its core lies the provisioning of access to good quality affordable food to people in the local community who meet vulnerability criteria in a retail like environment. This is backed up by a 'wraparound' support offer that includes, for example, debt and welfare advice, employment support, training and reskilling, and broader support for health and wellbeing. People have access to the CSS on a membership basis, reviewed at six monthly intervals. Opening hours have shifted with demand since 2020 to meet community needs.

7.2.2 Food pantries

Food pantries are planned and delivered by local organisations - the RSLs, churches, charities – and focus on "priority neighbourhoods". Each pantry is managed by a multi-agency/multi-stakeholder board (which includes also volunteers and members) to oversee and coordinate the operation of the pantries in its area.

There is not a single model of food pantries; there are membership and non-membership models. Pantries comes in different forms: a) Membership based pantries which are part of network of "Your Local Pantry", which is a social franchise run by partnership between the Skylight and Church Action on Poverty and Storehouse pantry. The membership-based pantries operate like cooperatives with subscription fee paid weekly (£3 - £5, set the by the pantries) in return for choice of groceries (10 items) worth more several times the subscription fees. b). Non-membership-based pantries (e.g., Sharehouse, Foodworks shared market, Neo community). These pantries provide access to food surplus on 'pay-as-you-feel' approach. The users/customers are invited to pay in money, time, or skills. The underlying principle is that of "inclusivity". The fact that they receive food as donations or that they intercept the food makes it possible that the food is not priced.

> *'The model is different from a food bank in several important ways, in that is a membership food shop, focused on a particular neighbourhood. Pantries enhance communities and are a preventative approach to food poverty, reducing the risk of household hunger.' (Dr Megan Blake, University of Sheffield, 2022 also credited with the content below)*

Access and eligibility

- ***Membership based pantries*** - access is controlled through membership subscription and geographical location. Although, there are no time limit on length membership and depends on the individual needs; membership is opened only to members of the community / neighbourhood within a specific postcode (in "priority neighbourhoods" according to the government's indices of multiple deprivation and/or have been referred by a partner agency and meet certain "light touch criteria" of need around whether prospective members are struggling with energy bills or rental payments, or multiple debts or any kind of financial issue that they need help with). Although psychological barrier – stigma is somewhat reduced through the membership fees. However, the membership subscription can act as a financial barrier. As studies in in the context of food banks have shown that when 'membership' is means-tested, there is a degree of embarrassment or stigma attached to participation and membership can lead to creation of a two-tier society – while including some, it also excludes others who may not it into the membership criteria, but equally experience lack of means to access food. ***Non-membership-based pantries***: Access is open to all irrespective of economic status, and prices are pay as you feel basis. The choice of maintaining the premises open to everyone is described as 'inclusive'. There is no exclusion based on geographical or socio-economic conditions which also necessitates looking into people's personal conditions or life choices.

Access to food/amount of food

Pantries offer food access to people who were not in crisis, but still vulnerable to food insecurity.

- In membership-based pantries access to food is controlled in the pantries using color-coded categories depending on the demand and to ensure a fair distribution. During each visit, a member/user can only take a certain number of goods from each of the different categories (1 red; 2 blues; 3 greens and 4 yellows - to ensure a balance of fresh, packaged, and higher value foods).
- Non-membership based models operate differently based on the location and set structure. In some pantries like Sharehouse, in one part of the store, food is offered on a pay-as-you-feel basis and users are allowed to take as much as they need, and in another part, volunteers serve the more limited items at a cost of £1 for a basket. However, there is a general restriction in place in terms of two bags of food per person on grounds of fairness.

Examples

Bradford: Inn Churches, a third sector organisation that provides practical support to people in Bradford including a Food Hub, established the 'Food Savers' scheme with the rationale that they did not want the legacy of COVID-19 to be an overdependence on free food[95]. Members of the scheme access the **low-cost food markets** whilst also establishing a savings account through the Credit Union:

> *"In addition to the pantry model, one thing that's developing in Bradford, and it's beginning to spread as well, is our FoodSavers Network, where the local Credit Union has got on board, as well. That has actually really turned lots of people's lives around that they've actually started saving a few pounds. They're purchasing their food at low cost and they're*

putting a pound a week aside or something. Then, for some people, that has really shifted their thinking. We've found that lots of people have been really positive. We've been surprised that people... We were worried that people would resent having to put some money in, but then some people have really found that a positive thing and actually have started to take charge of their life in a way they never had before, which is really, really positive." (Partnership workshop, Bradford) This model was also something that was being considered in Leeds.

Beverley in the East Riding

"Thank you to everyone involved in the Beverley Cherry Tree Community Pantry. We are benefitting from it so much, it helps ease money worries but more than that we're cooking more together, meal planning and eating healthier foods. Thank you all very much. (Anonymous Client, Beverley Cherry Tree Community Centre)[96]"

Three case studies are found in a 2020 study[97] that explore the characteristics of each pantry model in terms of their charity status, whether they were rural or urban, deprivation 'level' in the locality, the services provided, and the type of beneficiaries involved.

- The Core Project; Urban; Very High deprivation; Community Café, Food Pantry; involving homeless people, people who are socially excluded, single parents, older people, people with mental health problems
- Edlington Community Organisation; Rural; Very High deprivation; Food Pantry, Emergency food parcels, shared meals; involving single parents, people with mental and physical health problems, older people
- Multi-Denominational Centre; Urban; Medium deprivation; Food Pantry, a shared meal; involving socially excluded people, people with mental health problems

North Craven Food Pantries

Age UK North Craven has been supporting three food pantries in Bentham, Hellifield and Ingleton (North Yorkshire) since 2020, and as part of a wider COVID response that saw the development of the Craven Food Partnership. New pantries have since developed in Settle, and the pantries form part of a network of food access / support provision across the locality – including fridges, food banks, a local Quakers that does cook ups using food before it goes to waste and allotment groups. The Pantries evolved out of a social purpose rather than an environmental / food waste ambition, and are faith-based (multi-denominational), managed by volunteers and reliant on donations which brings challenges. Age UK North Craven, in its role as a locally trusted organisation, using its ability to secure grants from diverse sources has been able to help ensure the pantries receive an adequate supply of food, including fruit and vegetables which would otherwise not come through supermarket or other donations. Cost of Living means that donations of this nature from supermarkets are rare because those goods are being sold in their stores more cheaply.

The pantries originally labelled themselves as 'pop up pantries', but there has been a realisation that they are in fact community pantries and will need to continue to meet local needs and poverty. The models have traditionally been 'bring what you can, take what you need', however, in an attempt to improve sustainability one of the pantries is evolving into a social supermarket (Bentham). This despite being one of the pantries that does well for donations of food and money. It is also the pantry receiving the greatest footfall and people in need. A £2 contribution gives access to 3 bags of shopping. Before deciding to evolve, Management Group representatives and volunteers visited models in Hexham and Carlisle to learn the merits and pitfalls. The model is in its early days, but it is seeking to demonstrate that such a model can exist in a more rural location where many appear to be urban-centric.

A particularly helpful intervention using grants from the Stronger Communities Programme was to train volunteers at the pantry in how to have difficult conversations known as 'Conversations for Change training[98]'. This enables participants to develop a sound introduction and grounding in the communication technique of Motivational Interviewing. This kind of capacity building alongside a desire to help people using the pantries / social supermarket progress away from being insecure to better outcomes (e.g., accessing advice or getting a job) is helping to further evolve the model for the future whilst other options beyond grants are being considered for income generation and viability.

Strengths and limitations of food pantries

These 3 case studies and the wider review of literature offer useful learning about the efficacy of these different food pantry models:

Food pantries do create opportunities for people to come together and a focus for conversations are particularly effective for helping to cement social ties. However, activities that take longer i.e., cooking meals / cooking activities are seen as being more effective for creating relationships. The pantry model can help families and children to connect by using some of the food surplus for activities such as cooking / learning together. Members feel more connected to their local community through the pantry and there was evidence that members made new friends with knock-on positive effects to their mental and physical health. Some have used the pantry as a way of meeting others, feeling more connected to their community and making friends which has been good for reducing feelings of loneliness.

Food from the pantry gets people in the door, this often leads to participation in other activities. For example, some started out coming to the social supermarket and now come to the older people's bingo too. (This was an example piece)

Pantries offer short-term emergency support. Being a member of a pantry improves household finances. A typical food basket is valued at £20 saving members at least £15. Pantries can allow families some flexibility with other shopping needs. It can be very beneficial for example to those in need of fresh meat and halal. With money saved from the pantry use – Christmas and birthdays and meals and carpets have all been references to being financed rather than using a

moneylender etc. some have used savings to fund a particular activity i.e., membership to a football or swimming club for children or days out that they family would not have been able to afford ordinarily. The case studies suggest that using a food pantry can help reduce stress, new foods are tried and members cook more creatively. Members consume less processed food through use of the pantry and more fresh fruit and vegetables are consumed. An issue was raised around how people come to a pantry but don't go to put their food away / in fridges / freezers straight away as they likely would if they had been to a supermarket and how pantries wanted to make it feel more like a shopping experience which would help normalise the trip and using surplus food as shopping.

Challenges/limitations faced by providers:

- **High dependence on establishing and sustaining relationships** with food industry suppliers to ensure continuous provision of food. Issues of trust, cooperation and reliability are seen as critical when working with multiple stakeholders.
- **Logistic and distribution challenges** – investments in infrastructural – transportation, storage facilities (storage space and storage infrastructure (i.e., shelving), and having enough volunteers to deal with coordinating activities. The short of shelf life of the products requires timely sharing of information, especially dealing with diverse supply sources. While sourcing food from national redistributor like Fareshare improves logistical challenges, it can result in 'organisational food losses and waste' due to short shelf life. Direct donations by supermarkets to pantries will reduce losses and waste
- **Unreliability of surplus food –** pantries dependent on food surplus except for a small amount of fresh produce which is donated by food growers. The unpredictability of volume and nature of products of food surplus on one hand and control over stock to meet demand is a challenge, especially for pantries sourcing diverse sources.
- **Availability and coordination of volunteers –** unavailability of core volunteers particularly during summer holidays and lack of expertise of volunteers provide challenge for organisations
- **Financial challenges –** pantries generate income mainly through membership fees to cover cost of personnel, rent and operating cost as well as the services provided; there is high dependence on private and public donations and funds/grants to meet overheads costs - rent and/or infrastructure are considered as the major costs in the running of the pantries.
- Pantries can have **excess produce that it struggles to eat or sell** in certain seasons; and needs transport options to be able to deliver or offer food to other organisations to use.

Lived experience insights

> *'It has made me feel less of a failure for not being able to provide the basics that we need.'*

Pantries can be for people in food crisis who need emergency food support; people who are just about managing, but not quite. Members come from all kinds of household types from multigenerational families to single elderly people, families and single parent households. Children, families, older people aged 65 or older, living alone, white, black, other ethnicities etc. For members it is important that: there is increased fresh and healthy food available to them, making friends, tackling food waste, choosing their own food and reducing cost of bills for food. Tackling food waste is important to members of food pantries and is therefore a key benefit to communicate about this model.

Learning for the future and changing practice to be more effective

'The traditional food pantry model fails to recognize the influence of self-efficacy on a person's food security. A food pantry model with client-choice, motivational interviewing and targeted referral services can increase self-efficacy of clients. Prioritizing the self-efficacy of clients over the efficiency of pantry operations is required to increase food security among disadvantaged populations.'

'Food bank directors and food pantry staff are increasingly looking for ways to address the underlying issues of poverty rather than only give away food.'

'Lots of volunteer hours are dedicated to the running of a food pantry.'

7.2.3   Community shops/stores

The Community Stores/Shops are part of the Company Shop group. Community Shop describes itself as an award-winning social enterprise and the UK's first **social supermarket**. It claims to be the UK's leading redistributor of surplus food and household products and there are currently 14 Community Shops in operation – see Our Company Shop locations | The Company Shop Group. It was founded in 2013 by Company Shop Group (CSG) with a mission to build stronger individuals and more confident communities. It asserts that it achieves this by combining heavily discounted supermarket goods with a range of social services and activities, in order to help people, escape food poverty and realise wider success in their lives. It is in fact a mixed model comprising three elements:

How does Community Shop work?

To achieve its aims, Community Shop comprises three distinct but interdependent spaces:

1. Community Store

Community Store sells good quality surplus food, drink and household goods at deeply discounted prices to its members - people receiving welfare and living locally. These surplus items are either donated by CSG's clients in the food supply chain or powered by the revenue generated in Company Shop stores.

2. Community Hub

Community Hub offers a range of training courses, support programmes, mentoring and conversation groups for members. These cover topics relevant to members, from budget management through employment support, business training and community leadership. These services are funded by the money made in the Community Store.

3. Community Kitchen

Community Kitchen is a cafe and cookery school offering classes, a food mentoring programme, a growing space and a place to eat, host family events and socialise.

It provides members with vital access to deeply discounted food, as well as learning and development programmes. The **community kitchen** offers hot meals to members and their families at lower price. As part of the community store, there is **community hub** that provide host of services to members to tackle the root causes of food insecurity.

Access and eligibility

Closed access through membership which is based on three criteria: a) people who live locally in a specific local postcode area chosen in line with the government indices of deprivation; b) people living in a household that receives some form of welfare support; c) and those who are motivated to make positive changes in their lives, and want to sign up to their 'Success Plan' which involves individually tailored professional and personal development programmes. The membership runs initially for 6 months and undergoes periodic reviews. While the membership criteria provide targeted approach to tackle food insecurity and those struggling, it potential excludes other members of the community who may be experience moderate food security but not receiving social support.

Access to food/amount of food

Members have access to heavily discounted food and household products up to 70% off the normal retail price, helping to stretch family budgets further. There is no restriction on the amount of food items or households' essentials that members can buy. However, there is restriction on the amount that can be purchased at one time by a member (any 6 of 1 identical item per day).

Outcomes

Benefits to members

- **Improves food and nutrition security:** With community shops located in areas lying within the 10-20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK – areas with limited access to mainstream shops, limited access to fresh fruit and vegetables, and multiple health issues. The community shops improve food and nutrition security. With daily access to available healthy foods, 85% members have reported eating heathier – eating more fruits and vegetables since joining the scheme. The cooking classes and food awareness education aspect of the scheme increases members food knowledge and literacy, and they are better educated to eat healthy at home and to try new food.

> The integrated food hub of community shop, community hub and community kitchen provide stability to those members to improve their food security long-term. However, the membership criteria exclude people who may be experience moderate food insecurity but are not on benefits.

- **Improves Wellbeing**: paying for the food makes members feel more confidence in themselves which improves their self-worth and feels less stigmatised. The opportunities for members to volunteer at the shop, kitchen and community hub boost members confidence and provide valuable employable skills. For example, in 2021 alone 187 members volunteered or completed work placements with the community hub and 7471 people received support through the community hub programmes. However, non-members cannot volunteer therefore excluding potential people who may not want to sign to the personal development programmes.

- **Health outcomes:** Being a member of the community shop improves mental health and reduce anxiety – members do not have to worry about stretching their budget to buy good quality food - reduces financial worries of what they put on the table and allows time to think about their ambitions and their future. Coming to the community shop/kitchen or volunteering improves members physical and social wellbeing.
- **Improves household income:** On average, members save of £212 each month on their shopping bill, thereby increases financial wellbeing. Users can buy more wider range of good quality food than would be able to buy if they shopped in supermarkets or local corner shops

Community outcomes

- **Community resilience and social infrastructure.** The community hub provides advice and activities to members while the community kitchen that service hot meals at lower prices for the members provide good space for members of the community to make new friends and build social networks -thus improving their social interaction and helped them tackled isolation. The seasonal activities for families and kids help build family bonds and friendship, increase sense of community and belonging.
- **Investing in community.** The revenue raised from the in-store sales is invested in the Community Hub, where members can gain access to personal development support, with sessions including everything from cook clubs and home budgeting, to interview skills and business courses and community leadership training.
- **Connecting with community services /strengthening communities.** Members who participate in the community hub activities are connected to other support organisations in the communities thereby providing them with opportunity to build back their life.

The Relationships Project has developed a case study about the model[99] detailing the following kinds of outcomes for people using Community Shop/Stores.

What impact is Community Shop having?

87%	97%	96%	92%
of members feel more confident in themselves	of members say that they have access to the tools and skills they need to achieve their life goals	of members report that their mental wellbeing is improved	of members report that their physical wellbeing is improved

To date:

3521	453	526
members have attended the Community Hub's Success Plan	members have moved into full-time work	members have moved into learning and development.

Example

The case study goes on to suggest that in practice Community Shop warmly welcomes people looking for support in all sorts of unexpected ways. One member, Jenny, tells the story of Community Shop helping her find a job.

> *"I was buzzing as I came back to tell everyone that I had got a job, to start the following Monday, but then panic hit again as I realised I couldn't afford new work clothes and safety footwear. The Community Leaders rallied round and sorted me out quickly."*

Natalie's Story

See the difference Community Shop has made to one of our amazing members.

Natalie's story hears how she learned about Community Shop by accident and that she'd heard it provided food cheap and at a reasonable price for people on Universal Credit. But her journey, starting with food, has led to her doing some Kickstart classes and a decision and pathway to college in a very short period of time. "A fresh start that I never thought I would have."

The Relationships Project case study asserts that 'Community Shop is more sustainable that many other social supermarkets, largely because of its commercial arm, Company Shop, and overall Group heritage and structure which helps avoid supply-chain and staffing issues.. More insight about the model and how it works is found here About Us | The Company Shop Group

Find out how our model works

See the difference we make

Read our Latest Sustainability Report

Good practice

Models like Community Shop represent an interesting body of research exploring the social possibilities of using food as a powerful tool to bring stronger individuals and more confident communities. Think-tank Demos released a report in 2015 exploring social supermarkets as a sustainable solution to food poverty.

What can we learn from Community Shop?

A few things stand out to us about the way Community Shop works:

Powerful relationships rely on mutual agency

Especially in relationships involving vulnerable groups, co-creation is a valuable tool here. Through the Community Hub, for example, Community Shop works with members to set goals and design a bespoke support programme, allowing members to help set the agenda.

Physical spaces can often be re-designed to prioritise meaningful relationships

Community Shop's business model is innovative, but so is the way it reconsiders the supermarket as a place of social support. The use of physical space is crucial in accommodating this change in thinking.

Warmth is an essential precursor to helpful relationships, especially in unfamiliar spaces and with people in need

Company Shop's 2018 impact report gives voice to many members who report feeling anxious when arriving for the first time. In these cases, a warm, reassuring welcome is repeatedly shown to be vital in encouraging members to make use of support services. One member, after being made redundant, says, "My confidence fell rapidly. Luckily for me, Community Shop Lambeth opened its doors and I received a very warm welcome. I felt at home. I got involved in the Success Plan and progressed onto the Community Leadership Programme."

The case for low cost community food retail?

The model offers affordable, accessible and typically more nutritious options that could be regarded as a next step from needing to use a food bank. The model encourages more dignity because a contribution is made and there is choice. Models can often be mixed which gives rise to wider individual and community benefits aligned with their social purpose.

Questions arising

- Can the evidence be strengthened to the point where a food pantry / social supermarket / community shop is knowingly able to address the root causes of food insecurity, and help clients achieve long-term food security and self-sufficiency?
- How could the reciprocity aspect of low cost community food retail be embedded across all or more of the food models made available in communities, as this seems to amplify feelings of dignity, reduce stigma and encourage use without people feeling different?
- How could these models operate / be adapted for rural or sparse communities?

7.3　Community hubs, food hubs and clubs

Definition: community hubs

Using the definition supplied by Locality, a community hub is a multipurpose centre, such as a community centre, medical centre or school that provides a range of high quality and cost effective services to the local community, with the potential to develop new services in response to changing community needs. Community hubs can provide a means for alternative approaches to service delivery – underpinned by the principles of community involvement and partnership. Community hubs are:

Community-led

- Local people are involved in decision making about how services are run, how buildings are managed
- Also support the delivery through volunteering
- Typically managed by a community-led organisation, but alternatively they can be owned or managed by a public agency such as a housing association or local authority with substantial input from the community.

Multi-purpose

- Community hubs are multi-purpose, providing and hosting a range of activities and services that are used by lots of different people
- The range of services reflect local need and may be delivered by local people, other organisations or public agencies – for example:
- Parent and toddler groups
- Health and wellbeing activities – exercise classes
- Employment support
- Childcare
- Library services
- Advice and information.

Making use of local assets

- Community hubs utilise local buildings and land to provide a base for these activities
- These can be assets acquired through Community Asset Transfer (for example: an old school, sporting ground or town hall)
- Other hubs are created as a result of new development through community-led building projects.

Enterprising and resilient: Community hubs need an income to be sustainable. A range of income sources are usually required to cover the costs of running the building, maintenance, such as: grants; donations; hiring out space; delivering contracts. Effective community hubs make use of good ideas and resources within the community and can adapt to changing circumstances. More can be explored here: www.mycommunity.org.uk/the-community-hub-handbook

The main benefits of community hubs

Community hubs can benefit the community in many more ways that only providing services. They can:

- Help build more cohesive and resilient communities
- Build better and more integrated services
- Transform existing, unused buildings
- Provide a focus for community-led regeneration

In the context of Covid-19 responses in localities across the UK there was an emergence of hybrid community response / emergency hubs that differed in their operating model, resourcing, 'ownership', distribution capability and workforce (typically a mix of public and voluntary sector staff) but typically included an element of emergency free food response. The Welsh Government emphasised supporting community hubs to tackle food insecurity during the pandemic with their £2 million grant allocated to local authorities, third sector organisations and not-for-profit organisations. This emphasis was to bring together support services such as advice services with food provision. One of the other solutions they put forward and in response to concerns about a lack of access to FareShare support in the north of Wales, the Welsh Government provided funding to support the development of a FareShare operation in the north and west of Wales supporting the supply of food to each of the hubs[100].

Prior to the pandemic, community hub models with a food aspect more generally shared the common characteristic that that they offer '*more than a meal approaches[101],* and often offered a range of services and initiatives aiming to tackle food poverty and its underlying causes[102].' A hub is 'the effective centre of an activity, region, or network.' Sometimes delivered in partnership, hubs can be directly linked to statutory services, while others VCSE-led hubs may operate independently. Community hub income models vary with some providing a mix of free and chargeable services to residents, but there is typically no membership criteria. Having a paid for service is thought to increase a sense of dignity and reduces the feeling of relying on charity.

Where food is used as a key lever for people to get involved, unlike food banks or traditional meals on wheels services, community food hubs are spaces that connect to "food's unique role in communities and human socialisation, and deep anthropological roots in bringing groups of people together[103]." Preparing food and eating together connects people from different backgrounds. While food provision is included, community hub models build out to include a range of other types of support to reflect the complex lives of those receiving support.

Definition: Community food hubs

The language of 'community food hub' also has a specific meaning in some literature as distinct from a community hub that has a food element. The Food Research Collaboration explains that: 'Broadly speaking, food hubs are entities that sit between people who produce food and people who eat it, gathering food from growers and distributing it either to commercial customers or

directly to consumers. They can fill gaps in local food infrastructure, help consumers find locally sourced produce, support new forms of food retail, incubate food enterprises, or create a space for community education and action. Sustainable food hubs endeavour to apply standards or values supportive of sustainability principles to their sourcing and how they operate. They thus provide an appropriate route to market for agroecological and ethical growers and makers. The reports have been written for people who want to understand the role of food hubs in the UK, or to determine whether a food hub is appropriate for their locality and purposes. It goes on in its discussion policy paper[104] to say that 'food hubs are different from – and in many cases are deliberately set up as alternatives to – entities that perform similar functions in the mainstream, industrial food system. A key characteristic of food hubs is that they involve food aggregation and distribution – in other words, they gather food from growers and other suppliers, and distribute it, by some means, to customers. But this, in a manner of speaking, is what Tesco does, and it is certainly what wholesale markets do. So, what makes a food hub different? Perhaps the key thing here is their underpinning ethos or 'mission.' Many food hubs explicitly adhere to specified ethical principles in the way in which they obtain and distribute food.

The main purpose of the food hub is to enable small and medium-scale producers to reach large and stable markets, thus ensuring the producers' financial security. Alternatively (or additionally), the hubs may wish to collect and distribute food for charitable purposes (for example via food banks); or they may add services such as food packing or training to their basic function. In practice, we have found food hubs, both here and in the US, to be very varied in composition and purpose. Some are focused solely on building an alternative local and/or more sustainable food supply chain, while others also aim to deliver wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Activities can include: • Social supermarkets • Business training, business development support and facilities for new independent food entrepreneurs • Child and adult food education and skills development, such as cooking and growing • Food aid collection and distribution services • Spaces and opportunities for community food engagement, from food growing to community cafés and shared meals. There may be other forms that we haven't encountered yet. It's also notable that a particularity of self-identified UK food hubs, in comparison to US ones, is that the ones that function as social supermarkets or run food aid collection and distribution services call themselves food hubs. This is not found in the US.'

Evidence

Knowsley Food Hubs[105]

Partners undertook co-creation of community food hubs in 12 wards asking, 'what do you want as a food landscape?' The intended result of these conversations was a pilot in one of the wards. Evaluation findings indicate that engagement had an impact on food poverty, as a result of identifying unmet needs and coordinating a response. Refining the system needs to be ongoing i.e., introduction of cultural food hubs.

Herefordshire mapping local responses – Talk Community hub evolution

The Council was actively encouraging community groups and individuals to become Talk Community Hubs over the pandemic. Promotion information on the Council's WISH website stated: "A Talk Community Hub can be developed alongside existing community settings, such as village halls, community pubs, organisations, shops or centres, which are already at the heart of the local community, or they can be something completely new. Herefordshire Council can provide support to nurture and further develop these settings, to help meet the needs of the local community and enable residents to better look after their own health and wellbeing. It might be that you already offer a variety of daily activities, a weekly coffee morning or monthly lunch club within your community, in which case being a Talk Community Hub could enhance this further, by incorporating more elements to help the people you support." The "no size fits all" model of the Talk Community hubs was emphasised, with each hub being described as "developed to meet the individual needs of different communities, therefore unique to each community." The listed benefits of becoming a Talk Community Hub included potential funding from the Council, training for volunteers or staff, promotion via the Council's WISH directory, and growth and sustainability.

The Talk Community Hubs programme was developed within the Adults Directorate and had a focus on communities and communities supporting themselves. They are voluntary, because they are run by the community typically in lower-super output areas guided where food insecurity may be higher. It was noted that as well as the VCSE sector, there was opportunity to link and connect more with faith groups had a role to play. Connecting disparate hubs was a 'Church and Society Link Officer.' This role was created as it was recognised that though there were links to churches, they were not coordinated or networked with one another. One example is Ross Food Hub, a community food sharing project started in Autumn 2020 which sourced food from a community garden and from four supermarket. The Ross Food Hub started offering fresh food for anyone to collect four mornings of the week from their "Zero Waste" stall. It was reported that in their first week in the autumn of 2020, they served 40 people.

Releasing social value from surplus food[106]

While there is limited research on the role of food-based community support for addressing both loneliness and isolation, research on social eating, eating with others on a regular basis, demonstrates it can be an effective mechanism through which to forge social bonds (Cattell, 2001; Dunbar, 2017). Moreover, research also indicates that, by creating places with a strong sense of belonging to a community, what some scholars refer to as **communities that are socially organised**, can help prevent the causes of isolation and loneliness (Blake, 2019a). Socially organised communities reduce isolation because they are able to regulate themselves in order to attain goals that are agreed by the residents of those communities (Bursik, 1988)

Outcomes

This review is based on 16 of the most relevant studies along with practical examples kindly supplied by City of York Council, one of the partners supporting this research project. Key sources where the outcomes (below) were evidenced for this section of the report are:-

1. Food Hubs in the UK: Where are we and what next? (2019)
2. What are community hubs? And The Community Handbook, My Community, Locality
3. Mapping and monitoring responses to the risk of rising food insecurity during the COVID-19 crisis across the UK - Autumn 2020 to Summer 2021 (2022).
4. Food Power, Final Evaluation Report (2021)
5. Food Cycle Social Impact report (2021)
6. Herefordshire Case Study, Mapping local responses: March to August 2020', (2021)
7. Interim Evaluation Report: Community Food Hub in Foleshill, Coventry
8. Lewisham Homes' Community Food Stores Impact Evaluation (2022)
9. More than Just Food: Food Insecurity and Resilient Place Making through Community Self-Organising (2019)
10. Releasing social value from surplus food. Impact of British Red Cross funding on FareShare to tackle Loneliness and Isolation (2020)
11. The Bread and Butter Thing, impact evaluation (2022)
12. 'West Berkshire Case Study, Mapping local responses: March to August 2020. (2021)
13. Seeking Justice: How to understand and end food poverty in York (2019)
14. Evaluating food hubs: Reporting on a participatory action project (2020)
15. Evaluation of Food Poverty Alliances (2019)
16. Holiday Hunger Project (2019)

Community hubs can serve many purposes, often, relating to the alleviation of social isolation – and potentially malnutrition or poverty - experienced by many by more vulnerable populations such as older adults and disabled adults. Outcomes from food elements delivered as part of (highly variable) community hub, food hub and club models include:-

- Change attitudes
- Improved relationship with food
- Inspire change
- Improved food security
- Improved access to quality food and improved diet
- A sense of control
- Able to take part in community life*
- Nourished and supported
- Involved in decision-making Valued and able to contribute
- Reduced isolation
- Social value / social capital
- Pride
- Self-organising capability
- Employment

- Placed based feelings of safety
- Build community resources (finance and infrastructure, diet diversity, mental health, social networks and community cohesion)
- Community resilience (self-organised resilience)
- (Contributing to) a reduction in levels of food poverty and malnutrition
- Connectedness
- Community cohesion
- Financial savings and social profit (impacts on the community organisations).

Taken together, there are also benefits for the communities.

> *"Good social connections and eating a nutritious diet are hugely important to the health of individuals and society as a whole. People try new foods, eating more fruit and vegetables whilst making friends and getting to know people from different backgrounds, reducing loneliness and [feeling] part of their community[107]."*

Examples: York's community hubs approach 2017-2022

The development of community hubs as a vehicle for supporting and engaging with York's communities has been a priority for the Council for the past 5 years. An approach was tested for 30 months from 2017 (under the auspices of area-based financial inclusion known as 4CGY which was designed to promote financial inclusion through the development of community hubs in specified locations across the city. It steered relevant services into these hubs. The delivery of each hub relied on a range of partners working together – community groups managing the community venues, LACs, LAT community and partnership officers, CA York, CYC Benefits Advice, Peasholme Charity – Budgeting Project, Community health champions, Action for Elders, NY Police, York BID, OCAY, Community First Credit Union, CYC Housing Management Officers and Community Involvement Officers. C4YG delivered success in various forms:

- 2017 to 2019 – Over 9,000 meals were served and shared, 5,460 kg of food from supermarkets redistributed and seasonally up to 6 crates of apples and pears a week made available through Abundance York'.
- By aligning the Citizens Advice York budgeting café initiative with the community hub offer CAY were able to support more than 200 clients with over 380 issues resulting in excess of £210,000 income gain.
- Training was provided to support volunteering, healthy eating, budgeting and employment readiness.
- Residents attending the community hubs expressed what a difference having locally based services and activities has made to their lives.

Positive outcomes were recorded including:

- Personal finance (benefits and budgeting advice)
- Increased feelings of connectedness, confidence, wellbeing and giving people something to look forward to each week
- Development of friendships
- Peer support
- Community networks
- Greater resilience for individuals.

The community hubs also provided a benefit for professionals, practitioners and service providers for their outreach work. The case was made for further community hub development, creating improved community facilities and opportunities to York's residents. Whilst each model would be different emerging as a result of an approach which is community led and needs based there were some common ingredients:

- **Place** – in an area where there is a need for support services and a lack of a focal point for community activity. Community-managed. Accessible, safe space.
- **People** - Partnership of resident volunteers and front line service providers in a community setting offers opportunity to build trust and relationship to facilitate effective engagement reflecting local need. Hubs attract different population segments depending on their orientation – older people, families with young children, 'all ages'
- **Purpose** - Focal point for community activity – common motivation of connecting people to financial inclusion support and services – clear initial purpose helps to galvanise activity and motivate people to volunteer and engage
- **Connectivity** - Connecting multiple forms of resource – relationships, time, skills, gifts, people= growth in social connections and relationships. Moving away from a deficit model with a narrow focus on finances to creating one of abundance.

A common theme of ALL the community hubs developed to date has been a basic food offer on a free or pay-as-you-feel basis. This has been in the form of cooked meals eaten in the community venues and 'food shops' using food donations from supermarkets. Three benefits have occurred: Food helps form part of the welcome offer; they help household finances go further; they are creating a social setting where people can relax, feel supported by peer and the wider community. *'Food has been a very important element of the current community hubs and having a food offer requires good basic kitchen facilities and trained volunteers'*

The model has continued to evolve, with proposals for a universal and targeted approach, but always community led. The pandemic meant the community hubs taking on a different role for their communities supporting emergency response, but the ambitions prior to COVID are now being revisited where a Good Place Network could nurture peer support amongst hubs across the city, where accreditation ('Visible Communities') could be explored for the hubs and where any development programme would include a focus on the potential for hubs to address food poverty and other agreed social issues and challenges. The ideal is for hubs to stop the cycle of crisis and response with less focus on an approach to stabilise crisis, moving the focus to supporting applicants to identify ways to prevent crisis re-occurring and build resilient support networks.

Evolution means community hubs working with ward teams to establish a network of trusted community groups that will provide support to residents alongside the investment in benefits and financial advice capacity and the commissioning of Citizens Advice to provide outreach services in the hubs to strengthen approaches to support those in need. Hub Managers facilitate regular meetings and local area working across a variety of Local Area Teams (LATs) and Local Area Coordinators (LACs) and partners from different services. Hubs continue to support City of York's recovery plan and vision for community recovery leading to strong and resilient communities for all. Other types of hub have evolved too such as the York Migrant Hub with outreach service and Community Covenant Project which provides hubs for the armed forces community. Monitoring and scrutiny continues to help shape the mission for York's community hubs and the employment of dedicated 'Food' officers in 2022 provides further opportunity to co-ordination and strengths-based approaches across the network of assets they present.

Enfield community hubs with integrated food pantry[108]

Enfield community hubs is a face-to-face service for Enfield residents available in libraries that connects with support across 4 pillars:

Help with money, including:

- welfare and debt advice
- Council Tax and benefit enquiries
- concessionary travel

Help with jobs and skills, including:

- skills training employment pillar (STEP) programme
- support with work experience, training, or to find a job

Help with health and wellbeing, including:

- food pantry - offering heavily discounted food
- connecting people to their communities to avoid social isolation

Help with housing stability, including:

- support to access the Housing Advisory Service

The community hubs are designed to allow private conversations, so people feel comfortable to talk about their lives. There are also areas where children can entertain themselves. As part of the council's, Early help for all strategy, the hubs also help as an access point to then support vulnerable residents with complex needs to find solutions to their problems before they escalate.

The direct services work alongside one another including food pantry and employment and skills support, and referrals to other support as needed, such as welfare and debt advice.

This is an example of a **community hub that has an integrated food pantry model** which helps residents with accessing healthier foods, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, by offering members heavily discounted shopping. Membership costs £4.50 a week, which allows £15 to £20 worth of food and products every week. The food pantry (at time of writing in November 2022) is open at Edmonton Green Community Hub on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, by appointment only (with 8 to 10 appointments daily). Enfield Town food pantry is due to open soon. The pantry also offers support with access to welfare, debt management, and employment and skills training. The aim is to address food poverty and healthy eating issues at a basic level and prevent escalation into more complex needs. Partners include, Asda, Edmonton Green Shopping Centre Management Team, the Felix Project and North Enfield Foodbank, Baptist Church, Enfield Shelter and St Edmunds Church. Local market stalls also make regular donations. The pantry operates via referrals from the Welfare Advice and Debt Support Team. If residents feel they may be eligible for membership, they are encouraged to visit the community hubs where they can receive support to access the pantry.

The examples selected below have been chosen as they demonstrate, approaches that are already being delivered at scale, where learning and progression are 'baked in' and with potential to connect national and local agendas.

The Bread-and-Butter Thing (TBBT) – a community-led food club and hub network

TBBT is determined to reduce food waste in the UK, while at the same time ensuring that surplus food goes to the people who need it the most. They work closely with suppliers to encourage and help them to donate their surplus food safely and effectively, which they then redistribute to its network of members, via TBBT food hubs and partners. Each hub serves its local community, and the model works by TBBT partnering with existing community projects in areas of need and supporting their work to improve community resilience and help and support to people only just getting by. There are no membership criteria.

TBBT's community-led food club model partners with community projects and provides access to affordable, nutritious food. Hubs look like: - Community Centres - Schools - Foodbanks - Church Halls - Adventure playgrounds. TBBT claims to be the largest business to community network of food clubs in the UK. Members come from the local communities in and around hubs. Currently TBBT uses roughly 500 volunteers per week from the communities served. Typically, there are 3-4 family members back at home and to date TBBT have 30,000 registered members in 62 hubs redistributing roughly 250,000 meals a week.

The TBBT Impact Report cites an example working in partnership with Durham County Council, where a further four hubs were opened across the county from rural Crook to the centre of Durham itself. The report says: 'the scheme has been so successful that the council have now invested in a second van with five further hubs opening across 2022.' It also explains that: 'Hartlepool was quick to embrace the benefits of TBBT's affordable food with five hubs in operation within as many months and firm connections made with the local Food Council and others, to maximise TBBT's work across the town. Warrington's first hub also got off to a flying start, supporting more than 100 families a week, with more locations opening locally in 2022.Four new hubs opened as part of a partnership with Tameside Borough Council which will see a fifth founded in 2022.The fifth hub opened as part of TBBT's partnership with First Choice Homes Oldham. TBBT has continued to expand in Darlington as the town's Borough Council invested in a further van with two new hubs opening so far. Other locations are referenced.

From a community facing perspective the model provides a food access programme for people struggling to afford everyday retail. TBBT looks for communities in areas of need by working with local organisations and local authorities to find the most suitable areas to **target.** Independent evaluation evidence points to outcomes beyond supporting those in crisis. TBBT aims to make life more affordable to people. Evaluation estimates are that users have collectively saved nearly £3m from using the service.[109] As a result of using this national model, in 2021 the food industry was able to redistribute 7.5 million meals through 54 hubs (at time of the impact report). They work in collaboration with local partners and national networks to create bespoke packages of support for local communities - offering advice and practical solutions for dealing with debt, managing utilities, and accessing mental health support and available grants and funding. TBBT

recognises that it isn't only food that is expensive, so users can also access everyday essentials such as washing powder or feminine hygiene products. Where previously, 86% struggled to access fruit and vegetables locally before programme - 76% are now eating more fruit and vegetables The charity's impact report includes the following outcomes for TBBT's users:

- 77% are cooking more healthily at home and are eating more fruit & veg
- 83% of members who consider themselves good cooks said that TBBT enabled them to afford more than the basics.
- 22% of members have stopped or reduced using food banks[110]
- Two thirds feel less lonely and 76% feel more engaged with the community.

Lewisham Food Hub

Lewisham Homes (LH) operates 4 community food stores in Lewisham, which enable low-income families to buy food for a voluntary membership fee of £3.50 per week. Each community food store is also its own local community hub that offers a range of services and initiatives aiming to tackle food poverty and its underlying causes. These include community gardens, debt advice, employment support, digital training, financial education and counselling during COVID-19. One of the elements of LH's community food stores that distinguish them from food banks is the community aspect of the store - to 'build a community within a community.' Having a paid for service increases sense of dignity and reduces feeling of relying on charity. The stores provide an entry point for LH to identify needs and vulnerable individuals. Volunteers are trained in Mental Health First Aid and actively reach out to those people that seem in need of additional support. On a community level, LH see a strong sense of inclusion and a growing "*community within a community that provides a social safety net for its members.*" There are challenges to the sustainability of this type of community hub. Evaluation evidence highlights a lack of funds and the time spent on fundraising, and a lack of volunteers and that the high turnover of volunteers is a challenge.[111]

The Community Food Hub in Foleshill (Coventry)

This example was selected because of its overt focus on sustainability. It provides: *"access to good quality affordable food to people in the local community who meet vulnerability criteria in a retail like environment. This is backed up by a 'wraparound' support offer that includes, for example, debt and welfare advice, employment support, training and reskilling, and broader support for health and wellbeing."* Interestingly, this project aims to self-sustaining in the longer term. "At the end of the project period, the plan includes the community taking 'ownership' of the project that is, run by the community for the community."

Feeding Coventry acquired Foleshill Community Centre through a community asset transfer. The broader aim was to develop and rejuvenate the centre to benefit the local community.

In the second year and beyond, the plan included income generation from the community café. The café is open to non-members and intended as a shared community space for social interaction - for members and non-members to come together, meet, eat and connect. The

community hub is also at the heart of generating income, such as through the commercial letting of additional spaces in the building to local community groups and organisations for activities, events, and programmes benefiting the local community.

Learning: Merits and drawbacks

Offering a menu of service options around food increases the potential appeal, reduces stigma as it draws in a wider group of people. Drawbacks identified are that projects / services delivered as part of community hub model can be reliant on grant funding, and while offering a range of support is arguably more valuable than focussing on any single one, one commentator notes that there is often insufficient thought about 'where next?' in national strategies (for example on loneliness), and the pathways to build on these positive initial steps enabled through food. A challenge for multi-faceted approaches is managing growth; achieving a balance between expanding a project's reach and sufficient engagement (for example to overcome language barriers). Offering cultural food hubs was often a work in progress. Projects not linked to complimentary services were seen as less effective (judged by the number of referrals).

Learning: Success factors

The evidence identified a number of enabling or success factors. 'Food plus' approaches, with food at the centre

- Multi support provision through local partnerships, different drivers evolving over time linked to local community need, deriving different effects and benefits
- Contextualised – drawing on local ingenuity and creativity
- Mix of approaches to meet different needs. Staff able to triage and refer on.
- A paid for service, with different levels of support available.
- Delivered with dignity at the core, in all the details
- Opportunities for reciprocity - people become givers and receivers
- Best evidenced through 'collective impact' using consistent approaches and measures.

Questions arising

- How is it possible to develop a food offer integral to a community hub model that is relevant to, and ideally owned by / managed by the communities themselves?
- How can the co-design of any food hub or club model be co-designed or co-produced within communities?
- How can mixed income models be developed so that the sustainability for community food / hubs is less likely to be dependent on public sector grant / voluntary sector goodwill / donations in future?
- How can the opportunity to maximise surplus food be realised as part of any community hub model?
- What are the ideal conditions for developing / evolving community hubs?

7.4 Collaborative models

This section focuses on different types of collaborative food model found in the literature, including Local Food Partnerships (LFPs), Food Poverty Alliances (FPAs), food insecurity taskforces and food networks.

Definitions and characteristics[112]

Local Food Partnerships (LFPs) are cross-sector bodies that own and drive forward agendas on their local food system. Sub regional partners may also play a part. Local Food Partnerships involve local authorities and other public bodies, working together with third sector, faith groups, business, and academic organisations with the goals of promoting public health and wellbeing; fostering community connection and resilience; building prosperous and diverse local food economies; and helping to tackle the sustainability issues of waste and the climate and nature emergency. Food Poverty Alliances (FPAs) can take different forms. Some are sub-groups of pre-existing local food partnerships whilst others have recently emerged from coordinating responses to Covid-19. Alliances share responsibility for their sustainability, funding, reaching out to organisations that might be harder to engage and maintaining momentum, even during periods of lower funding. Evaluations of LFPs and FPAs were found in the evidence review, whilst food insecurity alliances or taskforces appear to be a more recent development and nomenclature with fewer published evaluations of their effects to date. The activities delivered by different collaborative models include but are not limited to:

- Supporting food access: - low cost community food retail e.g., social supermarkets, pantries (membership / nominal payment)
- Wrap around support e.g., money advice services, signposting, apps
- Cash based responses e.g., income maximisation, cash grants and vouchers
- Resources for food response
- Direct food provision (to people's homes and out of home)

Some partnerships may adopt different foci, for example the Blackburn and Darwen Food Power Alliance focused on young people with a specific intention of empowering young people to create local change.[113][114]

Outcomes

The outcomes listed below are predominantly drawn from the following sources:

1. Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 to September 2021). An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice.
2. Food Power, Final Evaluation Report (2021)
3. Working in collaboration - Leeds Food Insecurity Taskforce (2022)
4. Food Insecurity: Understanding local delivery, impact and innovation in the North East Riding (2021)

5. The Value of Local Food Partnerships: UK Sustainable Food Places Evaluation Report (2022)
6. Household Food Security in the UK: A Review of Food Aid Final Report (2014)
7. Food Poverty Alliances (2019)
8. Ways to care: Forms and possibilities of compassion within UK food banks (2021)
9. East Riding Food Poverty Alliance End of project feedback for lottery (2021)
10. Seeking Justice. How to understand and end food poverty in York (2019)

Outcomes for communities / localities as a result of collaborative models

- Systems leadership on food issues
- Improved levels of partnership working, co-ordination and collaboration
- Conditions are created to find shared visions for change / common purpose
- Emergence of a strategic direction and practical action / solutions
- Creation of efficiencies and reduced duplication of effort in the same locality
- Improved local food systems
- The assets of multiple / cross-sector partners / organisations are leveraged
- Increased skills and capacity compared to food aid / support models working in isolation
- Development of food poverty action plans
- Creation of an agenda for 'good food'
- Can help tackle rural challenges which can be disproportionate to urban contexts
- Help organise local provisions in an agile way to meet changing needs
- Shared learning
- Shared resources
- Sharing good practice to improve delivery to meet local needs
- Means to showcase specific interventions
- New partnerships or newly constituted partnerships to meet current need
- Improved monitoring, evaluation and learning of local action in an agreed / consistent way across multiple food aid / support providers in an area
- Better opportunity for demonstrating collective impact to stakeholders / communities
- Raise direct funds and / or re-direct funding to align with agreed priorities
- Approach and action plans influenced / prioritised by / with experts by experience
- Promotion of food citizenship
- Reduced food waste across the network
- Promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion principles meaning that local action can be tailored to meet people with highest / different needs

Outcomes for individuals

- Personal development for experts by experience involved in the model
- Increased awareness and understanding of food poverty/insecurity by all involved
- Relief from / reduction in food poverty
- Empowerment through involvement in designing local action plan
- Skills development – how to co-operate, collaborate and work in partnership
- Accessing new opportunities
- Improved diet / access to nutritional quality of food provision

Evidence

The Value of Local Food Partnerships (2022)

This evaluation considered 69 Local Food Partnerships that are members of Sustainable Food Places (SFP), a UK programme led by three national sustainable food organisations – the Soil Association, Sustain and Food Matters. The aim of SFP has been to bring about a fundamental change in the food system. SFP has sought to catalyse, inspire, and support multi-sector, local food partnerships to take a strategic and holistic approach to the sustainable food agenda. It concludes there have been four key results emerging as a result of the Local Food Partnership model.

1: In terms of *effectiveness,* LFPs tackle the fragmented and siloed operations of the local food systems. Working across complex and cross-boundary environments, LFPs are a unique type of partnership that help coordinate action on dysfunctions and opportunities for change in local food systems.

2: Regarding *efficiency*, LFPs encourage public, private and third sector agencies to collaborate and share resources. Examples from SFP member areas show how this partnership model provided a powerful way to create efficiencies, eliminate duplication and create innovative solutions.

3: From the standpoint of *engagement*, LFPs are designed to focus action on the interests of people and environment, ahead of the convenience of providers. This requires having mechanisms for consultation and co-production. LFPs are configured to engage lived experiences and to find shared visions for change.

4: Finally, in terms of *equity*, LFPs respond to the moral and legal case for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion through their open networks, outreach, and democratic structure. In embracing multiple voices, LFPs act as collectives working for food system leadership at the local level.

Further evidence is found here Food Governance and Strategy | Sustainable Food Places, however, these studies assert that LFPs have created impacts and achievements, and have been able to embed and amplify their work to deliver both local and national food priorities.

"LFPs have been uniquely placed to provide systems leadership and practical solutions through the strategic direction and support of the UK-wide Sustainable Food Places (SFP) programme, established a decade prior to the pandemic. LFPs have been able to pivot to respond with agility to an extended period of national crisis and have moved forward to offer a coherent framework for the transition of local food system. The four dimensions of 'effectiveness', 'efficiency', 'engagement', and 'equity' highlight the value of LFPs to fill the leadership gap on local food issues[115]."

The Value of Local Food Partnerships
Covid and beyond

Mat Jones, Sarah Hills, Amy Beardmore
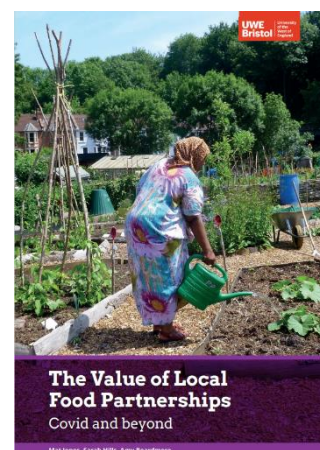
Furthermore: 'place-based strategies and partnership approaches have potential to create more sustainable food systems and to engage people and organisations shifting towards healthy and sustainable food systems at a local level[116]. A 2019 NHS publication (The Design, Deliver and Manage), specifically advises creating a local food partnership, adopting a whole systems approach and references Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, Good Food Oxford and the Sugar Smart campaign[117.] A Public Health England report published in 2017[118] also asserts that 'Strategic partnerships across relevant local council departments (for example, planning, economic development and public health), as well as with external agencies and the local community can add value to interventions'.

In another study[119] (2021) the authors found that LFPs directly raised food aid funding through popular subscription, grant applications and actions to re-direct funding. In localities where they had the greatest influence, LFPs were able to channel public resources and actively organise provisions to meet the food assistance needs of groups with high levels of need. For children and young people, LFPs promoted the nutritional quality of food provision and resisted unhealthy food donations or purchasing practices. LFPs led specific projects on tailoring food supplies to meet the needs of diverse populations such as refugees, homeless people, and specific cultural groups. LFPs have also been responsible for efforts to organise access to affordable food through a range of food pantry and similar membership projects, food growing, community kitchen and cooking projects. These initiatives go beyond food aid to promote active food citizenship and longer-term solutions. LFPs were active in bringing together and mobilising grass-roots groups during the pandemic to create an agenda for 'good food'.

In the Government's response to the National Food Strategy, it asserts that: 'Local Food Partnerships have already brought together councils and partners from the public sector, voluntary and community groups, and businesses to reduce diet-related ill health and inequality, while supporting a prosperous local food economy. We will learn from their approaches and work to understand and identify best practice in addressing food affordability and accessibility to healthy food. As part of our levelling up mission to narrow the gap in healthy life expectancy, government will identify the areas most in need of this insight, and Defra will work with local authorities and food charities in these priority areas.' This has, however drawn some criticism from Sustainable Food Places[120]:

"We're pleased with the recognition of the value of food partnerships, but without support, funding or a statutory requirement for local areas to set up food partnerships and forge ahead with food plans, there will be little difference on the ground for local authorities struggling with budget cuts to public health and dealing with rising food insecurity."

Evaluation of food poverty alliances

Evidence reviewed[121] finds that food poverty alliances, whilst variable in model created a range of benefits despite their variable models and local contexts. The main period in which (85) FPAs were established or developed came between 2017 and 2021 driven in part by the national Food Power initiative that attracted significant funding from a mix of investors, and dedicated support to help FPAs across the UK.

Food Power was a four-year programme led by Sustain and Church Action on Poverty, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF). It aimed to strengthen local communities' ability to reduce food poverty through solutions developed locally with the support of their peers from across the UK, and a focus on tackling root causes. The approach centred on local alliances, giving voice to those experiencing food poverty, influencing practice on the ground and levering in additional resources. A range of detailed, and reader-friendly evaluation reports, films and resources have been made available as a legacy from this programme including resources for any existing or new alliance to use, saving time and money reinventing new approaches.

Food Power: Final evaluation report | Sustain (sustainweb.org)
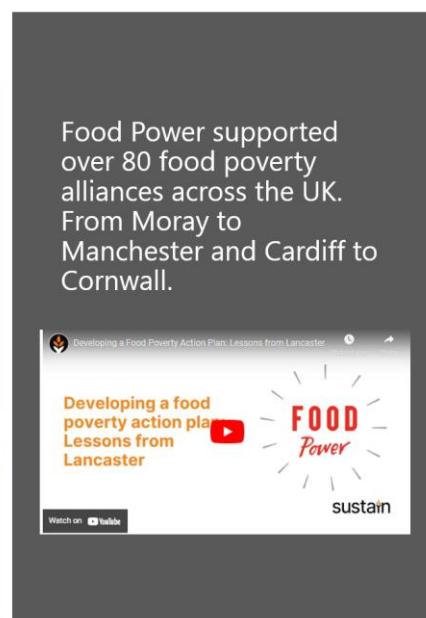
The Food Power evaluation concludes that:

'Despite the challenges around demonstrating an impact on the most fundamental need - levels of food poverty there is reason to be confident that Food Power has contributed positively to this. Research into complex challenges like food poverty suggests that progress is most likely when actors come together to seek collective impact[122].'

A key finding was that 76% of alliances reported that they had been influenced by Food Power to consider how to involve experts by experience. A network of people with personal experience of food poverty were able to play an active role at both local and national level that was thought to have influence that might not otherwise have occurred. Examples of MPs visiting localities to understand food poverty and then take action were cited. Another interesting finding is that the programme was able to help some FPAs tackle rural challenges and a lack of joined up thinking, primarily by sharing practice and learning through webinars during the programme.

Key ingredients to enable FPAs to establish or mature were the provision of advice, coordinator resource to support each one, connection, best practice, learning and resources. Alliances appreciated support in sharing learning, guidance and other resources and having the Food Power core team as a 'critical friend'. Where there was a lack of capacity Food Power offered financial support for a coordinator or a key project.

A major study (2021)[123] of local food response during the pandemic concluded as one of its four key trends and findings that:

'Food partnerships, food poverty alliances and other local networks continue to be powerful vehicles for collaboration, sharing of good practice, and developing a joint system-wide vision and accompanying set of actions.' (and) 'During the March-August 2020 UK-wide lockdown, across the case study areas partnership working, coordination and collaboration were seen by participants as key to the success of local responses'

The study's participants emphasised that any work done around local food response should 'foreground sustainable collaboration in future responses'. This should involve key actors including local government departments and public services that can help people access appropriate support and advice, as well as other third sector organisations.

Dundee Food Insecurity Network: a new model of accountable, responsive, and effective local government[124] - evidence for the future?

In Dundee, community food projects have worked together with local government to develop the Food Insecurity Network. The Network has enabled a dynamic and dignified response to the food crisis, ensuring that both direct food provision and policy decisions responded to the lived experiences of people experiencing food shortages during the pandemic. The Food Insecurity Network is an example of a new model of practice (supported by The Heywood Foundation) that embeds accountability while ensuring people's dignity. The opportunity therefore is to understand how this model of practice enabled the delivery of an effective city-wide response to food insecurity: to understand why it worked, how it worked, and how this model of crisis

response could help us to rethink the very structure of local government. Future evaluation should help identify the outcomes from this model of practice.

Examples

The East Riding Food Poverty Alliance[125]

The East Riding Food Poverty Alliance was formed to provide support in the pandemic and is made up of 10 food bank and food pantry providers. Their vision was simple, to 'achieve food security for all individuals across the East Riding of Yorkshire'. Through the partnership's combined efforts, nearly 12,000 food parcels distributed to almost 40,000 people. The project has 127 volunteers.

Key to the partnership was a Development Officer role (subsequently extended) to support the food banks and also to develop systems and processes and explore the progression from food bank provision to pantry provision to the development of social supermarkets providing food at reduced costs to those most vulnerable. The ambition was to move into sustainability for the food banks but also to help people become less reliant on food banks and encourage them to use social supermarkets. This will take form of membership, providing low cost food provision.

In addition, strategic development is an aim of the Alliance, to meet, share ideas, support each other, share distribution of food, share supplier information all of which has been required during this current crisis. In addition to the delivery of the project a monitoring tool has been developed to provide a consistent approach across the East Riding of Yorkshire. This was a challenging task as all Food Banks and Food Pantries operate within their own systems and maintain autonomy, but all understand the need for this consistent approach.

This model was set up to leverage funds from elsewhere and did successfully leverage over £220k from other sources. The Development Officer funding enabled the development of a Food Poverty Strategy, affording the time, money and space to collectivise the food providers' ambitions and intentions. To support volunteers further collaborative training was developed around the National Occupational Standards for food bank, food pantry and social supermarket volunteers, and there is a training log and record book, with plans to develop these into a 'volunteer passport' scheme. During the project, partners worked together to develop sustainable models of food bank support for communities across the East Riding, which led to the opening of three Social Supermarkets, with the latest opening in Goole in November 2021.

Working in collaboration - Leeds Food Insecurity Taskforce

The Leeds Food Aid Network exists to bring together a range of food aid providers, agency workers, the Council and members of the wider public, to tackle food poverty.[126] Partners agreed on a common vision for their work.

"Leeds has a vibrant food economy where everyone is able to access local healthy and affordable food, produced in a way which improves our natural environment and embraces innovation."
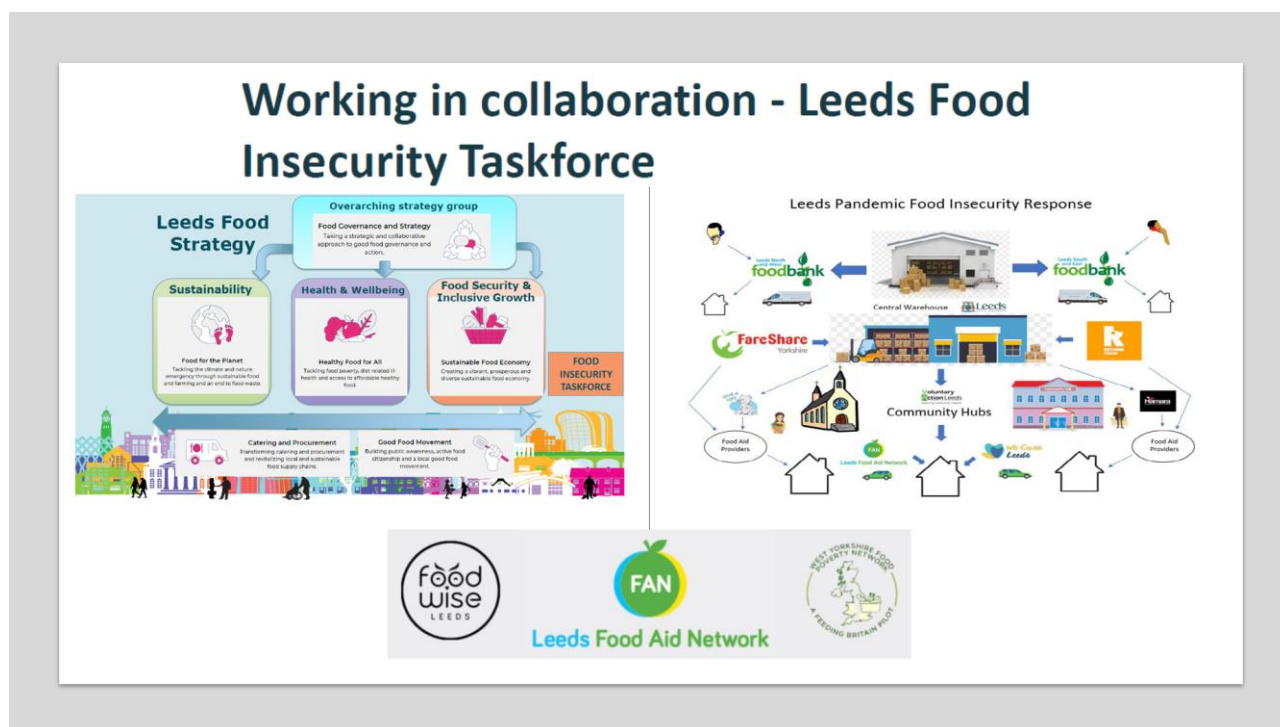
Evaluation highlighted the following enabling factors and learning points. Enablers:

Making Every Contact Counts	Greater choice and ownership	Appropriate signposting and support
Co-locating support	Working collaboratively	Securing opportunities to benefit the system

Learning points

Strength in the Leeds community	Community led approach –different needs in different areas	Refining the system needs to be ongoing	Need to build resilience and avoid dependence
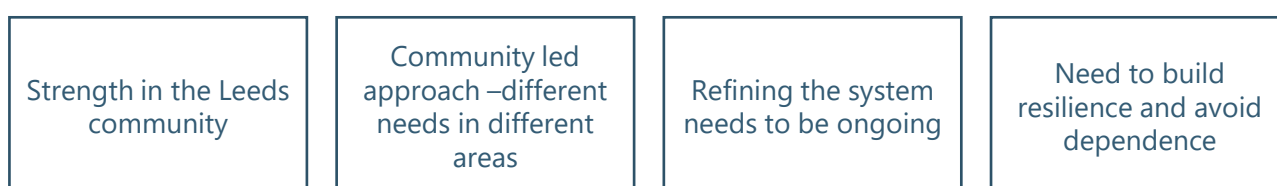
The structures that facilitated this collaborative model evolved from an initial primacy around public health and financial inclusion then to a broader hub model to enable the pathways to food resilience to be taken. Most recently, the network has produced a Food Resilience Toolkit (July 2021). For partners in the system, as well as organisational resilience, the aim is for more agile and better connected support services.
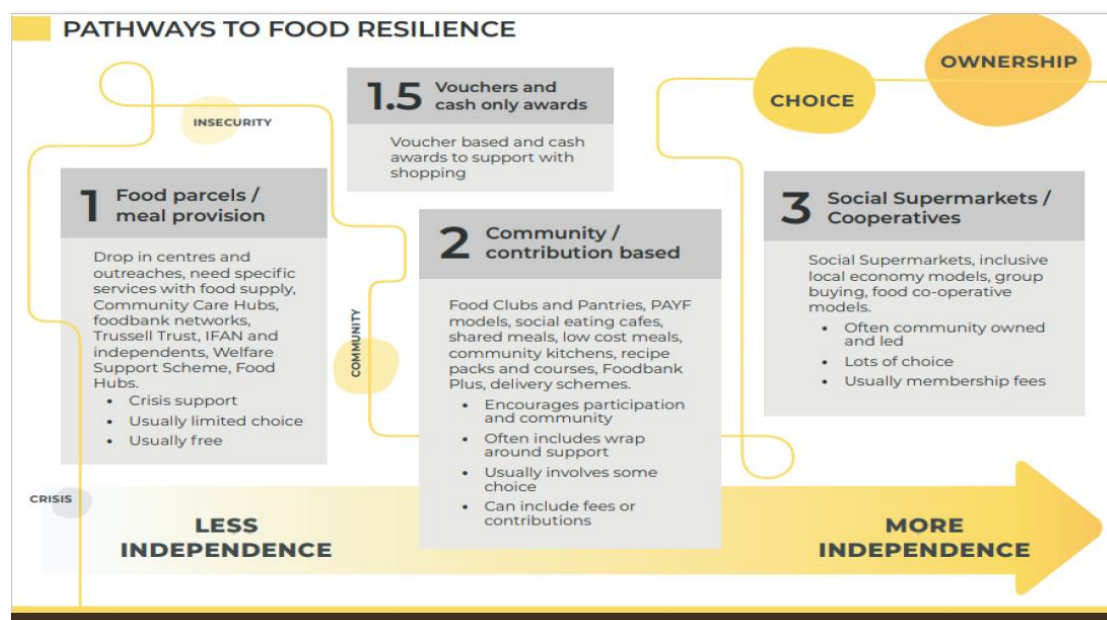
Blackburn with Darwen Food Resilience Alliance

This food alliance is notable for their focus on, and involving young people in the design, delivery and promotion of the work. Their youth empowerment exchanges, where young people lead conversations with other young people developed into dynamic forums, changed perceptions and responses to the impact of food poverty.

A small group of young people were ambassadors and champions in the borough and beyond for Blackburn with Darwen Food Alliance and their school.

As a result, the partnership has raised the issue of food poverty in a community of young people. They have provided life changing experiences for four young people to act as ambassadors on a bigger stage– their school is so proud of what they have achieved. Longer term, the partnership will encourage all schools to be part of the youth empowerment forums and poverty proof schools.

The partnership co-produced a film with young people 'Edgelands' and a campaign ''#DarwenGetsHangry'[127]

Cheshire East and Warrington Food Networks [128]

In June 2020 as a response to the COVID pandemic, the sub-regional Cheshire East Food Network was created. Whist there is a clear need and desire for the Cheshire East Food Network, it was the prospect of financial support that was the catalyst that brought it together. The Cheshire Food Hub is facilitated by CVS, and without this facilitation is unlikely to come together.

Building relationships across the area was important, for example a smaller network is already established in one town, and so they were careful to engage the leaders of this, to show that they were not taking over or duplicating their work. Through relationships made in the network food groups have been able to swap or sell ambient food to each other, distribute surplus fresh food quickly, and share plans and ambitions to support people to move out of food poverty. C

Participants identified the following success factors: * Supportive local community - welcoming to new ideas, providing donations; * Passionate and committed volunteers - nearly every project stated that it wouldn't succeed without these individuals; * Strong local partnerships and positive working relationships with stakeholders; * Sharing data and best practice with others; * Building on local assets and taking a co-production approach to project design and delivery; * Communication - with beneficiaries, partners and wider stakeholders.

Learning: Enablers and challenges of partnership working during the pandemic and more generally for food response

This section draws heavily on a key report[129] examining local food responses during the pandemic.

> '....across the case study areas, participants saw partnership working, coordination and collaboration as key to the success of local responses during March to August 2020. The partnership working may have been through food partnerships, food poverty alliances or other arrangements. The areas which had existing strong and active food poverty alliances or food partnerships considered this a significant enabler for a timely and coordinated response. In other areas, newly established partnerships, both formal and more informal, were warmly received and positively reflected upon[130].'

Enablers of partnership working during the pandemic
- Recognition of the need for a joined up approach and support, no one could do it alone.
- Getting the right people 'round the table'.
- Having a lead organisation that can enable collaboration.
- Having established partnerships and networks in place.
- Goodwill and willingness to support the response.
- Learning from what was happening in other areas.

More general enablers of collaborative working for food response

- A range of actors driving for comprehensive approaches and system-wide strategies.
- Recognising the role of third sector organisations and the limitations of food aid capacity and food supply.
- Increasing the reach of community food projects and other services. [131]
- Cash first approaches.
- Peer mentoring offers a space for like-minded people to share alternative approaches to common challenge and brings structure and greater visibility to existing networks.

Challenges of partnership working during the pandemic
- Different agendas of the actors competing with each other.
- Initially, getting the right people 'round the table'.
- Lack of co-ordination.
- Increase in inexperienced food aid providers.
- Continually changing provision made it difficult to communicate what was available.
- Accommodating an increase in inexperienced food aid providers
- Continually changing provision made it difficult to communicate what was available

'We had a lot of self-appointed people who were very busy telling everybody else, including established charities, what to do…It's a bit galling when you've been doing the same job for 17 years. Maybe we've been doing it badly for 17 years and people who've been doing it for 5 minutes know better.' (Charitable food aid workshop, West Berkshire)

More general challenges of collaborative working for food response

- Maintaining longer term relationships with experts by experience.
- Sustainability challenges owing to funding are commonly reported across the literature.
- The time to set up bulk buy processes.
- Obtaining referrals from health professionals.
- Bidding as a collective rather than individually as food providers.
- Ability to demonstrate impact of the model on the most fundamental need - levels of food poverty in the UK.
- 'Sticking plaster' support does not address the underlying issues behind poverty.
- Potential to create dependency rather than resilience depending on focus.

Good practice

Recommendations to local authorities in relation to supporting collaborative models.

- ✓ Ensure a coordinated local response.
- ✓ Develop wide networks.
- ✓ Develop and implement a food strategy and/or action plan.
- ✓ Work with and harness the third sector and communities.
- ✓ Ensure effective practicalities are in place.
- ✓ Identify effective ways to communicate amongst all relevant organisations.
- ✓ Learn from others.

Retaining or sustaining collaborative approaches

Food Poverty Alliances: It is unclear how sustainable these FPAs have been since 2021 and it would require contact with each one – where they still exist, or where they may have merged or reformed into another collaborative model – to locate their persistence and viability. Funding for the continuation of a dedicated co-ordinator post may have been a challenge beyond 2021, though there sustainability more generally is felt to have been achieved by ensuring FLAs / their localities are signed up to the Sustainable Food Place initiative giving continued access to shared resources. FPA action plans are available to review[132] as is the collective impact tracker tool which enables FPAs to consider a structure for gathering data and evidence as part of their role to communicate the difference being made locally to people, the environment, communities and the wider food system. *Partnership responses established as a response to the pandemic:* Some have endured and / or evolved. Just a small selection of examples in the literature include:

- One of the larger community food providers in Edinburgh was working to foster connections and networks between the smaller providers across the city. They felt this brought strength and energy to the efforts to tackle household food insecurity:
- The public health team at Greenwich Council were working to build a network of smaller providers and, in doing so worked to provide a means of doing this in a way that suited the third sector organisations, i.e., having individual conversations and not expecting for those conversations to all happen conveniently in a Food Action Alliance meeting
- A study participant from Swansea Council talked of work to update the Council's Tackling Poverty strategy. The revised version would have a stronger emphasis on "the role of partnership working and collaboration across the board.

COVID-19 learning

The Local Responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020-September 2021) study suggested these priorities for partnerships and alliances alongside local authorities and third sector organisations[133].

	Councils	Partnerships/ alliances	Third sector organisations
Local Responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021) Priorities suggested by the different actors involved in this major national research study	• Develop or update food strategy plan. • Encouraging and adopting cash first approach. • Continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with the third sector. • Continue to support third sector organisations with funding and expertise (as required) including smaller community organisations. • Support transition to affordable food models. • Support providers [to] resume social activities such as community meals. • Continue to support and develop wrap around services. • Increase opportunities for growing and cooking programmes. • Promote and operationalise means to tackle the root causes of food insecurity and poverty. • Continue to liaise with national Government.	• Promoting and embedding a wide approach to support household food insecurity focusing on inequalities. • Encouraging and adopting cash first approach. • Support transition to affordable food models. • Continue and facilitate regular engagement and networking with relevant organisations. • Engaging with and building relations with new food aid providers by meeting face to face, rather than virtually. • Retaining or building engagement with statutory agencies in partnerships. • Collating data on food aid initiatives in the local area. • Supporting rural communities with food access issues particular to this geography. • Provide support, guidance and accredited training with partnership organisations.	• Encouraging and adopting cash first approach. • Resuming face to face services. • Accessing funding. • Safely resuming volunteer opportunities (where these have been paused). • Networking with relevant organisations to ensure a joined up approach. • Consult families and communities with lived experience to shape services and delivery. • Resume services to pre-pandemic levels. • Expand range of services on offer (such as clothes bank, befriending services, community freezer and training opportunities). • Promote and operationalise the means to tackle the root causes of food insecurity and poverty. • Food growing and cooking activities. • Getting the messages out to the public and politicians that food banks should not be the answer to poverty.

SUSTAIN: 'The cost of living and local action by food partnerships (November 2022)' brought together 123 practitioners to hear about good practice from 3 food partnerships.

Key messages

- The economic situation has grown worse. Residents feel less supported through this latest crisis than they did during COVID. Networks are reporting more conflict between partners as resources grow scarcer.
- The funding environment has grown more challenging, and the supply of surplus food has reduced as economic conditions have worsened.
- Food partnerships play a key role 'knitting together' the public and VCSE responses to food insecurity.
- Central points and hubs with trusted relationships are key.
- The importance of coordination, capacity building and connecting roles between local authorities and VCSEs was also affirmed.
- The food surplus distribution model that many food partnerships were established with will need to evolve.
- Crowd funding is being used, with local authorities giving people the chance to donate their government support money. Some local authorities are choosing to match fund crowd funded initiatives.
- The local authority and Citizens Advice Bureau are key partners in these partnerships.
- Housing associations have the potential to be key partners (and feature in other literature reviewed for this study).
- Small grants with little or no administrative burden for grantees are seen to be agile and effective, and in one example, a £1k investment has led to a £12k further investment to scale up.
- In rural North Yorkshire, farmers could be encouraged to give over land for the community to grow food on in order to distribute.

Brighton and Hove: Cost of Living: Innovation and coordination between Council and CIVS

- A 'Food Cell' was established during COVID that provides a direct line between the food partnership and decision makers.
- The partnership has a member of staff seconded for 1 day per week to the local authority to support on food policy work. This increases knowledge of council systems and structures. For the local authority, it means that their staff can continue to focus on strategic food issues e.g., climate change while also managing the emergency response.
- The focus is on cash first approaches. The Children's centre gives out vouchers rather than parcels using the 'Huggg system' supported by supermarkets. This simple system is judged to be easy to set up[134].
- The suggestions was made to bulk buy and use empty council premises as free spaces to store food.
- Volunteers could benefit from use of council parking permits.
- 'In the Bag' is a popular scheme which includes recipes and ingredients to use surplus food.
- The food partnership seeks to influence and campaign and support groups to raise funding and increase the level of donations.
- They have focused on schools to drive more food donation and will then target businesses and individuals.

- With the local authority's support, they have crowdfunded in partnership with CAB using a mechanism where those who can afford to donate the Government support given to them can choose to. To date, this has raised £45k (40% goes to food projects and 60% to the CAB).
- The big challenge is that the level of surplus food supply is falling. Surplus food has formed the basis of most food partnerships, so this poses a significant threat.

Meeting the shortage of surplus food and donations. Sam Dyer, Cambridge Sustainable Food.

- The focus on emergency responses is delaying more strategic work, for example on shortening supply chains or making Cambridge a less unequal city,
- Part of the partnership in Cambridge's response is 'grow and distribute'. This includes a community farm, allotments and street-based projects to come together and grow food. Of relevance for North Yorkshire is a farmer who gave over some land for community growing, and this co-veg field created 0.5 tons of produce.
- The importance of CAB for direct referrals and vice versa (all hubs have a direct line to CAB).
- £1k small grants fund "goes a long way" and is popular.
- The LA match-funded the crowd funding amount raised.

"We cannot signpost people out of poverty, there's not enough money in people's pockets."

Questions arising

- There are a variety of collaborative models across the UK. Food Partnerships command the current weight of evidence around efficacy and value, however, national studies completed during COVID point to other forms being 'powerful mechanisms' too such as Food Poverty Alliances and Networks. York has had a Food Poverty Alliance which evolved into a Food Justice Alliance so its experiences and impact would be useful insight for this study. In North Yorkshire there is the Craven Food Partnership, Whitby Food Alliance, Ryedale Food Network and Selby Anti-Poverty Alliance. Insights, similarly, about the effects of these collaborative models would be helpful for this study in order to inform any wider strategic decision to be made about whether / how to encourage more collaborative models across York and North Yorkshire where this would lead to the desired outcomes referenced in this report section.

- How could any existing / new collaborative model root the importance of lived experience into its design and production?

- How can any collaborative model be viable beyond a time of heightened emergency and secure proportionate, adequate, dedicated co-ordinator resourcing?

- How could any investment in new or existing collaborative models link into – indeed be supported by the resourcing - of wider strategies or local cost of living arrangements e.g., Food Strategies being developed in York and North Yorkshire (by Public Health); the development of Community Networks (as part of local government reform in North Yorkshire)? (See Lewes Food Partnership example below from the Cost of Living Hub)

Food partnership support via Cost of Living investment case[135]

Lewes District Food Partnership: Partnering with Lewes District Council to develop a food security strategy

Lewes District Council have recently committed to developing a district wide food security strategy, in conjunction with their Lewes District Food Partnership and Emergency Food Network.

| 11 Aug 2022

About the programme

Links and resources

Contact

About the programme

Lewes District Council have recently committed to developing a district wide food security strategy, in conjunction with their Lewes District Food Partnership (LDPF) and Emergency Food Network.

This work was instigated by LDFP, who mapped out emergency food providers across the city and identified barriers to food access, such as digital literacy, playing a crucial role coordinating between the council, voluntary sector, and those in food poverty across the district.

The new strategic action plan will detail steps and timelines around sustainable approaches to fuel and food poverty. This action plan will balance the need to meet immediate hardship with the need to create longer-term solutions that can help prevent people falling into crisis

Lewis District Council have immediately committed £50,000 of funding to the network, as part of the councils wider £250,000 cost of living support package. This initial fund will be used by the partnership to help foodbanks meet unprecedently high need in the local area. The remaining £200,000 will be distributed through a grants programme in the autumn and to fund a new dedicated cost of living officer.

Links and resources

Lewes District Food Partnership • SCDA (sussexcommunity.org.uk)

Contact

Stef Lake, stef.lake@SussexCommunity.org.uk

- How can the principles and practice of dignity be embedded into all approaches by collaborative models (see resources below from Nourish Scotland)?

[Practice development resources - Nourish Scotland](#)

Nourish Scotland and The Poverty Truth Commission
March 2018

Dignity in Practice

Learning, tools and guidance for community food providers

7.5　Direct food provision

This section is based on a detailed review of 10 studies identified as most relevant from the wider evidence review. Foodbanks are alluded to here but are the subject of a chapter of their own.

Definition

- Direct food provision plays an important part within the wider 'food support landscape.' A satisfactory definition is hard to come by, but a key feature of this model is that it is 'commensal' that is supplying food to people who the provider does not have a family or close link with.[136] This type of service can be delivered in people's homes, but this is not a universal feature.
- The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the growth of this type of support, at a time when gathering together was not possible. In all four countries, national schemes were established to support people who were shielding and unable to access food. Many councils also began providing their own local government food parcels.
- There was variability in the levels of support and how this support was provided across the four UK nations but third sector involvement in direct food aid was a commonality.
- The model also diversified to include, for example, 'pub meals on wheels' or 'school dinners on wheels'[137]. However, this followed the austerity period when 'meals on wheels' type provision reduced significantly.
- Direct food can also be offered as part of a 'hot meals PLUS wrap around support ' approach, which might include welfare checks, and complementary social care services and Council-run services

Certain segments of the population are more likely to require direct food provision.

"Older adults, disabled adults, and those with mental and physical health problems can require meals on wheels services. Not all within these groups do however, nor at all times. Key factors include whether or not a person is able to leave their house regularly, whether they can easily use the internet and online ordering systems, and whether they are able to prepare and cook meals."

During COVID, those classified as clinically vulnerable (so are at high risk of severe illness from coronavirus) were eligible.[138]

Models

This report section considers two models:

- Food parcels / food boxes (these can also be a feature of 'Free Food' models e.g., distributed at food banks though in COVID a mixed methods approach was in evidence – paid for and free (emergency) parcels).

- Meals on wheels provision (can be paid-for, subsidised or free-of-charge typically linked to addressing malnutrition, or the risk of malnutrition, amongst older people[139]).

Evidence

Food vulnerability during COVID-19. Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021) An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice

- Generally, across the third sector organisations the types of food provision were food parcels for collection, food parcels for home delivery, takeaway hot meals, and home delivery of hot meals. To provide these services existing food aid providers made a significant number of adaptations including changes to the means of distribution, parcel contents and referral routes. Organisations which, before the pandemic, provided community meals, community lunches and community cooking groups also changed significantly due to the restrictions imposed by lockdown. Many reoriented their services in 2020 and began to provide hot meals for takeaway, home deliveries of hot meals, food parcels (collect and delivered) and virtual cookery and other support sessions.

Food vulnerability during COVID-19 End of project summary of key findings (2022)

- *Mapping and monitoring national responses – Sept 2020 – Summer 2021*. As the pandemic developed over September 2020 to summer/spring 2021, researchers continued to see interventions put in place to respond to concerns about food access. On the whole, these shifted to delivery at the local level and away from direct food provision. There were decisive shifts in guidance towards cash-based interventions in Scotland, as evidenced in their Financial Insecurity Fund guidance.

The nutritional quality of food parcels…: a mixed-method systematic review[140] (2022)

- Whether food parcels meet national nutritional requirements for nutrients and food groups is inconsistent. However, food parcels typically exceed energy, carbohydrate, sugar, and salt recommendations, yet are often insufficient in fruit, vegetables and various micronutrients, including vitamin D, calcium and iron. An intervention aiming to improve food parcel nutrition increased fruit and vegetable variety.

A survey of food banks operating independently of The Trussell Trust food bank network. (December 2019)

- Although it is evident that there are a large number of independent organisations and charities distributing food parcels, little is known about when or why they were established, how they operate, and whom they serve p23 The findings highlight the particular groups in need of support (namely, people who are unemployed, who have disabilities, and/or single parents) are especially significant, as they are consistent with many other existing pieces of research identifying the urgent need for effective policy responses to secure the adequate incomes for these groups.
- There is, however, increasing recognition of a much larger landscape of food parcel distribution through independent food banks not affiliated with The Trussell Trust. Early

works (see snowballs) by researchers in England, Wales and Scotland found that in some places where no Trussell Trust food banks existed, there were well-established independent food banks operating. In other places, both Trussell Trust and independent food banks were operating. More recent work by Sabine Goodwin on behalf of the Independent Food Aid Network has mapped over 800 food parcel distribution projects or food banks (for ease, referred to as food banks going forward) operating outside of The Trussell Trust's food bank network

Releasing social value from surplus food. Evaluation Final Report (February 2020)

- The report describes these effects resulting from FareShare's support: from financial savings to social profit (impacts on the community organisations); saving time and resources to enable a greater focus on project delivery (for the community organisations)
- For the charities in this study, the food service and the benefits associated would be scaled back or disappear entirely if the charities did not have access to low-cost food in the quantities, qualities and varieties that they currently receive through surplus redistribution = the network means they can continue "repairing social connections through the diverse and often multiple food-based activities that they offer."

Visiting Nurse Association. Meals on Wheels Analysis. Final Findings (2017)

- This US study estimated value of a meal is AT LEAST $8.87, resulting in a 48% ROI* on the meal investment and has the potential to lower healthcare costs by 7% annually for the conditions modelled. The level of detail we were able to model for different conditions will allow VNA to target discussions with different stakeholders with specific areas of interest Of the estimated overall $2,218 in health care savings achieved through the MOWs program the top contributors accounting for the cost savings were : Cardiovascular conditions accounting for 21%, Dementia accounting for 25%, Home health and SNF utilization accounting for 48%. Loneliness had a 25% reduction in prevalence, the largest out of the measure categories.

Meals on wheels for the 21st century. A report exploring meals on wheels services in London before, during and after Covid-19. Sustain (July 2020)

This report finds that meals on wheels services are one important aspect of a comprehensive adult social care system which facilitates health, independence, connectedness and wellbeing. Research on provision in London revealed complex reasons why they are needed as well as multiple benefits that this service brings. However, the study concluded *"community responses that emerged … will struggle to continue without funding and support."*

The report contests that there are viable mixed models exist for making the service affordable for local authorities, especially where this involves social enterprise and integration with social services.[141]

This form of direct food provision is essential for those who are least able to prepare or cook meals for themselves. This type of support also forms a preventative service that alleviates stress from the adult social care and healthcare system: Regular visits from delivery staff generate 'social, relational and psychological value.'

> *"A meals on wheels service, delivered well, treats recipients with respect and dignity, offers choice and control over several aspects of the service, and supports and nourishes recipients."*

'Economies of scale' that make these services financially viable can be difficult within a single borough or if strict eligibility criteria are applied. Working in partnership across borough boundaries should provide opportunities to find workable economies of scale; depending on how these are assessed.

Outcomes

The outcomes described below are drawn predominantly from the following sources:

1. A survey of food banks operating independently of The Trussell Trust food bank network. December 2019
2. 'Comparing local responses to household food insecurity during COVID-19 across the UK (March – August 2020)
3. Food vulnerability during COVID-19 End of project summary of key findings (2022)
4. Herefordshire Case Study, Mapping local responses: March to August 2020',
5. Meals on wheels for the 21st century. A report exploring meals on wheels services in London before, during and after Covid-19. Sustain. July 2020. The author is Morven Oliver-Larkin, who coordinates Sustain's London Food Poverty Campaign encouraging sustainable approaches to improving household food security, particularly where these address root causes.
6. More than Just Food: Food Insecurity and Resilient Place Making through Community Self-Organising, Published: 23 May 2019
7. Releasing social value from surplus food Evaluation Final Report FareShare-British Red Cross. Impact of British Red Cross funding on FareShare to tackle Loneliness and Isolation. February 2020
8. Shaping more resilient and just food systems: lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic. 2021
9. The nutritional quality of food parcels provided by food banks and the effectiveness of food banks at reducing food insecurity in developed countries: a mixed-method systematic review. 2022
10. Visiting Nurse Association. Meals on Wheels Analysis. Final Findings (2017

The evidence reviewed identified a range of outcomes, with commonality observed with those reported for targeted food support in particular. Owing to its typically older clientele, direct food support can be seen to have a more direct link to preventative / mitigation outcomes. As an example, delivering food to a person who has just left hospital may help reduce the likelihood of re-admission. Regular visits to bring food may also mean falls etc are discovered sooner, which in turn will probably reduce hospital stays.

Other outcomes include:

- Improved dietary intake, but not quality of diet (emergency food parcels)
- Social connectedness
- Increased social value (food has 'commensal qualities')*
- Reduced food insecurity
- Increased engagement by local authorities on poverty, food and related issues

- Increased partnership working across districts / boroughs
- Saving time and better resource deployment for charities
- Employment opportunities for volunteers

For statutory services:

- Earlier identification of issues / health problems
- Delayed need for care
- Reduced hospital stays.

"Meals on wheels can provide a lifeline to people struggling to feed themselves in their own homes[142]."

Examples

Please see Sustain's dedicated website section and resources aimed at anyone seeking to support and enhance meals on wheels provision

Supporting and enhancing meals on wheels provision - YouTube

During the height of the pandemic demand for meals on wheels services increased. Examples:

- The meals on wheels service run by HILS in Hertfordshire were receiving around 100 new referrals per day since social distancing measures were first introduced.
- In Southwark, London, Age UK's shopping service Food2You, which delivers shopping to older adults, reported referrals to have "gone through the roof".
- In Camden and Haringey, the London Independent Living Service (LILS), which provides a 'more than meals' service including a welfare check and nutritional screening, has had a 30% increase in demand.

Many established meals on wheels services were expanding their reach during Covid-19. There were also a wide range of services which have emerged during the pandemic, involving many different organisations from the public, private and community sector. Further examples:

- School caterers put their meals on wheels, Sustain (includes case studies from Brighton Enfield, Lancaster & Morecombe and Washingborough)
- Webinar recording: School caterers put their meals on wheels, Sustain, May 2020
- The Bevy Community Pub meals on wheels, Brighton
- Crop Drop meals preparation, Haringey, London
- Food and Friendship Luncheon Club meals delivery (short film), Hove
- Made in Hackney's advice on setting up a food service during Covid-19
- NR5, Society Alice and TLC meals delivery, Norwich
- FoodWorks meals subscription, Sheffield

Tackling rural food insecurity in Herefordshire.

The pandemic raised the profile of poverty in Herefordshire, which could lead to more engagement from the Council with the issue. This worked example from Hereford illustrates which aspects of direct food support were continued post pandemic and which were not.

Good practice
- Focus on healthy local food/importance of food
- Early identification of resources and where to get them
- The ability to pull community together, lead and own what is needed locally.
- Growing your own
- Stronger community feel
- Ability to adapt
- Community support in rural areas
- "Family focus"
- Use of surplus food
- Healthy food education projects
- Connecting producers with those who need food locally.

- Closer working between LAs and food supporting organisations, understanding needs better.

Not good practice
- National food box
- Bringing food into the county
- Judgement on why people are asking for help
- Duplication of services.

Food Train (Scotland)

Food Train is a registered charity, voluntary organisation and social enterprise. Since 1995 Food Train has been making daily life easier for **older people, providing vital services to those who are no longer able to manage independently, through age, ill health, frailty or disability**. Food Train makes hundreds of grocery deliveries every week, ensuring those most in need have access to fresh groceries. Teams of dedicated local volunteers across the regions also go that extra mile by helping with household jobs, delivering books through our library service and providing much needed friendly social contact and meals through our Meal Makers and befriending services.

Following 15 years of successfully supporting older people throughout Dumfries and Galloway, in 2010, Food Train embarked on an ambitious project to make its services available to older people in other parts of Scotland. With support from the Scottish Government, Community Food and Health Scotland and the relevant health and social care partnerships, Food Train services are now available in many more areas.

In order to fulfil their vision for all older people in Scotland, Food Train endeavours, in partnership with public and independent sector partners, to continue growing their services and support for older people to enable them to eat well, live well and age well at home.

Food Train's 'Connects' shopping service connects each of their customers with a volunteer living nearby willing to support them with the weekly task of shopping. Their volunteers collect shopping lists weekly on an agreed suitable day, do the shopping and deliver to their customer's home using their own transport or on foot. To access this service there is a £1 membership charge renewed annually and a £5 per shopping delivery charge to allow Food Train to cover its administration and volunteer expenses costs. Food Train deals with all payments, therefore no money should change hands between volunteer and customer.

Learning: Sustainability, enablers and barriers

Their vulnerability to funding cuts has increased interest in models that appear to be more sustainable. *"Sustain is especially interested in these models, and the part they could play in reducing household food insecurity for people who need support with food, welfare checks and social connections to overcome isolation."*[143]

The quote above exemplifies another funding in the literature, that the value of direct food provision should be judged using a wider set of criteria than cost of delivery alone.

> *'Meals on wheels commissioners and service managers should not feel that they have to do things at the lowest cost possible... Commissioners should take account of longer-term timespans, other public budgets, and a broad span of metrics for evaluating best practice including for example sustainability, wellbeing, dignity, quality, employment and supported employment.'*[144]

Achieving economies of scale for this type of model is still harder in rural areas like North Yorkshire, where they compound the 'rural premium' (extra costs of living / delivering services / transport / limited access to limited food choice) referenced along with the lack of co-ordinated response (Hereford).

Meals on wheels can be paid-for, subsidised or free-of-charge. Viable models are judged to exist for making the service affordable for government and local authorities, especially where this involves social enterprise and integration with social services. See:

Something to be proud of: Taking an enterprising approach to meals on wheels (2020)

Meals on wheels good practice case studies (Sustain and partners, 2018)

Other enablers

- Locating support as part of wider partnerships – for example, adult social care and hospitals charge teams, bring in a greater focus on food.
- Mutual aid approaches can mitigate stigma: "Where emphasis is on people doing this for one another, and reciprocity, the stigma associated with receiving food aid is somewhat mitigated."
- Providing choice for individual preferences is essential for mitigating food insecurity.
- Set up training and shared learning sessions to help newer services to professionalise and establish sustainable, robust models and structures.
- Strategically, a cross-cutting finding from this review is that tackling food insecurity and food poverty requires robust partnership plans which should include funding, policy and other support.

Challenges

Reliance on food that would otherwise be surplus can detract from the quality of the meals and is not considered reliable in the long-term. This has potentially damaging long-term consequences in that it further entrenches an unjust food system.

A more structural issue calls into question the need for additional support of this kind for the vast majority of service users.

> *"Some older adults could access a similar, commercially available online shopping service, if supermarkets adapted their model slightly... Older adults should be able to choose between using an online shopping service, if they are able to, and a tailored shopping service if these better suits their need."[145]*

The case for direct food typologies?

As part of an emergency response, direct food provision played an important role in the pandemic response. Expanding or creating a direct food infrastructure under difficult conditions highlighted the role VCSEs play supporting people at local level.

The plethora of responses lacked coordination and oversight / control were not possible.

Once emergency restrictions en-masse are removed, the case for such interventions at scale is less apparent, rather they may form part of other food typologies where circumstances demand and volunteer labour is available.

Meals on Wheels services are distinct, serving well-defined populations and supported by evidence on the value of providing nutritional meals and having regular contact. The economics of delivering such services are problematic if viewed only from the perspective of those delivering the service.

One US study identified a 46% return on investment when the benefits to users and the healthcare systems are modelled.[146] There is a strong social and moral argument for including meals on wheels services as part of the 'prevent' toolkit advocated by Public Health.

Questions arising

- How is the nutritional quality of food parcels achieved / managed?

- Should national or local government direct food insecurity interventions?[147]

- What is provision of meals on wheels in York and North Yorkshire? And if deemed insufficient, how is the case for investment best made to incorporate this as part of adult social care and / or public health in a pursuit of mitigating malnutrition in older people?

7.6   Cash-first approaches

Definition

What is a Cash-First approach to food insecurity? Cash-First approaches mean providing people with money, rather than emergency food or in-kind support, making them an effective and dignified form of support to people facing hardship locally. Cash provides people with the flexibility to spend it on their immediate needs, whether that is purchasing the essentials (for example food), getting an MOT for their car, buying school shoes for their child, or paying down debt to get on a more secure financial footing. They can have an immediate impact on people's lives[148]. There are different ways to embed Cash-First information and resources into partners' work supporting low income and vulnerable communities across communities. A Cash-First approach focuses on the rationale that maximising income is effective in aiding lower-income residents facing food insecurity.

Sustain has produced this helpful webinar[149] to Cash-First approaches:

In a major study of approaches to tackle food vulnerability during the pandemic the authors explain how 'cash first' or 'income-based' work encompassed a range of responses including schemes designed to refer or support people to access and maximise their entitlements to the social security system (e.g. signposting or advice services) as well as the provision of additional cash support on top of access to basic entitlements through crisis emergency payments (e.g. emergency finance schemes)[150].

For the purpose of this paper we have included reference to literature about the efficacy of voucher schemes, not because they are a form of cash-first grant, rather that these models are often contrasted in the literature reviewed (as seen in the infographic overleaf). Similarly, we refer to grants for food provision, but only in passing as there is a report chapter dedicated to this kind of response elsewhere in this report (see chapter 6.9).

Food voucher schemes

Voucher schemes (referred to in this report chapter) provide food vouchers to specific groups of people to enable them to access healthy food. There are both government run schemes like the Healthy Start Vouchers in England (for pregnant women and families with children under 4 years) and the Best Start food scheme in Scotland; and charity funded food voucher schemes like the Alexander Rose Voucher Scheme and research funded projects such as the Fresh Street Voucher Scheme. (See examples later in this chapter).

IFAN's '**Worrying About Money?**' project aims to reduce the need for charitable food aid by helping people access any existing financial entitlements and advice on income maximisation as a cash first approach to food insecurity. Find out more here.
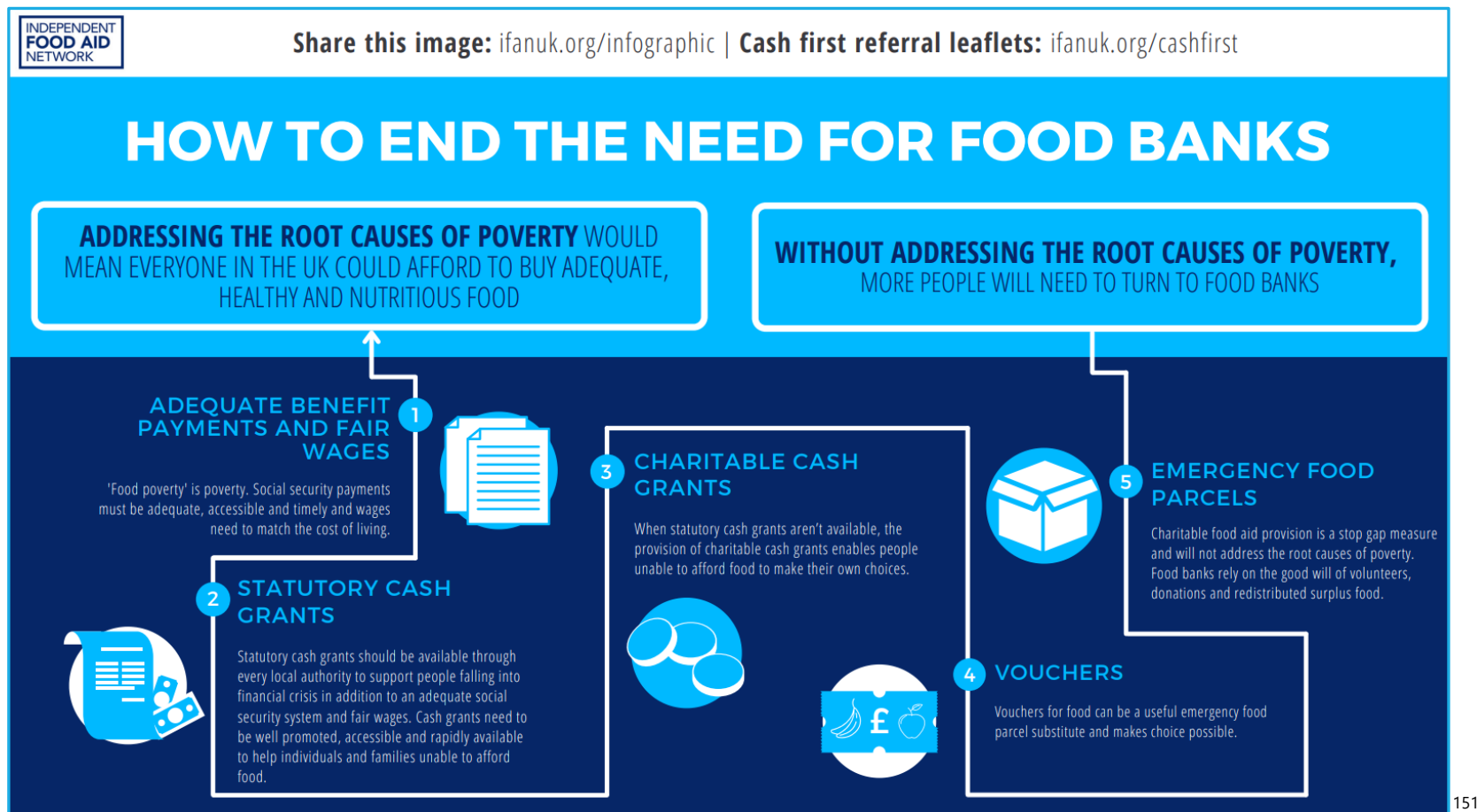
The project seeks to demonstrate why a cash first approach to food insecurity is fundamental to ending the need for charitable food aid.

Evidence

Interventions to address household food insecurity in high-income countries (2018)

This international review evaluated evidence on interventions intended to reduce household food insecurity in high-income countries. Canada and the USA regularly monitor household food insecurity, while in other countries, such as the UK, it has been the rapid rise of food bank usage that has drawn increased attention to this longstanding, but largely overlooked, problem.

The review supports cash-first approaches above alternatives and concludes that research on social protection interventions suggests both cash transfers and food subsidies (e.g. the US Supplement Nutrition and Assistance Programme in the USA) reduce household food insecurity. In contrast, research on community-level interventions, such as food banks and other food programmes, suggests limited impacts. Although food banks have become a common intervention for food insecurity in high-income countries, evidence suggests their reliance on donations of volunteer time and food make them inevitably limited in the assistance they are able to provide. The stigma people feel using food banks may also make them untenable. Alternatives to, or enhanced, food banks such as community shops or community kitchens, have become common, but evidence also suggests they may be limited in effectiveness if they do not reach people experiencing food insecurity. This review highlights the difficulty of trying to address household food insecurity with community-based food interventions when solutions likely lie upstream in social protection policies.

Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021). An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice appendix (2021)

This report explores ways in which (14) case study areas in the UK offered or supported income-based responses at the same time as food provision. During September 2020 – September 2021, the use of 'cash first' schemes continued, and the authors heard examples of local councils and third sector organisations continuing or newly introducing cash first approaches. Three approaches are considered: Support for income maximisation; Cash grants; and Vouchers.

Income maximisation

Various activities were being undertaken to support households with income in the form of offering, or signposting people to, advice services. Earlier research[152] by the authors highlighted work to make advice services more accessible by, for example, extending opening hours to include evenings and weekends, and providing services in a number of ways, rather than only face to face. One participant from Derry City and Strabane District Council highlighted this as a positive outcome of the new ways of working during the pandemic:

> "One of the things we found that has really strengthened through the pandemic would be, through the local growth partnerships [and] through community planning, doing a wraparound service. They [community groups] then had a thing of working with the advice services, which maybe a lot of them didn't have that experience before, as we were saying, of signposting things..... That was one of the big positives we found throughout the

pandemic, offering that wraparound service for people that needed it." (Council workshop, Derry City and Strabane)

Other examples were noted too: local food banks in Herefordshire were starting to offer money advice services; a food aid organisation in Argyll and Bute had paused face-to-face interviews and provided an advice leaflet as an alternative. Although the leaflet was a new response to support income maximisation that they planned to continue they were also hoping to resume the face-to-face service in the future.

It is worth noting that whilst participants highlighted the key role of income maximisation as a response to food insecurity, some also discussed that this may not, alone, be an adequate solution. This is because even with support for income maximisation households are still experiencing poverty, due to the current limitations of social security support or other income. A participant in Glasgow noted that whilst income maximisation had been a key feature of the response earlier in the pandemic, over time, it had been established that this alone was not an adequate solution for everyone:

> *"The local Community Food Network was pushing very hard for a cash-first approach to food. There was a lot of partnership work done, bringing in the Citizens Advice Bureaux and the law centres, to do benefits checks with people, but we've, kind of, de-prioritised that work to some stage because what became clear was, in fact, people were on the benefits that they were entitled to. There weren't a lot of people, we found, who weren't getting what they were entitled to, but they still couldn't afford to feed their family, particularly with the recent cuts in Universal Credit. So, we found that actually this idea of maximising benefits of people in food need wasn't the gold or the silver bullet it had been thought it would be, because many, many people were already maximised but still living in poverty." (Partnership workshop, Glasgow)*

Cash grants

In England, local welfare assistance schemes which are administered (designed and implemented) at a local authority level, may provide discretionary grants or support with basic needs, such as food. In the authors' previous research, they learned of changes made to local welfare assistance schemes in response to the pandemic[153]. For example, Leeds Council relaxed their eligibility criteria for their assistance scheme. In January 2021, the Argyll and Bute Community Food Forum, a partnership between the Council, advice agencies, local food providers and a local energy charity, established a 'flexible food fund', providing discretionary cash grants[154]. The fund was based on the model implemented by Moray Council and is funded by Argyll and Bute Council:

> *"The subsequent programme entitled the Flexible Food Fund Project has been incredibly successful. At our last count we had achieved a client gain of over £800,000 since its beginning in January 2021 and we are going to do everything in our power to continue this vital work beyond March 22 when the present funding runs out." (Partnership workshop, email submission, Argyll and Bute)*

The fund was promoted in several ways including roadshows, leaflets and social media campaigns[155]. Partnership working was highlighted as a key factor of the initiative.

In March 2021 Cardiff Council launched a new discretionary fund, 'Together for Cardiff' to provide emergency grants[156]. Initially this was funded through both Council funding and public donations. From September 2021 it was funded through the Welsh Government's 'Food poverty and food insecurity grant scheme'[157]. The fund was made available to individuals and families experiencing severe hardship to provide support with expenses such as paying for essentials like gas and electric, for an essential repair to a cooker or washing machine, for essential furniture or equipment to address digital deprivation. In this respect, the discretionary scheme by Cardiff Council differed to that of Moray and Argyll and Bute. Applicants to the fund are also supported by Cardiff Council's Money Advice team[158].

These practical examples of a 'cash first approach', both support for income maximisation and discretionary cash grants were underpinned by a general consensus across the study's research workshops that 'cash based' interventions are the most appropriate because they were seen to provide recipients with choice and dignity. However, similar to earlier findings from these authors, it was acknowledged that there is no 'one size fits' all solution with some noting the need for tailoring depending on particular circumstances, for example in rural areas where the cost of living is more expensive or when, despite maximised income, households still experience poverty due to the inadequacy of the welfare support they receive.

Vouchers

The authors' earlier research highlighted that some organisations were providing vouchers for people to use in supermarkets, local shops or for fuel over March to August 2020. This was sometimes existing organisations providing vouchers in addition to food parcels, or as an alternative to their usual provision that was paused, such as to families that would ordinarily attend holiday clubs. In comparison to food parcels, vouchers are seen to allow recipients to have more choice[159]. Some organisations were offering vouchers as an alternative to direct food aid as well whilst some provided vouchers for the larger supermarkets and others for local shops, including smaller retailers such as butchers or fruit and veg shops. Two of the food aid providers that were based in more rural areas described that the vouchers were provided for local shops, with the support of those shops. Referring to the approach the participant said:

> *"We put quite a bit of it (funding) into food vouchers, approached all the local stores, none of the multi-nationals, but local stores and asked them to participate in it. That was very successful."* (Charitable food aid workshop, Derry City and Strabane)

In Herefordshire some food aid providers had started to provide vouchers for local shops. Independent food banks in Shropshire received grants from the Council to purchase vouchers to distribute to households. Where these locally focussed schemes had been introduced this was considered to have the dual benefit of also supporting local businesses:

> *"Across South Shropshire and Herefordshire, some of them have fundraised and used their funding to buy vouchers for the local shops. It's also helping local businesses stay afloat as well. So, it's a win-win both sides."* (Partnership workshop, Herefordshire)

Some organisations provided cash or vouchers for people to link in with other forms of food aid provision e.g., a housing organisation in West Berkshire that was a referral agent for food banks, provided vouchers for community larders. A supported accommodation provider provided cash to residents for the purpose of them attending a "pay what you can" meal service. They also

provided support for people to attend the meal. In Belfast, where the provision of vouchers was a relatively new practice participants reported this had been well received and often preferred to food aid:

> *"What feedback we were getting is that the voucher scheme was much more preferable to them for reasons of dignity and choice and lots of other things. It's something we in Belfast haven't really dabbled in that much just through some community partners who chose that route to go when we funded them."* (Council workshop, Belfast)

Rose Vouchers for Fruit and Veg (F&V) Final Evaluation Report. 2017

This Project helps families on low incomes to buy fresh F&V and supports them to give their children the healthiest possible start and to promote healthy eating. Eligible households receives £3 a week for each child; or £6 if the child under 1yrs old. The distribution of the vouchers takes a community-based approach and are based in children centres who recruit participants. The vouchers are redeemable only at local market fresh F&V traders. Some participants described drifting in and out of eligibility for the vouchers. Impacts reported in the evaluation included:

- 89% of adults and 94% of children are eating more fresh fruit and 90% of adults and 95% of children are eating more fresh vegetables. The variety of F&V. that families are buying is also increased as families are able to widen the range of fresh produce they buy
- 74% of adults and 83% of children have been eating less sweets and savoury snacks
- Rose Vouchers helped overcome perceived risk when buying new types of fruit and veg
- For some families on very low incomes the financial support that the Rose Vouchers provide is absolutely vital. Budgets fluctuate and at times for some families Rose Vouchers make the difference between being able to feed their family and not
- 70% of families say they are more thoughtful about their food shop
- 92% of families say they are feeling healthier
- 95% of families are feeling happier, saying they have been getting out more, socialising and feeling less stressed financially (emotional wellbeing gains)
- % of participants say they shop more at the market
- 77% of families say they are visiting the Children's Centre more.

> *"The Rose Vouchers have really impacted positively in my life. I was lonely when I had my baby and didn't have much money, but when I started coming to the Children's Centre, I met friends and the Rose Vouchers helped me financially"* (Participant from Jubilee Children's Centre)

> *"I use them (the vouchers) with pride – they don't feel like a benefit"*

The **Fresh Street Vouchers** scheme provides a food voucher for only fruit and vegetables with healthy diet recipes and an information pack. It is an area or place-based scheme with geographically defined streets or areas of high economic deprivation and low F&V consumption and access is open to every household in that area irrespective of composition and individuals' economic status or income. Each household receive £5 a week. Households are encouraged to

share vouchers and vouchers are redeemable in only local fresh F&V shops / market stalls (not supermarket) or locally produced F&V supplied bag by Regather cooperative. While placed based vouchers have greatest impact because of local stakeholders and community buy-in, it may exclude potential benefactors who may be living outside the defined geographical area.

> In both examples the voucher schemes provide access to only fruits and vegetables to the recipients and in low-income families and areas where access to fruits and vegetables is limited.

Can food vouchers improve nutrition and reduce health inequalities in low-income mothers and young children: a multi-method evaluation of the experiences of beneficiaries and practitioners of the Healthy Start programme in England. (2014)

The results of this study found that women reported that Healthy Start vouchers increased the quantity and range of fruit and vegetables they used and improved the quality of family diets and established good habits for the future. Conclusions: 'Our evaluation of the Healthy Start programme in England suggests that a food subsidy programme can provide an important nutritional safety net and potentially improve nutrition for pregnant women and young children living on low incomes. Factors that could compromise this impact include erosion of voucher value relative to the rising cost of food, lack of access to registered retailers and barriers to registering for the programme. Addressing these issues could inform the design and implementation of food subsidy programmes in high income countries.'

Is Scotland's 'cash first' approach beginning to tackle hunger? (December 2021)

In spring 2021 when the Trussell Trust released its annual figures for the number of emergency food parcels it had given to hungry people, one thing stood out. The statistics going back to 2014/15 showed that in every region and country of the UK the figures had risen year on year – with one exception. In Scotland, in 2021, there had been a fall. Then, on 24 November 2021, the Trust published more recent statistics, up to September and the trend had continued. As the Trust's own data briefing says: "Data from food banks in our network in Scotland does however remain an outlier in terms of being the only area of the UK to experience a significant (25 per cent) decrease since the same period in 2019. Different policy interventions in Scotland to boost the income of people in receipt of social security may have impacted on the levels of need for food banks in this period." One of the biggest of these policy interventions has been the Scottish Child Payment (SCP), introduced in February 2021 this year, which currently pays £10 a week per child under the age of six, to support low income families. Then Nicola Sturgeon announced that the SCP would double that figure to £20 per week per child from April 2022, and be rolled out to children under the age of 16 by the end of 2022. In 2018 the Scottish Government also introduced Best Start Grants for babies and children in low income families[160]. And in Scotland, people who receive Carer's Allowance can now get a Carer's Allowance Supplement, an extra payment twice a year. In these and other ways, the Scottish Government has been making a real effort, within its devolved financial and political powers, to put extra money into the pockets of people on low incomes, and particularly investing in babies and children. The Trussell Trust says:

> *"Significant evidence exists to show that increasing the value of benefits reduces overall levels of need for food banks. Statistical modelling carried out as part of the* State of Hunger *(2021) research found that an increase of £1 in the value of all main income replacement benefits was associated with a decrease of 2.6 per cent in the number of parcels given out in a typical local authority."*

It is early days, but this 'cash first' approach to poverty by the Scottish Government seems to be working to reduce the need for emergency food aid.

> *"And it completely undermines the disrespectful argument that giving people more money is not the answer to poverty. Everybody should have the dignity of an income which enables them to buy their own food, and the statistics from Scotland suggest that the way to achieve that is really not complicated at all."*

IFAN Worrying about Money Cash Referral Leaflet evaluation (2021)

The evaluation[161] sought to understand how the 'Worrying About Money?' leaflet was being used in different local authority areas and capture any emerging impact related to its use. The research explored participants' experiences of using the leaflet including any benefits or difficulties they encountered. The research also asked how the leaflet could be improved. Findings:

- Overall, the leaflet has been viewed very positively by participants. It has been recognised as a useful tool which can help support income maximisation and poverty reduction work at a service, organisational and local authority level. This has been demonstrated by the range of people from local authorities, NHS and third sector organisations who have been involved in using and disseminating the leaflet to date.

- The leaflet is being used in a range of ways which has been dictated both by the contact and relationships services have with individuals experiencing financial difficulties, as well as COVID-19 restrictions.

- The main impact reported by participants is that the leaflet has helped raise awareness amongst staff, volunteers and people experiencing financial challenges, which organisations can provide financial support and how they can be accessed.

- Staff and volunteers also reported that the leaflet had given them confidence to discuss money with people experiencing financial challenges and signpost or refer them to staff.

- While it has been challenging to capture the impact the leaflet has had on individuals experiencing financial difficulties, participants were able to give examples of incomes of those experiencing financial hardship being increased as a result of referrals.

- Participants' positive experience of the 'Worrying About Money?' leaflet has been illustrated in their support for the leaflet being rolled out across Scotland. It was felt that the leaflet was a practical tool that could complement existing resources and approaches to poverty reduction and income maximisation across Scotland.

- For the leaflet to be most beneficial, time and resource need to be committed to tailor the leaflet to the local context, disseminate the leaflet and raise awareness of its purpose.

- Where possible, training should be provided for those wishing to use the leaflet to generate conversations about money to ensure that this is done sensitively.

Outcomes (Cash-First approaches)

The following sources were used to derive the list of outcomes that can be associated with **cash-first approaches**.

1. Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021). An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice appendix (2021)
2. Interventions to address household food insecurity in high-income countries (2018)
3. IFAN Worrying about Money Cash Referral Leaflet evaluation (2021)
4. Sustain: Cash-first approaches to addressing food poverty (2022)
5. Trussell Trust data briefing on mid-year statistics relating to use of food banks: April 2021 –September 2021
6. Trussell Trust, Cash first literature review (2022)
7. An evaluation of the Leeds City Council Cash Grant Pilot Programme (2022)
8. Five lessons – Learnings from Leeds Cash first evaluation (2022)

Outcomes for individuals

- More dignity compared to alternatives
- More choice compared to alternatives
- More flexibility for households to address their most pressing financial issues
- Greater confidence amongst staff and volunteers to discuss money with people experiencing financial challenges and signpost or refer them to staff
- Increased incomes for those experiencing financial hardship
- Healthier behaviours (and with more income, life expectancy[162])

Outcomes for organisations

- Support income maximisation work by organisations
- Support food insecurity and poverty reduction work by organisations
- Raised awareness amongst staff, volunteers and people experiencing financial challenges which organisations can provide financial support and how they can be accessed
- Tools (e.g., cash-first leaflet) easy to replicate and roll out in different places affordably

Outcomes for communities / system
- Injecting funds into the local economy
- Referral pathways into support are strengthened

Outcomes (Food Vouchers)

The following sources were used to derive the list of outcomes that can be associated with **food voucher schemes**.

1. Fresh street: the development and feasibility of a place-based, subsidy for fresh fruit and vegetables (2021) and 'Results FRESH Street: A place & household approach to fruit and veg consumption' (2021)
2. Is the Healthy Start scheme associated with increased food expenditure in low-income families with young children in the United Kingdom? (2021)
3. Can food vouchers improve nutrition and reduce health inequalities in low-income mothers and young children: a multi-method evaluation of the experiences of beneficiaries and practitioners of the Healthy Start programme in England. BMC public health (2014)
4. Rose Vouchers for Fruit and Veg- An evaluation report (2014)
5. Rose Vouchers for fruit and veg. Lambeth project final evaluation (2017)
6. 'West Berkshire Case Study, Mapping local responses: March to August 2020. (2021)

Outcomes associated with the food voucher schemes referenced in this chapter

Credit for analysis below: Dr Megan Blake, University of Sheffield (2022)

Access to food/amount of food: The voucher scheme provide access to only fruits and vegetables to the recipients and in low-income families and areas where access to fruits and vegetables is limited.

Outcomes for individuals

- **Improves food and nutrition security**
- **Behaviour changes and healthy eating outcomes**
- **Improves Wellbeing**
- **Improves household financial wellbeing**

Outcomes for communities

- **Community resilience and social infrastructure.** Buying from community markets and stalls increase social cohesion in neighbourhood and provides meeting place for diverse community members for connections and conversations. Place-based voucher schemes have the potential to increase social interaction.
- **Investments in local economy.** Vouchers are mostly redeemed at the local fruits and vegetable markets/stalls - increasing customers for participating stalls, co-operatives and FV producers and increase spending in local market and have the potential to increase footfall in local markets.
- **Connecting with community services /strengthening communities**. Place-based voucher scheme is likely to received greater level of support from local stakeholders and leaders and therefore have maximum impact. And the Rose VS are delivered in partnership with existing local organisations and existing activities focused on health and wellbeing to support families in their local area therefore increase community resilience and social interactions.

Examples

The 'Worrying About Money?' Project has seen cash first referral leaflets co-designed as straightforward resources both for people facing money worries and support workers. The step-by-step guides identify which local agencies are best placed to help people maximise income and access any existing financial entitlements and their design is based on learning from Scotland's A Menu for Change project. Since June 2020, IFAN has collaborated with local authority teams, advice providers, food aid organisations and other local stakeholders to co-produce cash first referral leaflets for over 90 local authorities in Scotland, England and Wales.
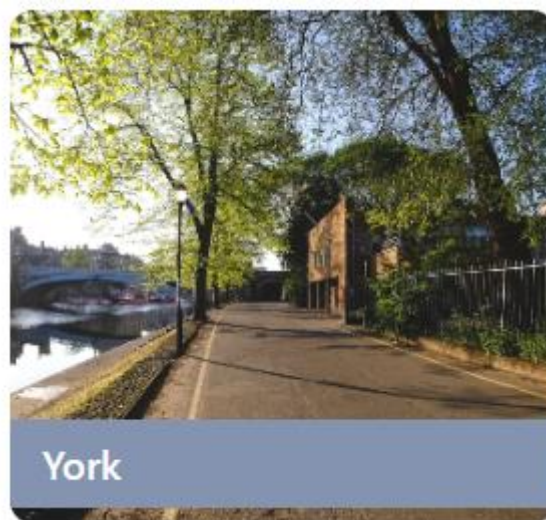
Craven

York

York and Craven have produced leaflets for example.

Worrying about money?

Support is available in Craven

Three steps to find options and places to get help

**Step 1:
What's the problem?**

I suddenly have no money
- Lost job or reduced hours
- Money stopped
- Lost money
- Unexpected expense
- Disaster (e.g. flood or fire)
- Relationship breakdown
- Sanctioned (see option: 5)
See options 1 2 6

My money doesn't stretch far enough
- Deciding between food, fuel, and mobile credit
- Low income
- Zero hours contract
- Statutory Sick Pay too low
- Facing redundancy
- Not sure if eligible for support
- Change of circumstance
See options 1 2

I have debt
- Rent or Council Tax
- Gas and electricity
- Payday loans
- Owe friends or family
- Benefit repayments
See option 3

I am waiting on a benefit payment or advance
- New claim for benefit
- Payment delayed
- Waiting for decision
See options 1 4

Other Support

Healthy Start Vouchers
Help to buy fruit, vegetables and milk if you are pregnant or have a child under 4 and are on a low income (Also available for people with NRPF)
Apply online: www.healthystart.nhs.uk

National Debtline
Free and independent debt advice
0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.org

Leeds Credit Union
Affordable financial services to people in Leeds, Wakefield, Harrogate and Craven
0113 242 3343
www.leedscreditunion.co.uk

Turn2Us
Information and financial support
0808 802 2000 | www.turn2us.org.uk
benefits-calculator-2.turn2us.org.uk

For Migrants with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

Project 17
Advice on housing and financial options for families with children facing severe poverty/homelessness because they have NRPF
07963 509 044 | www.project17.org.uk

The Unity Project
Support to have NRPF condition removed if applicable and other support
www.unity-project.org.uk

About this leaflet

This leaflet is based on learning from Scotland's A Menu for Change project and has been developed with support from the organisations below.

You can access the 'Worrying About Money?' leaflets online at www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk/cash-first-leaflets. The information on this leaflet was last updated on 29/04/22

Feedback? What did you find useful about this guide?
www.bit.ly/moneyadvicefeedback

CRAVEN | INDEPENDENT FOOD AID NETWORK | Craven Food Partnership | North Yorkshire County Council

Digital Leaflet

www.worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/craven

Step 2: What are some options?

1 Council Support Schemes
People on low incomes may be able to get Housing Benefit, Discretionary Housing Payments and Council Tax Support. All schemes will depend on your current circumstances.

Find out more: www.cravendc.gov.uk/benefits-and-advice

2 Maximise Your Income
Anyone who is struggling financially can get a benefit check and speak to an advisor for free and confidential advice. A benefit check can ensure that you are receiving all the money you're entitled to, especially if your circumstances have changed recently. Speaking to an advisor could also help you find cheaper deals on things like gas and electricity and make sure you're not missing out on things like free school meals.

3 Debt Advice
Debt can happen to anyone. Free advice and support can help you find ways to manage your debts and reduce how much you pay each month.

4 Benefit Advance
If you have made a new claim for benefit and are in financial hardship while you wait for your first payment, you may be able to get an advance to afford things like rent or food. It's important to get advice before taking out an advance. Benefit advances must be paid back, and the money will be taken from your future benefit payments (a loan).

5 Hardship Payment
If you have been sanctioned, you may be able to request a hardship payment from the DWP. Hardship payments are not always paid immediately, and they're not available to everyone. Hardship payments of Universal Credit need to be paid back (a loan), but hardship payments of Jobseekers' Allowance or Employment Support Allowance do not (not a loan).

6 Challenge a Decision
You can challenge a benefit decision if your benefit has been stopped / sanctioned / reduced / refused or you have been overpaid. Most benefit decisions need to be challenged within one month.

Step 3: Where can I get help? For free and confidential advice

Other Support

CRAVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL
Help if you are struggling to pay your council tax and housing costs
01756 700 600
contactus@cravendc.gov.uk
www.cravendc.gov.uk
Help with options: 1 2 4 5 6

CITIZENS ADVICE CRAVEN AND HARROGATE DISTRICTS
Advice on debt, benefits, employment, housing and more
0808 278 7900
www.cachd.org.uk/email
www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Help with options: 1 2 3 4 5 6

CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY
Free debt counselling service for anyone in financial difficulty regardless of their religious beliefs
0800 328 0006 | www.capuk.org
Help with option: 3

Citizens Advice Help to Claim
Advice for claiming Universal Credit
0800 144 8444
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/universal-credit

Craven District Council Housing Options Team
Help if you are homeless or at risk of homelessness
01756 706 475 | 01653 699 392
housing@cravendc.gov.uk
www.cravendc.gov.uk/housing/homelessness/homeless-or-at-risk-of-homelessness

Age UK North Craven
Support and advice for older people, their families and carers
01729 823066
info@ageuknorthcraven.org
www.ageuk.org.uk/northcraven

Carers' Resource
Information, advice and support carers' including help to apply for benefits and carers' assessments
0808 501 5939
www.carersresource.org

North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund
Help may be available to move into/remain in the community and to keep families under great pressure to stay together
01904 550 030
nylaf@familyfundservices.co.uk
www.northyorks.gov.uk/local-assistance-fund

IDAS
Support for anyone experiencing or affected by domestic abuse of sexual violence
03000 110 110 | info@idas.org.uk
www.idas.org.uk

Warm and Well in North Yorkshire
Advice and grants for people struggling to afford their energy bills
01609 767 555
wnw@northyorkslca.org.uk
www.warmandwell.org.uk

IFAN publishes the leaflets online, helps to disseminate printed copies as widely as possible, and produces poster, translated and interactive versions. Resources to enable training sessions linked to the leaflet are also available on request. IFAN also works with partner organisations to run virtual launch events and to support Money Counts training sessions. **If any reader is interested in co-producing a 'Worrying About Money?' leaflet for their local area please contact IFAN at admin@foodaidnetwork.org.uk.** Cash First Leaflets - Independent Food Aid Network UK

Shropshire Food Poverty[163] is just one example of an area that has produced these leaflets as their work has found that **t**he main driving factors behind food insecurity in the UK and Shropshire are insecure and insufficient income. They also assert that emergency food aid and food parcels are sticking plasters and "they don't let us address the root causes of food insecurity and they are not the most dignified way to support people." The leaflets are **a straightforward, step b**y step guide for anyone facing financial crisis (and those supporting them) to quickly see the local cash first support and advice which is best placed to help. A tool for individuals, but also a resource for frontline staff and volunteers to help them approach conversations around money with the people they support. "We know that both individuals in crisis, and the frontline staff supporting them, can find support systems complex and difficult to navigate so our hope is that this project will help to reduce barriers to existing financial entitlements and the need for charitable food aid by enabling people to access more dignified, cash first support."

More than a leaflet:

- Leaflet as 'tool' to start broader conversation on a cash first approach
- Launch events and Money Counts training
- Scottish Government's Draft Plan to End the Need for Food Banks
- ScotCen Impact report: ifanuk.org/wam-report

"The guide has filled a gap - we were aware of people in financial hardship but needed to be able to give them more support, in addition to just signing them up with the food bank."
Volunteer Worker

Cornwall is another area that has produced the 'Worrying About Money' leaflet in partnership with the IFAN, the Trussell Trust and Transformation Cornwall (a charity strengthening faith based social action) and Cornwall Council. By December 2021:

- Over 15,000 Cornwall 'Worrying About Money?' leaflets had been printed and distributed to frontline organisations all over Cornwall.
- Numerous organisations and frontline workers attended a virtual launch event to promote the leaflet and discuss how it could be used.
- By adapting a training resource linked to the leaflet devised by the Highland 'Worrying About Money? leaflet stakeholder group, the partners co-created a 1-hour online training session alongside Citizens Advice Cornwall and had trained 75 frontline workers based in Family Hubs across the county with plans to extend this training further to other frontline council workers.

"That's 75 more people resourced and equipped to facilitate informed signposting to advice and support to maximise income and access existing financial entitlements."

A focus group with frontline organisations across Cornwall was conducted to hear how they access financial support for the people that turn to them, including their experience of the local welfare assistance from Cornwall Council who have been receptive to recommendations made.

The partners were developing this work further to see how they could better amplify the lived experience of those who have struggled against poverty in Cornwall in shaping the support they receive.

Sustain has usefully collated examples from local authorities about how they have utilised a cash first principle during the Covid-19 crisis. A small selection feature here.

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham: A 'cash first' approach to hardship grants[164]

The pandemic and the cost of living resulted in the council recognising the importance of getting hardship funds to struggling households as quickly and effectively as possible. In response, a 'cash-first' approach to grant provision was adopted which involved the prioritisation of cash grants over in-kind support such as food parcels or shopping vouchers. The council has found that prioritising cash grants over support such as food parcels can offer more dignity, choice and flexibility for households to address their most pressing financial issues, as well as ultimately delivering greater beneficial impacts both for struggling households as well as injecting funds into the local economy.

During the pandemic and when the severity of COVID-19 related hardship quickly emerged, the council designed and implemented its own new local welfare fund from scratch in the space of two weeks. Cash payments were central to this scheme and funds were paid over several weekly instalments. Previously, sending cash payments through internal financial process was a challenging process and disbursing funds was time-consuming and complex, this meant it could mean days before customers received much needed funds. Yet, through its adoption of a new innovative cash payment solution called Cash Perks[165], the council can now send payments instantly to its beneficiaries. The council first piloted Cash Perks just for those without bank accounts. But its success, in both cutting staff time and costs taken to process payments and reducing the time taken for recipients to receive funds from days to minutes, has seen it become their default payment method for various discretionary fund schemes, including the Household Support Fund.

LBBD staff have now disbursed almost £1 million through the facility that enables staff to either individually or bulk upload payments between £10 and £500 that are sent via SMS texts. The funds are instantly available for the client collection locally at over 17,000 ATMs nationwide using the credentials within the messages, that has seen 97 per cent of payments collected on time.

Greater Manchester Poverty Action

In its 2020 Briefing Paper, 'Cash-First - Responding to the needs of low income residents through the provision of local welfare support[166]' the importance of taking a 'Cash- First' approach to local welfare provision is emphasised. It outlines the benefits of this approach and suggests that local welfare assistance schemes would be a suitable route to supporting people in this way.

The paper argues that the best way of giving low income residents maximum dignity, choice and control when accessing local welfare support is via a 'Cash-First' approach which prioritises providing support to people who are facing financial hardship in the form of cash grants and loans rather than vouchers, food aid or goods (in-kind support).

It states: 'It is important that localities do not allow misplaced negative perceptions to act as a barrier to providing people with crucial support. Evidence shows that when extra financial support is provided to low income households in crisis it is used appropriately and in a way that boosts household wellbeing. A 'cash first' approach to local welfare would deliver the following benefits:

- Giving people dignity by removing the stigma that often comes with using in-kind support.
- Giving people choice and control by enabling them to use support in a way that works best for them, enabling them to meet the multiple needs that they have. This boosts household wellbeing and has significant benefits in households with dependent children.
- Giving people what they want – cash is the preferred option for most people on low incomes.
- Simplicity and efficiency - Cash payments are the simplest, efficient and cost effective means of providing people with support as cash payments can be made directly into people's bank accounts. It can be a more efficient approach for local authorities as it removes need for the partnership arrangements that come with in-kind support.
- Increasing take up - Cash payments encourage greater take up of support by households experiencing financial hardship.
- Giving a boost to the local economy by increasing the likelihood of payments being spent with local, independent retailers.
- Preventing people from falling into high interest debt when they face a financial crisis, and therefore preventing them from spiralling deeper into hardship.
- Bolstering wider financial inclusion efforts by linking cash payments to other sources of financial support such as credit unions.
- Enabling funding to be recouped where there is a loans element to cash payments being provided.

Maximising positive outcomes through local welfare provision: dignity, choice and control

'Poverty is the consequence of having insufficient resources to meet one's needs and people experiencing poverty have multiple needs. Therefore, Greater Manchester Poverty Action believes that responses to poverty should give people maximum choice and control, and that this best done by providing people with cash benefits rather than in-kind support (i.e., vouchers, food aid or 4 household goods).

It is difficult to see how the provision of limited goods or vouchers can meet the broad range of needs that families have, for example clothing, mattresses, sanitary products, crockery, children's books and toys, cleaning products, travel vouchers, child safety equipment, birthday presents – all vital to help people create a home and a family life for their children. The principle of paying benefits in cash is generally largely applied through the national social security system, with benefits paid in cash rather than in the form of vouchers. However, local welfare schemes often run counter to this principle.

Many local welfare assistance schemes across England offer a limited and narrow range of in-kind support such as vouchers, specific goods and referrals to crisis support such as foodbanks. There can be significant stigma attached to making use of vouchers or visiting a foodbank.

The LGA advises that 'providing direct cash payments through hardship schemes will maximise flexibility and choice'. It is also the preferred option of people experiencing poverty.

Recent research by Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) into the provision of Free School Meals during school holidays found that most families preferred to receive support through direct payments to their bank accounts, as this method allowed flexibility, dignity, safety and convenience.

Other benefits of a 'cash first' approach

Providing people with cash gives them greater dignity, choice and control, but it also has other benefits:

- Vouchers provided to people experiencing poverty, for example to meet food needs, are often only available for use at a limited number of supermarkets. By providing cash, people can use money at the retailer that best meets their needs and increases the likelihood of money being spent with local, independent retailers, thus retaining money in the local economy.
- Cash payments are a simple and effective means of getting support to people in need as quickly as possible. As payments are made direct to the person in need, partnership arrangements with external VCSE, private or public sector agencies are not needed. Some councils have reported that the move from direct cash payments to the provision of specific goods or vouchers was discouraging some people from applying for support – not because of a reduction in basic need, but because families often need help managing a temporary cash flow problem.
- Cash payments can prevent people from needing to borrow money from high interest (legal or illegal) lenders. By preventing people entering a debt crisis through cash payments, local authorities can help reduce the likelihood of people relying on local welfare provision and other local support services in the future.
- A shift to greater cash provision in Greater Manchester could involve the introduction of no or low interest loans alongside grants. This would mean that some of the money spent through local welfare assistance schemes could be recouped and reinvested back into providing support. A 'cash first' approach could support a wider financial inclusion agenda, linking payments to access to credit union accounts and other financial support services.

Edinburgh

Edinburgh Community Food[167] has shared learning about its Cash-First approaches at a November 2022 conference. Take 5 Access is a partnership supporting Edinburgh's Community

Cafés post COVID with objectives to support individual with healthier food to eat socially, healthier food to take home, resources and skills to use healthier food, have access to Cash-First support and resources and connecting communities through the Community Café network. It aims to reduce the risk of food insecurity, increase opportunities for healthier food; and enhance the provision of skills, resources and supported signposting. Community cafes received fresh produce and recipes for three months, free meals for children, fuel payments for those in need, fruit/meal kits to take home, online cooking groups, Ask and Act: CHAI/GIC, tablets and training for staff/volunteers

Impact: Café staff: 'The [Ask & Act] stalls were a huge hit, and we are arranging for more. We have thoroughly enjoyed taking part in this project. It has engaged us with our community in a fun, caring, supportive and educational way. The elderly in our cafe seemed most to appreciate this. We have a lot of people come to eat so they don't have to, can't or don't know how to cook at home.' REHIS Training: 'Excellent.....good mix of facts, visuals, discussion & real life examples / I will be able to introduce what I've learned over the last two days in our kitchen.' Eat Well Age Well training: 'It has given me the means to enter into the conversation with customers and to access ways to help.'

Challenges

- Understanding ECF has a role to play around cash first when capacity already pushed.
- ECF must support and enable cafes and communities to improve health and wellbeing.
- Complexity of benefits/welfare systems.
- Benefits training from CHAI: highlighted importance of expert partnerships.
- Catering staff/volunteer capacity.
- Adapting project delivery to assist café capacity.

Legacy

- ECF staff: increased understanding and embedding in delivery e.g., Best Start/Pension Credits/£25 Scottish Child Payment uplift.
- ECF developed partnerships, have become a bigger part of a wider solution.
- ECF focused on impact of policy on our communities, voice for community to government.
- Involved in End Hunger Edinburgh, Ending the Need for Food Banks, members of Poverty Alliance.

Other Cash-First approaches: VOCAL Carers' Support –Rounds 1&2; 2022-2023 Food, equipment, fuel payments; IFAN/Worrying About Money? Leaflet distribution (English/Ukrainian) Discover! / Ukrainian response / Crisis food deliveries / Development work; Enliven -2022Community meal + food, equipment, CHAI/HES Ask & Act points; Coorie in –2023Community café community meals, food, Coorie In packs, fuel payments, CHAI/HES Ask & Act points; Implementation of Scot Gov Cost of Living -Campaign Resources; Best Start –ongoing; Added-value tailored boxes, home delivered o£18 fresh produce pcm+ extras; IFAN, signposting and health promotion content.

Leeds Cash-First Pilot and Evaluation

Laura Chalmers, Trussell Trust Area Manager for Yorkshire and Humber, reported in December 2022 that after two years of collaboration the Trussell Trust held a launch event of its cash first pilot with Leeds City Council in late 2022 with 245 attendees (including 56 Councillors) and 8 people from DWP. This pilot includes Leeds North and West, Leeds South and East and Wetherby Foodbanks alongside the Trust and Leeds City Council, the latter confirming recently that they have decided to keep the cash-first element of their local welfare scheme long term. Documents about the pilot and a recording of the webinar are found here: How we're working with local government - The Trussell Trust

The pilot scheme provided cash grants to people in financial hardship in Leeds, running from 1 October 2021 to 1 April 2022, and distributed £45,450 between 187 grants, supporting 283 individuals rather than emergency food aid (parcels). An external evaluation was commissioned that offered these five learning lessons:

1. Cash grants have an immediate impact on a person's financial situation and can prevent them from needing to turn to a food bank for support.

2. Cash grants are a more dignified form of support when people face financial hardship - people overwhelmingly prefer receiving a cash grant than an emergency food parcel from a food bank.

3. People use cash to buy the essential items, particularly food, gas, and electricity. This strongly supports existing international and UK evidence that cash transfers do not lead to 'misuse'.

4. Cash grants can also unlock benefits beyond purchasing the essentials, including paying down debt or reducing the impact of larger one-off costs such as paying for a car's MOT to be able to get to work. This can be vital in putting people on a financially secure foundation for the long-term.

5. Cash grants should be an option when providing support to people facing financial hardship locally, but alone can only provide short-term respite. They should be situated within a wider local ecosystem of support available to people, alongside a national social security system which provides people with enough income to afford the essentials.

The pilot scheme aimed to impact four areas for grant recipients:

1. To increase their emotional wellbeing.
2. To negate the need for further food bank use within 12 months.
3. To enable them to be better able to afford the essentials.
4. To enable them to be better able to manage their financial situation.

The evaluation of the pilot scheme found that the impact of cash grants on recipients was mainly short-term, with a decline after the grant period ended. There were longer-term impacts in some areas. The cost of living crisis and other issues affecting grant recipients such as ill health, benefit problems and debt all restricted the pilot scheme from achieving a longer-term impact.

The underlying causes of need for grant recipients were primarily benefits issues, debt, ill health, and changes in personal circumstances.

Improvements in finances were generally felt for the duration of the grant only, with 91% of grant recipients reporting an improvement in their finances while receiving the cash grant. 78% of grant recipients agreed that their ability to afford the essentials improved during the grant period.

Longer-term impacts of the scheme included the ability to accumulate small amounts of savings, increased confidence in financial management, debt repayment, and purchase of durable household items. The cost of living crisis, other personal issues and the design and delivery of Universal Credit all negatively affected the longer term impact of the scheme.

People supported by the grant commonly received food bank support before and after the grant period. A small percentage needed support from a food bank while receiving the grant. Grant recipients also anticipated that they would continue this use, although nearly all would prefer a cash grant over a food parcel. 94% of grant recipients would prefer a cash grant over a food parcel.

The emotional wellbeing of the grant recipients was generally improved by the cash grant, mainly for the short-term. The cash grant was preferred to using food banks partly because of the negative emotions associated with using food banks. In comparison the cash grant was valued for its flexibility. The cash grant was perceived to provide a more dignified option, which supported individuals' agency and freedom of choice, compared with receiving support from a food bank. Some grant recipients reported however that they had not experienced any positive change to their emotional wellbeing as a result of receiving a cash grant. The freedom of choice of how to spend the cash grant allowed grant recipients to prioritise spending on their immediate needs. The most frequently bought item was food.

Most people spent their cash grant on food as a priority and then spent any remaining grant on other pressing needs, mainly gas and electricity payments.

People liked to choose what food they bought, based on their families' preferences and dietary requirements, and they could buy frozen and chilled foods that are not available in a food parcel. Operationally, the vast majority of grant recipients felt that payment was made quickly and easily. Overall satisfaction with the pilot was also strong. Nearly all (97%) grant recipients felt that they did not have to wait a long time after applying to receive confirmation that they were being awarded the grant. 60% of grant recipients had no problems accessing the cash grant from a cash machine. The top issues encountered related to travel to, and issues at the cash machine.

CFINE[168]: Cash-First and wrap-around

At a Public Health Scotland webinar focused on Cash-First responses, **Community Food Initiatives North East** (CFINE), a charity shared insights about adopting a Cash-First approach based on income maximisation for beneficiaries. They assert that:

- Emergency food does not solve the problem; it creates dependency, erodes dignity, does not change status quo, However, essential if no other way of accessing essential support e.g., food.

- Food is more than often, the "vehicle" to other essential support services available.

- 'Cash first' as a standalone approach simply does not work. Beneficiaries need access to a range of wrap-around services to tackle underlying issues/causes.

- Poverty is often complex and for this reason, requires holistic and person-centred responses. (see diagram overleaf).

CFINE's approach: Income Maximisation example: Support, Advice, Finance, Education

- Financial capability/inclusion team based 'on the ground' at CFINE.
- Welfare/benefits support and advice (including supporting benefit applications, appeals, tribunals).
- Budgeting advice.
- Wraparound support including accessing additional services e.g., Pantries, Volunteering, Employability, Cooking.
- 2021-22 secured £1,586,372 in financial gain for beneficiaries.

CFINE's approach: Income Maximisation example: Employability & Skills Development

- Introductory & Warehouse Skills Development Programmes.
- Stage 1-4 of Employability Pipeline delivered in-house.
- Work experience and training.
- Accredited training (e.g., food safety, forklift accreditation).
- Employability support (CV's, interview prep, job search).
- Cooking on a budget, 1 to 1 SAFE and wraparound support.
- 62% success rate of participants gaining employment within 6 months.

Learning

Here follows a range of learning slides shared by IFAN at a November 2022 conference about Cash-First approaches.

Why cash payments are preferable in a crisis

"Cash transfers empower the poorest and most vulnerable people to make their own decisions about what they need most and enable them to spend it n their own communities."

Why cash transfers?

Cash transfers are an effective way of directly helping some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world, and are good value for money. They form small, regular payments which are increasingly paid through secure electronic systems, such as directly into bank accounts, mobile phone accounts or on smart cards. They empower the poorest and most vulnerable people to make their own decisions, and enable them to spend it in their own communities. Money can be withdrawn and spent when needed, saved up, or

Value for money

Cash transfers empower the poorest and most vulnerable people to make their own decisions about what they need most, and enable them to spend it in their own communities.

Directly giving people small amounts of money means they can spend it on things they need most, such as food, clean water, medicine, or school costs. This cuts waste, delivers value for money for UK taxpayers and makes the cash go further.

Reducing poverty and increasing resilience

Although cash transfers are aimed at providing immediate relief and reducing poverty, they eventually contribute to increasing resilience of poor households through better management of risks and shocks. Through cash transfers people can afford basic health care, more nutritious food and schooling, and help the poorest children grow up healthier and better educated.

"Cash transfers are an effective way of directly helping some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world, and are good value for money"

"Through cash transfers people can afford basic health care, more nutritious food and schooling, and help the poorest children grow up healthier and better educated."

SOURCE: www.gov.uk, Department for International Development, January 2017

www.ifanuk.org/cashfirst

Cash First in practice

On a local level: redirecting support efforts away from food and towards cash/advice

- Cash First Referral Leaflet project – over 90 local authorities
- Connect to local advice and cash first support
- Targeting local referral agents
- Advocating for local crisis grants
- Support members to distribute vouchers/grants

On a national level: calling for systemic change that would see the end of the need for food aid

- Benefit payments in line with cost of living
- Removal of sanctions, benefit cap, two child limit and No Recourse to Public Funds status
- Wages and fair employment practices

The case for cash-first approaches?

IFAN is at the forefront, alongside others such as the Trussell Trust, in calling for a Cash-first approach in the UK to address the causes of food insecurity. IFAN's vision is of a country without the need for charitable food aid where adequate and nutritious food is affordable to all. IFAN calls for governments and national and local partnerships to prioritise a cash first approach to food insecurity and to work together to address the root causes of food insecurity and poverty.

IFAN is working to promote a cash first approach to food insecurity in a number of ways:

- by advocating for all local authorities to provide adequate, well-promoted and easy accessible cash payments to people in financial crisis

- by advocating for systemic changes that would see social security payments and wages match the cost of living and the root causes of food insecurity and poverty addressed

- by co-developing and circulating cash first referral leaflets across multiple local authorities

- by supporting their member organisations to use shopping cards or vouchers and/or cash grants instead of or alongside food parcels or other food support

Please see these links for further arguments linked to this topic

Why Cash First? - Independent Food Aid Network UK

- The case for cash first - moving on from vouchers and food parcels as a response to food insecurity | November 2021 | READ HERE
- Webinar: Cash-first approaches to addressing food poverty | Sustain | February 2021 | READ HERE
- The growing need for charitable food aid and a cash first approach to food insecurity | Isle of Wight Food Waste and Food Poverty Conference | November 2022

Questions arising

- How can local authorities address increased financial hardship and food insecurity in an efficient and just way?

- What work are local authorities and others doing to ensure that money gets directly to those who need it the most?

- How can Cash-First responses work most effectively alongside models of wrap-around support?

- Under what conditions would local authorities consider Cash-First rather than alternative forms of support that might unintentionally create dependency?

- Do the examples in this chapter help us visualise further ways in which community cafes could play a part in actively promoting and participating in Cash-First approaches e.g. like the Edinburgh Take 5 Access arrangements?

- To what extent does York and North Yorkshire find the arguments made by the Greater Manchester Poverty Action persuasive regards theirs, and the LGA's recommended, approach to a cash-first approach for local welfare assistance schemes? Would any change to the existing schemes enhance the positive outcomes for people in hardship feeling dignity, choice and control?

7.7   Tailored / targeted food provision

This section is based on a detailed review of 10 of the most relevant studies.

Definition – targeted (tailored) food aid provision

This section considers work being done by organisations to tailor food support to particular population groups[169], with a particular focus (owing to the availability of evidence) on targeting of food aid for children and families experiencing financial struggle or insecurity.

Tailored food provision, such as school meal and holiday hunger clubs, are an example of 'attended programmes' one of two strategies that provide different possibilities for supporting families experiencing food insecurity:

> "Attended programmes can be devised in ways where children access support in spaces and places that they already attend (e.g., school) as universal provision which reduces the risk of children being further stigmatised."[170]

Holiday hunger has been defined as: "*a situation that occurs when economically disadvantaged households with school-aged children experience food insecurity during the school holidays.*"[171]

The support required follows an annual cycle in line with the school year. A Scottish study identified three broad phases: term time, 1 month before the school summer holidays (pre-school summer holiday period), and during the 6- or 7-week summer break.[172]

Models

Holiday food clubs are interventions which mainly focus on household strategies to mitigate food insecurity especially as it relates to school holidays and lack of access to free school meals. Research has found that these are mainly accessed by children aged 4 to 16.

During COVID-19, tailored food support played an important role in feeding people who were vulnerable, unwell or shielding.

While the mix and blend of activities offered varied, the primacy is *"giving people quality food."*[173]

Tailored food aid is also aimed at particular communities with different diets and food requirements and preferences. A meta review of COVID responses identified examples of tailored provision being made available to families with school aged children, Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, and asylum seekers and refugees made available during March to August 2020. In the absence of statutory support to certain groups during the pandemic, VCSEs had stepped into the gap – often temporarily.[174] There was also some concern that there may still have been population groups who were missed by the support then, or indeed since COVID.[175]

As with other food models, tailored support can also be extended to include advice and support.

Evidence

A Systematic Review of the Evaluation of Interventions to Tackle Children's Food Insecurity (Published online: 14 February 2019)

- UK stakeholders perceive benefits of universal free school breakfast, including alleviating hunger and improving health outcomes, as well as providing social, behavioural and educational benefits. A 2004 randomised controlled trial (RCT) of UK school breakfast provision reported that post-intervention, participating children demonstrated significantly improved concentration, skipped fewer classes and ate fruit for breakfast more when compared to control children.[176]

A free, universal, before-school breakfast club - Magic Breakfast Club evaluation

- The Magic Breakfast project provides schools with support and resources to offer a free, universal, before- school breakfast club. Offering schools support to establish a free, universal breakfast club boosts attainment at Key Stage 1 by around two months' expected progress. There was no statistical impact at Key Stage 2 (Year 6 pupils).
- Key factors for successful implementation of the breakfast clubs were (a) communication with parents to encourage take-up, (b) an established school breakfast routine, and (c) a well-functioning delivery team supported by the wider school. The main challenges were compensating staff for additional hours of work and balancing the supply of, and demand for, food. In some schools, barriers to take-up included earlier start times for pupils, breakfast charges, and a lack of ongoing promotion from the school.
- Pupil behaviour, as measured by a teacher survey, improved in breakfast club schools. This is interesting because it shows that breakfast clubs may improve outcomes for children who do not even attend breakfast club by improving classroom environments. This key conclusion is unchanged from the original report. Activities thought to increase take-up of the breakfast provision included promoting it to parents and encouraging all children to attend while sensitively targeting pupils most likely to benefit.

The Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) was a national programme

- HAF 2021 was delivered at considerably greater scale than previous HAF programmes, with funding totalling £220 million available to all 151 local authorities in England to run clubs in the spring, summer and winter holidays.
- A range of positive outcomes were reported, including improved and increased food intake, physical activity levels, social and wellbeing outcomes, increased engagement; and willingness to try new things.
- Seeking to raise nutrition levels proved complicated to achieve and evidence at scale. The results show a complex picture. At the simplest level, children believed they had healthier lunches on club days, but parents/carers reported that their children both ate less healthy types of food and less unhealthy types of food when attending HAF. The discrepancy between child and parental findings clearly raises questions about how much the parents knew about the reality of food available at the holiday club (recall), their knowledge about 'healthy food,' and the potential bias in reporting the food consumed by their child at home on days they were not attending the club.

Evaluation of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme: A Yorkshire-based review of the implementation and impact of the Holiday Activities and Food programme (2021)

- There was equality of opportunity for children to access opportunities. Children who were eligible for Free School Meals (FSMs) attended the programmes alongside children who paid for their places, at the discretion of the provider. Once children were participating in the programme, there was no indication that children were aware of who was attending with a free place or a paid place. Children had lots of opportunities to socialise and make friends with other children both from their own school and others. This was particularly important after a period of much reduced socialisation due to Covid restrictions.
- Attending a holiday club meant that if children were from households experiencing food insecurity, they were guaranteed a full, nutritious meal that day.

Working in collaboration - Leeds Food Insecurity Taskforce

- As part of the pandemic response (March - September 2020) an estimated 64,000 food bags (equivalent 34,000 food parcels) were distributed from the food warehouse including breakfast and lunch bags for up to 230 homeless people daily (over 68,000 meals)
- Catering Leeds also worked with schools to provide a total of 95,826 daily grab bags and 170,910 daily hampers (34,182 weekly hampers).
- There was no evidence relating to the efficacy of food nutrition available.

StreetGames Fit and Fed Wales report (2021 unpublished)

- StreetGames developed the Fit and Fed project to provide free meals to children within disadvantaged community holiday sports clubs across the UK. The programme aims to tackle three main inequalities—holiday hunger, isolation, and inactivity—by providing food alongside the opportunity to participate in sporting activities and physical activity.
- 93% were more active compared with normal school holiday activity levels
- Sharing learning, good practice and facilitating conversations between delivery partners is a key tool in connecting with wider offers and ensuring Fit and Fed adds value, rather than spreading delivery thinly and with diminishing quality.

KEY INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL FIT AND FED PROVISION

Following the summer of 2018, StreetGames identified eight lessons or 'key ingredients' for a successful Fit and Fed programme. Based on learning from 2021, these have not changed. Rather, the evidence has continued to reinforce the importance of each of these aspects.

FLEXIBILITY

Place Price Time Style People
THE 5 RIGHTS

ASSET-BASED APPROACH

NUTRITION

CONSULTATION

DEMAND-LED

LINKING TO OTHER AGENDAS

PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Outcomes

The outcomes below are derived from the following 10 sources:

1. A Systematic Review of the Evaluation of Interventions to Tackle Children's Food Insecurity (Published online: 14 February 2019)
2. Evaluation of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme: A Yorkshire-based review of the implementation and impact of the Holiday Activities and Food programme (2021)
3. Food Cycle Social Impact Report (2021)
4. Food Insecurity: A Constant Factor in the Lives of Low-Income Families in Scotland and England (2021)
5. Food vulnerability during COVID-19. Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021) An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice appendix.
6. Going universal - The impact of free school lunches on child body weight outcomes (2020)
7. Holiday Hunger Project, a report on the holiday food and activity clubs monitored and supported by York Food Poverty Alliance (June 2018-April 2019)
8. Rose Vouchers for fruit and veg: Final Evaluation Report (2017)
9. Shaping Places for Healthier Lives: about the programme (2022)
10. Ways to care: Forms and possibilities of compassion within UK food banks (2021)

Outcomes

- Improved variety and quality of diet
- Willingness to try new things
- Reduced risk of obesity*
- New skills for young people
- Social connectedness
- Parents can work
- Reduced household expenditure
- Reduced food insecurity
- Improved budgeting
- Changed shopping behaviours
- Reduced takeaways/ fast food
- Improved attention
- Fewer skipped classes

For supermarkets / food providers:

- Improved CSR for supermarkets
- Reduced cost of food disposal
- Increased market trader revenue (i.e., from the tailored voucher scheme.

Examples

Tang Hall Big Picnics and Breakfast Club (York)

The food poverty alliance in York has been a collective measure / model now known as York Food Justice Alliance. Research identified 32 organisations delivering varied community food aid in the city, ranging from traditional soup kitchens to community allotments. One of these was Tang Hall Big Picnics & Breakfast Club (THBBBC).

THBBBC was delivered by Tang Hall Big Local in partnership with Tang Hall Community Centre and Community Base, Tang Hall Food Coop and Food Circle. Community Base, an organisation for people with learning disabilities was already volunteering during termtime and needed the opportunity to continue in the holidays and find a space for people to come to eat their pack-ups in the day e.g., those on Direct Payments having to find their own care/day services.

Tang Hall Big Local picked up on this need and started the holiday picnic. On average, 50 people per week attended for lunch. Part of this tailored offer that worked well was the provision of advice and support, with outside workers from Credit Union, THCC groups, children's centres, all coming & joining in (i.e., not just setting up a stall and waiting for people to come to them). Another learning point was the direct and relentless promotion/holding hands required to encourage people to come for the quality food offer is needed. Cooking sessions developed too to increase knowledge of what people have eaten and how this could be replicated at home.

Red Tower CIC helping tackle holiday hunger (York)

A report looking at the role played by different providers, including Red Tower Community Hub and Chapelfields and Foxwood Community Hubs in York to tackle holiday hunger (2018-2019) through holiday food and activity clubs found that attendees of the 'food club' found it harder to make ends meet during the school holidays than during the school year. Whilst the report doesn't explore impact it presents three different case studies including the route of Red Tower CIC from basic food provision developing into a 'service-plus' project with a rotating programme of advice, support and activity embedded.

Red Tower CIC's model comprised a project manager with volunteers and a cafe (open every Monday for 7 weeks) with fresh food / lunches for every child and baked goods donated with advice on healthy amounts, plus teas/coffees/juices and a Pay As You feel PAYF signs / donations box (takings used to cover overheads). There was also a Food 4u Shop operated upstairs (produce that couldn't be made into lunches) for people to take a bag of groceries home (£1 suggested donation per bag) and volunteers talked to people about the value of the otherwise 'free' food and encouraged people to share what was there/think about how to use it best to limit journey towards waste. There were also craft activities for children and advice giving provided by council staff if needed it on at least 2 of the weeks and toys and games provided every week by the venue. The report found certain aspects that worked well for this approach:

- Outdoor well-being: The garden was enjoyed by customers young and old every week; in the beautiful sunshine mainly and even in the downpours (children literally dancing in the rain.)
- Inclusion: Elder neighbours enjoyed a sit-down, a hearty lunch and others to chat to; Some neighbours who had not been keen on the project to begin with, came to eat at the cafe by the end of the holiday period; People of minority ethnic origin came to the cafe.
- Alleviating hunger: There was enough tasty, varied food for everyone volunteers included every week. Left-over food was taken away by volunteers to feed people at home.

- Zero-Waste: In total approx. 785kg of food was intercepted before being sent to landfill. All recyclable products and waste food was collected for proper disposal by a local compost expert.
- Volunteer experience: 1 intern, 1 coordinator (with one lady piloting her own cafe-concept), 2 staff from the CIC and 13 other volunteers repeatedly contributed their time, resources and enthusiasm. They appeared to benefit, get along well and enjoy it.

There were also some wider benefits. Feedback from OCAY, a local advocacy organisation said that they got more potential users of their services than they did when they ran some standalone events at Red Tower. It showed that the basic idea of a PAYF meal and shop with advice available, it people want it, will work better together than splitting it into two events.

Persistence of the model: The PAYF lunch and food shop was going well on Mondays in 2019 and the aim was to continue running this, as there were frequently more than 50 people coming along. The kitchen equipment received in the autumn was working well. More craft workshops were being delivered and more organisations were offering advice including the credit union, OCAY, Healthwatch and North Yorkshire Police. The Guildhall Ward local area co-ordinator was also coming every week.

Rose Vouchers

This example is selected because it is an approach that has been refined, adopted more widely, and with significant ambition to grow. The Rose Vouchers for Fruit and Veg is an Alexandra Rose Charity project designed and delivered in partnership with Food Matters. Projects provide vouchers for fruit and vegetables to low-income families who have children aged 4 and under. Vouchers are collected at Children's Centres and redeemed at independent retailers in the local community, supporting the local economy[177] and to give their children the healthiest possible start. The ambition of the charity is to increase the scale of their offer five-fold by 2025.[178] To achieve this however, a more (more) sustainable, balanced funding mix will be required.

Evaluation results from Lambeth showed[179].

- 90% of adults and 95% of children are eating more fresh vegetables
- 92% of families say they are feeling healthier 95% felt happier
- 87% of families say they are eating more home cooked meals.

Learning

Enablers / barriers

The literature identifies a range of enabling factors, alongside barriers.

Enabling ingredients

- ✓ 'Contextualised – tailored to local needs
- ✓ Mix of approaches to meet different needs – through local partnerships
- ✓ More than FSM, for example, FSM+15%. Or 'Open to all' - equality of opportunity
- ✓ Parents can eat too, or unused food can be taken home
- ✓ Opportunities for participants and volunteers to build relationships
- ✓ Food vouchers reduce the risk of trying new food / wasting money
- ✓ Deliverers include voices of lived experience
- ✓ Involvement of VCSEs with deeper links to target communities
- ✓ Communicated and promoted through multiple channels – "requires more direct and relentless promotion."

Challenges

- ❖ Variability of approach and quality
- ❖ Evidence is often based on a narrow set of desired outcomes – for example attainment rather than social outcomes
- ❖ Families are rarely involved in the design of these services
- ❖ Funding is often short term and insecure, whereas the cycle of food insecurity is entrenched around the school year. A systematic review published in 2019 found that the evidence for the impact of tailored support to support children's food insecurity was patchy, constrained by a lack of high-quality evaluation and in particular a too narrow set of outcomes measured. [180]

"It is not clear the extent to which families experiencing food insecurity are influencing the design of the interventions that they are the beneficiaries of."

Again, the need for, and difference created by such interventions is determined by the wider system families find themselves in.

Similarly, a challenge with any approach that is tailored to specific contexts is that while this promotes local leadership and creativity, it also introduces variability – not only of approach but also quality.[181]

The case for tailored food aid models?

Interventions that target particular communities (for example refugees) or needs (holiday hunger) provide a more targeted approach compared to 'business as usual' food support. Holiday provision faces similar eligibility deliberations to other models; to restrict to those most in need or open up to encourage great mixing and social cohesion.

An over-arching finding of this review is the ongoing challenge to ensure that dietary requirements, cultural requirements and tastes can be catered for. Cultural[182] adaptations can often be found in the literature in the 'desirable next steps' section.

Tailored food aid models can be justified on a number of levels. Loopstra (2019) argues that "As specific groups have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and its aftermath[183], while already being at greater risk of food insecurity, we consider that targeting and tailoring of support warrants particular attention from practitioners and policymakers."[184]

If a food support ecosystem aims to be inclusive, then including offers that will be appropriate for different community groups has a contribution to make. Similarly, a people-centred approach, would ideally include universal access to sustainable, healthy, culturally appropriate and affordable food.[185]

Questions arising

- How to resource the coordination, quality assurance and requirement to scale up and down in response to need?

- The challenges in implementing holiday food schemes that have wider eligibility than Free School Meals. Where then to place thresholds?

- How best to work with the VCSE sector that may not have food-related expertise but have the trust of people in groups where targeted food support might be most beneficial?

- How best to build on all the learning from HAF in the past and over the next 3 years, somehow creating conditions for resilience rather than long-term dependency?

- How to redress the evidence finding that families experiencing food insecurity were not sufficiently influencing the design of the interventions intended for them.

7.8   Food with wrap around support

Definition

Wrap-around support models are found in settings where food is part of wider person-centred approach to encourage them towards a more stable and secure situation. It can:

- Food venues / settings where there is also access to money advice /other services on site
- Food models where volunteers are skilled to signpost on to other services and / or have access to resources that detail other person-centred services e.g., Leeds Resilience Toolkit
- Apps that empower the individual seeking food to also access other support and services e.g., Hope for Swansea app[186]

This wrap around support can often be found amongst models already described in this report such as community hubs and some food banks[187] that have developed their services to include advice and / or signposting e.g., in Harrogate 4 food banks are collaborating on a pilot with a fully qualified Citizens Advice worker to provide wrap-around support for people using the banks.

The kinds of wrap-around support identified in the literature include, but are not limited to:

Debt advice	Employment support	Digital training	Benefits advice	Financial education
Counselling / Emotional Help	Signposting	Mental Health First Aid	Income maximisation	Job seeking advice
Befriending	Health and wellbeing support	Family support	Housing advice	Advocacy
Cooking classes	Addiction support	Life skills support	Community gardening	Routes to / volunteering
Recovery groups	Local welfare support scheme	Pastoral / spiritual support	Legal advice	Practical services

Some food banks in the UK and Canada offer additional programmes or operate as a part of a community food centre, where people can receive additional services such as benefits

counselling with a caseworker, debt counselling, cooking classes or fuel vouchers, or participate in community kitchens or community gardens.

Evidence

In a survey of a simple random sample of 114 (from 558 possible invitees in the IFAN Network) independent food banks conducted between September 2018 and May 2019, over 60% of food banks offered other services in addition to food parcel distribution. Almost all food banks provided signposting to other services or assistance and 60% offered other services, in-house, as well. The most popular additional service offered was advocating on behalf of clients e.g. making telephone calls on behalf of clients to job centres or housing providers and, offering benefits, debt, or housing advice. Significantly, 47% of independent food banks indicated they also provided services beyond

Figure 4: Other services or activities offered at food banks.

Practical services
- Accommodation support
- Offer household goods (utensils, appliances, furniture)
- Offer fuel vouchers
- Help with home refurbishment
- Access to laundry, shower, or phone facilities
- Social supermarket

Educational
- Computer access and support
- Confidence building/life skills
- Employment mentoring and training
- Food growing
- Literacy skills
- Language skills

Communal/social activities
- Christmas parties
- Community choir
- Arts and crafts club
- Volunteering opportunities
- Games

Social support
- Children's services
- Family support
- Domestic abuse support
- Parenting support
- Women's group

Pastoral
- Prayer
- Listening ear

Health/well-being
- Chiropody
- Grooming
- Optician
- Mental health support
- Personal hygiene products

the 13 types tested in the survey. These were grouped into six broad categories: additional practical services, education activities, additional social/communal activities, social support, pastoral support, or health- and well-being support or services.

Over half of independent food banks were run by a Christian faith group. Most of the remaining (43%) were operated by secular organisations. Local authority social services were a source of financial support for over a third of food banks and provided in-kind support for 23% of food banks. More than 75% of food banks reported receiving referrals from local authority social services/family services, GP or other medical professional, housing associations, Citizen's Advice, schools, children's centres, and/or probation officers. Almost 70% also indicated receiving referrals from Jobcentre Plus offices. The agency reported by most food banks as sending the highest number of referrals was local authority social services or family services. This finding highlights the close relationship that now exists between local government and the local, volunteer-led, food aid sector. their areas.

Outcomes

Key sources where the outcomes (below) were evidenced for this section of the report.

1. Sheffield: Advice and Food Bank Pilot Evaluation (2015)
2. Hartford, USA: Self-efficacy is associated with increased food security in novel food pantry program (2016)
3. Lewisham Homes' Community Food Stores Impact Evaluation (2022)
4. Community store/shop[188] and food pantries[189] reviews synthesised by Dr Megan Blake (2022)
5. The Bread and Butter Thing, impact evaluation (2022)
6. Learning from international experience on approaches to community power, participation and decision-making in health Case Study: Empowerment approaches to food poverty in NE Scotland
7. A survey of food banks operating independently of The Trussell Trust food bank network. December 2019
8. Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 September 2021). An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice.
9. Interventions to address household food insecurity in high-income countries. 2018

The most notable outcomes referenced in the literature include:

- Access to additional services, e.g., benefits, employment guidance, housing
- Alleviation of stress of dealing with an acute income crisis
- Saving money on travel by accessing in-situ/local advice worker at a food bank
- Improved skills via training – some leading to qualifications
- Increased confidence (to access the right support towards financial stability)
- Feeling empowered / being able to make choices
- Increased social inclusion (where individual takes part in education/classes/groups)
- Reduced stigmatisation for individuals / increased feelings of dignity
- Improvements in self-efficacy (for individuals experiencing a novel food pantry approach)
- Improved collaboration across providers/agencies
- Increased reach of projects/support.
- Connecting with community services /strengthening communities[190].

Evidence is emergent around the **preventative effects** of these wrap-around services too and how their design is able to help individuals deal with the root causes of food insecurity[191]. In one study it is asserted that their model was helping to **move households out of food poverty**[192]. Success, for that model (in Sheffield), is measured by the person not having to keep coming back. This pilot was purposely located in an area where there had previously been no existing advice provision. In this model a Sheffield Citizens Advice worker was available at 4 food banks, working alongside food bank co-ordinators and volunteers, who were later trained up to undertake a through initial assessment of social care needs of individuals.

Examples of wrap around support models enabling positive outcomes

North East Scotland

The 'health system' that responds to food poverty comprises three state systems and the nongovernmental agencies. State agencies include i. the welfare system, providing benefits and income support for those in and out of work; ii. local authorities, providing welfare services and working with deprived communities; and iii. health authorities, delivering healthcare provided free at the point of delivery. Neither local authorities nor health authorities directly provide or fund services related to food poverty. They collaborate with the voluntary sector to do so. Health authorities provide evidence on reducing health inequalities, and local authorities support services delivered by the voluntary sector.

Case studies include two non-governmental enterprises - Social Bite and Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) - and explore three key practices:

1. **opening pathways to employment, financial capability and housing (Social Bite)**
2. **supporting poor households to move sustainably out of food poverty (CFINE)**
3. making community grants in low-income urban areas through Participatory Budgeting.

Social Bite and CFINE both provide emergency food aid, develop employment capabilities and opportunities and provide education, skills development and training. Social Bite provides food to homeless people, and through this process facilitates access to housing, healthcare and employment within its broader business. CFINE aims to empower people and communities by promoting the consumption of healthy food, building financial capabilities and building confidence through supported volunteering and employment[193]. At Social Bite, one in four staff are formerly homeless. At CFINE, adults with learning difficulties are provided with supported training and employment. Both organisations provide volunteering opportunities with a continuum of involvement from donating food, fundraising, unskilled manual work, through driving, sales and customer care, to managing the enterprises.

Social Bite – giving voice to the homeless community

Social Bite Academy aims to take homeless people further through a process of supported employment, help with accommodation, training, qualifications, work experience and ultimately a full-time paying job. It focuses on things that people in vulnerable or difficult backgrounds may struggle with, such as employment interviews, CV writing, job-searching and referrals. It provides job placements in the Social Bite cafes and kitchens and placements with organisations, including cafes, hospitality groups and retail outlets.. The Aberdeen cafe is also used as a social space where people in various stages of homelessness can come in for a sit-down meal after the shop has closed for the day. Termed **'social suppers',** it offers counselling and other support for housing and healthcare in addition to food. The social suppers are volunteer-led by people with or without a background in homelessness, and attendees are encouraged to volunteer. For

homeless and vulnerable volunteers this provides one-to-one support and facilitates access to employment, housing, healthcare and training opportunities and meeting others.

The intention is for the training to be certified, to help people build CVs. Volunteers have been recruited and suppers run weekly for mixed and women-only groups. Issues discussed in the suppers have included **politics, addiction, legal struggles, grief, racism, violence, boredom, frustrations with bureaucracy, family estrangement and job hunting**. Suppers link people with homeless charities and a multi-ethnic housing project, information from mental health services, financial advice and food security support groups, among others. They also distribute free condoms and toothpaste, with sun cream as the next priority. Access to social services and healthcare is promoted through referrals to services. Their work has led to reported benefits in access to decent food, and pathways to employment, financial capability and housing, whereby people in the process of stabilising their own lives report a desire to help others in similar situations.

CFINE's work meantime has been found to empower people and communities by promoting the consumption of healthy food, building financial capabilities and building confidence through supported volunteering and employment. The learning report concludes that food can be an effective, accessible way to engage people in activities and develop capabilities that improve their quality of life, such as when food-related activities provide an entry point for health and social service referrals, for training, supported volunteering and employment.

Sheffield Advice and Food Banks Pilot - making a difference to people in food poverty

This pilot project in 2015 comprised a food bank and advice worker integrated model. It was funded by the City Council and implemented in four of Sheffield's food banks with an aim to help vulnerable food bank users who may be experiencing different types of acute income crises. Specifically, it sought to work with clients to address their advice needs, including support in accessing their full benefit entitlement and dealing with benefit sanctions, as well as addressing the impact of other pressures such as debt, housing, employment and low pay.

Via training provided by Sheffield CAB to food bank volunteers, the project had the additional aim of building capacity within the food bank volunteer community by equipping them with the knowledge, skills and confidence required to undertake a thorough initial assessment of social care needs. Potentially this would empower volunteers in identifying immediate and urgent needs which may or may not require external intervention, as well as providing an enhanced service to clients who may be more efficiently restored from situations of food poverty, stress and crisis. There were important variations amongst the two food banks where evaluation took place. Food Bank 1 was approaching the end of its third financial year and was affiliated to the Trussell Trust while Food Bank 2, an independent, had only been operating for less than a year just received charitable status.

Food bank 1 aimed to support clients in improving their lives and moving them out of food poverty, not only through the provision of food parcels, but in working with the wider community

in providing a range of activities e.g. fruit and vegetable growing at the site, along with cook and taste sessions.

> *'Neither the food bank co-ordinator nor the volunteers who were interviewed for the purpose of the evaluation had anything but positive things to say about the integration of the advice worker intervention within their food bank service.'*

Given that the food bank attracting this testimonial was located in an area that has no existing advice provision, the volunteers indicated that having the advice worker on site is: handy because they don't need to go traipsing off anywhere. In addition to its convenience - there were small, but direct material benefits for clients who usually did not have the money to spend on bus-fares in order to see an advice worker at a CAB office outside the area.

The research offered 7 recommendations

1. It is essential that the intervention has clear aims and objectives; for example, regarding income maximisation; supporting service users into positions whereby they no longer need to use the food bank; empowering service users to manage their own problems; enabling food bank volunteers to identify the most vulnerable and to triage appropriately.

2. These objectives should be used to inform the volunteer training which, at present is not adequately tailored to preparing volunteers to undertake triage of immediate and urgent needs, an objective I understood was core to the initiative. Rather than providing detailed information about the benefit system, it is worth revising the training with a more practical and directly relevant focus, with handouts that will give volunteers greater confidence in knowing how to refer clients most in need.

3. Sufficient lead-in time is required to enable advice workers, food bank co-ordinators and volunteers to engage in a dialogue regarding expectations and objectives and to work toward developing a joined-up approach. This is particularly salient in relation to the advice worker issuing food bank referrals and for how long.

4. As part of this process, advice workers would benefit from an orientation period within the food bank, during which they simply observe what goes on, in particular how the client facing work is conducted. This would enable the various stakeholders to identify best practice for referring service users to the advice worker or, conversely, establishing terms by which food bank referrals are issued.

5. In order to maximise uptake of the advice worker service, it is important that all volunteers involved in client liaison have the opportunity to meet the advice worker and have attended the training. This is particularly important at those food banks which are open to the public on more than one day each week.

6. Notwithstanding the need to provide privacy to clients, it is worth considering the positioning of the advice worker service.

7. Once established, the advice worker is likely to become very busy, both with issuing food bank referrals, and in giving advice. Acknowledging that additional costs may be incurred in terms of room hire, it is worth exploring the possibility of extending the time that the advice worker is available before and after the food bank is open to allow for pre-booked appointments.

Another example in the literature[194] of a similar nature is found in Herefordshire where independent food banks were starting to offer money advice though no evaluation was evidence to explore its efficacy.

The learning above could usefully be triangulated with the current pilot of citizens advice and four food banks in Harrogate which we learned about from one of the participating advice workers at the North Yorkshire Partnership Conference.

Hartford, America - self-efficacy increases in a novel food pantry programme

A random control study in Hartford (USA) concluded that 'a food pantry model with **client-choice**, **motivational interviewing** and **targeted referral services** can increase self-efficacy of clients. Prioritizing the self-efficacy of clients over the efficiency of pantry operations is required to increase food security among disadvantaged populations.' In this model clients were likely to experience very low confidence in their ability to become self-sufficient often dealing with unemployment, low levels of income and education with high housing and heating costs, lack of access to transport, poor mental health and low social capital. The model purposely adopted a goal based behaviour change approach[195] with an aim to help residents acquire long-term food security and self-sufficiency. Members attended monthly meetings with the Project Manager who oversaw the co-ordination of case management, motivational interviewing and wrap-around services. Dignity was improved by offering appointment times rather than anyone having to wait in lines; and individuals having a choice of shopping in the food banks. The evaluation found increases in self-efficacy which included:-planning meals ahead of time; making food money last all month; making a shopping list before grocery store visit; comparing prices before buying food to get the best deal; making low-cost meals; buying foods that you think are healthy for your family. The study is an example of how to programmatically design in the ambition NOT to create a cycle of dependency.

Learning: Strengths and limitations of wrap-around service based models – the settings appear to be important

Over half of independent food banks indicated having one or more problems with their premises. The most frequently cited problem by independent food banks (2018-19) related to insufficient or inappropriate space for storing food, but also being unable to offer privacy to clients. Other problems included: not having enough space for running additional activities, the location of premises being inaccessible by public transport, premises unsuitable for, or inaccessible to, people with disabilities, and/or problems relating to sharing the space with other groups.

The case for more wrap-around service models?

In 'Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 September 2021)': An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK' key trends with the potential to reshape the landscape of local response to food insecurity were identified:

- **Cash first approaches are increasingly integrated in local responses to food insecurity;** playing an increasingly prominent role in local responses to food insecurity in the case study areas in both council and community sector provision - income maximisation efforts, cash grants and vouchers. There was a common concern with these approaches though in that success is determined by the adequacy of the social security safety net and/or earned incomes, over which local level governments and organisations have little control.

- **A range of actors are driving for comprehensive approaches and system-wide strategies;** priorities for the future include that work be done to foreground sustainable collaboration in future responses. This should involve key actors including local government departments and public services **that can help people access appropriate support and advice**, as well as other third sector organisations. Food partnerships, food poverty alliances and other local networks continue to be powerful vehicles for collaboration, sharing of good practice, and developing a joint system-wide vision and accompanying set of actions.

Questions arising

- What is the most dignified way to offer wrap-around services to someone presenting at a food venue with very low or low food security?
- Deploy qualified advice workers in situ as part of an integrated model – or would this be off-putting for people, would they see it as 'authority' leaning into their lives 'knowing what's best for them'? How could any mistrust of perceived or actual authority be overcome whereby an individual is more likely to agree to engage with an advice worker. In the 'Next Stop Shop' at FROG in Grangetown (Redcar) the volunteers work seamlessly with a qualified advice worker, dressed casually, and located in the social supermarket ready to support anyone presenting or referred in – but there are no conditions attached, no requirement to attend meetings.
- How important is that these qualified advice workers are also capable in motivational interviewing?
- Would models to train up volunteers in food settings be more likely to succeed and / or how could they integrate with professionals in the advice sector to provide a dignified pathway for individuals towards a more secure situation in their lives?

7.9   Other resources for food response

This model of support is directly inspired by this report: 'Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 September 2021). An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice.' This report highlights funding, food supplies and human resources were key resources for ensuring a food response during the pandemic. The report suggests that:

In York and North Yorkshire, both local authorities worked alongside the voluntary and community sector, health partners, local communities, mutual aids, faith organisations, businesses and many other grassroots networks and contributors to mobilise a response to the pandemic, particularly to support the most vulnerable residents.

This chapter focuses on just one part of that wider effort, namely, the deployment of Defra, and then additional NYCC resources, to provide food access and support in North Yorkshire. Our thanks to the Stronger Communities Programme for providing these insights in October 2022.

Food banks and community Food Projects' (Defra Rounds 1 and 2 and 'Food for the Future' funding Programmes.

- ➥   Number of Projects funded 2020 – 2022: **68 Projects**

- ➥   Number of Providers delivering 2020 – 2022: **41 individual providers**

- ➥   £ investment over time period 2020 – 2022: **£365,861 spent**

- ➥   Core programme outcomes

Defra R1 & R2: Supporting and expanding the direct provision of food for those people and families experiencing financial hardship and offer additional support i.e., signposting for access to longer term help.

Food for the Future: Increased partnership working, with a focus on provision of sustainable food options for those in need, whilst supporting people to improve their confidence and increase independence.

Grant awards were allocated to support and expand the direct provision of food for those people and families experiencing financial hardship with the core aims of:

- Providing food supplies to those in need due to financial hardship
- Providing additional support, for example, signposting people to advice and information to help them access longer term help such as benefits advice or emotional wellbeing support

In 2021, the funding shifted emphasis with a new name 'Food For the Future' (FFTF) which provided grants with these core aims:

- Provision of a sustainable local food option to those in need
- Supporting people to improve their confidence and increase their independence
- Partnership working with others, for example with other food bank and / or community food support projects in an area, statutory services and local businesses.

Commissioner thinking was that as we move out of emergency response and look towards recovery, there is a need to explore how the new and emerging local food support options can be retained and / or developed in a sustainable way on a longer term basis; whilst supporting people to improve their confidence and increase their levels of independence.

Projects receiving FFTF funding were encouraged to demonstrate how their approach / project would demonstrate they would contribute to at least one of the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: <u>Reduced Inequalities</u>

- Reduced health inequalities.
- Improved access to services and / or activities.
- <u>Increased levels of independence</u> and confidence for those accessing services and / or activities.
- Reduce risk factors, including poor nutrition.
- Increased levels of <u>trust</u>, choice and control (individuals and communities).

Outcome 2: Improved Social Connectedness

- Reduced loneliness and isolation.
- Reduced stigma in relation to accessing food support options.
- Improved individual and community health and wellbeing (emotional, physical and social).
- Increased community resilience.
- Increased levels employment, skills and / or volunteering.

Outcome 3: Improved Wellbeing

- Improved emotional, physical and social wellbeing.

Priority would also be given to the following applications:

- Projects that demonstrate a clear commitment to a strengths based approach and promote partnership, collaboration or networking across existing provision – for example, working with other key voluntary organisations, statutory services, or collaborating with local businesses.
- Projects that address identified unmet needs or demand and / or fill gaps in existing provision.
- Projects that can demonstrate that further to Food for the Future investment, the project can be sustained on a longer-term basis. This could achieved be through the

creation of reasonable charged-for-services or embedding educational or training elements in to the project.

- Projects that are inclusive and <u>equitable, as well as flexible and adaptable</u> - for example, able to adapt to varying levels of Covid19 restrictions as required or fluctuations in demand.
- Projects that are <u>rooted in social action</u>, and value the inclusion of volunteers in their delivery model.

Investment enabled VCSEs / food providers to develop capacity, capability, invest in HR resource, equipment, storage, volunteer support, buy food, deliver services to communities in these ways:

Each project / provider awarded a grant was encouraged to complete proportionate monitoring and evaluation. Data analysed from providers in receipt of the two rounds of Defra funding identified a range of outcomes for individuals, communities and their own organisation. These outcomes are presented on the following pages and further work is currently being completed to understand the effects of the Food for the Future programme as evaluation forms are returned.

This section is provided to stimulate discussion amongst local authorities and other funders who may also have invested in food response through funding / grants, and / or providing HR and resources to enable the purchase / supply / redistribution of food surplus in communities. In addition to this snapshot, there are other central and local government resources being used to support food response including local welfare assistance programmes and the Household Support Fund and from Foundations there are a range of cost of living related funds in place that ultimately can support food access.

As a result of the funding projects reported these outcomes for residents / individuals supported by their activity:

- Older residents felt empowered to share food related experiences

- Volunteers have felt purposeful and useful (particularly in the pandemic heights – wellbeing increased reported)

- Increased levels of trust, choice and control

- Better able to engage in other services

- Felt assisted in the prevention of returns / admission to hospital

- Improved emotional, physical and social wellbeing

- Improved meal making skills – ability to chop, slice and cook fresh food items that they previously would have discarded.

- Encouraged to leave house / get out more after a long period of being told to stay indoors

- Specific groceries have been received for those needing a bespoke service.

- Received genuine and tangible support when they needed it most.

- Some have started volunteering themselves who were being supported by the organisations / projects

- Reduced isolation and loneliness, particularly in those that may have felt they'd lost their purpose through losing their job, being on furlough, retirement etc.

- More individuals have had access to food at a time of need

- Improved employability (volunteers)

- More individuals supported sooner due to home visits / conversations that were fed back to befriender (or similar)

- Helped improve people's confidence to socialise

- Stigma has been reduced through inclusion of social activities

- Increased confidence and independence

- Increased confidence in trying new foods and broadening tastes.

As a result of the funding projects reported these outcomes for communities supported by their activity:

- Welcoming and supportive environments were created for clients to socialise and/or request assistance

- Increased levels of trust, choice and control created

- Projects helped alleviate the strain on the family budget

- Reduced stigma in relation to accessing food support options

- Project brought communities together as well as several other charitable organisations either by support or signposting to the right support

- Courses, have enabled inspiration and increased skills for individuals / families to cook and grow food from scratch

- There has been measured reduced food waste for example: *'We have been able to collect vast amounts of surplus food from supermarkets and other sources and have saved at times over 100kg a day of food from being wasted.'*

- Reduced loneliness and isolation in community, through provision of friendly, central spaces to talk to others locally

- Reduced the risk of poor nutrition by providing supervised cooking lessons and access to cookbooks and recipes designed for eating healthily on a very limited budget

- Enabled independent learning and skill development

- Development of a Cash First Leaflet, and similar signposting documents and information that direct people to appropriate sources of support especially around debt and finances. (Increased knowledge of local provision and made accessible)

- Brand new services in communities, for example: a new Pop up Pantry in Settle.

- Potential reduced admission to hospital for example: ''Food First' that was designed to meet the needs of people in poor mental and/or physical health and/or financial hardship has supported vulnerable people at this extremely difficult time, who, without nourishing food may have been admitted to hospital'

- Or enhanced provision for example: *'It has allowed Hellifield to extend the range of activities on offer, so that regular social activities and exercise groups are now meeting and for Ingleton to offer coffee and chat alongside the Pantry offer.'*

As a result of the funding projects reported these outcomes for their own organisations:

- Increased resource to tackle demand i.e., recruitment of a Food Project Development Officer which has allowed organisations to allocate the time required to do in-depth work with clients that they might not have been able to if not for this funding support

- Enabled links to be developed more formally with statutory authorities

- Better able to identify areas of risk and need and individuals in most need of support

- Confidence to apply for funding for a similar project / thematic 'purpose'

- Increased knowledge of crisis, and circumstance, partners and the local picture through attending forums, partnership meetings etc.

- Running more effective services

- Approaching self-sustainability through a combination of members contributions, grant support and local donations.

- Reduced financial strain on small charitable organisations.

- Increased the number of areas covered as an organisation.

- Projects have helped facilitate closer cross-partnership working which has allowed support to be mobilised more quickly and effectively.

- Funding has helped develop organisational resilience.

- Funding allowed organisations to establish themselves as a trusted organisation where people feel safe and secure communicating difficulties with and trying new activities.

- Local businesses and organisations have had the opportunity to work together.

- Increase in profile in the community leading to further referrals and, further funding from local businesses.

- Increased reach of those who would not have attended larger community events through lack of confidence or awareness

- Funding has allowed for target deliveries to meet specific family needs which were not so feasible prior the Programme

- Become a contact point on a weekly basis for emotional wellbeing support in the community

- Organisations have realised their wealth of knowledge on nutrition, growing food and crafts for example. This has inspired some to think how they could run a similar course in future whereas this was not a priority / organisational focus previously perhaps.

Learning: Challenges

The national report cited at the start of this chapter highlighted a range of challenges to consider around funding and resources for food support including, but not limited to:-

- The shift from an 'abundance of funding from March to August 2020' to a situation where funding was less available, and in the interim period, food initiatives set up to respond to the pandemic had ceased to operate – whilst demand was still high in communities for support owing to increased levels of hardship across the general population
- Increased levels of dependency and reliance on services during the pandemic – without those services necessarily being available to the same extent moving towards recovery
- The stipulations and conditions attached to funding for third sector organisations was variable amongst those providing this kind of resource, impacting food aid providers in different ways. In one of the case studies (Herefordshire), a food bank organisation noted that two local authorities of the areas they covered provided direct grants to the food banks, for infrastructure type of funding and some grants for food and vouchers type of funding. The other authority encouraged the food banks to expand and move into debt advice, provision which stretched them further.
- The capacity of small organisations, completely run by volunteers, to apply for funding is very limited so in the absence of that capacity their reliance on local communities is huge and if that community is 'well-heeled, its' easier to expect donations, but in some areas that's much more challenging.
- Keeping the bureaucracy associated with funding / grants to a minimum but within the confines of audit (Source: Council workshop, Belfast)
- More generally, there were challenges at the start of the pandemic and now being echoed as a result of the cost of living crisis in the disruption to food supplies and reduced donations (cash and food / nutritious food especially which is being sold more cheaply in supermarkets). Using surplus food attracts concerns about the quality, quantity and suitability of food sourced this way with research participants saying there needed to be a move away from dependence on food surplus. This was a divergent opinion, however, and others recognised the valuable source of food that this surplus provides the third sector. The language of 'food waste' seen as being 'leftovers' and attracting negative connotations was problematic and 'food surplus' seen to be a more positive framing.
- The human resource dynamics for food response were many during the pandemic and revolved around the availability of a volunteer workforce to support emergency response; and to maintain support as people who had been furloughed returned to work – this brought challenges in terms of induction, safeguarding, proportionate bureaucracy to bring new volunteers in at a time of urgent crisis, training, support and dynamic policy and practices.
- More recent insights gathered in North Yorkshire amongst a small sample of food aid providers points to the concerns with the increased energy costs if they have a premises, in which they have a kitchen / ovens / freezers / fridges to maintain as part of their operating model to support people experiencing food insecurity.

Learning: Opportunities

- Mixed models of funding for the future: For some food providers they felt the pandemic had brought food aid to the forefront of people's attention and this had opened up a wider range of funding options including private investment, from companies and universities (source: Edinburgh charitable food aid workshop)
- The opportunity to continue having 'food conversations' and food funding conversations beyond the experiences of COVID winter grants and Household Support Fund or other central government sources as they are announced
- Different parts of the system working together to support people back to independence rather than continually supplying a food parcel (Source: Council workshop, Leeds)
- New means of sourcing food in practice or in planning e.g., a Leeds food bank (Trussell Trust) has been supporting lots of the independent food providers working together on food supply / distribution / reach into communities
- A scheme where the local authority purchases food (so that it's 'cheaper than Aldi or Lidl) and distributes it via a pantry model, but not surplus food (Leeds are looking at this)
- Exploring collective purchasing e.g., memberships across a collective of VCSEs / food aid providers in a whole place where this might be appreciated
- New actors are now operating in the field of food aid which is opportune in so far as this could provide more channels to reach more people in communities; at the same time, this becomes problematic if they are either a) not connected into local networks of similar food aid / motivated providers and funders or b) if their provision isn't actually reaching the people who are very or most food insecure.
- Sharing or transferring resources in communities - We have come across examples where in some localities fridges previously run by one food aid provider became too expensive have successfully been handed over to another asset in the community to operate as a community fridge, with motivated volunteers working hard to cover these costs and provide a supply of food through that model and equipment.

Questions arising

- For any future funding (by local authorities), what would be an appropriate mix of grants to achieve desired outcomes (and which ones?) whilst encouraging resilience rather than dependence?
- How can funders make fair decisions when faced, almost inevitably during the foreseeable period owing to the cost of living crisis, with heavily oversubscribed applications whether for grants of other commissioning approaches, mindful of:
  - Local context
  - Extent and type of need
  - Population focus (e.g., 'vulnerable', households with pensioners, children, people with a disability or other characteristics determined)
  - The need to ensure equity if managing a place-based portfolio i.e., spread across localities
  - Specific challenges and additional costs to deliver / meet needs in rural / sparse areas
  - The desire to encourage collaborative behaviours in localities serving the same community where models can complement one another
  - Build on any previous funding awards for the same organisation if the intention is to support the evolution of their food support.

- The key purpose of any funding or investment e.g. direct food provision or resources for essential items and / or infrastructure support with an eye to the future
- Whether these are other better / alternative funding options and alternatives for providers to meet their communities' needs during the same time period
- Whether it is important to weight / favour / approve grants for a) new providers / actors in the market or b) prioritise mature / established models or c) build collective approaches whether new or established or developing towards a set of common outcomes
- The reach of any proposed food provision/ support/local project
- The added value by funding something that is located in a wider hub / wrap around model where people not only get food but can have wider needs identified or met
- Value for money
- Evidence that any proposal has an eye to sustainability.

Here are some scoring criteria applied to recent food-related grant applications. Score of 5= eligible, 3 = marginal, 0= ineligible (no further evaluation needed).

- Eligible expenditure under food bank and provision criteria / scheme criteria *(including meeting both aims of the fund, meeting at least one outcome described in the guidance and meeting priority criteria)*
- There is a clear, identified and well evidenced need for the project.
- Anticipated numbers of beneficiaries identified
- The project is financially viable.
- Volunteers and/or community partner involvement
- The organisation/project has appropriate monitoring in place to enable external validation.

3: What % of any funding should be apportioned to encourage solutions aligned to the food ladders strategy model a) catching b) capacity building c) self-organising?

Progression model and /or investing for community abundance?

4: Some strategies recommend a cornerstone approach of moving an individual progressively from food banks to pantries to social supermarkets to supermarkets, essentially a movement from being very food insecure to stability. Alternative thought leaders, as for example suggested in the 'The Food Ladders Project - Mapping the Geographies of Food Provision in Sheffield' (2022) study found that:

> *'Many of the organisations interviewed shared a collective dream of a network of community food spaces in the city. These are cafes to provide a hot drink and meal, but also social supermarkets where anyone can get access to fresh, low cost food. The aim of these spaces is not progression to mainstream commercial provision (i.e., from foodbanks to Supermarkets) but is instead more investment in the community itself. We must move thinking towards a new narrative of abundance in which people don't use services, but are instead part of communities that provide them. Our recommendations set out to make this dream reality.'*

7.10 Food and education

Definition

For the purpose of this report, this section details some of the evidence about models that specifically have a focus on food education or literacy. These can manifest in different ways but can include:

- Community kitchens
- Community food programmes or projects with a specific 'social making' motivation e.g., cooking, learning and sometimes then eating together
- Courses and demonstrations that are accessed at community hubs

At their heart, these food education / literacy approaches aim to reduce household food insecurity by teaching skills to people so they can make limited household food budgets stretch further. They can also provide access to places to grow food or provide cheaper access to food, through community shops, market voucher schemes or food box programmes.

In community kitchens participants prepare large amounts of food together and take home the meals prepared, and simultaneously often are taught budgeting and cooking skills.

In practice, there is often an overlap between food models and education, however, the community kitchen is a particular model of focus in this report based on the availability of evidence found in the review.

Evidence

Community Kitchens and classes

Evaluations reviewed suggest that a community kitchen can become highly valued by stakeholders and has a significantly positive effect on people who participate in classes and on partner organisations (defined as public or voluntary sector organisations)[196].

The evidence suggests that community kitchens typically support an increase in reported intake of nutritious foods and increased healthy food access, increased self-reliance and engagement with social services, improved social skills and enhanced social support, and increased skills, confidence and enjoyment from cooking. However, in an evaluation of the experience of people using a community kitchen programme in Canada, Engler-Stringer and Berenbaum noted the tenuous nature of any benefits provided to programme users since programme availability was subject to holiday schedules, funding constraint and time allotment of staff[197]

In an impact assessment of a food insecurity project in the UK[198] which offered cooking classes, key aspects participants valued about the classes included: learning new cooking skills, sharing their own skills, the information about sauces and spices, communal cooking and eating and the food budgeting tips.

- 75% stated that after the classes they felt more confident about cooking healthily on a budget.
- 72% of participants also stated that their confidence in cooking had either improved or greatly improved.
- 65% of participants stated that they had 'used ingredients which were new to them'.
- 65% of participants reported that they would 'eat more healthily', but 26% did not feel they would.

More than had been expected, classes served as a means for the participants to socialise, share recipes and cooking tips, and to eat together. The social and communal element was important including being out and meeting people. The collective aspect of learning, cooking together and sharing food was highly valued. The value of sharing problems when cooking and eating with other people was also highlighted. Classes had a role in providing a distraction from the participants' everyday problems. There was some evidence that the impact would be longer term for some participants however this was by no means universal. Additional benefits included improved social connectedness and sharing of issues and problems. Some participants reflected on the ways in which coming to the cooking classes felt like they had some control and were making positive changes in their lives.

In another study[199] one food charity operator providing cooking lessons described children who did not know what grapes were because the parents could not afford them. The manager of a surplus food pantry confirmed that people often did not know what the food that was on offer was or what to do with the food they receive because surplus food often includes items that would usually be well beyond the affordability of people on a very low-income (for example asparagus or whole fish). People who were on very low incomes in the communities talked about difficulties with budgeting and being able to access the best deals and the cheapest food. While many organisations offer budgeting advice, it is clear that this advice is not always contextualised for the budgets within which many are operating. In another study the connecting power of community kitchens is evidence:

> "*The Community Kitchen has provided a community space that overcomes social isolation amongst some of the marginalised including the street homeless, elderly and disabled, without restricting ourselves to a particular social group. We often receive guests who are not in financial difficulty, but who want to be part of the community. As a result, new friendships have emerged that cut across cultural barriers in a way that respects people of different backgrounds and assures them that they do not need to compromise on any of their beliefs or values."[200]*

Cooking skills

In 2014 Community Food and Health Scotland/NHS Health Scotland commissioned a realist review of community cooking skills activities run by community initiatives and agencies. Cooking activities are a popular activity run by community groups and agencies such as local authorities and NHS teams within low-income communities. They deliver cooking activities in the form of cooking courses, drop in sessions, and as part of activities such as independent living skills programmes or when supporting people on a one-to-one basis. CFHS has provided development funding for 100s of cookery courses and activities since 1997. In recent years, CFHS has focused on improving practice, supporting the development of self-evaluation and developing the evidence base around cooking skills activities. The review explored issues such as how the social circumstances of participants and the approach of the cooking skills activities can affect the outcomes. The researchers analysed 81 sets of reports and evaluation materials or grey literature from community initiatives and agencies, carried out two focus groups with 19 cooking skills course practitioners, and two focus groups with nine cooking course participants. There were limitations in the quality and robustness of the grey literature. The reviewers overcame this challenge by identifying practitioners' 'strategies': what practitioners do and why they do it and linked these to behavioural change theories. The researchers' conclusions included:

- The cooking activities appeared to be targeting and successfully reaching low-income and vulnerable groups.
- There was evidence of consistent good practice by practitioners.
- Some behaviour change concepts appeared to be used more than others – self-efficacy, salience and social norms were used frequently; and formal goal setting less often.

The CFHS cooking skills study group then ran (from 2016) an 18-month long cooking skills study group for eight organisations– NHS, local authority and community initiatives from across Scotland who are supporting people who are vulnerable or from low-income communities. The organisations were Fife Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Grampian, Edinburgh Community Food, Healthy Valleys, Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Dundee Healthy Living Initiative and NHS Forth Valley. The group adopted recommendations from the CFHS review of community cooking skills activities and   an agreed a list of what outcomes they would evaluate over the next year. CFHS worked with the group to analyse the collective evaluation materials and has reported back on progress since. The study group's

The [cooking skills study group](#)[201] realist evaluation (2016-2018), gathered information from 29 community cooking skills courses (attended by 75 adults -all of whom were managing on low-incomes and the majority were 'vulnerable'[202]). The results showed that:
- 79% improved their cooking skills (a further 16% could already cook)
- 68% made steps to improve their diet

As part of our realist evaluation, CFHS wanted to find out more about 'why' these positive results occurred. Including the different ways, the courses were run which all:

- ran flexibly, were led by experienced practitioners, with people attending the course helping to shape it, and practitioners adapting to people's needs.
- planned activities that were targeted to suit the participant groups attending them.
- asked participant groups what recipes they would like to learn.
- ran for small groups – the ratio of staff to participants was three participants or fewer to each member of staff.
- used recipes that made generous amounts of food – enough to eat a meal at the end of the course and often enough to take a family-sized meal home too.

What course activities made a difference and how can practitioners do these?

There were just two course activities that only some of the practitioners offered and that seemed to make a positive difference for all those who took part in them. These were:

- offering (and people taking up) food-related activities after the course had finished (e.g. attending an additional course, such as a food hygiene course, or taking up volunteering opportunities at lunch clubs or cafes).
- providing 'give aways' during or at the end of the course e.g. recipe ingredients or cooking equipment.

Offering and taking up additional activities made a positive difference across a range of outcomes, but had the biggest impact on improving people's diet.

It's not surprising that people having an opportunity to reinforce what they have learned on a course improves their outcomes. But this might be difficult for some practitioners to arrange, particularly if they are not part of a community or team that continues to have contact with people and/or can signpost them to other opportunities. Other tips and learning are found here and here[203]. Check out CFHS's Chopping and Changing report for further information about what seems to work in cooking skills courses, why and who for.

Outcomes

Key sources where these outcomes were evidenced for this section of the report.

- Evaluation of Fife's Community Kitchen (2012)
- An independent evaluation of Food for Life cook and eat courses, Shoreditch Trust (2017)
- Social policy and embedded evaluation: Assessing the impact of a food insecurity project in the United Kingdom
- Interventions to address household food insecurity in high-income countries (2018)
- A review of practical cooking skills activities which focus on promoting an affordable healthy balanced diet for adults, young people and their families within low-income communities in Scotland (2015)
- Chopping and changing: Evidence and ideas to improve the impact of your cooking skills courses (2018)

The most notable outcomes referenced in the literature include:

- Increasing awareness, knowledge, skills, experience and confidence around healthy eating through classes on topics including:
    - What constitutes a healthy diet
    - The importance of eating healthily
    - How easy it can be to prepare healthy food
    - How to prepare affordable healthy food
- Increased intake of nutritious foods/reduced barriers to healthy eating / significant improvements to participants' diets e.g., in Fife Community Kitchen nearly two-thirds
    - eat more fruit and vegetables
    - make meals using fresh ingredients more often
    - add less salt to food; and
    - eat less food that is high in fat and/or sugar
- Improved ability to plan, shop for and prepare healthy meals for themselves and their families
- Increased healthy food access
- Improved knowledge of selection and preparation of more highly nutritious food
- Improved eating habits and consequent health benefits
- Improved social connectedness / socialising / meeting new people
- Increased self-reliance and engagement with social services
- Improved social skills and enhanced social support
- Increased skills, confidence and enjoyment from cooking
- Budgeting skills
- Life and employability skills (where this forms art of the education model) e.g., in Fife 80% of survey respondents said they had learned new skills from the Community Kitchen, 31% said it had helped them get into education or training and 20% said it had helped them find a job
- Introduction to college (n.b. some community kitchens are able to attract a younger target group / young families and with the Fife model participants who had become comfortable and familiar with the college environment as a result of going to the Community Kitchen and had since enrolled in college courses)
- Sense of achievement
- Increase in confidence
- Choice and empowerment
- Reduced isolation
- Feel valued
- Have fun / have a laugh / a sense of pleasure

Examples

Fife Community Kitchen

In a 2012 evaluation in Fife, the study aimed to identify the health and social impact of the Community Kitchen on participants, including any changes in the way they shop, cook and eat, as well as investigating long-term sustainability and funding options. Success would be judged against the aims of the Community Kitchen "to improve the skills and knowledge of vulnerable groups in Fife by providing groups of participants with an opportunity to cook together simple

healthy meals made from raw ingredients, thus enabling and empowering them to make informed choices about the food they buy and eat". The project's specific aims were to:

- reduce barriers to healthy eating and increase awareness, skills and knowledge around healthy eating for targeted individuals, families and communities;
- increase the quality of life and mental wellbeing of local people engaging with the Community Kitchen; and
- develop team building through practical activities.

How it works (in Fife)

The Community Kitchen aimed to improve the health of the local population by delivering cookery courses including theory and practical elements. These aim to improve the skills, knowledge and confidence to shop for and prepare healthy meals among vulnerable groups in Fife. A range of partner organisations used the Community Kitchen to deliver group-based cookery courses to their service users. The Community Kitchen was available for partner organisations to use with any of their service users, but the main target groups were disadvantaged or vulnerable members of the community including young families, teenage parents, homeless and low income groups.

Delivering healthy eating sessions: a development worker or one of two sessional workers from the Fife Community Food Project and/or a member of staff from the partner organisation organising the session, tend to deliver the healthy eating classes in the Community Kitchen.

Who used the Community Kitchen?

Where the age of the participant is known, **most were young**. 46% of participants were aged 16-24 years and 31% were under 16. This is perhaps not surprising as two of the Kitchen's target groups were teenage parents and young families, but the results suggested scope to widen the Community Kitchen's use among people aged 25 years and over.

The evaluation concluded that the Community Kitchen is perceived to be largely successful in its aims to: reduce barriers to healthy eating and increase awareness, skills and knowledge around healthy eating for targeted individuals, families and communities; increase the quality of life and mental wellbeing of local people engaging with the Community Kitchen; and develop team building through practical activities. The Kitchen primarily services a young demographic but other vulnerable groups are also targeted - it has largely missed engaging homeless people. The study identified a number of key areas where service could be improved for future expansion but that there would be significant financial implications of developing additional Community Kitchen(s).

Shoreditch Trust Food for Life cook and eat courses

In a 2017 evaluation of this community organisation's cook and eat courses run as part of their Food for Life Health and Wellbeing programme, found strong evidence to support the idea of

introducing community-based 'cook and eat' initiatives particularly in disadvantaged areas and in Caribbean and South Asian communities where residents tend to have the least healthy diets.

How it works (London Borough of Hackney)

The courses are mix funded by the local authority within their **Community Kitchens programme**, Hackney and City Wellbeing Network, Shoreditch Trust and private donations (McQuarrie). The study reviewed the six week courses designed for adults run in five community kitchens on housing estates in Hackney and open to anyone in the community over the age of 18 years, and courses ran as part of the Wellbeing Network for people with mental health issues and held in the Healthy Living Centre owned by Shoreditch Trust.

The purpose of the cook and eat courses were to increase participants' knowledge, skills, and confidence in meal planning, budgeting, healthy eating and cooking, and anticipated that home cooking would improve their diets. Other intended outcomes include increased confidence to work as a group, to engage socially, and a reduction in social isolation.

Who attended the courses and what were their motivations?

200 participants attended the adult classes in 2015 and 2016. Most were women (72%), aged between 36 and 55 years old (62%), and 20% aged 26-35 years, with few under 26 years and none over the age of 66 years. Attendance was voluntary and free of charge and the cook and eat courses are a good example of local people taking up an opportunity to improve their own lives. Several reasons explained participants' motivations to attend. Some were clustered around cooking and healthy eating; to learn how to cook (63%), they like cooking (58%), and to learn how to buy and eat healthy food (55%). Other reasons were social and the courses provided an opportunity to meet local people (73%). Loneliness motivated almost a quarter of respondents to attend and for them the course was 'something nice to do' (23%), or participants were worried about their health in the future (23%). A few who attended were unable to cook at home (4 respondents). Others were not motivated by outcomes, they came 'for something to do' and a few came for free food. Every participant gave several reasons for attending and said that they benefited in several ways. Attending due to experiences of ill-health and anticipating worsening health was a recurring reason for attending.

Survey results suggested positive results for those taking part in the classes
- 98% felt that the courses were warm and welcoming
- 95% said they had learnt about healthy foods
- 88% felt more confident about cooking
- 88% enjoyed cooking with others
- 68% enjoyed eating a meal together (68%).
- 70% said they had improved their diet including
- 80% cooking using more ingredients
- 73% eating less salty and/or sugary foods
- 69% eating more fresh fruit and vegetables

The majority of respondents made improvements in their eating habits:
- 80% cooked more for themselves, family and friends
- 74% ate less processed or ready to eat meals
- 58% ate fewer takeaways

The majority felt more optimistic about the future (63%), better about themselves (55%) and many felt more able to chat to other people (50%) and some felt more confident about making friends (40%). The target outcomes did not capture the full impact of the initiative, particularly for those in poor health, those anxious about their future health and those struggling to live on low incomes and in poverty. For these attendees classes enabled them to feel valued, to have fun and to laugh, and gives them a great deal of pleasure.

Learning

Community Kitchen (Fife)

Strengths / effective aspects
- A domestic, homely environment
- Well-equipped
- Facilitates the delivery of healthy eating sessions
- Staff who deliver courses at the Community Kitchen
- The Community Kitchen has social benefits for participants
- The management model of the Community Kitchen minimises on-going costs and overheads.

Challenges
- Barriers to accessing the Community Kitchen - a small number of survey respondents said that it was sometimes difficult to find a parking space and a few others said they found it difficult to get to the Community Kitchen using public transport.
- Participants and stakeholders identified a few areas for improving the Community Kitchen: extend sessions and programmes; extend opening times to include evenings and weekends; increase capacity of the Community Kitchen
- Income generation - The Community Kitchen is available for use free of charge to partner organisations and service users from the 20% most deprived SIMD neighbourhoods. It charges a fee for other use of the Community Kitchen and aims to use 25% of its time for income-generating work and 75% as non-income generating activity. However, it appears that this aim was not achieved in that there has been less income-generating activity than expected.
- There are several barriers that hinder individuals' ability to eat healthily, including: a lack of awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet; a lack of skills, confidence and knowledge to shop for and prepare healthy meals; a lack of available and affordable healthy produce, particularly among low income communities; and cultural habits and traditions.

Cooking courses (in Hackney)

Strengths

- By understanding how to work closely with residents, and listening to them, Food for Life staff have designed an initiative that meets their needs and wishes.
- As a well-run organisation Shoreditch Trust are able to use their community connections to reach out to those with poor diets, although statutory and voluntary agencies could make better use of cook and eat by referring those with poor diets, who are overweight or obese.
- Staff have the confidence to show leadership by organising courses which extend the knowledge of participants to show them what is possible and what options are available to develop a healthy habits.
- Key to the high quality provision and its success is the use of knowledgeable and committed sessional staff sensitive to working with those on a limited income and with an ability to incorporate those with disabilities and with long-term health issues into a group.
- The cook and eat initiative model provides opportunities for developing a more integrated system of commissioning. Complimentary projects could be run at the same centres to capitalise on the additional motivations of cook and eat participants to make further improvements to their lifestyles.
- The findings show that the courses were well run, participants learn, found them pleasurable and many enjoyed them socially. They show a synergy between motives for attending and the course itself, indicating the relevance of cook and eat classes to residents' needs.

Challenges

- Implementing community-based programmes in low income stressed neighbourhoods is difficult and requires skill, dedication and hard work over a long period of time.
- The courses were oversubscribed indicating a demand for the courses.
- The challenge for staff is, however, to sign up residents who live locally and who have low socio-economic status.
- It was difficult to recruit people living within a short walk of the kitchens (in Hackney) for reasons including a lack of confidence to try something new, associating a course with school that 'never did anything for me', shift work, chronic illness or an unwillingness to be out-and-about in the early evening.
- How to motivate local people with poor diets to attend may require 'extra' encouragement from GPs, nurses, voluntary organisations or housing officers.

Other examples in the literature

Crafternoons, cooking lessons and others. As a result of putting on a craft activity, which included a cup of tea and a snack, it was reported that the number of medical visits by older people in the village went down. Crafternoon sessions facilitate social connections and a sense of purpose for older residents in the community, which has the outcome of enabling them to live longer and better lives but also makes them available as a motivated resource for community self-organisation.

Cookery lessons. One model comprised a six-week cook and eat session called 'healthy, wealthy, and wise' where participants do five weeks of different recipes, mostly fake-aways because that is what people like to eat. This is all done with basic equipment. Participants play icebreaker games and are given a choice of recipes to decide what they are going to cook – providing choice and a sense of empowerment. Participants sit together and eat. They try to get kids involved as well. The aim behind these courses is to find a fun way for people to learn to cook healthy options within a tight budget. Residents (primarily women) talked about the difficulty of getting family members to eat fruit and vegetables but reported that when trying the recipes at home, they were able to "hide" these items in food that looked familiar. Many spoke with a sense of pride at being able to provide healthy foods for their families that they would eat and enjoy. By enabling new ways of cooking, these sessions also reduce stress associated with trying to find low-cost food that families will eat that are also at the same time healthier options. Building on existing food skills participants began to be more confident and have more positive relationships with their food. This intervention also expanded the reach of their services to a wider range of age groups in the community thereby enhancing the communities capacity to build resilience.

The case for community kitchens?

The investment case for the Fife Community Kitchen was oriented around **public health challenges**, specifically data relating to obesity, being overweight, links to type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, some cancers and premature death. The total cost to Scottish society of obesity was estimated at £457 million including approximately £175 million in direct NHS costs back in 2012. Obesity was also recognised as affecting employment, production levels, and mental health. The case for healthy food was made by providing evidence that lower income families in the UK were reducing their consumption of fruit and vegetables. Statistics released by DEFRA showed that lower income families in the UK reduced their fruit and vegetable consumption by nearly a third to an average of 2.7 portions per day and that recession and rising food prices contributed to this trend. Before the Community Kitchen was developed, NHS Fife and the Fife Community Food Project had identified a lack of suitable facilities to meet the significant need for basic cookery classes for people in deprived areas of Fife to help them develop the awareness, knowledge and skills to prepare healthy meals. The Community Kitchen was led and funded by **NHS Fife** and was run in partnership with **Adam Smith College, Fife Council and Fife Community Food Project**. The **Food and Health Strategy Group** contributed a one off amount of £20,000 to develop the Community Kitchen and Fife Community Food Project contributed £11,500 in 2010 to purchase a Smartboard, to upgrade the equipment and work surfaces, and to purchase light equipment. Any items that were lost or broken were replaced by Fife Community Food Project and this was absorbed in their core budget. On-going costs such as electricity, cleaning, equipment maintenance and booking administration were met by Adam Smith College's main budget.

The important thing to note is that the Community Kitchen aligned with numerous national and local policies, strategies, priorities and ambitions – across public health, but also at a local level it

would contribute to the achievement of several Fife-wide priorities linked to its 2011-2020 Community Plan. The most direct link was to the aim to reduce inequalities which included an outcome to 'improve the health of Fifers and narrow the health inequality gap'. The Plan noted the importance of improving the health of Fife's most deprived and vulnerable households, an aim which the Community Kitchen shared. The Community Kitchen also aimed to help participants to improve their skills, including cooking and life and employability skills such as teamwork, thereby helping to move participants closer to work, education or training and contributing to targets related to increasing employment. The Community Kitchen was also directly linked to several national and local outcomes identified in 'A Stronger Future for Fife – Single Outcome Agreement between Fife Partnership and Scottish Government 2009-2012'.

Other similar initiatives that have made effective use of income generating activity reported in the Fife Community Kitchen Evaluation. Durham Community Kitchen runs a community cafe and plans to deliver training for hospitality businesses; Community Training Kitchen in Inverurie charges a fee to organisations using the Kitchen but ensure that the classes are free for the service users. Some initiatives such as Knowle West Health Association Community Kitchen and Community Kitchens Northwest (USA) run classes for members of the public, for which there is a nominal charge, on various topic including: one pot meals; food on a budget; and diabetes and weight control.

The case for food education / cooking classes

Evaluations suggest that attending cook (and eat) classes represents a moment in time when participants are motivated to improve their lifestyles, it is a time of heightened awareness about their health and they learn that they can make a difference to their own health. This situation presents an opportunity to develop an integrated set of interventions alongside cook and eat sessions to support participants sustain these improvements such as exercise. A range of health, wellbeing and wider social benefits are in evidence and they can be targeted and or inter-generational in their approach depending on the desired outcomes. These classes can effect behaviour change for participants around how they shop, cook and eat. For those people struggling or seeking to stretch their budgets, skills can provide greater confidence to provide healthier food for their families or households that they might not otherwise try.

Questions arising

- Are these interventions attractive for Public Health investment in York and North Yorkshire?

- What opportunities are there for building on existing community assets to develop community kitchens and classes where they will help people that are struggling, stressed or having to stretch their budgets?

- How viable are community kitchens in rural or sparse communities?

- What can we learn from the ongoing work of Community Food and Health Scotland with their innovative approach to evaluating the efficacy of these kinds of food and education models, as well as the new research and evaluation commissioned to build the evidence base on the nature and extent of community food activity in Scotland; identify the contribution of this work in reducing health inequalities and barriers to healthy and affordable food; explore new ideas for improving food and health work.

CFHS is currently working with the Scottish Government, community food networks and colleagues in Public Health Scotland to plan how the community food sector can be supported in the future.

7.11 Community food initiatives / projects

This section is based on a detailed review of 11 of the most relevant studies, together with additional research from the grey literature.

Model definitions and descriptions

Research from Scotland provides a working definition and framework.[204]

> *"Community food initiatives (CFIs) aim to ensure that people have access to affordable, acceptable and adequate food."*

CFIs have a variety of aims and may work within a geographical community or a community of interest. Public Health Scotland's community food work has focused on supporting CFIs that aim to address or mitigate health inequalities. CFIs have supported organisations that aim to tackle access, affordability, acceptability, availability and/or the adequacy of good food within their communities.

CFIs come in a range of shapes and sizes, but fall into three main groups:

1. Initiatives that run food activities as part of their wider work (e.g., youth clubs, Development Trusts).

2. Initiatives whose core work is about food, e.g., lunch clubs, community cafes, community allotments, community shops, food or meal delivery, food-based-social enterprises.

3. A third type of food organisation are 'anchor' organisations that support community food activities locally by supplying food, outreach activities or providing facilities for other organisations and agencies (e.g., cooking classes, training, training kitchens).

CFIs deliver activities for a range of reasons, including to:

- Address food insecurity (e.g., food banks, social meals).
- Increase food access: fruit and veg barras, community shops, shopping or meal service.
- Mitigate social isolation and/or promote good nutrition: lunch clubs, community cafés, social meals.
- Develop individual skills and/or promote community development/environmental aims: food growing, cooking skills, community-led research.

Community food projects

The Eden Project Field Guide to **Community Food Projects**[205] meantime has developed a useful framework to better understand the range of activities being carried out. The underlined models feature predominantly in this section based on evidence that was available for review at time of writing, though others are referenced in terms of examples where appropriate too.

Growing food	Be enterprising	Make something	Sharing and celebrating
• **Community food garden / community gardening** • Allotments • Community orchards • Community growing on farmland[206] • Home growing and shared gardens • Guerrilla gardening • Wild food and foraging • Community-supported agriculture (CSA) • Livestock and bees	• **Food co-ops and buying groups** • Box schemes • **Community shops/retailing** • **Community cafes** • Pop-ups • Food hubs • Farmers markets	• Using up food that's being wasted • Making and selling your own produce • Sharing your skills • Community composting	• Sharing food in your community • Supper clubs • Lunch clubs • Food Swaps

*"Food is a great way to bring people together in your community. You can get your local community growing, cooking and sharing food that is not only good for them, but also the environment. There are many fantastic examples of community food projects across the country, which are often about **more than just food.** Many of them also aim to improve the community and the environment. Projects are often set up to create an alternative to the way most people shop, cook and eat or to learn new skills. Community food projects are all about allowing local people to take control of where their food comes from and connecting them with each other and where they live. A food project is a great way to get everyone involved, bring communities together, helping to create a sense of local pride." (Eden Project Field Guide)*

Community retailing

Community Food and Health (Scotland) (CFHS) defines **community retailing** as:

"Community groups selling affordable, quality foods within or for low-income communities."

All community retailers focus on selling fresh fruit and vegetables, and many sell a small range of other healthier foods. There are also community retailers, usually community shops that sell a wide range of food and other non-food products.

Every community retailer is different because they have been set up to meet differing and specific needs within their communities (e.g., limited access to shops, poor-quality fruit and vegetables available locally or few opportunities to meet other people). When, where and how they run, how they are managed, what they sell and what other activities they provide (if any) reflect these differing needs.

Evidence

This section begins with international evidence, which draws on a larger evidence base than UK-only studies. Examples that illustrate the different types of community food initiatives / projects are then presented.

International evidence. Interventions to address household food insecurity in high-income countries. (2018)

- This review evaluates evidence on interventions intended to reduce household food insecurity in high-income countries. Research on social protection interventions suggests both cash transfers and food subsidies reduce household food insecurity.

- In contrast, research on community-level interventions, such as food banks and other food programmes, suggests limited impacts. Alternatives to, or enhanced, food banks such as community shops or community kitchens have become common, but evidence also suggests they may be limited in effectiveness *if* they do not reach people experiencing food insecurity. This review highlights the difficulty of trying to address household food insecurity with **community-based food interventions** when solutions likely lie upstream in social protection policies.

'Growing food' (international evidence)

Community Gardening: Stress, Well-Being, and Resilience Potentials

- A Singapore study (2020) found community gardeners to have significantly increased subjective wellbeing, optimism and resilience compared with a control group. This indicates that engagement in community gardening may be superior to individual/home gardening or non-gardening outdoor activities. These novel results also indicate some potential for mental health benefits in urban environments, specifically in terms of subjective well-being and resilience. These findings have implications for future research in clinical psychology, mental health promotion, and policy (n=111)

- An impact study of community gardening used in domestic violence shelters in California found that it eased adjustment to the shelter and relieved stress and improved mood (n=81)

- A study of 50–88-year-olds showed significantly lower levels of perceived stress for the allotment gardeners compared with participants who performed indoor physical activity. However, there was no significant difference in the perceived stress levels between the allotment gardeners and home gardeners, or those who performed outdoor physical activity.

- Community gardening has been proposed as a means to foster good health and well-being by furthering resilience on three levels (individual, social, and natural environment), strengthening social resilience, and motivating neighbourhood improvements, particularly in deprived areas.

- Evaluation of The London Food Poverty Project for low-income communities identified community gardening as a conduit for connecting people, building confidence, wellbeing, and improving both gardening and cooking skills.

- In New South Wales, participants of the Community Greening Program reported a significant increase in their shared emotional connection with the community as measured by a quantitative survey at the beginning of their participation and up to seven months later. Participants who were not eating any fruit and vegetables or cooking healthy food at the start had changed these behaviours at the post test. Qualitative data also revealed positive changes in both inter- and intrapersonal outcome

'Be enterprising'

Food co-ops and buying groups. Shaping more resilient and just food systems: lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.2021

- Community-led solutions such as community supported agriculture and food cooperatives present a promising way to enhance consumer equity and justice through engagement with food systems. Public funding could support community-led action to build enduring support infrastructure and organisations.
- People-centred food systems require 'transformative governance' which is rooted in meaningful engagement from civil society.
- Public sector procurement has the power to exert change by sourcing sustainably produced food that supports public health objectives. But to supply large public contracts, small-scale producers require intermediaries such as processing facilities. Public investment in this infrastructure would enable smaller-scale producers to access new markets and support expansion, creating a more equitable producer landscape.

Side note: Sustain reports that more and more communities are setting up food co-ops so they can get good food at an affordable price and have more control over where their food comes from. Co-operation is all about people working together to achieve something they couldn't do on their own. In the case of food co-ops a group of people volunteer their time and pool their buying power so they can order produce at cheaper prices, direct from suppliers and local farmers.

Sustain has published a toolkit that helps anyone wishing to set up a food co-op and an interactive locator map

Map | Sustain (sustainweb.org)

Community cafés
Supporting and Strengthening Community retailing (2018)[207]

- This study recognises that community retailers want to stay locally based and run. However, it suggests that by working together, community retailers could reduce their costs and amount of work needed to run and develop their services. This could include buying produce jointly (to reduce the cost) and working together to apply for funding. The research also suggests that community retailers could look at how the resources they already have (e.g., premises and transport) could be used more effectively among themselves, or with other third sector groups.

- The operational recommendations focused on training and information needs. All would gain from making it easier to share information between community retailers, for example using an online resource. Such a resource base could also include training materials to develop skills and expertise. The range of material provided could include support with business skills, retail skills or governance of community retailers.

- The time taken to source good quality produce all year round, at the best possible price, can be an issue for community retailers. Depending on price and availability, they may buy from a number of suppliers, including wholesalers, farmers, local producers and community food networks. In addition, checking the quality of produce to maintain standards may take staff away from other work (which affects capacity). The research also found that community retailers may find it difficult to work out how much produce to buy, which could result in high waste levels (between 20% and 30%).

Community food shops

An Eden Project Guide to Community Food Shops (2015)

- There are over 300 community shops in the UK, and they are mostly found in rural areas. They tend to be very responsive and listen to their customers' requests. Some have taken over commercial shops that have closed, others have started from scratch to address a local need. Community shops get a group of people with a range of different skills and experience together, and often rely heavily on volunteers to run them.

'Make something'

- Brighton & Hove Food Partnership includes a scheme called 'In the Bag.'[208] Sponsored by Sussex Cricket Club, the recipes are designed to encourage families to cook together. The bags include activities for children. Importantly, the ingredients are chosen to use surplus food that would otherwise go to waste.

'Sharing and celebrating'

Navigating Storms: Learning from Covid-19 food experiences 'Food Vulnerability During Covid-19' Participatory Panel. (2021)
- Panel members were keen to emphasise the power and value of local projects. Eating together and sharing food creates a distinctive camaraderie, and relationships reduce stigma and enhance support.
- Volunteering increases a sense of purpose and self-worth. For some, the opportunity to be involved in tackling food waste and encouraging healthy eating was also significant.
- As well as existing projects a lot of informal, new work began. "Community responses were perceived as 'natural'. Communities have long come together, both in 'ordinary times' and in a crisis."
- The Panel felt projects already 'on the ground' were well placed to plug gaps in statutory provision, more in touch with local needs and better able to harness and channel local support.

'Sharing food'

Shaping more resilient and just food systems: lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.2021

- As a direct reaction to COVID-19 lockdowns, self-defined Mutual Aid and COVID-19 community response groups sprang up around the UK. The principal functions of mutual aid groups have been to support neighbours in self-isolation by collecting food shopping and prescriptions and sharing advice and information.
- They have also become forums for sharing food and plants and have linked with other community efforts coordinated through charities, and community and religious groups focused on food and meal provisioning.
- Pre-existing community food projects described huge increases in offers of help with food growing, cooking and distribution.

Outcomes

The outcomes are derived primarily from the following evidence sources:

1. Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 September 2021). An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice.
2. A snapshot of Covid-19, food insecurity and community food initiatives What happened and what can we learn? (2020)
3. An Eden Project Field Guide to Community Food Projects (2015)
4. Community Gardening: Stress, Well-Being, and Resilience Potentials (2020)
5. What are the health and well-being impacts of community gardening for adults and children: a mixed method systematic review protocol. 2014
6. The contribution of community food initiatives to national food and health programmes (2013)
7. Shaping more resilient and just food systems: lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic (2021)
8. The Food Ladders Project - Mapping the Geographies of Food Provision in Sheffield. 2022
9. Navigating Storms: Learning from Covid-19 food experiences 'Food Vulnerability During Covid-19' Participatory Panel. (October 2021)
10. Community and Health Scotland Strengthening the future for community retailers (2018)

Outcomes for individuals from community food initiatives / projects *(will vary per model and the extent to which people come together to do something as part of a CFI or project)*

- Improved diet/food access: fruit and veg barras, community shops, shopping or meal service.
- Mitigate social isolation and/or promote good nutrition: lunch clubs, community cafés, social meals.
- Develop individual skills and/or promote community development / environmental aims: food growing, cooking skills, community-led research.
- Easier to get involved compared to higher commitment alternatives e.g., community gardening.
- Wellbeing, optimism and resilience.
- New friendships, camaraderie, reducing stigma e.g., if there is a sharing, celebrating, growing or eating together element
- Reduced social isolation, *"A place to go"*
- Increased self-awareness / understanding of situation
- Shopping locally
- Reduced food supply chain and cost of food disposal.

Outcomes from community food projects can be tracked in these ways too

People
How it helps individuals and the community, e.g. health and wellbeing, shared ownership and decision making, buiding a community that includes everyone.

Environment
Benefits to your local area, the land, animals and wildlife plus connecting people with where they live, the land, and nature.

Money
Spending money with local food projects helps support local jobs and your local economy, food could also be more affordable.

Learning
Acquiring new skills, training others or giving people useful work experience.

Taste
Better tasting, fresher food which can be more nutritious and better for you.

Examples

Granton Community Gardeners – community development in action (North Edinburgh in a locality recognised as an area of deprivation)

This case study looks at how a community gardening project started in 2010 from a conversation between neighbours about a small piece of unused land and has grown into a local charity hosting regular community meals and events, group gardening sessions and tuition, and a number of thriving connected projects including a bakery, a chicken co-operative, and a free-shop.

The main site is managed by a working group of staff and core volunteers, who oversee shared food growing, as well as all the different uses of the garden, including hosting activities for school, and other young people's groups, hosting large community events, and being a resource hub for local gardeners.

The project has found that for a lot of people, the diminished individual responsibility, and increased sociability and mutual learning of shared work makes it easier to get involved, compared with other higher commitment alternatives (e.g., allotments).

With three open gardening sessions per week, their approach is that 'everyone's welcome, but never obligated.' There is enough of a core group of volunteers to keep on top of things, so that other people can take part when they want to.

A natural progression of the project's work has been setting up community meals. At the very first meals, people taking part were asked to bring a dish to share that included produce from their own garden or a community garden. These attracted up to 20 people. In 2013, a Harvest meal attracted 60 local people, and that winter, a Burns Community Ceilidh sold out 250 tickets which have since become a very popular annual local celebration and have sold out for six years in a row.

A culture has grown of sharing regular weekly meals featuring food grown in the local gardens, but most is sourced from FareShare, and other donations. Food is prepared by a cooking team of volunteers led by an experienced chef and is provided free/donation. Everyone regularly participating is encouraged to contribute in some way – for example by helping wash up, setting tables, donating produce, or by delivering meals to people unable to get to the venue. The meals are open to anyone. Those experiencing food insecurity can access nutritious tasty free food, with dignity.

> *"It has also been interesting to observe over time, community connections and mutual understanding, gradually strengthening simply as a result of 30-50 neighbours from a wide range of age groups and cultural backgrounds, eating together around large tables each week."*

For more details about the enterprising elements that have evolved such as the chick co-operative, the Granton Garden Bakery and the Free-Shop please see full case study [here](#)[209]

Initially this project began with a budget of £10 donated at the first family gardening day and some loose change they dug up, along with donated tools, plants and seeds. In 2012 a grant from the Big Lottery Fund Awards for All programme was used to run a 'grow your own' course which attracted new members to the project. Later it was awarded funding from the Voluntary Action Fund to run volunteer capacity building training. More recently the organisation has been funded by The Scottish Government's Investing in Communities Fund, The National Lottery Community Fund, The Robertson Trust, and STV Children's Appeal.

Further community gardening case studies are found [here](#)[210]

Kate's Kitchen – Pay What You Can Community Cafe

Kate's Kitchen (KK) is based in Dumfries and Galloway. It runs a 'pay what you can' café which is open to anyone. The café offers full lunches twice a week, and light lunches another two days when group activities are running. It is funded through the Scottish Government's Fair Food Transformation Fund. It also runs a gardening service. Volunteers are essential to KK. To ensure continuation if and when funding ceases, the staff have been working with them to develop the skills required to take over ownership of the service. Some of the volunteers have been service users or customers in the past: some still are to some extent but are moving towards a more

positive destination and less supported volunteering. Evaluation findings showed that for most, but not all, the services had been life-changing, and had given their life a purpose. Outcomes reported included more confidence building new friendships and having somewhere to go were all highlighted by other service users. The questionnaire also highlighted the transport costs and difficulties faced by a quarter of those surveyed. This finding has since been used to inform funding applications for an outreach service. Further **community café case** studies are published by Community Food and Health Scotland [here][211]

Leeds based project highlights social connection through food growing[212]

Growing Friendship is a new project providing seedlings, tools and other inputs, as well as training workshops for asylum seekers, refugees and people in food hardship to grow and harvest vegetables at home or other growing spaces around Leeds. It is the latest in a series of #getgrowingleeds initiatives that have emerged since the pandemic to support people to grow food and is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund. The seedlings are grown by experienced volunteer food growers from around Leeds and dropped at Meanwood Valley Urban Farm collection point ready to be picked by anyone interested in growing. The project gives out growing advice via a community Facebook Page. They have run growing workshops giving out growing packs of seedlings; compost; pots and tools for people who would struggle to get their own. The team was planning Harvest workshops to celebrate what everyone has grown and swap recipes and cooking ideas.

> *"By encouraging experienced food growers to grow extra seedlings to share with people who are new to food growing, this project creates a support network of new food growers and new friendships that wouldn't happen otherwise. This is what inspired the name of the project in the first place. We hope that new friendships along with delicious fresh vegetables and confident new food growers result from this new collaboration."*

Sustain are encouraging more areas to launch Veg Cities campaigns and get local businesses and organisations making veg pledges. Veg Cities is a campaign of Sustainable Food Places and is run in partnership with Peas Please.

Learning

- The Eden Community Food Project Guide recommends being creative to maximise community benefits e.g.
- Using local green spaces or unloved areas to create projects that build the knowledge and skills to grow fresh, local, seasonal food
- developing local enterprises and jobs around the growing and processing of food
- creating opportunities for people to learn and to involve schools and young people
- linking local people making food (producers), selling food (retailers) and those who buy it (shoppers)
- promoting healthy living and improving general wellbeing
- ensuring money is spent and stays in the local economy sharing and celebrating food.

The Guide has practical tips for setting up a project along with thoughts about the resources required, assets to identify and challenges likely to be faced with each type of project. The key tip is:

The Sustain archive also includes an old publication though it is unclear whether a similar resource exists now. The directory listed projects including food co-operatives, community cafés, school breakfast clubs, cooking clubs, food growing projects and farmers' markets. It was designed for anyone with an interest in local food initiatives, especially anyone running or trying to start a community food project.

Sustain also have a series of guidance leaflets called 'Cracking Community Cafes![213]' to assist with the operation of this model.
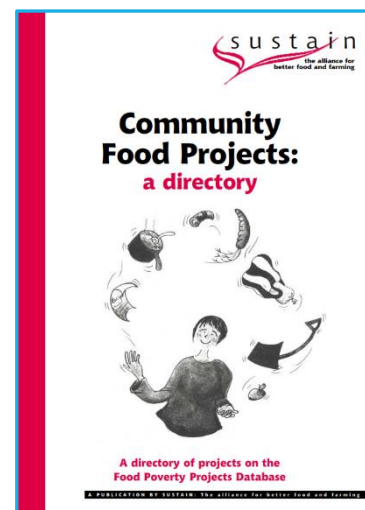
This resource - **community food activity | Community Food and Health (Scotland)** is also helpful to better understand how community food activity has been classified, described and evaluated in Scotland over many years and includes practical case studies for different models referred to in this paper

Making the case for community food initiatives

A 2014 publication[214] focuses on the work of community food initiatives working with older people helpful to CFIs in building and articulating the case for their work with older people. It gives an overview of the needs, contexts and strategies engaged in developing food work with older people, described in the format of a simple theory of change model. It is based on consultations with CFIs working with older people and there are illustrative models for each of their projects in the appendix. There is also a brief review of the limited research evidence to support the contribution of this work to preventative spend. The different project types 'theorised' suggest that desired results might include the following:

Allotment model

- Reduce isolation and promote community connections for men diagnosed with dementia through taking part in a physical activity, namely gardening, along with other people affected by dementia in a safe and creative environment.
- Grow a range of different foods and provide the opportunity to think about healthy eating as well as take produce home.
- Provide time out and informal therapy and support for carers, with the result that 'they feel better able to cope as a carer.'
- Promote best practice and ways of working creatively with men affected by dementia, building on learning from the drop-in cafés that run in different locations in Glasgow, through providing food-based gardening activities for older men.
- Provide volunteers with transferable skills in a specialist area

Community food model

- Access by older people to low-priced fruit and vegetables and basic foodstuffs in suitable small quantities, tailored to individual needs.
- Skills development among volunteers and workers in using the resource pack to share knowledge and understanding of the needs of older people.
- Increased understanding among health and social-care staff, including sheltered housing wardens, and older people themselves of nutritional messages specific to older people.
- Better health and wellbeing of older people, based on a better understanding of what a healthy balanced diet means for individual older people, with access to support to achieve this.

Lunch clubs model

- Promote an independent way of life among older people who are not housebound, but have difficulties shopping for health reasons, and for whom cooking for one is quite expensive.
- • Provide access to social activity involving cooking meals from scratch with other older people in the community.
- • Increase affordability of nutritious food through subsidised service charges.

Questions arising

- What is our map of provision in York and North Yorkshire like when compared to the 4 community food project framework typologies derived by the Eden Project?
- What has been, or is, the current appetite from local residents to develop their own community food initiative / project and if they wanted to, how would they get practical advice and tips beyond the resources identified in this paper?
- Has any local self-evaluation[215] been tried by those running the community food projects to understand the benefits they deliver / their local efficacy?
- Is there any evidence of York and North Yorkshire landowners being incentivised / encouraged to give over pockets of their land for communities to grow food on?

7.12　Food surplus redistribution

The research team are less certain whether 'food surplus redistribution' is a model or whether it is instead a 'golden thread' of all / most of the other models in so far as most food aid models involve the use of redistributed food and / or interception of food waste (before going to landfill). The research team recommend inviting contributions from the likes of FareShare to understand their approach in more detail and the extent to which they have penetration in York and North Yorkshire.

FareShare is the UK's national network of charitable food redistributors, made up of 18 independent organisations. Together, we take good quality surplus food from right across the food industry and get it to nearly 9,500 frontline charities and community groups.

What we do

The food we redistribute is nutritious and good to eat. It reaches charities across the UK, including school breakfast clubs, older people's lunch clubs, homeless shelters, and community cafes. Every week we provide enough food to create almost a million meals for vulnerable people.

They are a franchise model and where there is engagement with York and North Yorkshire food models, they be served by their large warehouse based in Leeds (which serves Yorkshire and Humber region). One of their principle measures of success is avoided food waste, however, there has been some research looking at the wider social value of their approach[216] describing other positive social effects including its potential to contribute to the prevention of loneliness. It concludes:

> 'The eight case study organisations discussed in this study illustrate there is a wealth of creativity and ingenuity in the ways that community-based organisations provide food-based activity to their communities. FareShare is in a good place to help them celebrate and recognise this good work collectively. Collective recognition not only enables good practice and innovation to spread, but it opens doors to competitive funding streams that so many organisations rely upon. Many organisations also want to expand what they do with food in order to create more social value in their communities.
>
> Currently many have to devote time and effort in a bid to reinvent the wheel as they add a new service because there is a lack of accessible practical information about what should be considered. Given that time is a valuable resource to these organisations, finding ways to release that time back to the community is important.
>
> While this report speaks to the positive outcomes from organisations that are using food as a means to help communities to re-connect and help individuals to overcome loneliness, there is still much that could be done to support this work further. Our national loneliness strategy places much of its focus on identifying and then moving people back into their communities through social prescribing and transportation

improvements, but it pays little consideration to supporting what people will do when they get there.

Community organisations and the food they use are vital to this equation and **more support from national and local government should be directed toward supporting community-based food activity**. Furthermore, the food industry should be encouraged to better understand and then to help extract the social value out of surplus food."

In another study '**Case studies from More than Just Food: Food Insecurity and Resilient Place Making through Community Self-Organising' (2019)** this extract describes some of the wider effects of FareShare's approach:

'FareShare provides a network of charities across the whole of the United Kingdom with access to surplus food, either through an app-enabled back of store collection service (approximately 6962, charities) or via distribution through one of the 21 regional FareShare warehouses (3195 charities). Approximately 77% provide meals (social eating), 57% offer snacks (social eating), 58% give a food parcel (social distribution), 25% run a pantry (social distribution), and 33% conduct cooking lessons (social making and/or learning). 25% offer a single food service, with meals the most likely service provided on its own (18%) and only 8% provide an emergency food parcel on its own.'

2020/2021 has been FareShare's biggest year yet. We helped 10,542 charities and community groups and 1,108,064 people were provided food supplied by FareShare. The food we redistributed contributed towards 131.9 million meals and saved the charity sector £18.5 million[217]

In a recent (January 2023) tender specification[218] FareShare is inviting an evaluation of their impact. Unpublished work[219]. about its impact to date has been reviewed by the researchers and the report that has been commissioned focuses on the impact of FareShare on food security and how FareShare can demonstrate its impact. Alongside this report concerning food insecurity, there is a web-based zoomable map. The report first considers how FareShare addresses food insecurity across the **four pillars** identified by the United Nations. In addition to the pillars, the report also considers feedback loops. It highlights social impact concerning each dimension and highlights how FareShare could demonstrate this impact quantitatively. Most of these indicators map onto FareShare's theory of change, but some are new impact measures. The report then turns to vulnerability and risk to different estimates of the experience of food insecurity. It makes seven recommendations that would enable FareShare to demonstrate its impacts more efficiently and show change.

FareShare's current theory of change looks like this:
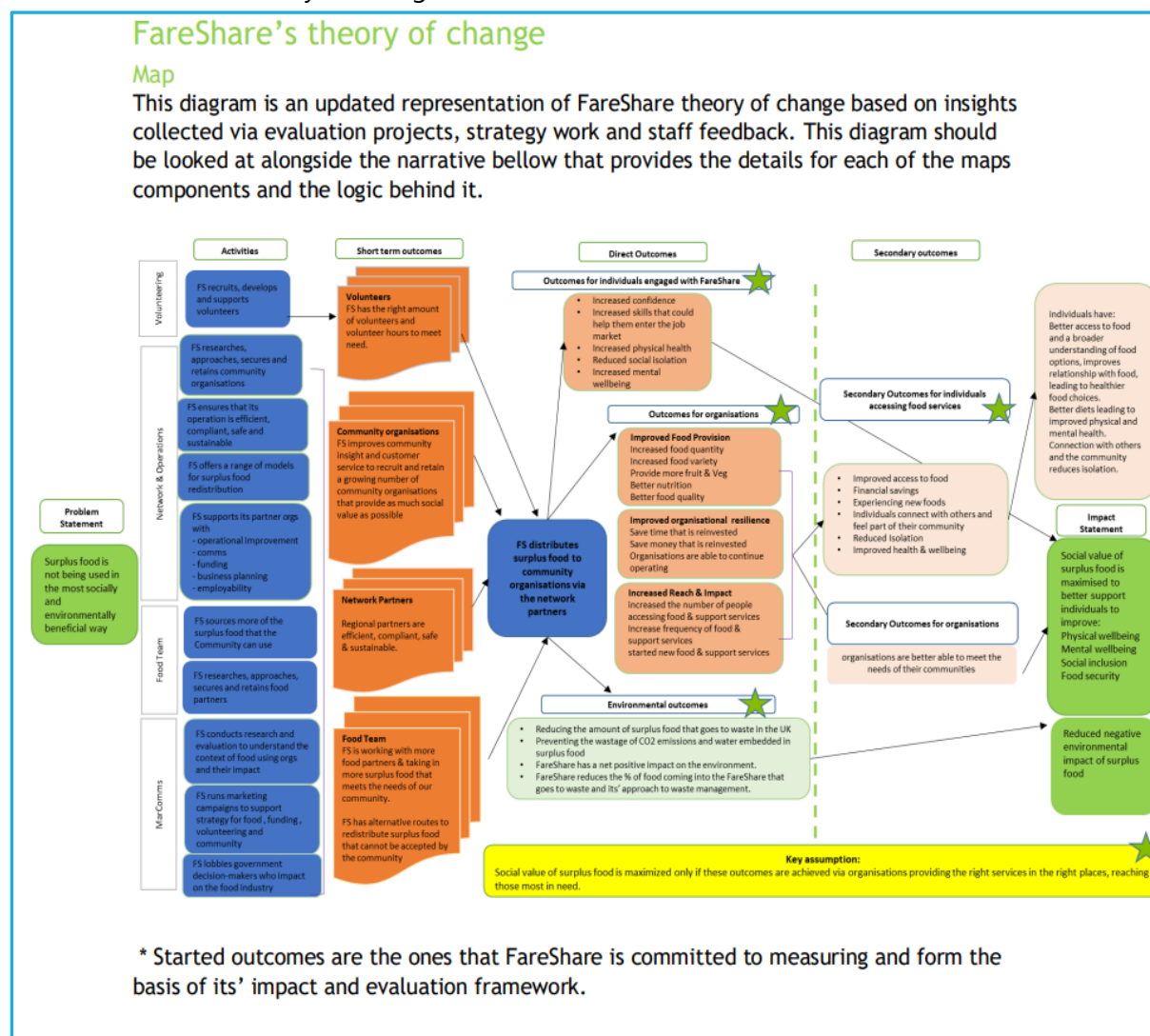
Their new research will explore impact in the following ways:

Outcomes that FareShare has a <u>direct impact</u> on:

• Charities and community organisations have an improved Food Provision by getting access to:

- Increased food quantity
- Increased food variety
- More fruit & veg
- Better nutrition food
- Better food quality

• Charities and community organisations improve their organisational resilience by:

- Saving time, they can reinvest in their service
- Saving money, they can reinvest in their service
- Being able to continue running their service

Charities and community groups are able to increase their reach & impact by:

- Increasing the number of people accessing their food & support services
- Increasing the frequency of their food & support services 11
- Starting new food & support services

Outcomes for individuals engaged with FareShare via volunteering and employability:

- Increased confidence
- Increased skills that could help them enter the job market
- Increased physical health
- Reduced social isolation
- Increased mental wellbeing

Environmental outcomes

- Reducing the amount of surplus food that goes to waste in the UK
- Preventing the wastage of CO2 emissions and water embedded in surplus food
- FareShare has a net positive impact on the environment.
- FareShare reduces the % of food coming into the FareShare that goes to waste and improves its' approach to waste management. It also identified a number of indirect outcomes that FareShare contributes towards:

Social outcomes for individuals attending food services:

- Improved access to food
- Financial savings
- Experiencing new foods
- Individuals connect with others and feel part of their community
- Reduced Isolation
- Improved health & wellbeing

In another study, 'How London's communities are tackling food poverty Report (2018), researchers found that:

> 'Local community groups using surplus food are distinct from traditional food banks, and often more effective in that they:
>
> Are more likely to provide nutritious food: surplus food, by its nature, is often perishable fresh food that is nearing the end of its usability, or that grew in a wonky shape. The fast redistribution and use of this surplus food provides nutritious fruit and vegetables that are almost never available at food banks.
>
> Are more likely to save food from landfill: perishable food is, by definition, more likely than long-life food items to be disposed of, since there is a narrower window for consumption (both in terms of food safety, and also judgements based on aesthetics).

Are a more dignified source for those in food poverty: the necessity of 'saving' food, and presentation of surplus food initiatives as creative solutions to food waste, provide families in food poverty with more dignity in sourcing much-needed fresh food than food banks, and the stigma that can be attached to using them.

Provide social environments in the community: handling fresh surplus food is an activity in itself, whether in the cooking or communal eating, and provides a meaningful social dynamic beyond being a recipient of charity and walking away with a bag of dry goods.

As such, there is a distinct need for community-oriented surplus food initiatives, which serve an important role in not only providing food but increasing health and wellbeing in families and their communities. Their local knowledge, relationships with local retail and positions of trust within the community make them well placed to swiftly divert food to where it is needed; though not without its associated challenges.

Food poverty is a reality for a large number of Londoners and represents a crisis in health and welfare that needs urgent attention. Food surplus is an important resource to fill this emergency gap, and to save food from being wasted in an inefficient system. In using surplus food, charities and other organisations have a unique opportunity to celebrate food within communities, in atmospheres that emphasise commonality, cohesion, and a shared purpose in 'rescuing' food. Ultimately, food poverty is best addressed through this positive lens: where meals are provided not through a focus on need and poverty, but on shared enthusiasm and community value.'

Questions arising

- What is the extent and reach of FareShare's work in York and North Yorkshire?
- What are the experiences of charities involved in FareShare memberships / alternative food redistribution arrangements (e.g. with local traders, supermarkets) regarding the consistency, reliability and quality of food supply to meet community needs?
- Researchers heard a view expressed that FareShare may work particularly well for models where the food being redistributed is going to be cooked at the receiving venue (e.g. breakfast clubs) but potentially not for those models where the food is prepared as food parcels. This is a view not an evidence-informed assessment, but it suggests there is merit in asking whether FareShare as an approach is more beneficial in certain contexts than others?
- Is there an opportunity to explore collective bargaining if this achieves an economy of scale i.e. exploring York and North Yorkshire-wide memberships in the same way that the Welsh Government trialled during the pandemic?
- What would be the long-term goal in terms of having an effective food redistribution model across communities that encourages resilience as opposed to dependency or anything that 'normalises' emergency food aid?

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8.0 Strategic place-based interventions

(e.g., food resilience models, food ladders approach)

There is a desire to use this research, and related data and provision mapping activity, to inform confident decisions about how best to invest in ways that can support people to be food secure, and to be able to do that in the places they live.

But how would we know if a place has an appropriate mix of provision to meet the needs of its local community?

And how would we know that those in a position of food insecurity will be aware of and / or choose to use the support that might be available when they need it?

Furthermore, how could that place be socially organised enough in order to:

- stand the best chances of preventing, or at very least, supporting people and households at times of food insecurity?
- and be in a better position to wrap around their lives to move them into a more stable pathway, being able to afford essentials with choice and dignity whilst forging opportunities for themselves in other ways – whether volunteering, employment, training or maximising their welfare entitlements?

Further work, conversations and experiences are needed to satisfactorily determine what would work best in any given place, but there are some clues in the research that has been reviewed.

Moreover, the Government, via its Food Strategy[220], has committed to learning what it can from the best practice of Food Partnerships around the country, and also investing in a range of Random Control Trials (through a lens of reducing health disparities) that would build the evidence base around encouraging healthier and more sustainable dietary choices.

> '2.2.2. Over the next three years, we will undertake a programme of randomised control trials of interventions in the food system to encourage and enable healthier and more sustainable diets for all. This programme will build a suite of evidence based and value for money interventions that can be developed into largescale and long-term policy. The findings will enable government to channel resources towards the most effective interventions. As announced in the levelling up white paper, we will invest in enabling primary care to undertake a pilot programme to improve diets through the Community Eatwell programme. This will build on the growth of social prescribing within primary care networks, the additional roles available via the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme and consider the role of those staff in primary care who have completed the Healthy Weight Coaches training. Further details will be published in the health disparities white paper.'

2.2.3. Local Food Partnerships have already brought together councils and partners from the public sector, voluntary and community groups, and businesses to reduce diet-related ill health and inequality, while supporting a prosperous local food economy. We will learn from their approaches and work to understand and identify best practice in addressing food affordability and accessibility to healthy food. As part of our levelling up mission to narrow the gap in healthy life expectancy, government will identify the areas most in need of this insight, and Defra will work with local authorities and food charities in these priority areas.'

Leading academics meantime continue to advocate for improved ways of measuring and understanding food insecurity, and variably call for:

More emphasis on cash-first approaches whilst pursuing a vision where there is no need for emergency food provision in UK society

Interventions in places that are about more than money and more than food solutions i.e. where the emphasis is on moving from supporting people in crisis through to self-organising communities that come together for reasons of not only social redistribution of food (avoiding food waste), but the celebratory aspects of food such as social making and social eating – that drive commensural outcomes and improve people's lives.

For the former community, advocating for cash-first approaches the opportunity exists for York and North Yorkshire to test and trial at least one cash-first pilot in the near-medium term using the recent experience of the Leeds cash-first pilot as a basis for inspiration and reassurance. This will drive conversations about the optimum ways to use the existing local welfare assistance schemes and to potentially divert future investment away – to some degree – from the VCSE sector and instead, direct payments of cash into eligible people's pockets. This model, they argue offers the ultimate dignity compared to any alternative food model that might otherwise receive the resource. A growing evidence base in Scotland suggests that of the different policies that can make a difference to food insecurity, this – cash-first – is the most promising.

The second community, those advocating for place-based foodscapes that can move beyond food banks and free food aid models to the use of food as a transformative driver of community and social cohesion, put forward an alternative future with food still at the heart of the formula.

Dr Megan Blake, in particular, has researched and put forward the 'food ladders' approach which York and North Yorkshire might seek to adopt, in a collaborative way, with difference places and investors across the communities.

Moving beyond food banks and soup kitchens to social distribution and social eating

What is different?

- Not Charity—involve some payment (small fee, deep price discount) or exchange for the food (e.g., pay what you feel, give what you can, timebank) —increased financial sustainability once initial set-up costs are covered;
- The division between decision-makers, employees, volunteers and beneficiaries is very blurred. People often fill multiple roles in the space;
- Not intended to be the only source of food, part of a wider household food strategy;
- Not limited to demonstration of emergency need--Often place-based so few barriers to participation;
- Tend to provide a wider array of healthier food items or meals;
- Enables capacity building through education, exposure, sharing, and referrals to other support and services;
- Creates a positive and social atmosphere.

Food Ladders: Levels of intervention

- Rung 1: Catching—Crisis support enables ability to cope (does for).
- Rung 2: Capacity building—Vulnerable to crisis, enables adapting through education, and sharing. Lower stigma (doing with), accessible choices.
- Rung 3: Self-organising for community change—Transformation from a recipient or content user to a content provider (doing by). Can be a commercial product or a social good.

#FoodLadders @GeoFoodieOrg

Interventions From catching to capacity building to transformation

1. Basic Food Bank
2. Food bank+
3. Food Clubs and Pantries
4. Cooperatives, buying clubs, growing exchanges, shared meals
5. New enterprise

Collective transformation

- Examples: Cooperative buying clubs, Community meals, Produce exchanges, and community markets.
- Community instigated and self-organised— comes directly from and is coordinated by community members with and for community members.
- Sharing, reciprocity and exchange—no one is the beneficiary. Everyone gives/receives something.
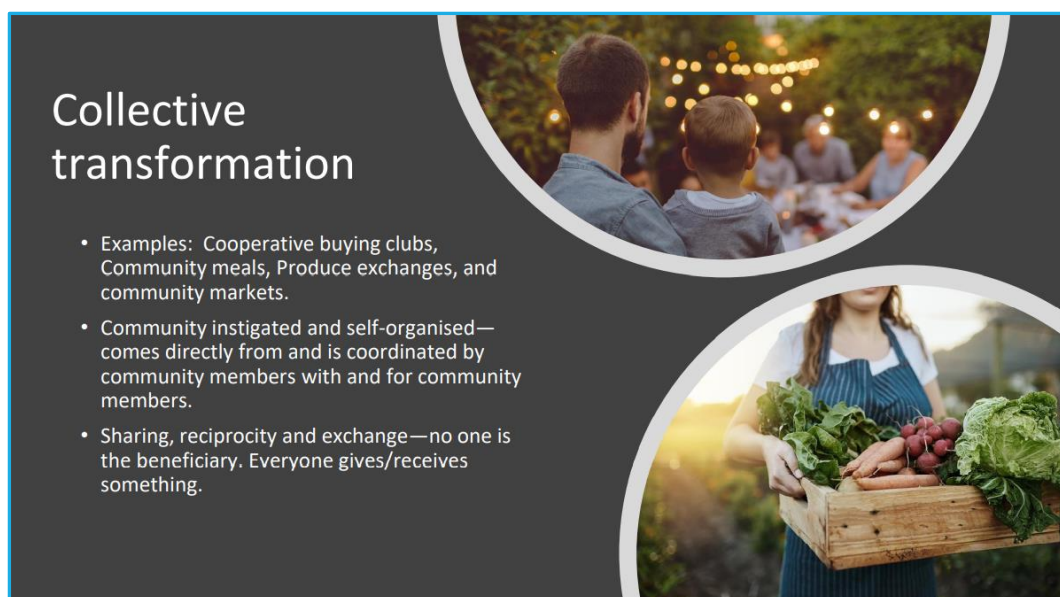
In these models and ladders of intervention, there are multiple beneficiaries not just the individual or household needing essentials in a crisis, rather the volunteers and the local community – the lines are blurred to the extent where you might not know who was the 'user' of a food provision and who was volunteering because the extent of reciprocity was such that everyone involved is 'needed' not 'needy'.

The research team noticed a range of reports around 'food resilience' with different place-based governance structures, networks, taskforces and toolkits emerging as a result. These food resilience models feature particularly amongst contemporary examples shared with Public Health system partners across the UK, some of who are involved in supporting the development of local Food Strategy activity too.

Colleagues in Public Health at North Yorkshire County Council kindly undertook a literature review with guidance from the research team to see what they noticed about different resilience and place-based models presented in the next tables – and how they might map to a place-based food ladders model as per Dr Blake's framework.

They conclude from their review that food can be an effective tool to get people involved in activities that can develop their skills and enhance their quality of life. However, an approach that is focused only on the inability to purchase food is not sufficient to tackle all the levels of food poverty/insecurity. For example, the food bank approach is a useful tool in a food crisis but does not give room for individuals to develop their resilience plan. Moreover, no singular approach will suffice to effectively tackle food insecurity, but a strategic blend of several interventions suited to each group in society's need. To this effect, the collaborative efforts of all members of the population, adequate funding, and coordination of activities by the government is needed. The review would therefore support especially collaborative models of working in places and, ideally, more empowerment models of working as described next.

A tabular summation of food models from case studies reviewed by NYCC Public Health

Model	Description	Case Studies	Food ladder	Strengths	Limitations	Opportunity/Solutions	Outcomes	References
Food Bank	1.Provision of emergency food packages. 2.Food sourced through donations. 3.Volunteer led	West Berkshire Foodbank,	1	Support for those in crisis	1.Reliant on donations. 2.Lack of fresh food due to hygiene and storage requirements. 3. Creating dependency 4.Eroding dignity. 5. Stigma	1.'More than food' additions – e.g., Links to MH support, money advice and employment. 2.Offer fresh food, link to growers and/or supermarket surplus. 3.Alternative delivery models e.g., food share model where people can choose their items. 4.community fridges e.g., West Berkshire	1. Hunger alleviation 2. Critical support to families in financial need.	Goldberg, B., Loopstra, R., Gordon, K., Lambie-Mumford, H. (2021) 'West Berkshire Case Study, Mapping local responses
Mixed model	Different community food approaches and solutions for different areas	Herefordshire Wales	1,2 and 3	1.Local community needs led. 2.Flexibility, adaptability to service delivery	1.Duplication and gaps. 2.Lack of coordination among providers. 3. Reliance on outsider providers to meet local need.	1.Connect local growers with food distributors at a neighbourhood level e.g., Wales. 2.Employ a network coordinator/cluster community network. 3. Enhance local growing of food. 4. A community food distribution hub e.g., West Berkshire	1. stronger community cohesion 2. food literacy 3.Reduces stigma through food share model.	Loopstra, R., Gordon, K., and Lambie-Mumford, H. (2021) 'Herefordshire Case Study, Mapping local responses

Model	Description	Case Studies	Food ladder	Strengths	Limitations	Opportunity/Solutions	Outcomes	References
Empowerment model	1. LAs do not directly fund activities related to food poverty. However, they collaborate with the voluntary sector to do this. 2.Provision of debt, welfare and asset advice and support to people using the food bank. 3. Supported volunteering and employment.	1.The social bite enterprise (See fig.1). 2.Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) Herefordshire	1,2 and 3	1. Disrupts stigma, promotes inclusion, self- worth and confidence. 2. Access to decent food, pathways to employment, financial capability, and housing.	1. Reliant on non-governmental enterprise to provide support for individuals living in food poverty. 2.Reliant on unpredictable external funding 2. The actions of independent providers are usually focused on empowering individuals rather than collective action and empowerment. 3. Lack of partnership between key agencies.	More than meals additions e.g., volunteer-led social suppers, social media activities, supported volunteering and employment, community training kitchens, providing training in cooking and healthy eating on a budget, and referrals to health and social services. 2.Provide support services for financial education and advice. 3.create a local food providers hub e.g., Wales.	1. Person-centred approach to food poverty. 2. Builds self-confidence through supported volunteering. 3. Promotes employability 4. Improves mental health 5. Access to financial education 6. Promotes healthy living 7. Builds individual skills and competencies through trainings. E.g cooking classes.	D'Ambruoso, L., Abbott, P., Douglas, F., Macpherson, E. and Okpo, E. (2017) 'Case Study: Empowerment approaches to food poverty in NE Scotland

Model	Description	Case Studies	Food ladder	Strengths	Limitation	Opportunity/Solutions	Outcomes	References
Multiple food provision	1. Like a ladder approach where people access food services according to their circumstance; emergency food parcels, community pantry, cook and eat activities, free fruits, and vegetable with hot lunch table. 2. The use of volunteers.	1.Organisation A (locally based community organisation) 2. Organisation B (Community Interest Company)	1,2 and 3	1.Local community needs led. 2. Builds individual confidence by enabling people to be both givers(volunteers) and receivers. 3. The multiple food activities meet different needs for different groups. 4. potential to create community assets by building social networks.	1.Organisation A is funded primarily by grants, voluntary activity, donations, and grants. 2.Organisation B does not offer emergency food parcel	Greater support in terms of funding can be provided to identified organisations.	1. Improves mental health. 2. Builds self-confidence through supported volunteering. 3. Minimises feelings of isolation/loneliness. 4. Fosters social interaction. 5. Promotes healthy living. 6. Builds individual skills and competencies through trainings. E.g., cooking classes 6. Promotes healthy eating by incorporating fruits and vegetables into home cooked meals. 7.Builds a sense of independence and self-pride (being able to contribute to society through volunteering).	Blake, M.K., 2019. More than just food: Food insecurity and resilient place making through community self-organising.

9.0 Implications and opportunities

Early messaging shared by the research team iterated during the desk research process.

There are different beliefs about how to end food insecurity and different policy positioning noticed in the literature: ; cash first; food first; and housing First.

There is a desire to develop a society and communities with systems that go beyond food banks indeed to put an end to food banks / emergency food aid long-term.

There is a tension created by the desirous move towards low cost community food retail models vs the reality of the requirement to ensure access to free food during cost of living crisis – however, should / are any of these models 'sustainable' or constantly needing funding from the public purse or supporting by precarious nature of donations and volunteering?

There is a desire to provide practical support without creating a dependency on free food – moving towards 'resilience' and 'empowerment models' of provision in communities but without normalising food aid provision.

There is a desire to remove stigma and shame whilst developing open access to food; and learning from lived experience to understand why those that are most food insecure might not choose to access free food aid provision – and so what alternatives might work for them in their lives during crisis. Environmental framing of food aid provision is thought to have helped reduce stigma for some people choosing to use them.

There has been an emergence of tools and practices towards more resilient food systems, food partnerships and collaborative place-based networks / ways of working to deliver greater impact for those communities.

There is a prevalence of food poverty alliances or networks and there is learning to be extracted from those models have achieved in improving the co-ordination of conversations, understanding and shared purpose locally

The nature of wrap around support is multi-faceted and well-intentioned but it is less clear what the efficacy is of the different approaches, and whether they are sufficiently upstream enough to prevent rather than deal with someone in crisis or seeking to move away from that low point in their lives

The importance of developing a vision that is not top down, nor waiting to take action whilst wider central government cash first responses take effect. Campaigns are anticipated that call for a UK society where everyone can afford the essentials and where emergency food aid is not required, however, that may take years and in the meantime pragmatic blends of place-based provision is likely required.

There is a need to share practice, experiences and views on future investment by public, professional and voluntary and community sectors that will trial different approaches in different places that suit their contexts.

This report can hopefully inform the other workstreams of this wider project including:

Helping identify what models of provision currently exist in York and North Yorkshire and whether any models are currently missing or might usefully be supported in future if a food ladders model were to be adopted in the next 5 years:

- e.g. there are very few low cost community food retail models, does that matter, is it a gap in an overall blend of provision in certain places where it might work well?
- e.g. there are very few collaborative models at a time when place-based working is increasingly important in local government and health systems – does this present an opportune time to encourage the conditions for more of these place-based networks and a jointly agreed investment plan?
- e.g. there are thought to be very few community kitchens where the evidence reviewed suggests a range of helpful health and community benefits can arise, often for targeted populations or those experiencing the greatest health inequalities – is this something that Public Health would wish to investigate further and invest in across the area?
- e.g. meals on wheels provision is felt to be important to certain people in the population but it is unclear whether that provision is available and high quality, or integrated in adult social care services / packages
- e.g. are there sufficient types of model in areas where there are the highest disparities and / or where the risks of food insecurity are known to be greatest (this would require mapping by the 'data dashboard' workstream and engagement with Public Health statisticians and modellers)
- e.g. is there a sufficiency of mixed and empowerment models in York and North Yorkshire as described in the report, these tending to offer the greatest opportunity for building local resilience, dignity and increased choice for individuals

Wider still, any future strategy and investment framework for York and North Yorkshire needs to be cognisant of:

- How to embed food security / insecurity into the wider opportunities for financial inclusion and social inclusion.
- How to ensure appropriate connections within the emerging Food Strategy approaches in the local authorities.
- The opportunity for putting lived / direct experience at the heart of any co-produced strategy and framework in future, learning from the experimental participatory research completed by the LIFE Group in York for this project; dovetailing into other place-based systems such as the Poverty Truth Commission in York (or any equivalents in North Yorkshire)
- How to measure levels of food insecurity in the localities with confidence over time and being able to evaluate the impact of any interventions agreed as a consequence of this project

There is also an opportunity to improve approaches to investing in models with efficacy in mind:

Efficacy: 'The ability to produce a desired or intended result.'

In the full report each of the 11 models have been reviewed by assessing available evidence / impact studies, identifying learning lessons about how to make the model 'successful', shining a light on examples of practice and then posing a number of questions for policy makers and food access providers to inform and guide future decision making processes.

It is important to note that:

- This study does not seek to compare one model against the other like a competition, rather help build an understanding of each model, the outcomes typically associated or possible to derive from that model and the different enablers or inhibitors to be mindful of.
- The study encourages you to consider whether your decisions have a longer-term unintended effect too e.g., whilst ensuring the most vulnerable in society are prioritised do the emergency responses build dependency rather than resilience; and do they adequately reach those most in need or do issues relating to stigma limit their efficacy.
- The desire to apply a standard 'assessment' of efficacy across the models has not been possible owing to the variability, inconsistency and limited quality of studies that explore this topic. In an ideal scenario, investors, food aid providers might, with lived experience and local partnerships, consider a framework for investing in food models that explore these dimensions of efficacy[221]

| Effectiveness | Impact | Relevance | Sustainability |
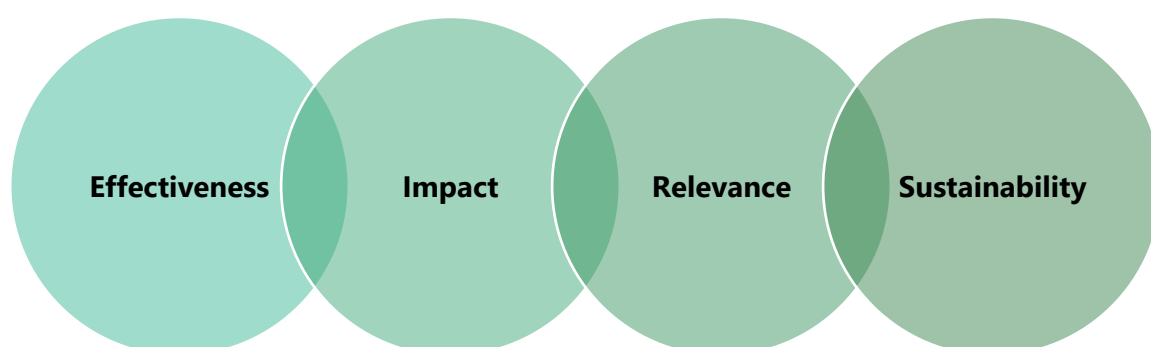
- **Effectiveness** – How effective is the model?
- **Impact** – What positive and negative impact do activities have on stakeholders / members, families and volunteers?
- **Relevance** – Are activities relevant to the context and needs of communities?
- **Sustainability / Viability** – To what extent do activities have long-lasting and wider impact?

Gaps in research: further areas to explore in future

Researchers across the literature also appear to be agreed that more work is needed to understand the rural challenges involved to support models of food aid that work for those communities. The research team for this study found very few examples of studies that demonstrated clearly how individuals could move from a position of being very food insecure to being food secure, perhaps a gap in academic study that could be usefully filled in future.

10.0 Key Messages & Opportunities

Whilst national campaigns to 'end food banks' and 'end emergency food aid' are absolutely the right pursuit, this will likely take a very long time and rely on nationally owned levers that are in the gift of central government to pull. In the meantime, this research demonstrates that there are meaningful benefits derived from food access models and that local levers can be used to optimise their efficacy. There is a great opportunity to build a greater, shared understanding of the 'best' aspects of these models and wherever possible encourage joint working. Information sharing events in 2023 could support this ambition using the resources from this Project and the wider knowledge and experiences of those involved in food access across York and North Yorkshire.

The study's author also believes that there are some specific opportunities arising from this research that could improve the conditions for improving the efficacy of existing food access models, adapting them to derive intended results and / or developing them in a co-ordinated way whilst linked to a wider long-term ambition for a more food secure York and North Yorkshire.

Opportunity 1: Place-based collaborative models

Place-based approaches to investment in food access models might be improved through the development and / or nurturing of collaborative models such as partnerships, networks, taskforces or alliances in more parts of York and North Yorkshire working together in a planned way using the **'Food Ladders[222]'** blueprint. The reasons for highlighting this opportunity include:

- Evidence that collaborative models accelerate local co-ordination of food security initiative, helping to join up different food models despite their different drivers and purpose, whilst also providing a forum for lived experience and multiple sectors to join their resources and endeavour in a place-based context.
- Whilst York has a variety of collaborative models (e.g. Good Place Network and previously the York Food Poverty Alliance which morphed into the York Food Justice Alliance), North Yorkshire has only a small number of place-based (food) networks or partnerships (in Craven, Whitby, Ryedale and Selby) suggesting a deficit in this kind of model; and an inconsistency in approach which could easily be improved and amplified – particularly in the context of new, proposed Community Networks as part of local government reorganisation in 2023.
- Evaluations of collaborative models suggest a range of benefits including the agreement of 'success measures' that can be tracked and the direct involvement of lived experience to guide and inform policy and action planning.
- Food Ladders is an approach that has caught the imagination of the Project Steering Group and with appropriate support to 'translate' it into a practical set of approaches that could be implemented in different places, provides a balanced and pragmatic framework for catering for the continuing crisis need to '*catch*' people at a time of significant financial duress, whilst also developing a foodscape that can build capacity for those struggling to afford and / or access good food (but who are not in crisis), as well as the pursuit of self-organised community change.

The conditions for a place-based collaborative model may need to be assessed before any significant resource is allocated, however, we can learn from the ones that have already formed, have navigated the pandemic and are setting their goals for the future. In terms of making an argument for any targeted, new collaborative model, one approach might be to make a presumption that disproportionate investment ought to be located in those areas where there is the highest prevalence of or risk of food insecurity and associated health disparities. A data dashboard being developed as part of this Project could assist, and more specifically the new **Priority Places for Food Index**[223] could assist with such targeting – not only of where best to establish a 'partnership,' but also where other specific food models could be tailored or targeted.

Opportunity 2: Mixed income food models rooted in communities

'A decent network of community food spaces in a place.'

Mixed income food access models are more likely to be viable and can iterate around a community's dynamic needs, not solely focused on emergency response but also appealing to those seeking affordable models and/or social connection (e.g., at community hubs). Examples of mixed income models might be a community hub with a café and social supermarket or a community store/shop with an integrated community kitchen and community café. The reasons for highlighting this opportunity include:

- Evidence that mixed income models deliver a wide set of positive outcomes for individuals, volunteers and staff and wider community over time, whilst not depending on repeat public sector funding to prop up the operations.
- Evidence that the enterprising aspect of these models not only improves their longer-term viability (to meet local community needs), but also in of itself encourages local enfranchisement and 'ownership' – an emotional connection to some social infrastructure that encourages a sense of belonging and higher levels of reciprocity where everyone contributes something – if not money, they can contribute, time and skills and feel needed not needy.
- The community hub model is well established in York with food a common aspect of each one despite their varied ownership and infrastructure. In North Yorkshire it is less obvious if and whether these mixed income models exist and persist. Certainly, across the geography there were only a few low cost community retail models (such as social supermarkets) whereas these are found to exist around the UK and investment appears to be attractive to public health partners who can see the potential nutritional benefits of such models. At the same time, paying money for food – albeit at a much lower rate than supermarkets – is reported to improve a sense of dignity, choice and empowerment this mixed models can potentially deliver social, health, wellbeing and local community wealth benefits if organised with that multi-faceted intent.

Opportunity 3: Cash-first approaches

1. Cash-first approaches offer a different type of emergency response option to complement – or some would argue, displace - the existing investment approach seen in

York and North Yorkshire. These approaches put money directly into people's pockets at a time they need it most and without conditions. However, even 'cash-first' approaches alone cannot address food insecurity. Wider support, skills and connection is required for any individual to move from their situation sustainably. This issue is about 'more than money,' particularly true in highly rural areas where access is a significant barrier to food security[224]. The reasons for highlighting this opportunity include:

- The political imperative to support the most vulnerable in our society and the need to do more around financial and social inclusion wherein food insecurity forms just one part of that wider political domain and governance.
- The growing evidence (particularly in Scotland as a result of policy there) that cash-first approaches can support individuals in a more dignified fashion, without stigma, that alternative models cannot match, and that when aligned to supportive advice and guidance creates the time and headspace for individuals to more likely access that support and address the root causes of their insecurity.
- Evidence and advocacy, particularly from the Trussell Trust for this model means that this Project can benefit from their experience of piloting and evaluating a cash-first approach in Leeds and explore the opportunity for a similar pilot in York and North Yorkshire, most likely in a willing locality where there is already a pre-existing collaborative model and / or where the IFAN cash-first leaflet approach[225] has already been tested (e.g. food partnership or food alliance) so that different approaches could be run ideally in combination to assess their different effects.
- York and North Yorkshire have local welfare assistance schemes as well as being responsible for the deployment of the Household Support Fund. There is opportunity to use the evidence in this study and comparative UK practice to explore their flexibilities for cash-first approaches alongside an active advice sector and income maximisation services and support.

Opportunity 4: More than food models

'More than food' models' are those as the name suggests that offer something beyond the transaction of the food itself. They might include wrap-around support and advice, with access to other services either on-site or signposted accordingly into communities and other settings.

These models are more likely to help an individual or household address the root causes of their food insecurity because the food is just the symptom of wider insecurity, hardship and / or poverty. Models will ideally have access to attractive community services and experiences such as social making and social eating that can support ongoing health and wellbeing beyond emergency. The reasons for highlighting this opportunity include:

- Evidence that many food models already offer signposting and / or other services that are variously described as person-centred can support an individual at a time of crisis and, with appropriately skilled volunteers and multi-agency professionals, reach, understand and support them to explore the things that are required to improve their economic and social situation.
- The interest in how best to configure advice, support and guidance around food models by stakeholders that have been engaged in this research study, and different views about what works best – professionally qualified advisers and / or volunteers trained in

motivational interviewing and other core skills to confidently engage in conversations with people using food access models. The absence of a wrap-around offer seems to limit the potential efficacy of any food model so ensuring this is built in to a place-based 'system' or foodscape would seem highly beneficial.

- A need for greater evidence as to whether and how this kind of 'beyond food model' allied to an integrated financial inclusion approach actually supports individuals from being severely to moderately insecure to secure over time, and to understand the resource requirements to typically achieve such an outcome.

Opportunity 5: Invest in the convening power of food

Beyond the notion of food as fuel, or food as an essential resource needed at a time of crisis and emergency, food has the power to convene and include and encourage connection – through growing, enterprise, sharing and celebration. Models that explore this potential can derive benefits that extend beyond an individual's health and wellbeing and offer additional benefits to communities within a community. They may manifest as community food projects or initiatives, luncheon clubs, suppers, co-operatives or intentional models that combine 'food and education' (such as community kitchens, cooking classes or courses and demonstrations at community hubs). They look different, demand different levels and intensities of resource and energy but all have the ability to produce commensal benefits. The reasons for highlighting this opportunity include:

- Strong evidence from evaluations of food and education models that individuals experience short-, medium- and longer-term benefits from participation (leading to better life chances and outcomes linked to learning and employment).
- Growing evidence about the efficacy of community food initiatives[226] and the co-production opportunities afforded by community food projects[227].
- The potential for these kinds of model to encourage community resilience and strengthen social ties, offering a mechanism for contributing to places deemed to have low social capital.

11.0 Conclusions

This research is by no means a definitive systematic review of all food access models and their efficacy as that would require significant and combined academic resourcing and rigour beyond the scope of this commission. However, it does offer a taxonomy, a common language for the various models which might encourage greater understanding of their attributes and associated outcomes. It has also started to build a set of practical resources that can hopefully support policy makers, commissioners, investors, local welfare assistance scheme managers, food aid / access providers, sub-regional, local or thematic partnerships/networks and other interested system partners:

- Public health partners could explore the evidence associated with, and case for investment in, food and education (e.g., community kitchens, cooking classes), voucher and targeted models.
- Children, young people and families service partners are encouraged to consider the evidence relating to targeted provision.
- Adult social care service partners are encouraged to explore the direct provision models (e.g. meals on wheels evidence).
- Voluntary and community sector partners are encouraged to consider which part of the 'Food Ladders' blueprint they support or aspire to support in future alongside other food access models in their place and explore the many examples of practice to optimise their activities.
- Other investors such as the National Lottery and Foundations with an interest in addressing poverty or specifically food insecurity as a symptom of that more entrenched issue are encouraged to collaborate and support place-based investment approaches, especially helping create the conditions for collaborative, mixed income and 'more than food' models that have a greater chance of enduring impact and efficacy over the longer-term.
- The advice sector is encouraged to share its best practice from pilots happening across the UK linked to financial inclusion and to build up resources and approaches that can be generously shared and distributed across local foodscape systems.

More generally all readers and food access models are encouraged to consider how best to embed the **dignity in practice principles** in their approach[228] and commit to learning together through any opportunities to attend events that should emerge as a consequence of this Project – whether relating to wider cost of living impacts, the work of the new Core Food Partnership (North Yorkshire), the ongoing work of the Financial Inclusion Group (in York) and / or specific workstreams being led by Public Health or other children young people or adult services.

In terms of finding a home for this food insecurity focused study and the wider Project, the best positioning would appear to be at a unitary authority level linked to financial and social inclusion; whilst making a useful contribution to wider Food Partnership / System structures.

Finally, and most important of all, **lived experience** should be at the heart of any revised policy around food insecurity, indeed any investment options appraised in future. Through a greater understanding of people's experiences, needs, hopes and strengths the value of this work can be more authentic, pragmatic and likely to succeed – if the measure of success is an incrementally more food secure York and North Yorkshire by 2030.

12.0 Practical resources
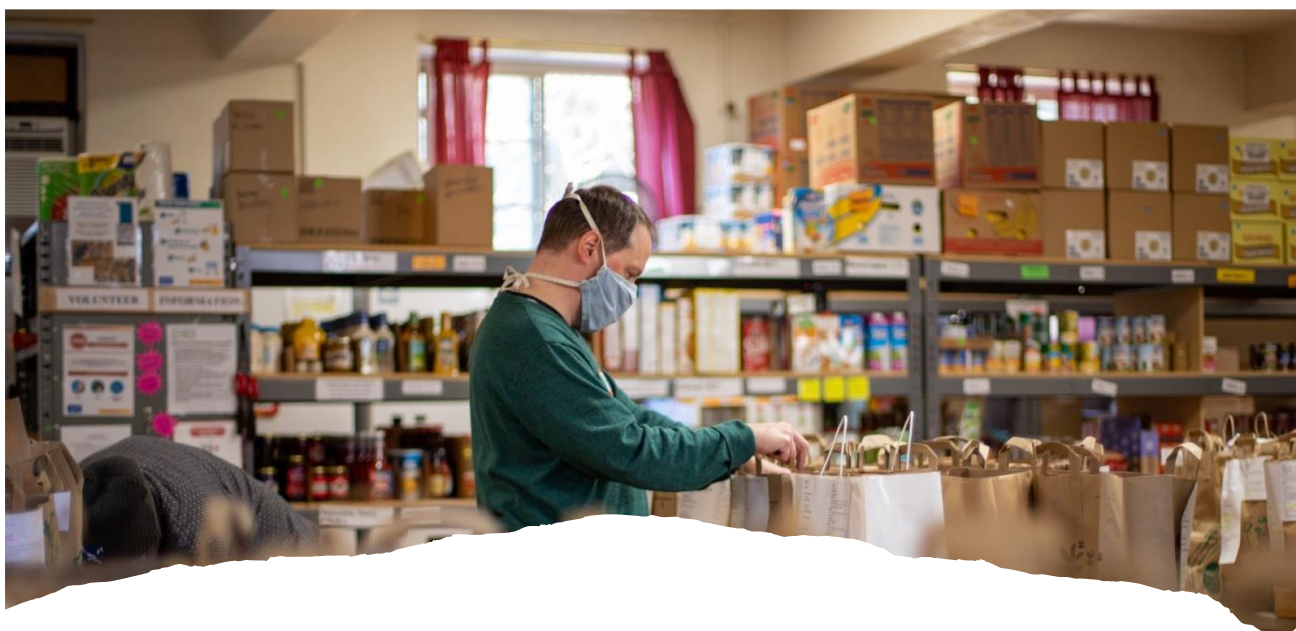
A set of resources have been produced as part of this research study to enable you to explore each model in more detail should you be interested to learn in that way. Please visit this site:

https:// skybluefoodinsecurity.wordpress.com

The author would particularly encourage anyone reading this summary to download the **'50 questions'** that are designed to encourage conversations about what to think about before investing in food access models either for the first time or to extend what already exists – a sort of **checklist** that has usefully evolved during the process that initial recipients have suggested are very useful to their practice.

https://skybluefoodinsecurity.wordpress.com/questions-arising/

Further resources may be added in 2023 including the much-anticipated LIFE Group's lived experience research report and links to the emerging data dashboard that complements this work.

Thank you for taking the time to contribute to or read this summary. We sincerely hope it can support your work and further discussion about the best ways to address food insecurity in York and North Yorkshire.

Appendix: national studies that provide recommendations for local authorities and other system partners seeking to address food insecurity

There are many sources of practical resources that the Project Steering Group can draw on to help inform any decision-making as a result of this study and wider workstreams. Many recommendations have been made by many different academics, think tanks and advocacy groups for local authorities to consider, a small selection of which are named here.

Key sources where recommendations are made for local authorities

Sustain: 10 key lessons for local action on food poverty

10 key lessons for local action on food poverty | Sustain (sustainweb.org)

Sustain launched a report to share the key lessons from Food Power on how to empower local action to tackle food poverty and deliver effective, dignified responses. They summarised these lessons, along with national recommendations for government and funders, in their report – Empowering local action on Food Poverty: Key lessons from Food Power. Sustain identified 10 key lessons:

1. Communities should develop **food poverty alliances and action plans** to ensure a sustainable response to household food insecurity.
2. **Local councils** should get involved with and support the development of food poverty alliances and actions plans in their local areas.
3. **Experts by experience** should be involved in work to reduce food poverty, enabled through appropriate compensation and creative methods that fairly represent their views and amplify their voices.
4. Sustainable responses to food poverty should include efforts to **maximise people's household income** and take a cash-first approach.
5. Local alliances can play a role in ensuring **children's access to food 365 days a year**. But local and national level change is also needed to remove barriers and prevent the burden falling on overstretched voluntary organisations.
6. **Community food retail initiatives** should be developed to support local producers and retailers where possible and avoid further entrenching the current flawed food system.
7. We should **consider the language** being used to ensure it fairly reflects and seeks to address the injustices within the system and the voices of experts by experiences.
8. Efforts to reduce food poverty locally should **build towards local food resilience**.
9. Efforts to tackle the root causes of food poverty should be **evaluated collectively** to effectively measure impact, galvanise collaboration, and understand areas for improvement.
10. Alliances and local actors should **collaborate with diverse organisations** to ensure everyone in the community is able to access the good food they need

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Download the full report and find more resources, including guidance for local authorities, case studies and webinars on the Food Power website.

A major study has been completed exploring [Food vulnerability during COVID-19 | SPERI | The University of Sheffield](#), providing a contemporary insight to the models adopted by 14 different local authorities during the pandemic. A range of reports with recommendations have been produced. The extracts below are from 'Local Responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021)'. Priorities suggested by the different actors involved in this major national research study are linked to these 4 trends observed.

1: Cash first approaches increasingly integrated in local responses to food insecurity including income maximisation efforts, cash grants and vouchers.	"A common concern with these approaches, however, was that their success is determined by the adequacy of the social security safety net and/or earned incomes, over which local level governments and organisations have little control."
2: A range of actors driving for comprehensive approaches and system-wide strategies	"Food partnerships, food poverty alliances and other local networks continue to be powerful vehicles for collaboration, sharing of good practice, and developing a joint system-wide vision and accompanying set of actions."
3. Recognising the role of third sector organisations and the limitations of food aid capacity and food supply	"There needs to be full, frank and inclusive discussions at both the national and local levels - of the role that community organisations should and can play in response to food insecurity. "
4. Increasing the reach of community food projects and other services	"As specific groups have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and its aftermath, we consider that targeting and tailoring of support warrants particular attention from practitioners and policymakers. Furthermore, as some projects aim to have more inclusive models of support and reach a wider group of people, projects are considering how they communicate and facilitate access to support."

The key learning lessons from the research are:

1: Take a whole systems approach to tackling household food insecurity.

2: Retain and sustain networks and partnership working.

3: Harness and guide new interest in food support systems.

4: Retain wide engagement, from a range of audiences, for food access interventions.

5: Empower third sector responses in a sustainable way.

6: Understand, and respond to, the range of factors impacting food access.

7: Avoid negative local perceptions of food support.

8: Learn from the limitations of the national food box schemes for people who were shielding.

'How do projects and local communities think through the role of open access provision that may help to reach those in need or who may not come forward and support a preventative approach?'

Recommendations are made for different system partners:

Councils	Partnerships/ alliances	Third sector organisations
• Develop or update food strategy plan. • Encouraging and adopting cash first approach. • Continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with the third sector. • Continue to support third sector organisations with funding and expertise (as required) including smaller community organisations. • Support transition to affordable food models. • Support providers [to] resume social activities such as community meals. • Continue to support and develop wrap around services. • Increase opportunities for growing and cooking programmes. • Promote and operationalise means to tackle the root causes of food insecurity and poverty. • Continue to liaise with national Government.	• Promoting and embedding a wide approach to support household food insecurity focusing on inequalities. • Encouraging and adopting cash first approach. • Support transition to affordable food models. • Continue and facilitate regular engagement and networking with relevant organisations. • Engaging with and building relations with new food aid providers by meeting face to face, rather than virtually. • Retaining or building engagement with statutory agencies in partnerships. • Collating data on food aid initiatives in the local area. • Supporting rural communities with food access issues particular to this geography. • Provide support, guidance and accredited training with partnership organisations.	• Encouraging and adopting cash first approach. • Resuming face to face services. • Accessing funding. • Safely resuming volunteer opportunities (where these have been paused). • Networking with relevant organisations to ensure a joined up approach. • Consult families and communities with lived experience to shape services and delivery. • Resume services to pre-pandemic levels. • Expand range of services on offer (such as clothes bank, befriending services, community freezer and training opportunities). • Promote and operationalise the means to tackle the root causes of food insecurity and poverty. • Food growing and cooking activities. • Getting the messages out to the public and politicians that food banks should not be the answer to poverty.

Priorities for the wider efforts to support people with food access are suggested:

Approach food insecurity from a food systems perspective	• "Look at food systems across the counties - using Sustainable Food Places model - encouraging development of projects that enable better access to reasonably priced food/meals in areas where it is needed" (Food aid workshop, Herefordshire) • "Look at how we can address this issue long term, instead of quick fixes. Looking more towards sustainability also." (Food aid workshop, West Berkshire)
Utilise third sector knowledge and expertise	• "Make sure we are consulted, listened to and valued for our understanding and connection with communities" (Food aid workshop, Edinburgh)
Adopt a rights based approach	• "To embed [reducing] food poverty and access to food as basic human right into our New Anti-Poverty Strategy Framework" (Food aid workshop, Belfast)
Publicise the desire to end the need for food banks. And plan for how this can be achieved	• "Publicise boldly that we want less food banks, not more" (Food aid workshop, Leeds) • "Contributing to a Swansea / Wales plan to end the need for emergency food" (Food aid workshop, Swansea)
Understand the range of factors impacting food access. Particularly in rural areas.	• "Need to understand the other factors that prevent people accessing affordable food e.g. low cost transport to get to cheaper food shops" (Food aid workshop, Herefordshire) • "Equality around access, have the same opportunities and access in rural areas" (Food aid workshop, Moray)
Support the spectrum of food access issues	• "What we do not do is help those who are 'just about managing'... We have and will continue to consider how best we might do so." (Food aid workshop, Argyll and Bute)
Overcome the stigma of seeking support	• "One of the main problems with any support is ensuring it goes to those in genuine need. We would have found that pride has prevented some of the most vulnerable from coming forward especially as this is a small rural rea where a stigma is attached to requesting assistance" (Food aid workshop, Derry City and Strabane)
Campaign locally and nationally	• "Pressurise Council for coherent and simple resourced Food Poverty Action plan that does something." (Food aid workshop, Merton) • Support campaigns that look to address the roots of poverty (Food aid workshop, Moray)
Enable effective food recovery	• "Better food recovery from shops/restaurants etc. Used to be very good but currently only M&S donating surplus food." (Food aid workshop, Moray) • "Pressurise Council to have local regularised agreement with local supermarkets to use waste food that is then used by community groups, and to ensure that the transport aspect is funded even if the rest cannot be." (Food aid workshop, Moray)

Recommendations from local councils and partnerships/ alliances for other areas

Recommendation	Jamboard data
Ensure a coordinated local response	"Whilst the basics like partnership working are important everywhere, a local response, that works for your communities is needed" (Council workshop, Cardiff)
Develop wide networks	"Think beyond existing providers - which may be dominated by organisations with good reach into some communities but not others, finding networks that can help to tailor and expand the response to under-served communities (and can help that to be an appropriate response)" (Council workshop, Bradford)
Develop and implement a food strategy and/or action plan	"Develop an evidence-based strategy/action plan and find some highly influential champions to support you with this and help drive your agenda forwards." (Council workshop, Greenwich)
Work with and harness the third sector and communities	"Working with the third sector and communities to enhance and strengthen provision and whole system approaches to tackling food poverty and insecurity." (Council workshop, Swansea) "Use a third sector intermediary body to direct resources to the micro-third sector, the specialist and minority groups, etc. Public sector as enabler, facilitator and funder, but a partner." (Partnership workshop, Glasgow)
Ensure effective practicalities are in place	"A very practical recommendation: allow public sector to use Zoom. In Scotland they're only allowed to use Teams, and most of the community moved on to Zoom, so public sector partners literally could not attend many online planning meetings." (Partnership workshop, Glasgow) "Get data-sharing sorted. Get a common understanding of GDPR." (Partnership workshop, Glasgow)
Identify effective ways to communicate amongst all relevant organisations	"Regular communication led by one partner organisation to avoid duplication of services." (Partnership workshop, DSCDC)
Learn from others	"Try and link in nationally to learn from other experiences." (Partnership workshop, Moray)

Appendix: Rapid evidence assessment search terms (phase 4 of the desk research process)

Generic search terms	Searches by specific intervention/ typology	Search terms by wider approaches	Searches by stakeholder in the food landscape
Food / poverty / evidence UK	Community food programme / project	Food ladder	DEFRA
Food bank / pantry effectiveness / UK	Community fridge	Food system resilience	DWP
Food aid provision / models / UK	Community kitchen / café / orchard / garden	Food partnership	JRF
Food poverty provision / models UK	Food banks / food pantry	Food poverty alliance / action plan	Sustain
Household food in/security UK	Community shop / social supermarket / ECO shop / low cost food retail model	Sustainable food places	National Lottery ('Food Power' et al)
Household in/security interventions	Community larder	Food desert	Church Action on Poverty (CAOP)
People at risk of food poverty	School / institutional feeding / breakfasts / holiday hunger programmes / free school meals	Good food places	Hubbub (social supermarkets network)ENUF
Community food projects	Beyond food banks	Healthy start programme	Trussell Trust
Community food systems	Food skills / education	Cash first	IFAN
Promising evidence of tackling food insecurity in the UK	Food network	Food first	Dr Megan Blake (with Rachel Loopstra and CAOP)
COVID 19 and food insecurity	Food redistribution	Housing first	Fare Share
Child food insecurity	Food surplus / waste	Community wealth building	Food Foundation (inc. Rachel Loopstra)
Promising / evidence / impact		Enterprising / sustainable food models	Nourish Scotland
Effectiveness / efficacy		**Searches: stakeholders in the food landscape**	Red Cross
Provision		DEMOS	UK Food Poverty Alliance
Models		SPERI University of Sheffield[229]	Food Cycle
Evaluation	*Full listing available in research method section of this report*	Nuffield	Magic breakfast
Systematic review		Esmee Fairburn Foundation	Resolution Foundation
Measurement / metrics		NAVCA / VCSEP	York Food Justice Alliance / Good Food York
Random control trials / intervention / design		DEMOS	*P29 Food Power Final Evaluation has a useful 'food landscape' graphic listing key organisations*

Sources and end notes

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[1] Individuals (and their household) primarily accessing free / PAYF / low cost food; but also, individuals in their role as volunteers / members / supporters of a (food) model.

[2] Food poverty definition: Department of Health, Choosing a Better Diet: A food and health action plan, 2005, p.7 Food insecurity definition: Food Standards Agency, Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey, 2007 Food aid definition: Household Food Security in the UK: A review of food aid, DEFRA, 2014, p.iv

[3] Language matters, especially when it comes to achieving food justice | Sustain (sustainweb.org)

[4] Food poverty: Households, food banks and free school meals - House of Commons Library (parliament.uk)

[5] State-of-Hunger-2021-Report-Final.pdf (trusselltrust.org)

[6] Language matters, especially when it comes to achieving food justice | Sustain (sustainweb.org)

[7] What is household food insecurity? | ENUF

[8] What is food insecurity and why it is a threat? | British Red Cross

[9] Measurement of household insecurity | ENUF. Why is this? Likely because spending on food is self-regulated, meaning that when households feel stretched financially, spending on food is often among the first essential items that are cut back on. Compared to fixed contracts, payments that are automatically deducted from income, and the threat of eviction, research has shown household spending on food is often the most flexible

[10] Too Poor to Eat Food insecurity in the UK By Anna Taylor and Rachel Loopstra, The Food Foundation May 2016

[11] Food poverty: Households, food banks and free school meals - House of Commons Library (parliament.uk)

[12] The estimates draw from a survey commissioned by the Food Foundation that was conducted in Jan 2021 by YouGov. The estimates are produced by Dr Angelo Moretti (MMU), Dr Adam Whitworth (Univ Sheffield) and Dr Megan Blake (Univ Sheffield) using a regression-based multilevel small area estimation methodology. The accompanying briefing report provides technical details on the methodology. Estimates and confidence intervals may be downloaded here. Further questions on the local estimates can be direct to m.blake@sheffield.ac.uk. For further information about the Food Foundation survey please contact office@foodfoundation.org.uk

[13] E.g., Jack Monroe, Marcus Rashford, anti-poverty campaigns

[14] E.g., amongst CIPFA comparative group

[15] e.g., Defra UK 2021 report, House of Commons Briefing Paper, measurement approaches in the UK

[16] e.g., audit toolkit for schools provided by Children North East (children-ne.org.uk)

[17] e.g., York Poverty Truth Commission/ York MCN / JRF

[18] Rotherham, East Riding and Knaresborough mentioned as working models

[19] Noted because they had the previous day done a piece on a local community fridge and the diminishing donations

[20] North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund

[21] York Financial Assistance Scheme

[22] Local Area Coordinators

[23] Various grant schemes mentioned for food and essential supplies and embedding sustainability in food schemes

[24] Energy vouchers

[25] Pig n Pastry (York)

[26] Training café for young people with additional needs taken on to full community kitchen (Clifton)

[27] A tool for helping understand and measure changes in household poverty being piloted in Scarborough (SPARKS)

[28] CYC trying to do something through Live Well York

[29] Example: Resurrected Bites started as a climate change food waste café ; evolved to social supermarket model.

[30] ONS, Resolution Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and House of Commons Briefing Papers for 'Poverty,' 'Food poverty: Households, food banks and free school meals' and the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee's 'Hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity in the UK' report.

[31] This report from 2019 focused on poverty in North Yorkshire comparing it to the workhouse era with statistics and insights around various forms of poverty and insecurity. It contained 7 recommendations for action. It also contains a map of areas at risk of household food insecurity with data source listed perhaps replicable for this project.

[32] From key releases such as the Family Resources Survey and Households Below Income Average (HBIA) data 31st March 2022

[33] New but based on pre-existing indices.

[34] 'Food aid' was employed as an umbrella term encompassing a range of large-scale and small local activities aiming to help people meet food needs, often on a short-term basis during crisis or immediate difficulty; more broadly they contribute to relieving symptoms of household or individual-level food insecurity and poverty. Household Food Security in the UK: A Review of Food Aid Final Report February 2014, Lambie-Mumford, H., Crossley, D., Jensen, E., Verbeke, M. and Dowler, E. Food Ethics Council, University of Warwick. Households employ multiple strategies for trying to deal with food insecurity; these may, or may not, include accessing temporary food aid. International evidence is that it is only after other main strategies have been employed (including changes to shopping and eating habits, cutting back on other outgoings, and turning to family and friends for help) that the most food insecure households may turn to food aid. Even then, there are many reasons why some households do not use food aid (Bhattatai et al 2005; Loopstra and Tarasuk 2012; Yu et al 2010; Aluwalia et al 1998; Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk 2009 among others). International research findings on household behaviour under financial pressure are a useful starting point for understanding in the UK

[35] Reflecting the central importance of income in determining a household's financial ability to acquire food, data from national surveys have routinely shown **household income to be the most consistent and strongest predictor of risk of food insecurity** (45–52, Conference on 'Improving nutrition in metropolitan areas' Symposium 4: Interventions to improve nutrition in urban areas Interventions to address household food insecurity in high-income countries Rachel Loopstra Department of Nutritional Sciences, Faculty of Life Sciences and Medicine, King's College London, 150 Stamford Street, Franklin-Wilkins Building, London SE1 9NH, UK

[36] Marmot review ten years on: Food insecurity is defined by the Trussell Trust, and academics working with them, as "a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food" (234).

[37] Food security definition: food security is used in a conventional manner, one that encompasses the four traditional dimensions of food security: food availability, food accessibility, food utilization, and stability (FAO 2008). Resilience of local food systems and links to food security – A review of some important concepts in the context of COVID-19 and other shocks | SpringerLink

[38] They offer individuals and households groceries to take home (supplementing basic necessities of daily living). For example, The Trussell Trust Foodbank model uses a referral system. Foodbanks provide local frontline agencies with referral vouchers, who in turn provide referrals to clients identified as being in financial crisis. Referring agencies include Citizen's Advice Bureaux, Jobcentre Plus offices, GP offices, schools, housing

associations, and social services, but vary across food banks. Once someone receives a referral, they can go to the food bank to receive food. They are called food pantries in US and Canada. Other definition: "a charitable organisation that solicits, receives, inventories, stores, and distributes donated food and grocery products to charitable agencies that directly serve needy clients. These agencies include churches and qualifying non-profit charitable organisations" (Mabli et al. 2010). FBs in other countries follow this definition (see Foodbank Australia 2010; Foodbank Canada 2010; Global Foodbanking Network 2010).

[39] Social Supermarkets: Typology within the spectrum of Social Enterprises Dr. Christina Holweg, MBA Eva Lienbacher, Prof. Dr. Peter Schnedlitz WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, Institute for Retailing and Marketing. „Social Supermarkets receive surplus food and consumer goods from partnership companies (e.g. manufacturers, retailer) for free and sell it at symbolic prices to a restricted group of people living in or at risk of poverty".

[40] Charitable meal programmes typically offer warm, prepared or takeaway meals for high-risk groups. Food banks tend to reach a wider population as they offer a grocery supplement (Power et al. 2017).

[41] Community kitchens are another form of community food programme. Programme participants prepare large amounts of food together and take home the meals prepared, and simultaneously often are taught budgeting and cooking skills.

[42] through a membership structure (possibly operated through volunteering time or a low membership fee), members make their own choices from the donated or surplus foodstuffs available

[43] Community food programmes also often focus on improving food availability and improving food skills. For example, reflecting concern about food deserts, some programmes focus on providing alternative places for people in low-income areas to buy or acquire food by establishing mobile, low-cost fruit and vegetable markets, fruit and vegetable box drop-off programmes, or community or allotment garden spaces for people to grow food(131) . Funding and provision of these programmes can be through third-sector organisations, government (particularly local governments if public health is devolved), or both.

[44] 'Feeding Hungry Children': The Growth of Charitable Breakfast Clubs and Holiday Hunger Projects in the UK. Framing the problem and solution: from promoting social inclusion to feeding hungry children.

[45] List of support informed by a review of NYCC / DEFRA food grants in 2020/21 and 22 and partly informed by this source: Household Food Security in the UK: A Review of Food Aid Final Report February 2014, Lambie-Mumford, H., Crossley, D., Jensen, E., Verbeke, M. and Dowler, E. Food Ethics Council, University of Warwick

[46] Distributed to people in their own homes and may or may not be free to users e.g., meals on wheels

[47] Given to eligible individuals or households, which entitle them to purchase food at below market price e.g., Healthy Start

[48] Source: Household Food Security in the UK: A Review of Food Aid Final Report February 2014, Lambie-Mumford, H., Crossley, D., Jensen, E., Verbeke, M. and Dowler, E. Rapid evidence assessment.

[49] Meals at midday or breakfast, or one commodity such as milk are provided sometimes free or subsidised

[50] Food is usually of a particular kind e.g., high energy, high protein, micronutrient rich to be consumed in addition to the usual diet

[51] A more generic version of distribution usually of fixed amounts of food commodities given to all who are eligible defined by Government, an aid giving body or other institution

[52] Where people do a specific job, usually manual labour, and are paid in food usually to take to their homes e.g., sacks of flour, cans of oil)

[53] Google Scholar; NHS open Athens; Ebsco; NHS discovery service; Science Director; Web of Science; Medline and social science journals accessed as a member of the Social Research Association

[54] Local Responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020-September 2021), Katy Gordon, Hannah Lambie-Mumford, Simon Shaw and Rachel Loopstra

[55] Food poverty: Households, food banks and free school meals, House of Commons Briefing Paper, April 2021

[56] Food banks in the UK, July 2021, House of Commons Library

[57] Source: Feeding the food insecure in Britain: learning from the 2020 COVID-19 crisis - May 2020

[58] Source: The role of food banks in addressing food insecurity: a systematic review. 2016

[59] A survey of food banks operating independently of The Trussell Trust food bank network. December 2019

[60] 'Almost half (47%) of people referred to Trussell Trust food banks are in debt to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)'. Trussell Trust, Emergency food parcel distribution in the United Kingdom: April – September 2022

[61] The main reasons for food bank use (in descending order), from the 2019 review of independent food banks cited: Awaiting outcome of a benefit application (i.e. payment or decision), Benefit payment interrupted or reduced due to re-assessment, loan repayment, or other reason, High rates of debt meaning income insufficient to cover basic needs, Benefits currently stopped due to a sanction, Regular income insufficient to meet basic needs (e.g. food, housing, utilities), Inability to manage money due to issues such as gambling, addiction, or other problems, Unexpected outgoings (e.g. repairs, accident, funeral, relocation, help for family member), No recourse to public funds and 'Other reasons'.

[62] 'State of Hunger' Building the evidence on poverty, destitution, and food insecurity in the UK Year two main report May 2021

[63] '71% of food banks reported people in part-time work made up a large proportion of their clients; 62% reported people on zero-hour contracts made up a large proportion of their clients; and 36% even reported having a large proportion of people in full-time work. Among Trussell Trust food banks, only 14% of households using food banks include someone with employment, and this is very rarely full-time employment.' A survey of food banks operating independently of The Trussell Trust food bank network. December 2019

[64] Independent Food Bank Emergency Food Parcel Distribution. Comparing February – May 2019 with February – May 2020

[65] Other requirements for food bank use (instead of a third party referral) were: Completion of a registration form, Questionnaire/interview to assess need(s) conducted by food bank volunteer or staff, Required to present, Required to present proof of address, Required to meet with an on-site advice worker, Proof of income or income source or Proof of emergency/crisis (e.g. homelessness, redundancy, benefit delay, contact with other service agency etc.)

[66] Trussell Trust, Emergency food parcel distribution in the United Kingdom: April – September 2022

[67] Food banks in England in rural communities distributed 76% more parcels to September 2022 than pre-pandemic in 2019/20. Urban areas in England saw a 34% increase since the same period last year, and a 61% increase from pre-pandemic levels in 2019/20. Trussell Trust, Emergency food parcel distribution in the United Kingdom: April – September 2022

[68] Food vulnerability during COVID-19. Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021) An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice appendix Katy Gordon, Hannah Lambie-Mumford, Simon Shaw and Rachel Loopstra

[69] Two examples are cited in: 1) Gentilini U. Banking on Food: The State of Food Banks in High-income Countries. IDS Working Papers. 2013 2) Lindberg R, Whelan J, Lawrence M, Gold L, Friel S. Still serving hot soup? Two hundred years of a charitable food sector in Australia: a narrative review. Australian and New Zealand journal of public health. 2015.

[70] Martin KS, Wu R, Wolff M, Colantonio AG, Grady J. A Novel Food Pantry Program: Food Security, Self-Sufficiency, and Diet-Quality Outcomes. American journal of preventive medicine. 2013;45(5):569-75

[71] Loopstra et al. 2015b).

[72] Based on a representative survey of 114 independent food banks providing food parcel distribution outside of the Trussell Trust's network across England.

[73] https://www.hubbub.org.uk/the-community-fridge

[74] The primacy of community fridges is to reduce food waste – with supermarkets the prime focus. Despite the huge quantities of food that pass through community fridges it is useful to be aware that the level of food waste from retailers - which makes up most of the fridge's contents - only counts for 2% of the total food waste figure for the UK. The majority of food that is wasted in the UK (69%) is wasted by households, who make up only around 5% of fridge donations across the network. Source: Feeding the food insecure in Britain: learning from the 2020 COVID-19 crisis - May 2020

[75] Based on a review of 21 studies and meta studies.

[76] Feeding Britain is a charity with a vision of a UK where no one goes hungry. It supports a national network of 66 regional anti-hunger partnerships comprising more than 600 local organisations ranging from community centres and schools, to local authorities and social enterprises.

[77] Food Insecurity: Understanding local delivery, impact and innovation in the North East Riding (2021)

[78] Over 6 in 10 independent foodbanks operate a 'food plus' model whereby other support is also available. Some Trussell Trust food banks also offer this extended service.

[79] The Trussell Trust made headlines in 2022 thanks to a deal with Deliveroo. Customers were able to donate to the charity by rounding up their bills. However, due to Deliveroo's own payment practices, the deal was controversial. https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/20081956.trussell-trust-slammed-deal-deliveroo/

[80] The exception to this is where the level of need in a community has reduced to such an extent that this (and likely other) types of provision are no longer required, or required on a reduced scale.

[81] IFAN, Isle of Wight Food Waste and Food Poverty Conference, 18th November 2022, The growing need for charitable food aid and a cash first approach to food insecurity

[82] https://www.trusselltrust.org/getinvolved/campaigns/

[83] Source: https://www.trusselltrust.org/what-we-do/more-than-food/

[84] https://www.rsmuk.com/real-economy/economic-voice/cost-of-living-crisis-likely-to-last-until-second-half-of-2023

[85] A recommendation in Food vulnerability during COVID-19. Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021) An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice appendix Katy Gordon, Hannah Lambie-Mumford, Simon Shaw and Rachel Loopstra

[86] Inspired by the Craven Food Partnership. Source Stronger Communities Shaping the Future part 2 (2020). "Importantly, the manager of the Foodbank is very knowledgeable about the causes of food insecurity, and once the initial emergency food provision channels were established and working well, she helped us to appreciate the underlying causes of food insecurity and connected us to the established organisations and networks on this topic, out of which Craven Food Partnership was born."

[87] Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 September 2021). An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice p17

[88] ibid

[89] ibid

[90] Community social supermarkets: understanding how they shape access and availability to healthier foods in food insecure communities, 2022, School of Health & Life Sciences Teesside University with NIHR (applied research collaboration North East and North Cumbria)

[91] This study will be led by the School of Health & Life Sciences Teesside University with NIHR (applied research collaboration North East and North Cumbria)

[92] Dr Blake drew on these sources for her synthesis kindly supplied to the research team for this study: Maynard and Tweedie, 2021; Lambie-Mumford, 2014; Lasko-Skinner and Jeyabraba, 2021; Saxena and Tornaghi, 2018; Psarikidou et al., 2019; Jenkins et al., 2021

[93] For example, in Grangetown, Redcar and Cleveland New Next Step Shop opens in Grangetown Community Hub - footprintsinthecommunity.co.uk

[94] Food Insecurity: Understanding local delivery, impact and innovation in the North East Riding (2021)

[95] https://innchurches.co.uk/foodsavers/

[96] East Riding Food Poverty Project Alliance Report. 2021

[97] Releasing social value from surplus food Evaluation Final Report FareShare-British Red Cross. Impact of British Red Cross funding on FareShare to tackle Loneliness and Isolation. February 2020

[98] Conversations for Change - RIPEN (ripens.co.uk)

[99] Community Shop - Relationships Project

[100] Mapping and monitoring responses to the risk of rising food insecurity during the COVID-19 crisis across the UK - Autumn 2020 to Summer 2021 (published August 2022).

[101] Meals on wheels for the 21st century

[102] Lewisham Homes' Community Food Stores Impact Evaluation - January 2022

[103] Dr Megan Blake, University of Sheffield

[104] Food Hubs in the UK: Where are we and what next? Paola Guzman and Christian Reynolds August 2019

[105] Food Power, Final Evaluation Report, 2021.

[106] Source: Evaluation Final Report FareShare-British Red Cross. Impact of British Red Cross funding on FareShare to tackle Loneliness and Isolation. February 2020

[107] Food Cycle Social Impact Report

[108] Community hubs and food pantry | Enfield Council and Community hubs and food pantry | Enfield Council

[109] Based on sampled feedback from 2,500 users. Source https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f452e5078bf4f32c97a8045/t/6241963f9ec2b51a579a08b5/1648465485739/TBBT+Impact+Report+2021+FINAL.pdf

[110] This contrasts to international evidence which found A review of the evidence on food banks and other community food programmes in high-income countries found that the services' ability to meet the needs of people experiencing food insecurity was limited. There was little evidence of these services effectively reducing food insecurity. Cash transfers and food subsidies were far more effective. Source: Food Cycle Social Impact report. 2021

[111] Further challenges mentioned by key informants included the management of (poor) quality food donations, getting good impact stories for advocacy and fundraising purposes, and dealing with conflict and racism outside of the store while people are queuing.

[112] Sources: The Value of Local Food Partnerships: UK Sustainable Food Places Evaluation Report. And: 2022 Food Poverty Alliances (2019)

[113] This partnership also made a film highlighting the realities of growing up in food poverty. http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/edgelands/

[114] 'Holiday hunger' pushes many families into food poverty and insecurity. While many children from low income families are entitled to free school meals during term time, there is currently no such provision during holidays. Local voluntary sector organisations 'fill the gap' in some places but this is far from universal.

[115] The value of local food partnerships: Covid and beyond. Jones, M., Hills, S., & Beardmore, A. (2022). UWE Bristol: Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and National Lottery Community Fund

[116] Faculty of Public Health. March 2019. 'Sustainable Food Systems for a Healthier UK: A discussion paper, page 12.' https://www.fph.org.uk/media/2409/sustainable-food-systems-for-a-healthier-uk-final.pdf

[117] NHS England. September 2019. 'Putting Health into Place'. Healthy New Towns programme. https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns/

[118] PHE. March 2017. 'Strategies for Encouraging Healthier 'Out of Home' Food Provision A toolkit for local councils working with small food businesses' Public Health England. (Toolkit page 20) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/encouraging-healthier-out-of-home-food-provision

[119] Ways to care: Forms and possibilities of compassion within UK food banks. 2021

[120] Government Food Strategy: Much ado about nothing, an empty plate at a time of hunger and uncertainty | Sustainable Food Places

[121] Food Power Evaluation 2017-2021 and Food Poverty Alliance EvaluationPREA61

[122] https://collectiveimpactforum.org/

[123] Gordon, K., Lambie-Mumford, H., Shaw, S. and Loopstra, R. (2022) Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021), published February 2022, available online http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/food-vulnerabilityduring-covid-19/

[124] heywoodfoundation.com

[125] Source: ERFPA End of project feedback for lottery – Final | ERFPA - East Riding Food Poverty Alliance - East Riding Voluntary Action Services (ERVAS) Ltd

[126] Leeds Food Insecurity Taskforce brought together Leeds City Council including Financial Inclusion Team, Catering Leeds, Children & Families and Adults and Health. Food Partnerships and wider food systems representatives such as Leeds Food Aid Network, Fareshare Yorkshire, Rethink Food, Trussell Trust, Foodwise, Foodcycle. Academic partners including University of Leeds Voluntary and community sector organisations including Voluntary Action Leeds.

[127] Image: https://www.instagram.com/p/Bx7gs7aAyp2/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY%3D

[128] Source: Food Insecurity: Understanding local delivery, impact and innovation in the North East Riding (2021)

[129] Gordon, K., Lambie-Mumford, H., Shaw, S. and Loopstra, R. (2022) Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021), published February 2022, available online http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/food-vulnerabilityduring-covid-19/

[130] Lambie-Mumford, H., Gordon, K., Loopstra, R. and Shaw, S. (2021) 'Comparing local responses to household food insecurity during COVID-19 across the UK (March – August 2020), published July 2021, available online http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/food-vulnerability-during-covid-19

[131] As specific groups have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and its aftermath, we consider that targeting and tailoring of support warrants particular attention from practitioners and policymakers.

[132] Food poverty action plans | Sustain (sustainweb.org)

[133] Page 51, table 6

[134] https://www.huggg.me/public-sector. Creating shared databases and systems was identified as a particular challenge, particularly as no one has the time to do this.

[135] Lewes District Food Partnership: Partnering with Lewes District Council to develop a food security strategy | Local Government Association

[136] From 'A commensal is an organism that uses food supplied in the internal or the external environment of the host, without establishing a close association with the host, for instance by feeding on its tissues.'

[137] Source: https://www.sustainweb.org/foodpoverty/meals_on_wheels/

[138] https://www.stroud.gov.uk/community-health-and-wellbeing/coronavirus-update/extra-support-services/clinically-extremely-vulnerable/definition-of-clinically-extremely-vulnerable-groups

[139] Supporting and enhancing meals on wheels provision | Sustain (sustainweb.org)

[140] Based on a review of 21 studies and meta studies.

[141] Meals on wheels can be paid-for, subsidised or free-of-charge.

[142] ibid

[143] See Shaw, S. (2020) "Something to be proud of: Taking an enterprising approach to meals on wheels."

[144] Meals on wheels for the 21st century. A report exploring meals on wheels services in London before, during and after Covid-19. Sustain. July 2020

[145] Meals on wheels for the 21st century. A report exploring meals on wheels services in London before, during and after Covid-19. Sustain. July 2020.

[146] The estimated value of a meal is AT LEAST $8.87, resulting in a 48% ROI on the meal investment and has the potential to lower healthcare costs by 7% annually for the conditions modelled. Based on the assumption of a $6/meal cost. Conditions modelled included: stroke, heart attack, congestive heart failure with and without hospitalization, coronary heart disease , angina, and hypertension.' Visiting Nurse Association. Meals on Wheels Analysis. Final Findings (2017) https://www.vnatexas.org/impact/Meals-on-Wheels-Analysis-2017.pdf

[147] From: Food vulnerability during COVID-19 End of project summary of key findings (2022)

[148] Edinburgh Community Food and the Cash First Approach

[149] Cash-first approaches to addressing food poverty | Sustain (sustainweb.org)

[150] Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021). An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice appendix (2021)

[151] IFAN Infographic (strikinglycdn.com)

[152] Lambie-Mumford, H., Gordon, K., Loopstra, R. and Shaw, S. (2021) 'Comparing local responses to household food insecurity during COVID-19 across the UK (March – August 2020), published July 2021, available online http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/food-vulnerability-during-covid-19

[153] 22 Lambie-Mumford, H., Gordon, K., Loopstra, R. and Shaw, S. (2021) 'Comparing local responses to household food insecurity during COVID-19 across the UK (March – August 2020), published July 2021, available online http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/food-vulnerability-during-covid-19

[154] https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/forms/flexible-food-fund

155 https://www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk/cash-first-leaflets

156 https://www.cardiffmoneyadvice.co.uk/benefits-and-income/cardiff-discretionary-emergency-fund/

157 https://gov.wales/food-poverty-and-food-insecurity-grant-scheme

158 https://www.cardiffnewsroom.co.uk/releases/c25/26014.html

159 https://uploads.strikinglycdn.com/files/bf9f4bfb-abfc-4c08-b2e6-a3a04a27a8b4/IFAN%20Infographic%20(1).pdf?id=3713853

160 The Pregnancy and Baby Payment gives eligible families £600 on the birth of their first child and £300 on the birth of any subsequent children – not putting a limit on the number of children that can be supported. The Early Learning Payment is £250 for toddlers, and the School Age Payment is £250 to help with the costs when a child starts Primary school. Scottish Social Security Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville said: "For a two-child family, the Best Start Grant package will provide total support of £1900 to £2400 more than they would get under the previous UK system. This shows the direct difference we are making to families across Scotland with our new powers over social security."

161 Methodology: ScotCen conducted 14 semi-structured telephone and video interviews with delivery partners, advice providers and community food aid providers in four local authority areas: Argyll & Bute, Glasgow, Highland and West Lothian. Interviews took place between 11th August and 3rd November 2021. NatCen Social Research

162 Relationship between income and healthy life expectancy by local authority, Health Foundation (2021)

163 Cash first solutions to food insecurity | sfpa (shropshirefoodpoverty.org.uk)

164 London Borough of Barking and Dagenham: A 'cash first' approach to hardship grants | Local Government Association

165 www.cashperks.co.uk

166 Cash first approach to welfare provision - Greater Manchester Poverty Action (gmpovertyaction.org)

167 Cash First Edinburgh and Cash First (edinburghcommunityfood.org.uk)

168 CFINE improves health and wellbeing and the environment, tackles poverty and builds resilience through a range of support and services for and with disadvantaged, vulnerable, low-income individuals, families and communities in North East Scotland Homepage - Cfine

169 Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021) An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice, page 36

170 Source: A Systematic Review of the Evaluation of Interventions to Tackle Children's Food Insecurity Published online: 14 February 2019. In contrast, 'subsidy programmes' provide families with more flexibility to make decisions about how the additional resources they are provided with can best be utilised within individual families, but they have the disadvantage of potentially further stigmatising families who are defined by their low socioeconomic status.

171 Source: Food Insecurity: A Constant Factor in the Lives of Low-Income Families in Scotland and England. 2021

172 Ibid

173 Source: Holiday Hunger Project, a report on the holiday food and activity clubs monitored and supported by York Food Poverty Alliance June 2018-April 2019

174 Loopstra (2019) cites examples in Cardiff and Bradford where VCSEs then stopped providing direct food support after the pandemic, on the basis, the need was no longer there. Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021) An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice, page 36

175 Lambie-Mumford, H., Gordon, K., Loopstra, R. and Shaw, S. (2021) 'Comparing local responses to household food insecurity during COVID-19 across the UK (March – August 2020).

176 Shemilt I, Harvey I, Shepstone L, Swift L, Reading R, Mugford M, et al. A national evaluation of school breakfast clubs: evidence from a cluster randomized controlled trial and an observational analysis. Child Care Health Dev. 2004;30:413–27 This is one of a small number of RCTs captured in this review. It exemplifies the difficulties with conducting RCTs with public health interventions and makes a clear statement about the necessary policy changes to overcome such difficulties.

177 The nearest location is Barnsley, where Rose Vouchers report market traders make on average £150-£250 a week more because of the vouchers.

178 Source: Evaluation Strategy 2020/2021 – 2024-2025. https://www.alexandrarose.org.uk/rose-vouchers/impact/

179 Source: Rose Vouchers for fruit and veg: Final Evaluation Report. 2017. Since 2014, the Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg Project has supported over 7,766 families to access fresh fruit and veg in their community.

180 For example, narrow focus on selected outcomes, for example a meta review of breakfast club evaluations found that measurement was orientated to assess impact on children in the classroom (e.g., behaviour, educational achievement). As a result of eating fruit and vegetables measure but ignoring any potential wider impacts that may impact positively (or negatively) on children's outcomes. Source: A Systematic Review of the Evaluation of Interventions to Tackle Children's Food Insecurity Published online: 14 February 2019

181 Source: Evaluation of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme: A Yorkshire-based review of the implementation and impact of the Holiday Activities and Food programme. 2021

182 See for example Meals on wheels for the 21st century. A report exploring meals on wheels services in London before, during and after Covid-19. Sustain. July 2020 and Can food vouchers improve nutrition and reduce health inequalities in low-income mothers and young children: a multi-method evaluation of the experiences of beneficiaries and practitioners of the Healthy Start programme in England. (2014)

183 https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/charts-and-infographics/same-pandemic-unequal-impacts

184 Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 – September 2021) An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice

185 Alkon 2018 quoted in Shaping more resilient and just food systems: lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic (2021)

186 Local responses to household food insecurity across the UK during COVID-19 (September 2020 September 2021). An analysis of experiences from 14 local areas from around the UK and recommendations for future policy and practice' references 'Hope for Swansea' an app making it easier for food bank users to signpost residents to wrap around support.

187 'The Trussell Trust's model for food banks is well-established, involving establishing relationships with third-party local social and health service agencies who provide referrals; requiring that people in need of assistance have a referral for use; collecting data through the referral system; and guiding their member food banks to follow-up with referral agencies if they provide more than three referrals to a single client in a 6-month period.' Source: A survey of food banks operating independently of The Trussell Trust food bank network. December 2019

188 Dr Blake's synthesis draws on sources authored by Maynard and Tweedie, 2021; Lambie-Mumford, 2014; 'The Power of Food: Community experiences of tackling food insecurity', Lasko-Skinner and Jeyabraba, 2021; 'The emergence of social supermarkets in Britain: Food poverty, food

waste and austerity retail.' CAWR, Saxena and Tornaghi, 2018: 'Understanding lived experiences of food insecurity through a parliamentary lens: Sociology, 55(6) pp.1169-1190, Moraes et al., 2018.

[189] Dr Blake concludes that food pantries act as food hub by offering additional support (skills and training – cookery classes/demonstrations) to members, which help members to learn how to cook simple and nutritious meal. They also connect members to other social and service providers (debt service recovery groups, local welfare support scheme, pastoral, and spiritual support; benefits and legal advice), therefore able to help members to deal with the root causes of food poverty.

[190] Members buying the food packages in their community spaces often provides an informal opportunity for them to engage with other support services that they wouldn't necessarily have done before, in turn supporting them to rebuild their resilience

[191] Lewisham Homes' Community Food Stores Impact Evaluation, 2022

[192] Advice and Food Bank Pilot Evaluation (2015)

[193] It is a charity funded by a mix of government grants charitable funding and the profits from the sale of fruit and vegetables to the commercial sector. CFINE leads the Food Poverty Action Partnership, bringing together more than 60 agencies for a political response.

[194] Herefordshire Case Study, Mapping local responses: March to August 2020', published July 2021.

[195] Bandura's social cognitive theory and determinants – stages of change model whereby the individual makes change by small achievable goals

[196] Evaluation of Fife's Community Kitchen (2012)

[197] Interventions to address household food insecurity in high-income countries. 2018

[198] Social policy and embedded evaluation: Assessing the impact of a food insecurity project in the United Kingdom

[199] More than Just Food: Food Insecurity and Resilient Place Making through Community Self-Organising

[200] Releasing social value from surplus food Evaluation Final Report FareShare-British Red Cross. Impact of British Red Cross funding on FareShare to tackle Loneliness and Isolation. February 2020

[201] CFHS cooking skills study group | Community Food and Health (Scotland)

[202] for example: they had mental health support needs; a learning disability or were on the austistic spectrum; had experienced homelessness or were in recovery from addiction or a combination of issues

[203] Research and evaluation | Community Food and Health (Scotland)

[204] A snapshot of Covid-19, food insecurity and community food initiatives, Community Food and Health (Scotland, 2020)

[205] community_food_projects_e-book_0.pdf (edenprojectcommunities.com)

[206] Source: Meeting the shortage of surplus food and donations. Sam Dyer, Cambridge Sustainable Food. Part of a webinar entitled 'The cost of living and local action by food partnerships. SUSTAIN (November 2022)'

[207] Source: https://www.communityfoodandhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Retail-report-Strengthing-the-future_Jan2018_English.pdf

[208] Source: https://bhfood.org.uk/directory-hub/in-the-bag-recipe-kits/

[209] Granton Community Gardeners – community development in action | Community Food and Health (Scotland)

[210] Community gardening | Community Food and Health (Scotland)

[211] Sycamore Tree Café – evaluating their place in the community | Community Food and Health (Scotland)

[212] New Leeds based project highlights social connection through food growing | Sustain (sustainweb.org)

[213] Cracking Community Cafés: Promoting your café | Sustain (sustainweb.org)

[214] Making the case | Community Food and Health (Scotland)

[215] Community café self-evaluation programme | Community Food and Health (Scotland)

[216] Releasing social value from surplus food Evaluation Final Report FareShare-British Red Cross. Impact of British Red Cross funding on FareShare to tackle Loneliness and Isolation. February 2020

[217] Our impact fighting hunger and food waste 2019/20 | FareShare

[218] Request for tenders - FareShare

[219] FareShare Impacts of Surplus Food Redistribution Food Insecurity Impact July 2021, Updated January 2022.

[220] Government food strategy - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[221] extracted from the Lewisham Homes' Community Food Stores Impact Evaluation 2022, evaluation matrix

[222] Using 'Food Ladders' to create household and community resilience | Sustainable Food Places

[223] Priority Places (priority-places-explorer.azurewebsites.net)

[224] Consider the United Nations 4 Pillars of Food Insecurity: What is Food Security? There are Four Dimensions (worldbank.org)

[225] Cash First Referral Leaflets (worryingaboutmoney.co.uk)

[226] For example: A snapshot of Covid-19, food insecurity and community food initiatives (communityfoodandhealth.org.uk)

[227] How to set up food projects in your community | Eden Project Communities

[228] Dignity Project: Nourish Scotland & the Poverty Truth Commission

[229] Dr Megan Blake with Rachel Loopstra and Church Action on Poverty appear to be key academics regularly publishing in this field and leading on a variety of contemporary studies.

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