

GLASGOW COMMUNITY FOOD NETWORK

GLASGOW,
TACKLING FOOD
POVERTY WITH
A CITY PLAN-
PATHWAYS TO A
JUST RECOVERY



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METHOD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report from our Strategic Community Response Project was only possible because of the strong community that we have.

Through collective and collaborative work, we have made recommendations for a more resilient local food system for the consideration of the Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council and Third Sector Partners.

In the light of the global pandemic resulting from coronavirus, GCFN embarked on two projects. *Food For Good*: a bulk and wholesale logistics project, enabling food provision organisations around the city in gathering nutritious and fresh produce to distribute to people experiencing food insecurity or poverty. *The Covid Response Project*: a scoping and research project with the aim of documenting the city's response to the pandemic and to provide an in-depth view of the factors surrounding food poverty. This report is a result of that work.

Our research was carried out using methods including interviews, participatory action research working with local service users, workshops, recorded events, surveys and contributions from our networks. We'd like to acknowledge the following people, and groups, for their contribution to this report, and their determination to eradicate food poverty.

GCFN STRATEGIC COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM

Our project centred around Community Response Officers, with a Project Management Team, namely: Project Coordinator[job share]), a Project Team Development Officer and Project Support Worker). The CRO role was to facilitate community-led action research on improving supply chains and looking to longer-term solutions for local food, health and financial insecurity.

Thank you to Asma Adballa, Cara Craig, Catriona Gibson, Charlotte Keeley, Clem Sandison, Geri Sinclair, Jackie Stockdale, Louis Kitchen, Mark Fitzpatrick, Martha Williams, Rachel Edwards, Sarah Martin, Simon Knight, Tierney Woods and Zsara McEwan.

This work was supported by all of the fantastic staff, sessional workers and directors across [GCFN](#). With special thanks to the Food for Good Logistics team, [Community Transport Glasgow](#) and donors [Locavore](#) and [Green City Whole Foods](#).

GCFN STRATEGIC COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM HOSTS

Our CROs were hosted with organisations based in the North, South, East and West of Glasgow, with a CRO dedicated to working with BAME people and people in the asylum and refugee systems. The hosts were chosen after an extensive scoping exercise with support from Thriving Places Community Connectors and (NHS) HSCP Health Improvement team officers. Hosts provided support, information and access to local networks, key organisations and relationships.

Thank you to Asma Abdalla at [Empower Women for Change](#), David Zabiega at [Govanhill Community Development Trust](#), Florence Dioka at [Central West Integration Network](#) Marie Ward at [Cranhill Development Trust](#), Neil Lovelock at [Glasgow Eco Trust](#), and the late Paul Kelly at [Partick Thistle Charitable Trust](#).

CONTENT CONTRIBUTORS

We used work produced by researchers Clara Pirie at [University of Glasgow](#), Sarah Weakley at [Policy Scotland - University of Glasgow](#), and Kevin Smith at [CEIS \(Community Enterprise in Scotland\)](#).

We sought contributions from Third Sector partners, Health Improvement Teams, Glasgow City Council

and many community organisations across the city to collate knowledge. This was in areas surrounding key themes of food and income security (what support is provided), supply chains (logistics and where the food is coming from) across Glasgow, and food dignity and solidarity.

Thank you to Aileas Pringle at [Govan Community Project](#), April McCauley at [Glasgow City Council](#), Audrey Flannagan at [Glasgow SE Foodbank](#), Beverley Downie at [Glasgow City Council](#), Carey Doyle at [Community Land Scotland](#), Chris Williams at [New Economics Foundation](#), Colleen Rowan at [West of Scotland Housing Association Forum](#), Damian Shannon at [Bridging the Gap](#), David McKay at [Soil Association Scotland](#), David Thomson at [Food and Drink Federation Scotland](#), Gerald Tonner at [Glasgow City Council](#), Gordon Thomson at [Lanarkshire Community Food and Health Partnership](#), Ian Bruce at [Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector](#), Irina Martin at [Nourish Scotland](#), Jim Burns at [Move On](#) Jimmy Wilson at [FARE Scotland](#), John Casey at [NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde](#), John Sherry at [Glasgow City Council](#), Justin Little at the [Scottish Government](#), Kathleen Caskie at [Glasgow's Third Sector Interface Network](#), Mandy Morgan at [The Scottish Pantry Network](#) and [Glasgow City Council](#), Maria Marshall at [Independent Food Aid Network](#), Paddy McKenna at [Cassiltoun Housing Association](#), Sabine Goodwin at [Independent Food Aid Network](#), Sandy Paterson at [Glasgow City Council](#), Shona Stephen at [Queens Cross Housing Association](#), Siobhan Boyle at [Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership](#), Stephanie Mander at [Nourish Scotland](#), Tracey McCollin at the [Scottish Government](#), Vicki Hird at [Sustain](#), GCFN Directors and the Food and Climate Action team.

FUNDING

We utilised a patchwork of funding to deliver our Strategic Community Response Project. Thanks to [Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership](#), [Scottish Community Development Centre](#) and [Scottish Government Supporting Communities Emergency COVID Grant Scheme](#).

EDITING

The themes we explored in our research were complex and wide ranging, covering a holistic look at food poverty across Glasgow. In order to analyse and refine our findings, we worked with a team of editors and proofreaders. Thank you to Andreea-Camelia Bocioaga, Catriona Gibson and Veronica Clark.

DESIGN

In order to effectively communicate our research and recommendations, we worked with a graphic designer to organise and present our work using compelling visual elements. Thank you to Philip Taylor. Thanks to freestock from Euan Cameron, K Mitch Hodge, Ross Sneddon and Andrew Jephson. Some icons were Designed by Freepik and distributed by Flaticon.

FURTHER WORK

In the process of this work, we co-created a number of further outputs. [How to eat well in Blackhill](#) is a film based on questions raised by local residents at a community workshop in Blackhill it is hosted on YouTube.

[The Ruchazie Pantry](#) is a film exploring a community membership shop providing low-cost food in Cranhill and Ruchazie it is hosted on YouTube. [The Cranhill Cabin](#) is a film exploring how local residents can access food when there are no local supermarkets and limited public transport it is hosted on YouTube.

We worked with [Nourish](#), [IFAN](#), [Glasgow Advice Information Network](#), [Empower Women for Change](#), and [The Trussell Trust](#) to co-produce Cash First Referral Leaflets distributed to people in Glasgow who face financial crisis, and those who support them. These can be found on the [IFAN website](#), including translations in a number of community languages.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public sector support is often not able to adequately meet the food needs of individuals and as a result, a vast number of third sector/civil society organisations step in to meet these needs. Together these multiple programmes create a patchwork of assistance for low-income families in Glasgow, which vary in their adequacy and robustness. The low levels of income support for families reliant on benefit income to make ends meet is simply not enough. There are distinct policy choices (e.g., Universal Credit) that have been found to exacerbate family crises and might push families towards the need for emergency food aid.

We stand with the work of our partners during this crisis at Independent Food Aid Network, Trussell Trust and Nourish Scotland to see an end to the need for emergency food aid. This will require not only greater financial resources for those experiencing low incomes but a greater democratic participation in the design and development of programmes for those experiencing poverty.

Can Scotland take a lead in its fight to end poverty by taking forward its commitment to a Minimum Income Guarantee with a Universal Basic Income pilot? A pilot that provides UBI for everyone (non-means tested), giving the pilot enough scope and scale and being fully inclusive could make a compelling case for transformative ways of working and supporting communities.

Refugees, asylum Seekers and those with no recourse to public funds should have access to adequate financial resources, housing and the variety of service provision required for all their basic needs. Glasgow has shown the world that it welcomes all, and the UK Government should be resourcing its immigration programmes so that local public sector organisations and third sector service provision is fully in pace.

For better access to food, particularly those who live in multiple areas of deprivation, there needs to be facilities offering a healthy choice of nutritious and fresh food. At GCFN, we advocate for bottom-up development with local people taking ownership over how their local areas are developed. This includes community retail models and spaces that bring social cohesion, as well as providing outreach from local service providers. Good food jobs have been a recurring theme highlighted by our Roots to Market Research. local market gardeners such as the Wash House Garden, Tenement Veg and local enterprises Locavore and Greencity wholefoods to name but a few in Glasgow. Local food economies put money back into communities and create opportunities for cooperative ways of working. Cities should think about where their food is coming from and, by investing in better practices namely, those who grow the food, produce and sell it, wider benefits could be felt for local people and the environment which we rely on.

We hope our report highlights how these wide and varied areas of work that much of the public and third sector is invested in can be tackled in a holistic approach across organisations and departments seeking to end food poverty. Glasgow is well-positioned with the creation of Scotland's first City Food Plan. We all have an opportunity to play a part in its development and its ambition.

The pandemic may have exacerbated the crisis for those experiencing poverty but, at the same time, it has created stronger partnerships and determination across sectors to see an end to the structural issues.

KEY FINDINGS

TACKLING FOOD POVERTY

The most notable income support schemes at all three levels of government are Universal Credit/legacy benefits, Scottish Welfare Fund and Scottish Child Payment, and local-level support such as: holiday food programmes, free school meals, clothing grants and income maximisation programmes, including Universal Credit's 'Help to Claim' service through embedded NHS Money Advice Schemes in local GP practices. This patchwork of support should be resourced to meet everyone's basic needs.

It is particularly important that the referral processes and systems at local level are working well between public sector agencies, the public and third sector to ensure families receive all the support they are eligible for.

A Minimum Income Guarantee and Universal Basic Income pilot should be taken forward by the Scottish Government. UBI should include high level support and be offered to all residents so the full effects can be measured.

Glasgow City Food Plan should be continually developed and resourced through work with funders at all levels, Government, the public, third and private sectors. Working groups should be engaging and renewing work with local communities fully participating in the process, and action and implementation of recommendations should be at the heart of this work.

Community Food Provision should be about social cohesion, not emergency crisis support. However, where emergency food is required, there should be wraparound services and outreach programmes to support people and quickly reduce the need for this kind of provision.

Organisations should adopt Dignity Principles and the Scottish Government should Implement the Right to Food in Scots law.

REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

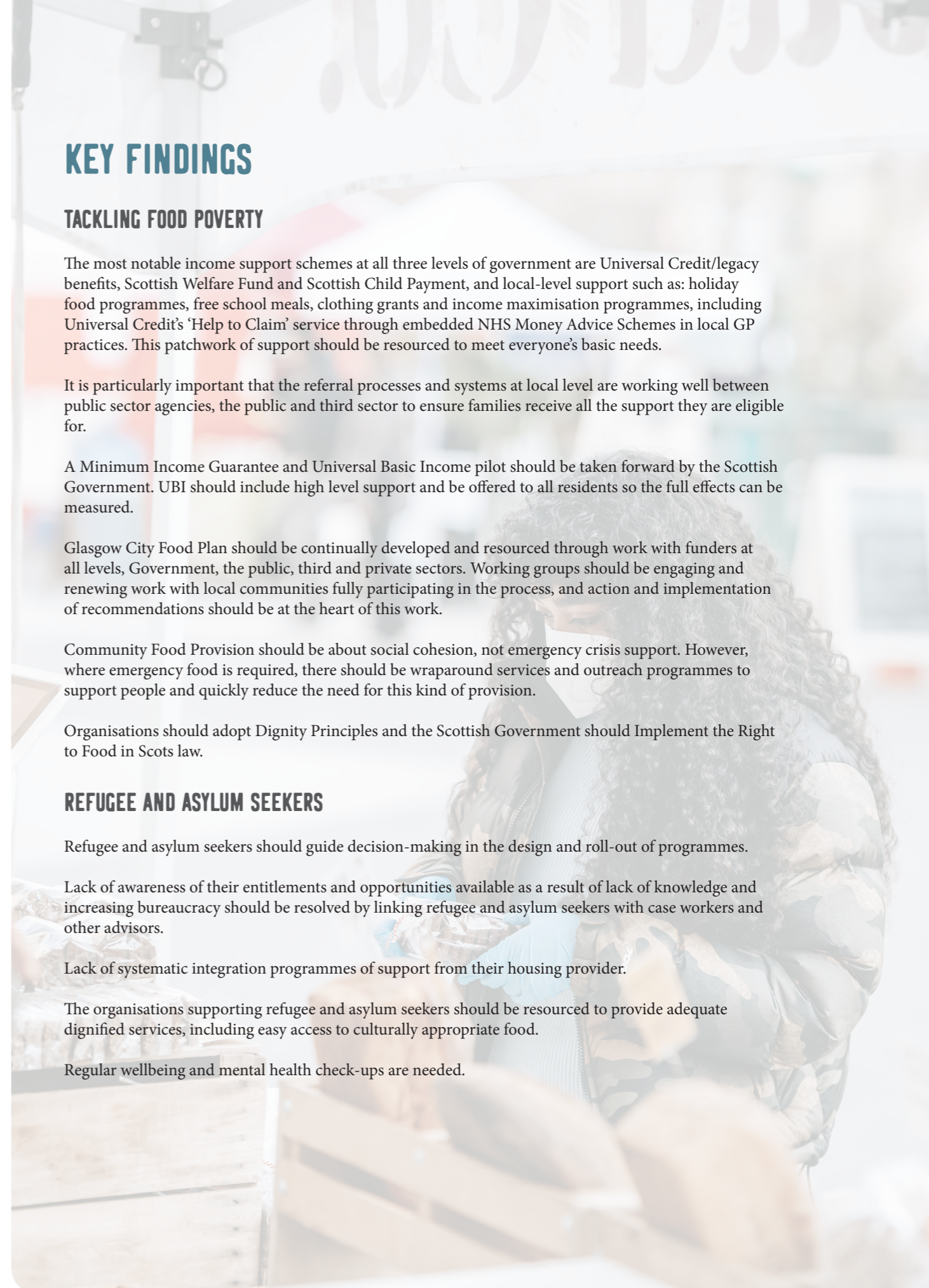
Refugee and asylum seekers should guide decision-making in the design and roll-out of programmes.

Lack of awareness of their entitlements and opportunities available as a result of lack of knowledge and increasing bureaucracy should be resolved by linking refugee and asylum seekers with case workers and other advisors.

Lack of systematic integration programmes of support from their housing provider.

The organisations supporting refugee and asylum seekers should be resourced to provide adequate dignified services, including easy access to culturally appropriate food.

Regular wellbeing and mental health check-ups are needed.



GLASGOW COMMUNITY FOOD NETWORK AND BRIEF INTRO

GCFN was established in 2017 to support community food providers, local food growers and social enterprises to tackle the root causes of food poverty at a citywide level. GCFN are part of the Glasgow Food Policy Partnership bringing local community organisations and leaders together to create Glasgow's first ever Glasgow City Food Plan.

During the pandemic, GCFN looked into the pervasive issues impacting community food providers and people accessing community food resources. We connected with Glasgow-based researchers and Community Response Officers working on the ground. This is a study looking at their findings.

CHAPTER 1: FOOD POVERTY

Food insecurity in Scotland is caused by too much poverty, not too little food. The current welfare system is inadequate. 'Cash First' approaches (including UBI) are an effective and dignified way to provide food and income security to protect the most vulnerable in our community.

CHAPTER 2: THE PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Third sector organisations have had to plug the gaps and dedicate resources to providing emergency food instead of focusing on social cohesion. This got worse during the Covid-19 crisis. The 3rd Sector led in supporting communities in the Covid 19 Response and partnerships were improved

CHAPTER 3: SUPPORTING REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Third sector organisations have had to plug the gaps and dedicate resources to providing emergency food instead of focusing on social cohesion. This grew worse during the Covid-19 crisis. The third sector led in supporting these communities during the Covid 19 response, and partnerships were improved

CHAPTER 4: ACCESS TO FOOD AND IMPROVING ITS SUPPLY

The food we have could be grown and produced in a way that generates community wealth, local jobs, and enhances sustainability and resilience.

We have collated the recommendations of experts, who have advised on dignified and sustainable ways to improve access to food and the local food economy in Glasgow. .

ACCESS AND SUPPLY OF FOOD

Local people should be fully integrated into local development plan processes, building capacity with local leadership in the design process. Having local good food as an option to develop and regenerate areas most in need across the city can generate greater community wealth.

People with poor access to affordable and frequent public transport should be eligible for free travel passes. Glasgow City Council should also look at the feasibility of better links, including the possibility of a publicly funded public/third sector bus service. During the pandemic, GCFN worked closely with Community Transport Glasgow, The Pantry Network and twenty plus community food providers, offering free transport for service users and fresh food to organisations needing a steady supply; this proved to be a need in communities across Scotland, prior to the pandemic.

The pandemic and Brexit have exacerbated supply chain issues and led to shortages in the workforce and supply of imported food. With the Good Food Nation Bill, we have an opportunity to create a new holistic and sustainable food system by choosing carefully what environmental and local development standards are required.

The Scottish Government should invest in support for agroecological farming, diversifying types of food produced and supporting good jobs in the good food sector.

As Nourish Scotland have recently highlighted, 5-10% of the reformed Common Agriculture Policy farm support budget could go direct to local authorities to invest in what works best locally.

Glasgow City Council should commit to the delivery and implementation of the Glasgow City Food Plan and Food Growing Strategy, supporting more access to growing and local food enterprise opportunities. The private and public sector in Glasgow should be supported to buy more local food and more food grown through agroecological methods, alongside a drive to increase availability of this produce. This is acknowledged in the Glasgow City Food Plan, although strategies to achieve this have not yet been developed.

Further work should be undertaken across the public sector to raise the standards of public procurement, working closely with the Soil Association accreditation schemes.

Transparency is also key to avoiding greenwashing. Short transparent supply chains will help with this, but also promoting foods that have undergone a competent accreditation process to confirm their environmental sustainability. For example, engaging with food producers to undergo organic accreditation with the Soil Association or Scottish Organic Producers Association. The Glasgow City Food Plan also suggests creating a Good Food accreditation or standard for Glasgow, which will cover social and environmental criteria..

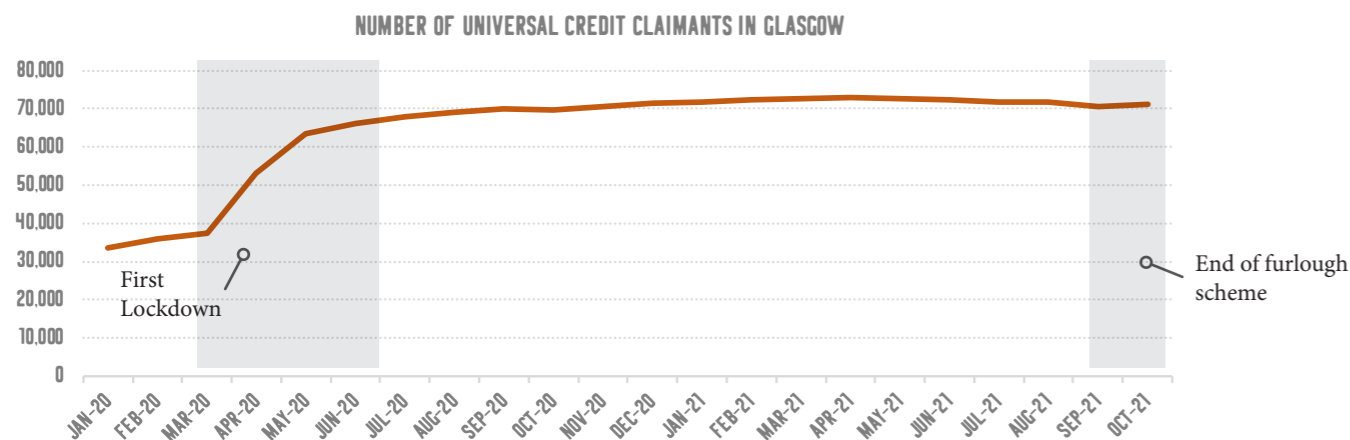
GLASGOW SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS IN THE COVID-19 CRISIS: DRIVERS OF POVERTY

Dr Sarah Weakley, University of Glasgow

The levels of poverty in an area have knock-on impacts to levels of need for emergency food aid. As a result, we have seen steep increases in the need for food aid because of the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Before the crisis, Glasgow was the local authority with the highest levels of poverty in Scotland, with 34% of children living below 60% of median income after housing costs¹ compared to 24% of all children in Scotland². In 2019/2020, 25% of all children in Scotland lived in households with low food security; 48% of children in poverty lived in households with low food security. While official statistics do not yet provide estimates of child poverty after the onset of the pandemic, other indicators suggest that poverty - is increasing; this includes data on sharp increases in emergency food aid across the UK³, job losses and rates of redundancy, and increases in those accessing the means-tested benefit system.

Child poverty rates, however, vary. Children from larger families, those who come from families where someone has a disability, or those from adult unemployment households have a higher poverty risk than children from other family types. While having a job does protect a household from falling into poverty, many people are in low-paid jobs that are not enough to lift them out of poverty based on income alone. There has been an increase in work poverty since 2007; today, two thirds of children in poverty in Scotland are living in households where at least one adult is in full or part-time work⁴.

One of the ways to consider the depth of this is the amount of money below the poverty line families are living with. Overall, families in poverty are living £107 per week below the poverty line. Families experiencing in-work poverty are living £57 per week below the poverty line on average.



Families where no one is in work are living £112 per week below the poverty line on average. The Covid-19 crisis has impacted all three of the main drivers of poverty: cost of living, income from employment and income from benefits.

Cost of living challenges facing low-income households relate primarily to the rise in average weekly rents in the social housing sector and the greater reliance on the higher-cost of private rented sector to house low-income families. Even in the lower-cost social housing sector, between 17-30% of social housing residents in the Glasgow City Region reported that they were not managing well financially

1 [Child Poverty in Glasgow \(2020\)](#) - This measure is also considered 'relative poverty'; after housing costs are considered the most appropriate way to measure poverty as this measure most accurately measures the amount the money families have to live on.
 2 [Poverty in Scotland 2017-2020, Child Poverty](#)
 3 [Trussell Trust - End of Year Stats \(2021\)](#)
 4 Ibid. Note: the data contained in this report ends at March 2020; the next official statistics will be released in March 2022 and will cover the period to March 2021.

before the crisis⁵, and it is likely that low-income families have fallen into rent arrears as a result of income loss since March 2020. New research has also found that low-income families have spent more, not less, since the onset of the crisis compared to higher income families: having children at home during multiple lockdowns has meant higher household costs on food, energy, and broadband/devices for home schooling⁶. These costs take a larger toll on household finances.

For families who are also accessing Universal Credit, survey data from February 2021 reports 45% of these families had experienced a drop in their disposable income (which includes benefit income) by more than 25%⁷.

Income from employment has also been reduced as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, with swathes of the labour market suspended at multiple points during the last 18 months. While the number of payrolled employees across the UK continues to rebound, this number is still around 550,000 lower than pre-Covid levels at May 2021. The largest losses in employment were for those who worked in accommodation and food services and for workers younger than 25. While the official unemployment rate is low (4.7%), 21% of the UK population is currently economically inactive (those who do not have a job and are not considered as actively seeking work)⁸. For people who have been able to continue working or who have been able to re-join the labour force, wages have not kept up with costs. Full time work, paying minimum wage, has not been enough to meet essential living costs. This increases in-work poverty for many families⁹.

Over the past year, increases in the National Living Wage (NLW) and temporary changes to the adequacy of the benefit system (e.g., Working Tax Credits, Universal Credit and Local Housing Allowance) improved the situation of families with two adults in work, according to modelling by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation¹⁰.

'A couple with children aged four and seven, where both parents work full-time and receive tax credits, now has a disposable income just 4% below the Minimum Income Standard (MIS), compared to 10% in 2019. If they are in the UC system, which gives higher support for childcare, disposable income is 5% above MIS, and just 1% below it if the second earner works half-time rather than full-time.' These improvements are not experienced by lone parents. 'Even working full-time on the National Living Wage and receiving Working Tax Credit, they remain 8% below MIS, although this has halved from 16% in 2019.'

45% of families had experienced a drop in their disposable income (which includes benefit income) by more than 25%.

The DWP offered a £20 uplift to Universal Credit setup as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, however this expired in September 2021. As a result, many will be pushed into poverty even further, and it is estimated that there will be an additional 400,000 children in relative poverty in 2021-2022. The main rate of UC for a single adult would fall from £343 to £257 per month, the lowest real-terms level for our basic unemployment benefit since 1990-91. As such, both advocates and Parliamentary Committees call for the UK government to make the £20 uplift permanent and extend this uplift to those on legacy benefits.

Now more than ever, real and concrete change to our food systems is needed. The following report explores different solutions to the pressing issues of food inequality and food poverty. Recent relevant literature in the area offers creative and inspiring insight into what change is needed into national and local food provision.

5 [Child Poverty in Glasgow Report \(2020\)](#)
 6 Glasgow Centre for Population Health (2020) Children's Report Card: Poverty and income inequality.
 7 Resolution Foundation (2021) Pandemic Pressures: Briefing Note
 8 Resolution Foundation (2021) The debts that divide us
 9 ONS Labour Market Overview (2021)
 10 Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2020) A Minimum Income Standard for the UK 2020.

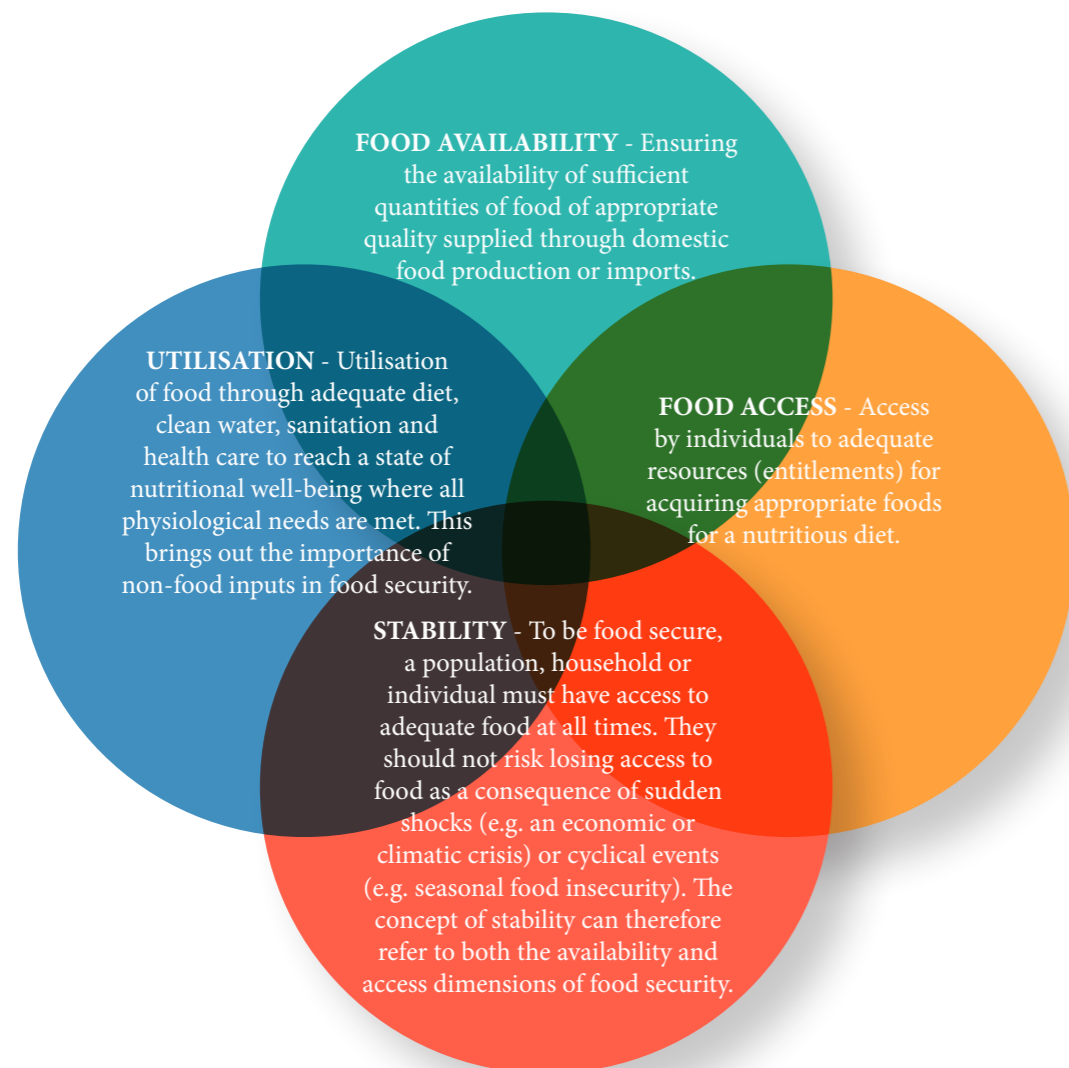
GLASGOW FOOD POVERTY

FOOD INSECURITY OR FOOD POVERTY?

There has been much written with regards to food security and insecurity and there is a debate whether it is a new phenomenon or simply an inevitable consequence of poverty. Food Security can be defined as the measure of the availability of food and an individual's ability to access it.

The [United Nation's Committee on World Food Security](#)¹¹ suggests that all people should, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. This should hold true irrespective of class, gender or locality¹². Others argue that "food insecurity is simply poverty"¹³. Understanding the causes of food insecurity and striving to achieve food security in Scotland today requires an awareness of all of the above.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Nourish Scotland describe four key elements of food security:

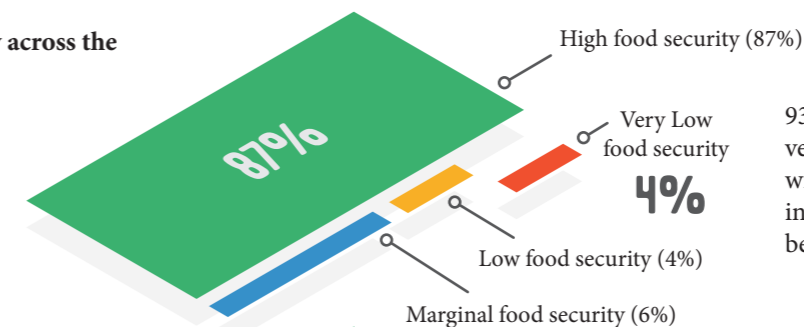


The extended definition above suggests possible scenarios for intervention, many of which will be described in the following sections of this report. It goes without saying that all of the above elements of food security have suffered seismic stress with the advent of COVID-19 and are likely to do so for some considerable time. The growing impact of Brexit on supply chains, labour shortage and general economic recovery have further complicated structural factors likely to impede economic, social and community recovery.

11 [FAO \(2002\) Chapter 2. Food security: concepts and measurement](#)
 12 [FAO \(1996\) World Food Summit](#)
 13 [Poverty Alliance - Menu for Change](#)

WHO IS FOOD INSECURE?

Food Security across the UK



93% of adults in the UK are food secure (87% very secure, 6% moderate), 8% are insecure with 4% experiencing very high levels of insecurity. There is very little difference between UK and Scotland.

Food Security for single parent families with three or more children



The most insecure family group is a single parent household with three or more children, 41% of this group experience food insecurity, with 19% experiencing very high levels.

16 - 24 year olds



16 to 24 year olds are more likely to be food insecure than any other age group. Food security appears to reduce with age.

Adults on Working Tax Credit



17% of adults on working tax credit are food insecure, 8% experiencing very high levels of insecurity. Only 69% of this group are very food secure.

Adults on Jobseeker's Allowance



This drops markedly for those on jobseekers allowance, with 37% of these adults experiencing food insecurity and 22% experiencing very high levels on food security. Only half (52%) are very secure.

Renters



22% of renters are food insecure. This is particularly bad for social renters. Only 67% of this group are very food secure.

SCOTLAND IN CONTEXT, PRE-PANDEMIC POLICY & DEVELOPMENTS



Prior to the Covid -19 pandemic, tackling food insecurity was on the agenda of many governments. In Scotland, [The Independent Working Group on Food Poverty](#) (IWGFP)¹⁴ asked to reduce and ultimately combat the need for the use of foodbanks. The report made clear the need for improved incomes in line with inflation (such as a basic minimum income guarantee), access to cash and advice and investment in the community food sector to prevent food insecurity. The working group urged the Scottish Government by 2030 to end hunger and ensure access for all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round¹⁵. The report's recommendations included:

- Exploring the Right to Food as part of Scots Law
- Measurement of household food insecurity and targets integrated into National Performance Framework
- Payment of Living Wage using measures such as public procurement rules
- Use its powers to improve the value of social security
- Invest in social security advice and welfare services
- Should use all powers to reduce the costs of energy, rent, transport and the school day
- Should invest in healthy meals for School as part of a holiday hunger programme
- Scottish Government and Local Authorities should ensure widespread use of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) as first port of call
- If Scottish Welfare Fund grows the Scottish Government should increase investment

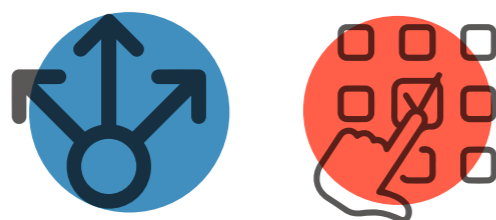
Food and Agriculture (FAO) and Nourish Scotland describe four key elements of food security:

Involve people in decision-making who have had direct experience of food insecurity;



Recognise the social value of food which aims to build community around food and a feeling of place;

Provide opportunities to contribute to a more dignified system such as volunteering, learning skills, growing your own and participation in local community life;



Service users have the power to choose what they eat including fresh and health food.

14 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/dignity-ending-hunger-together-scotland-report-independent-working-group-food/pages/4/>
15 Ibid

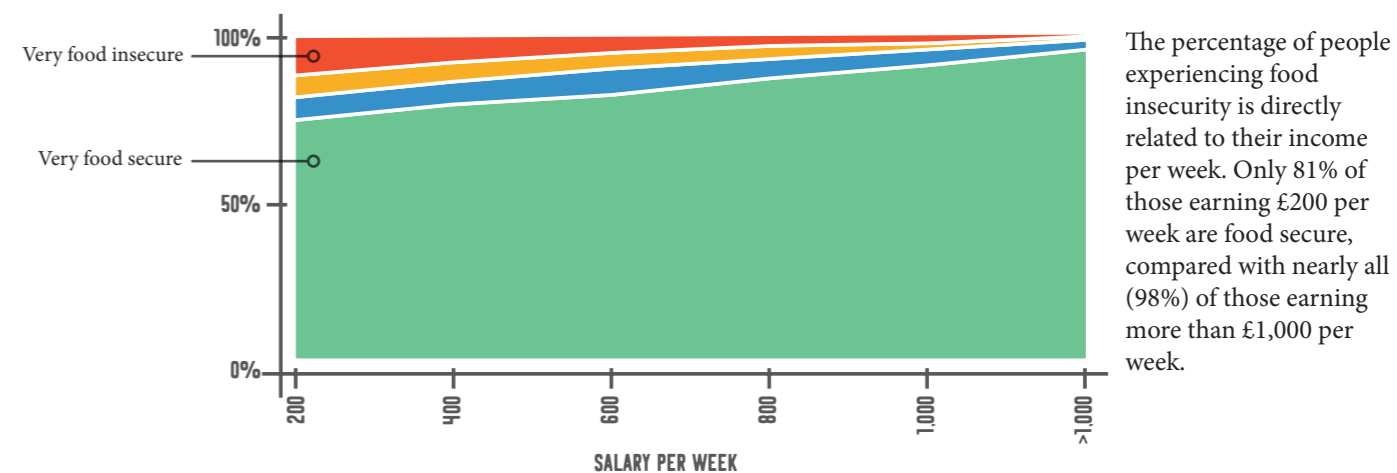
TACKLING THE DRIVERS OF FOOD POVERTY: "A MENU FOR CHANGE"

The IWGFP created action through the Menu for Change project. *A Menu for Change* was a three-year project aimed at tackling food insecurity in Scotland. The project was coordinated by Oxfam Scotland, Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland, Nourish Scotland and the Poverty Alliance. Using many of the recommendations set out by the Independent Working Group on Food Poverty, the project focused on three local authority areas (Fife, Dundee and East Ayrshire) to support public and third sector services to move away from using emergency food aid as the primary response to food crisis. This included developing, testing and promoting alternative approaches that put cash at the heart of responses to food insecurity. Central to this approach was enhancing access to statutory entitlements and cash-based crisis supports, as well as debt minimisation. The aim was to ensure people had money to buy food, rather than relying on emergency food aid.

The Menu for Change project revealed that:

*“Food insecurity in Scotland is caused by too much poverty, not too little food. As A Menu for Change has explored, the evidence suggests key drivers of acute food insecurity are income crises caused by: **the operation and adequacy of the benefits system, low income, insecure work and the rising cost of living.** Until we evolve our approach to do more to prevent people reaching the point of hunger by tackling the underlying causes of income crises, the need for emergency food aid in Scotland is unlikely to end.”*

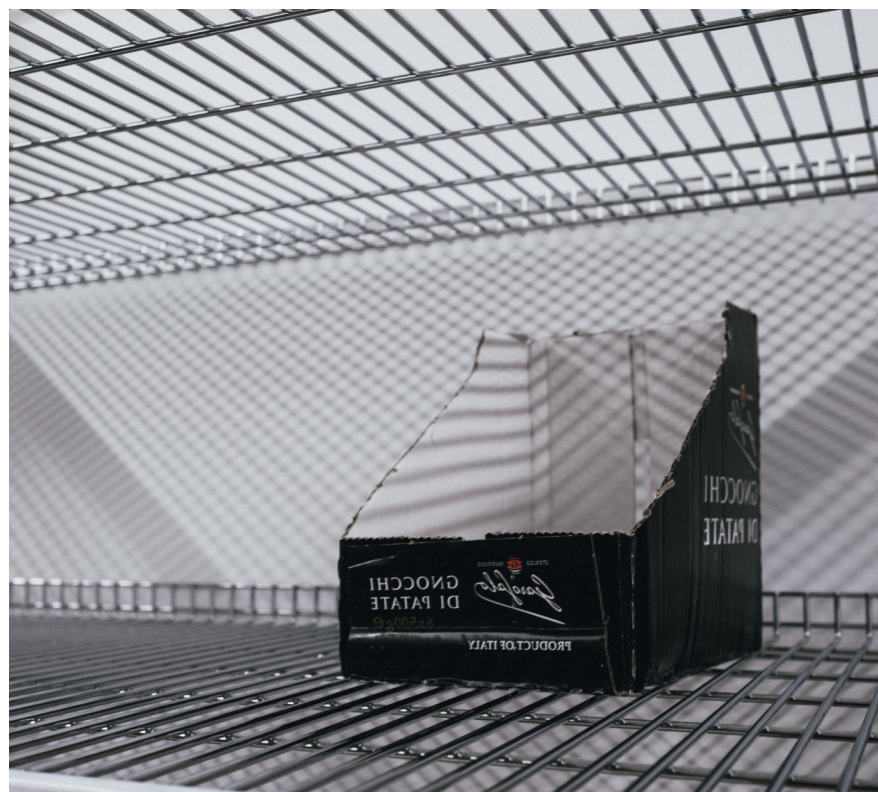
As a result, [Menu for Change](#)¹⁶ project recommended the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) provided crisis grants and community care grants administered at local authority level, which act as a safety net to people on low incomes, *“Increase the programme budget – the money distributed to claimants – in line with the anticipated increase in demand created by enhanced knowledge about the Scottish Welfare Fund and the removal of barriers to access it”*.



The project asks the Scottish Government to build on the recommendations of the Dignity report and to ensure new Scottish Child payments achieve their objectives of reducing child poverty, use public sector procurement to deliver fair and higher paid work, invest in welfare rights and advocacy, support community food that provides wider advice services and enshrine the Right to Food in Scots law. While at a UK level asking to remove the five-week wait for universal credit, increase the amount available, increase all benefits in line with inflation, remove two-child benefit cap, ban exploitative working practices such as zero-hours contracts and increase the Living Wage to the Real Living Wage¹⁷.

16 [Menu for Change](#)
17 [ibid](#)

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO UN RAPPORTEUR FOR FOOD SECURITY AND UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



More recently, the newly appointed Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri highlights some of the pressing issues of the current food crisis as exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Special Rapporteur's recent report emphasises that: "Without the means to earn an income during lockdowns, many are unable to feed themselves and their families. For most, no income means no food, or, at best, less food and less nutritious food".¹⁸

In response to this report, the Scottish Government released its own statement which asserts the Government's human rights approach to tackling food insecurity and to reduce inequalities and poverty.¹⁹ Their commitments align with the previous recommendations made by the IWGFP and highlight the Scottish Government's goal of:

- ending the need for foodbanks in Scotland;
- committing to the Sustainable Development Goals which include Goal 2: Ending hunger
- taking a holistic approach to food insecurity which considers the accessibility, acceptability and quality of food matter. In tackling food insecurity, Scottish Government considers financial and physical access to food that is safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate

The Scottish Government has also started monitoring food insecurity using [UN Food Insecurity Experience Scale](#) and the [Scottish Health Survey](#)²⁰ collated annually since 2017 after recommendations made by Independent Working Group on Food Poverty.

18 Scottish Government (2021) Food insecurity and poverty - United Nations: Scottish Government response
 19 Scottish Government (2016) Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland
 20 Scottish Government (2019) Scottish Health Survey 2019: summary report

RIGHT TO FOOD CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Dignity Peer Network is a practice development programme for community groups working to promote and enhance dignity in responses to food insecurity. The peer support programme encourages practice change that recognises the role of community initiatives as sources of support to people experiencing food insecurity. Members of the network were asked to contribute, either by attending or facilitating workshops, to the Proposed Right to Food [Scotland] Bill. This fed into the consultation at the end of 2020.

Our local Community Response Officer Geri worked with the Dignity in Practice team to co-produce a letter to the Scottish Government:

1. What do you think would be the main practical advantages and disadvantages of the proposed Bill?

We are writing as a group of thirteen concerned individuals from across Scotland in response to question number three of the public consultation on the Proposed Right to Food (Scotland) Bill. Our group includes workers and volunteers from community food groups, Scotland's civil societies and charities, as well as those from academia. As a group, we believe that there are many advantages to including the right to food in Scots law.

The first advantage is the right to food would let people like us - community food activists, charity workers and individuals with lived experience of food insecurity - have a bigger say in how we want the food system to work so that our right to food is met adequately. This is particularly important because enshrining the right to food in Scots Law would: "Change the balance of power to community well-being and not that of corporations interests and profits. This would also ensure proper rights for people working in the food industry."

Secondly, there would be specific advantages for those who work in community food groups, civil society and charities. For example, it could mean we could move away from delivering emergency food parcels and working or volunteering in foodbanks and focus instead on supporting and build the strength of our communities. This could be achieved through activities such as organising shared meals, community gardens, community learning workshops, etc. Our focus could change from preventing people going hungry to improving their overall health and quality of life: "If food was available to all, there would be no stigma because people would not have to access emergency food from foodbanks. It would remove the divide."

Thirdly, we believe that having the right to food in Scots Law would allow Scotland to become a more inclusive nation, where the most vulnerable groups in would be protected, included and supported by our communities and Government. People with lived experience of food insecurity said that having their human right to food realised would result in them not having to be constantly worried where their next meal was coming from. The group felt strongly that dignity was at the centre of food provision. It is vital that people have choice and there is access to culturally appropriate food for our diverse community. We believe everyone should be treated with dignity and people having the autonomy to decide upon their diet must become a reality.

Although the majority of the people in the group didn't think there would be any disadvantages if the right to food were in Scots law, there were concerns that would need to be addressed as we make the transition. One concern is that even though we would be able to focus our energy on community-building projects, this might mean we would need to develop new skills and rethink the mission of our projects accordingly. Another member mentioned potential impacts that the right to food could have on the job security of some workers in emergency food provision. However, the group agreed that having the right to food in Scots law could create further jobs.

We unanimously agreed that enshrining the right to food is of extreme importance and we would hold the government accountable for its realisation. The right to food clearly sets out it is the Scottish Government's responsibility to fulfil this.

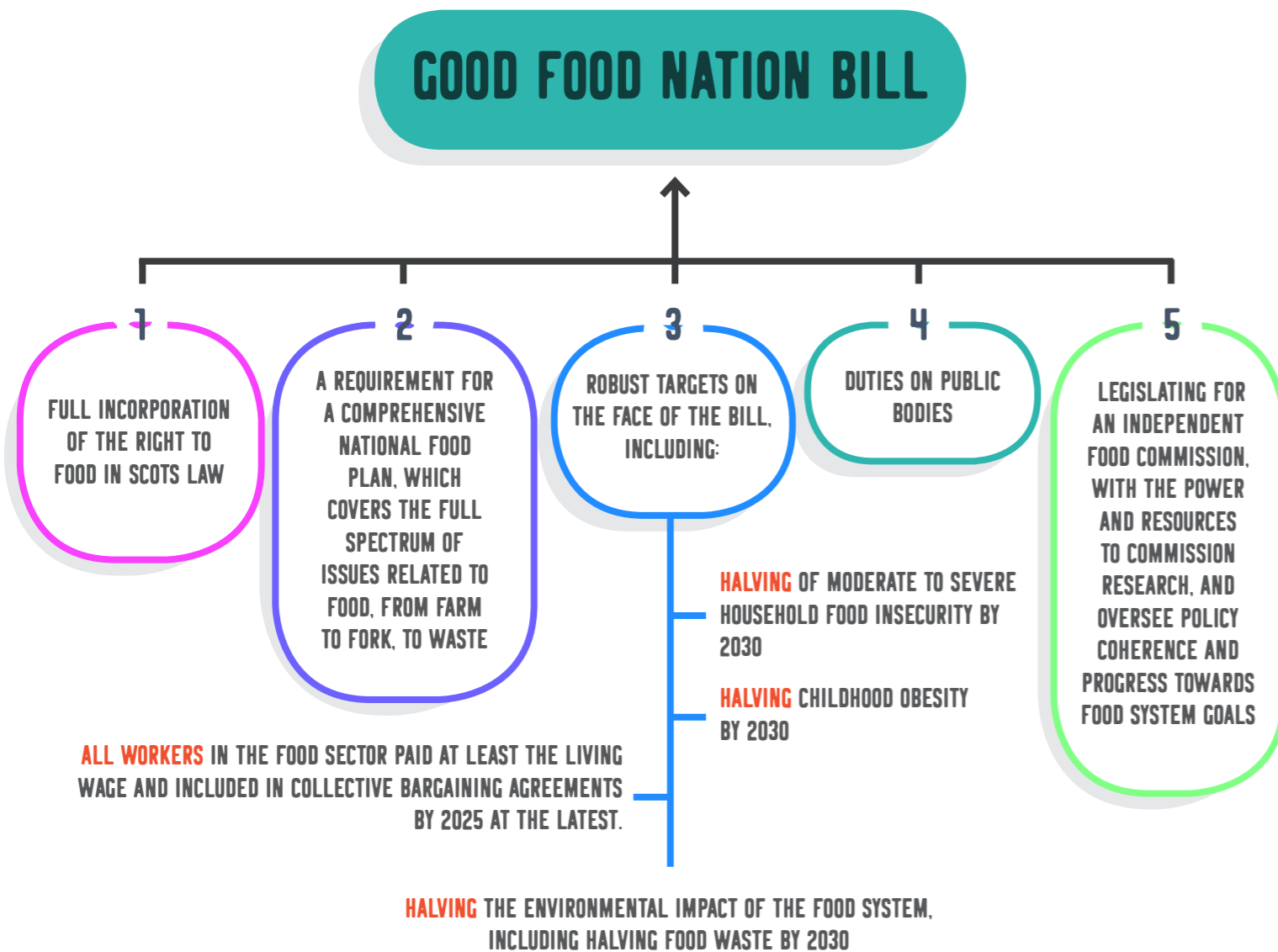
IN 2020
8%
 OF ADULTS FEARED
 THEY WOULD RUN
 OUT OF FOOD
4%
 ATE LESS AS A
 RESULT, AND
2%
 ACTUALLY RAN
 OUT

Source: Scottish Government Health Survey, 2020

A GOOD FOOD NATION BILL & THE SCOTTISH FOOD COALITION

In September 2018, Scottish Government put out a public consultation for a [Good Food Nation](#)²¹. The Bill was to build political will for more progressive food governance through the legislation of the Good Food Nation and the human rights context in regards to food systems. Nourish Scotland had been building civil society voice through the Scottish Food Coalition (SFC). The aim was to make sure all stakeholders were clear in the overall goal and strengthen partnership working, to bring about whole system transformational change. The Good Food Nation bill was due to be introduced to parliament during spring 2020 but was delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the Scottish Government currently has Good Food Nation team with the hopes that the bill will bring a framework for the Scottish food system by aligning agriculture, planning, social security and public health policies to generate a just transition to a sustainable food system. The [SFC's priorities](#)²² for a new law on food are:



As a member of the Scottish Food Coalition, Glasgow Community Food Network supports these agreed upon priorities and recommends the Scottish Government takes forward the Good Food Nation Bill in line with these asks.

21 Scottish Government (2019) Good Food Nation proposals for legislation: analysis of consultation responses
 22 Scottish Food Coalition (2021) Scottish Parliament Elections 2021 Policy Asks

MAKING A CASE FOR UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

Community Response Officers Cara Craig and Sarah Martin reflect on their involvement in GUBIC (Glasgow Universal Basic Income Conversation) and a series of workshops throughout Glasgow on Universal Basic Income

CASE STUDY

In February 2020, with expertise and support from the Basic Income Network Scotland and the UBI Lab Network, GCFN set up a local working group: 'Glasgow Universal Basic Income Conversation' (GUBIC). GUBIC held a virtual [hustings](#)²³ event and an open Q&A session with six Scottish Parliament candidates from SNP, Scottish Greens, Labour, Liberal Democrats, Conservatives and Scottish Trade Union and Coalition Party; along with over 70 attendees. This initiated a dialogue between political candidates and members of the public about the benefits of trialling a new social welfare system, with candidates consequently pledging support for UBI. This has now been realised, with parties across Scotland exploring basic income in their manifestos, including SNP, Scottish Labour, ISP, Scottish Greens and Scottish Liberal Democrats.

GUBIC is exploring methods to forge our nation's way forward with UBI, and as a group and a movement, we are growing. Using a toolkit created by the Basic Income Conversation, GUBIC continue to hold discussions around guaranteed income, embedding communities' voices into the heart of the matter.



In June of this year, GCFN also joined forces with UBI Lab's worldwide network to create a 'UBI Food Lab'. A UBI Lab is a citizen-led group seeking to explore and advocate for a Universal Basic Income, with groups themed geographically or by lived experience. The UBI Food Lab will meet each month to share learning and contribute to a shared set of resources, assisted by the UBI Lab staff team who offer skills and expertise. The UBI Food Lab will discuss more widely the impact UBI could have in particular on those facing food insecurity. This merges two of our most focused-on project themes and has provided excellent opportunities for us (representing both GCFN and GUBIC) to network, share knowledge and resources, and to continue campaigning for UBI trials in the UK.

The report Scotland's Wellbeing: The Impact of COVID-19 (2020) highlights that

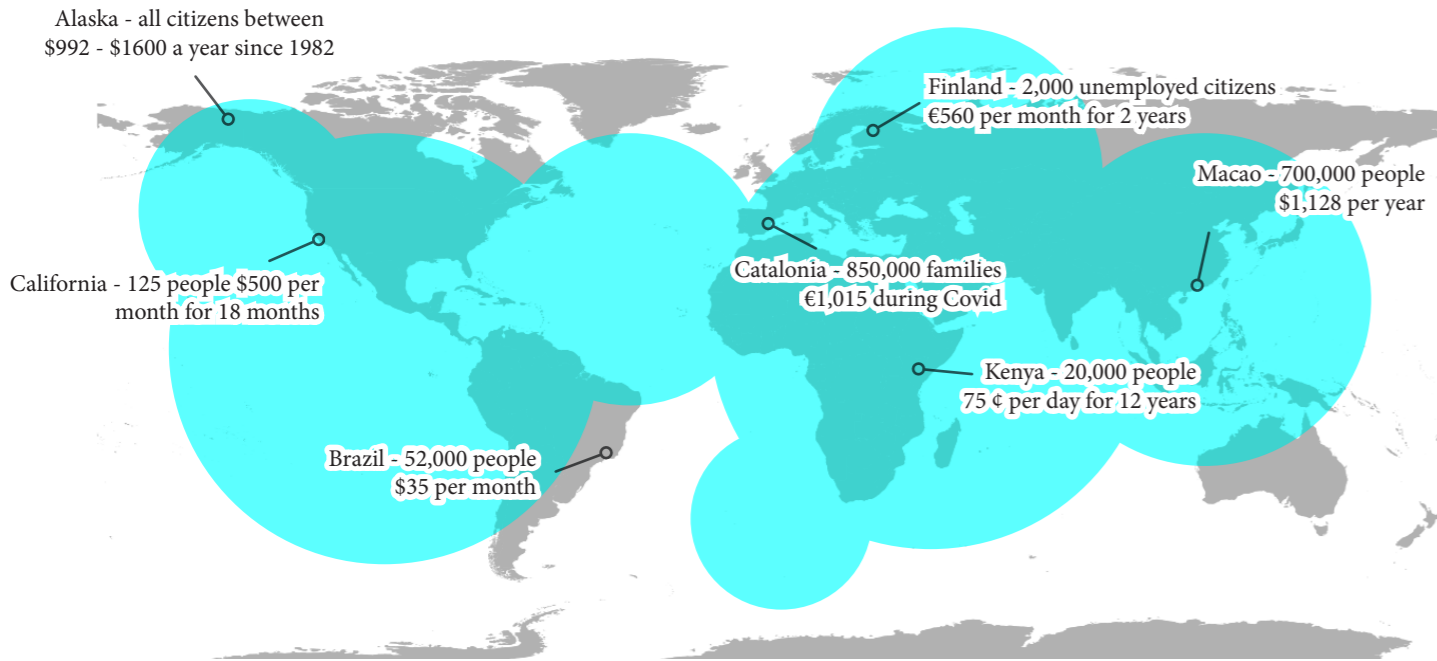
"In June 2020, a quarter of adults in Scotland reported being very or somewhat worried about affording enough food for themselves or their household in the next month. Based on projections of rises in unemployment, the Food Foundation estimated that between 252,000 and 337,000 more working-age adults in the UK became food insecure in the six months from September 2020" (p 43).

It becomes even more pressing we build a basic income programme which would create a safety net for all, giving people the security to weather changes in life and withstand any future crises.

23 [Universal Basic Income: Ask the Scottish Candidates](#)

THE CASE FOR UBI

UBI trials have been gaining momentum with a variety of pilots being rolled out worldwide, see California, Alaska and Catalonia.



In California, an 18-month guaranteed income scheme is currently underway, giving 125 people \$500 (£354) per month. Alaska has been giving every citizen, including children, an annual cheque since 1982. In the years between 2018-2020, this annual dividend has ranged from \$992 to \$1600 (£702-1161) per annum²⁴. During COVID-19, Catalonia has been offering monthly instalments, up to a maximum of €1,015 (£871), to 850,000 of the district's most vulnerable families²⁵.

In 2017, Finland ran a government backed UBI pilot. Finland's project was deemed a failed experiment for several reasons: it had a short timeline which did not allow for any long-term perspective into the benefits of UBI; it had a limited budget and scope and there were strong social attitudes against the experiment²⁶. However, even with these flaws, the experiment did show an increase in happiness and wellbeing²⁷ - a testament to Basic Income and the stability that cash-first approaches can bring.

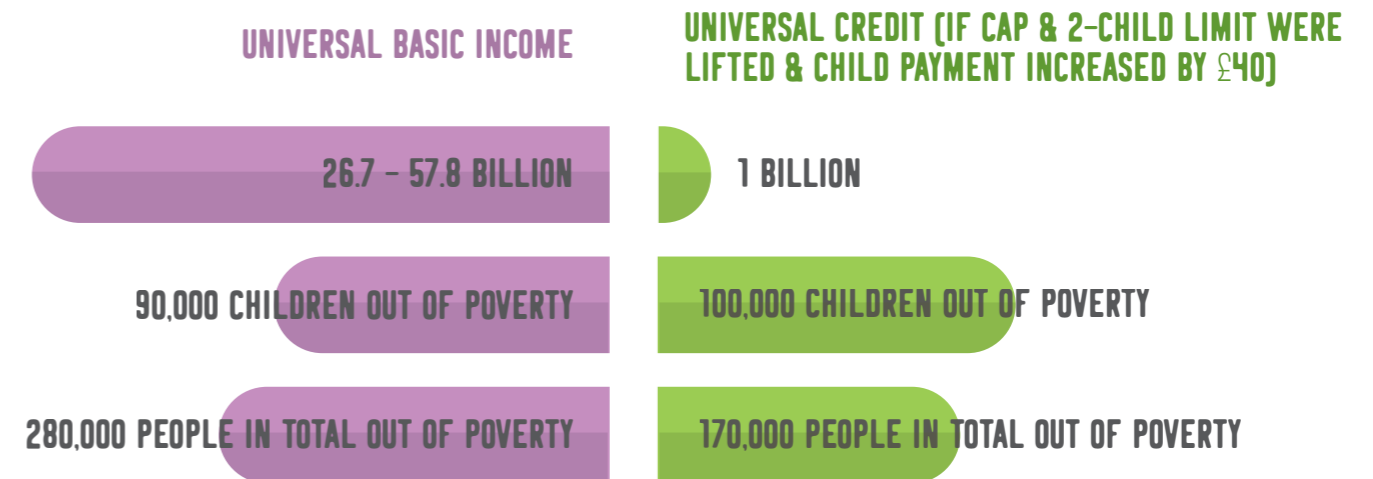
Nonetheless, Scotland must learn from Finland. A Basic Income Pilots feasibility study was published in June 2020²⁸. The pilot would focus on four councils (one of which is Glasgow City) and would last three years, testing out two sets of Basic Income: a lower and higher level. Unlike Finland's study, essential benefits would be retained, such as Disability, Childcare and Housing. It would be truly universal too, with all ages receiving an individual payment. The total costs of the study would be £186.4m over the 3 years; drastically larger in budget size than Finland. Scotland's study works to the guiding principles for UBI, too: universal, unconditional, without means-testing, individual, periodic and cash-based. Scotland proposes a random control group, to detect the effects across genders, ages, life situations and communities. It is clear the lessons of Finland's study - larger control groups, higher levels of UBI, more detailed research and design - have been addressed in Scotland's feasibility study.

Crucially, there is widespread public support for a Scottish UBI trial, with polls suggesting two-thirds of people in Scotland support the introduction of a basic income²⁹. There is also increasing momentum across the country for UBI and this August, Glasgow was home to the [22nd world congress on Universal Basic Income](#)³⁰. Hosted by Basic Income Earth Network, there were guests attending from around the world. As members of GUBIC, GCFN was part of this event which builds stronger connections in the UBI community throughout the country.

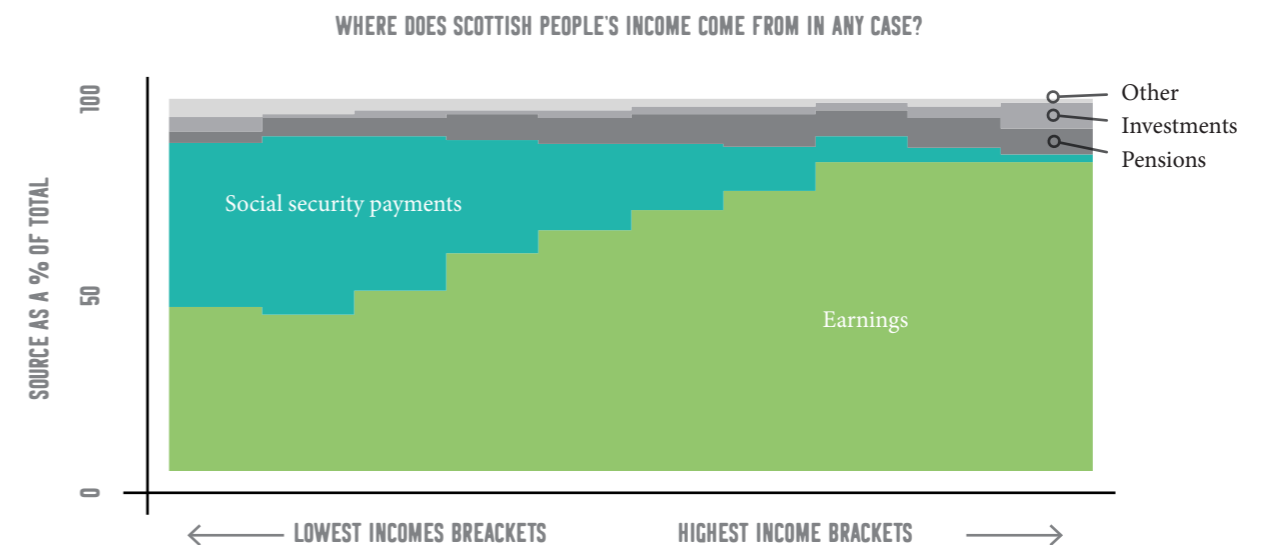
Crucially, there is widespread public support for a Scottish UBI trial, with polls suggesting two-thirds of people in Scotland support the introduction of a basic income

24 [Alaska Department of Revenue](#)
 25 [Spain approves targeted basic income for households at risk of poverty](#)
 26 <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/12/basic-income-finland-experiment-kela>
 27 [The first results of the basic income experiment](#) video
 28 Citizens' Basic Income Feasibility Study Steering Group June (2020) Assessing the feasibility of citizens' basic income pilots in Scotland: Final Report
 29 [The Herald \(24/05/2020\), Corona virus - what now: two-thirds of Scots support UBI poll finds](#)
 30 [Bien Congress 2021](#)

Nonetheless, Scotland's two levels of Basic Income's gross cost is £26.7 billion (lower level) and £57.8 billion (higher level) to implement country-wide³¹. A model from the [Fraser of Allander Institute](#)³² of UBI indicates that around 280,000 people and 90,000 children could be lifted out of poverty if the lower-level Basic Income was implemented. In comparison, Universal Credit could reduce overall poverty by 170,000 and child poverty by 100,000 if the benefit cap and the two-child limit were lifted while increasing the main child payment by £40. This would cost £1bn per annum in 2023/24. While the immediate financial cost for UC is drastically lower than that of UBI, there are other long-term implications to consider.



The benefits of UBI are potentially far-reaching, especially for those who are unemployed or facing financial insecurity. For those living in poverty, alleviation from stigma, insecurity, destitution, homelessness, exclusion, and material deprivation would be significant. People would be able to afford safe and stable housing with a regular UBI payment. Those who are not in employment but give up their time to traditionally unpaid roles (such as caregivers, activists, and non-working parents) would be more valued, creating empowerment and a greater quality of life. There are many benefits for people who are already in employment too: we would witness people paying off debt, retraining, seeking education and employment, gaining new skills, opening businesses, leaving abusive relationships and caring for loved ones. Employees would have more bargaining power to increase their employment rights and working conditions. For those working in the gig economy, on zero-hour contracts, self-employed, in casual and seasonal work, greater financial security would be seen. We are at the precipice of fundamental change within our system, where we can choose to value people's lives, seeing their inherent worth as people, not just workers. As First Minister Nicola Sturgeon [says](#)³³, implementing Basic Income will grant people "both dignity and opportunity".



Social security payments already comprise a significant proportion of household incomes for many people in Scotland. Making up on average, at least 23% of income for the lowest half of earners. (Source: Scottish Government)

31 https://www.basicincome.scot/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/175370/All-in-One-Presentation-i.pdf
 32 [Fraser of Allander Institute University of Strathclyde \(2020\)](#)
 33 [twitter.com - MichaelPugh status](#)



By providing this safety net for people, UBI can create widespread positive change. Scotland's communities could become healthier, happier, more creative and independent. Scotland would be better equipped to deal with our increasingly unstable climate. A basic income grants people financial resources to reduce their carbon footprints and devise a sustainable, low-carbon lifestyle - both individually and collectively. Businesses could afford to become more environmentally friendly, so Scotland could see a reduction in high-carbon goods and services. Families, with extra income from UBI, could afford and access more nutritious, local food ³⁴.

An alternative to UBI is a Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG). This was recently mentioned in the SNP's 2021 [Manifesto](#)³⁵, and the Scottish Government report [If Not Now, When?](#)³⁶. A MIG, however, would only provide payment to those who need it, based on independently assessed circumstances, meaning people could be forced to navigate complex bureaucratic systems. MIG could lead to the same issues and stigma as the current Universal Credit system. Particularly when an unconditional, universal payment can be administered efficiently and reduce barriers created by bureaucracy. Moreover, under a Minimum Income Guarantee, there is still no way forward to give asylum seekers and refugees an income, but this could be included within a UBI programme.

TO SUM UP, HERE ARE SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW UBI COULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN SCOTLAND SUCCESSFULLY:

1. A nationwide pilot must be affordable; financing it and the resulting policy need to be worked out in detail before a large-scale roll-out, and though the feasibility study and FAI economic models show only one way to fund the programme, many more exist.
2. The Higher Level in the Scottish Feasibility study only sits at 2500 participants who would receive £213.59 (25yo-pension age) - we would suggest the sample size of this control group be increased³⁷.
3. Key benefits should be retained, rather than exchanged for Basic Income, especially Disability, Child, Limited Capacity to Work, and Housing benefits. This would retain a safety net for our most vulnerable residents.
4. The Scottish UBI pilot will be more effective if we cover a greater number of people, ensure a diversity of people and include multiple geographic areas, as the larger the control groups, the more effective the data will be. To accurately assess the potential benefits to whole communities, everyone in an area should be involved in the pilot.
5. A joined-up database of residents should be created, to roll out a nationwide UBI programme.
6. Basic Income payments should be paid to everyone who calls Scotland home - including all refugees, asylum seekers, children and pensioners.

There are still many unknowns with UBI in Scotland - what happens to wages, rent prices and pensions? In particular, for those who are disabled, carers or have extra support needs, there are many complex questions. We must tackle these if we are to reassure the public and ensure UBI not only becomes a reality but works for everyone. UBI is not a silver bullet and should be part of a series of measures: rapid increases in social housing, housing reform, financial education, guaranteeing a Living Wage, redesigning our public transport system to be green and affordable, maintaining solid social infrastructure, and land reform. These Universal Basic Services would work with UBI to form nationwide wraparound support. With this in mind, UBI could be part of a common good that benefits everyone in Scotland and enable us to share our resources.

34 [ibid](#)
 35 [SNP Manifesto 2021](#)
 36 [Scottish Government \(2021\) If Not Now, When?](#)
 37 [ibid](#)

CASE STUDY: LOVE AND SOLIDARITY

In the Croftfoot Quad in Castlemilk, Southeast Glasgow, street space has been utilised by a group of neighbours to create the 'Wee Street Shelf', where people are invited to share what they have and take what they need in a "show [of] love and solidarity to those of us in our community struggling. Also to challenge the shame and stigma we face living in poverty". The Wee Street Shelf comprises of two donated filing cabinets on the pavement, filled with food donations. Some of the core group has also created pop up "Share and Cares" at the local shopping centre.

Through a conversation between this group of neighbours and Paddy McKenna, Community Development Manager at Cassiltoun Housing Association on language around food solidarity /food poverty/food insecurity, key learnings emerged, some of which are echoed elsewhere in literature around food solidarity. This piece is co-created; however, the learning and message is from the Wee Street Shelf group:



"People feel shame, the stigma, and embarrassment, we build trust, we don't judge, we create comfort, we've all been there"

Anyone who commits to a food solidarity approach must understand and be compassionate about the negative feelings that people are likely to have based on a multitude of negative experiences. They must commit to creating an alternative experience where the person's comfort is priority. Shame, embarrassment and judgement prevents people from accessing their human rights and impacts negatively on their mental health and "pits people against each other". The Wee Street Shelf creates opportunity for anyone to donate food and resources, and so many people who have accepted food support do then contribute - this directly challenges power dynamics, stigma, embarrassment and furthers the solidarity messages. Language that places the value of the contribution that anyone can bring to a food solidarity approach must be at the forefront and opportunities for genuine contributions prioritised.

"We get together to chat about what we're doing, what message we put across, we don't want to be part of the propaganda against people like us"

A food solidarity approach is self-reflective and anyone who engages in this approach has to think deeply, critically and regularly about their stance and the ways in which they may perpetuate the stigma and shame, and potentially go through a process of unlearning. To challenge language and create a new narrative, a food solidarity approach must carve out spaces for critical self-reflection, must centre those with lived experience in an authentic way and must actively challenge any language that is steeped in stigma, blame, humiliation or judgement.

"We're changing minds through solidarity"

Following several negative experiences, people can, understandably, feel resentment, aggression and overwhelmed. - three responses the Wee Street Shelf group have observed. Minds are changed through solidarity towards each other and through food. They recognise that "it is all connected" and that food insecurity is rarely a stand-alone issue. People show compassion by leaving a bag of messages at the door of someone whose income has been drastically cut. They always welcome people and never ask why. This compassion has allowed the group to engage in conversations which have resulted in those in need accessing further support, including Welfare Rights. Compassion has to be evident with any language on food solidarity to change minds and to challenge the narrative that continues to perpetuate stigma, shame, judgement and humiliation.

These key learnings on language and solidarity highlight that any publication, policy, conversation, communications around food solidarity, food poverty or food insecurity must challenge shame and stigma, must create an alternative compassionate narrative, must not, even indirectly, place blame on an individual for what is a systemic issue. It must also centre people with lived experience.

FOOD AND GLASGOW

Glasgow is the largest and most densely populated city in Scotland with just over 600,000 citizens, and the most ethnically diverse Scottish city. The city is one of contrasts: it is the fastest growing major city economy in the UK outside London, almost 50% of the workforce is educated to degree level, employment is rising and educational attainment improves year on year³⁸. Considering these positive-looking attributes it may seem surprising that one in three children in Glasgow lives in poverty.

A JOINED-UP APPROACH

[Glasgow Food Policy Partnership and Developing a Glasgow City Food Plan](#)³⁹ was formed by leading organisations Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH), Glasgow City Council (GCC), NHS Glasgow and Greater Clyde and Glasgow Community Food Network (GCFN) following the approach of [Sustainable Food Cities \(now Places\)](#)⁴⁰.

The [Glasgow City Food Plan](#)⁴¹ is a long-term plan (ten years) which brings together representatives from public, private and third sectors, each with an interest in aspects of the food system in Glasgow. So far, over 600 people and organisations from across Glasgow have been involved in or participating in, the development of the plan.

LINKING THROUGH TO OTHER STRATEGIES



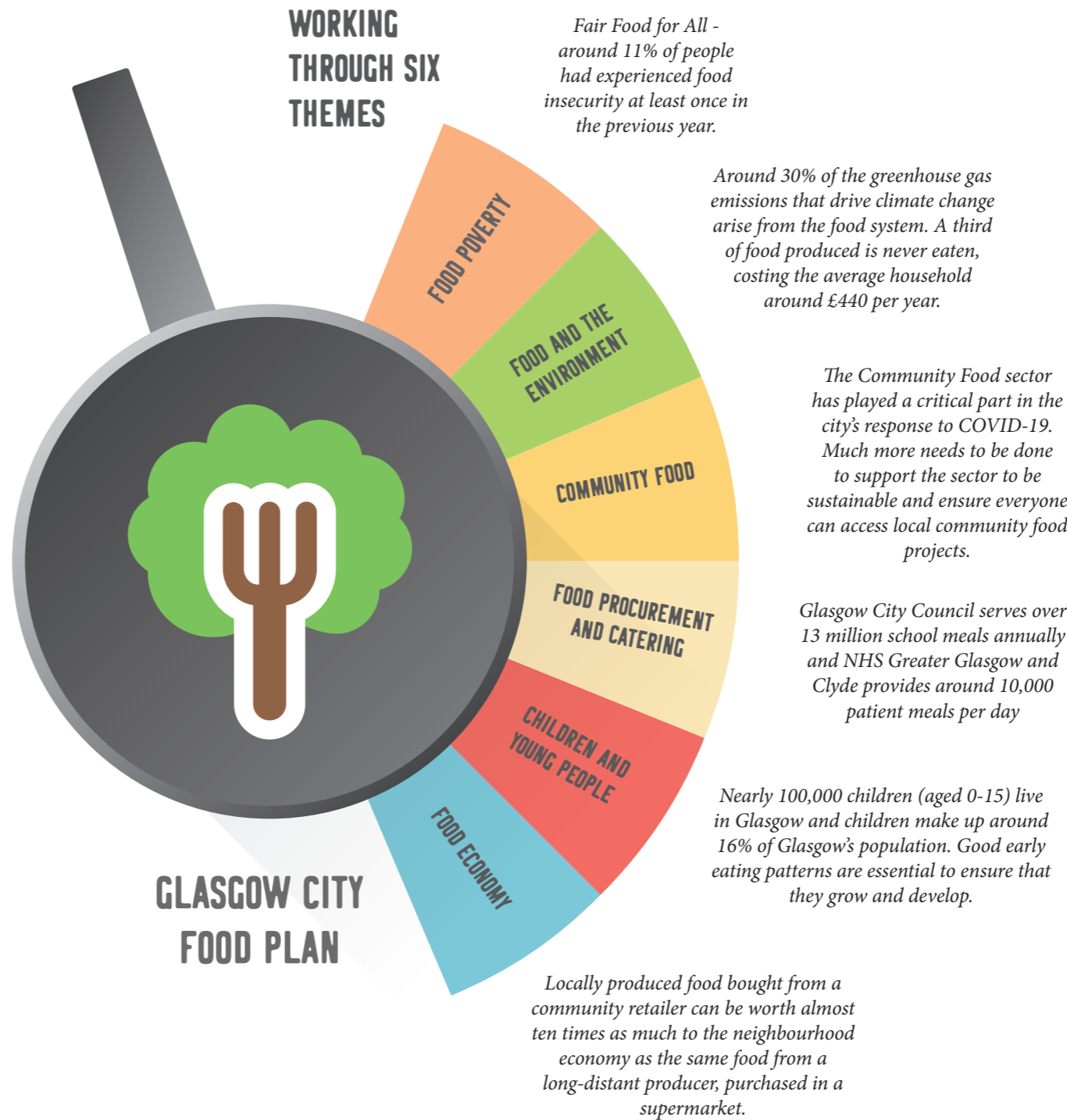
Although further ambitions have been made in the City Food Plan there is still a great deal to develop over the next ten years. As mentioned at the recent launch (15 June 2021), this is the beginning of the journey not the end and cross-sector working groups are open places for growing the ambition of the Glasgow's City Food Plan.

38 [Glasgow's Child Poverty Action Plan 2018 - 2019](#)
 39 [Glasgow City Food Plan 2021 - 2031](#)
 40 [Sustainable Food Places](#)
 41 [ibid](#)

"ONE IN THREE CHILDREN IN GLASGOW LIVES IN POVERTY"



DELIVERING THE FOLLOWING LONG TERM OUTCOMES



WORKING THROUGH SIX THEMES

Fair Food for All - around 11% of people had experienced food insecurity at least once in the previous year.

Around 30% of the greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change arise from the food system. A third of food produced is never eaten, costing the average household around £440 per year.

The Community Food sector has played a critical part in the city's response to COVID-19. Much more needs to be done to support the sector to be sustainable and ensure everyone can access local community food projects.

Glasgow City Council serves over 13 million school meals annually and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde provides around 10,000 patient meals per day

Nearly 100,000 children (aged 0-15) live in Glasgow and children make up around 16% of Glasgow's population. Good early eating patterns are essential to ensure that they grow and develop.

Locally produced food bought from a community retailer can be worth almost ten times as much to the neighbourhood economy as the same food from a long-distant producer, purchased in a supermarket.

Improved health and well-being as a result of improvements in our food system and food environment.

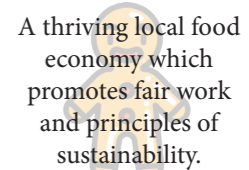
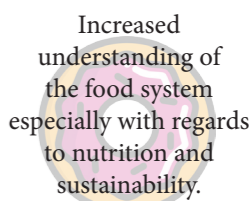
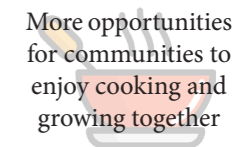
More food produced in ways that are good for the environment.

Increased availability and use of seasonal, locally grown and produced food in or close to Glasgow.

More opportunities for communities to enjoy cooking and growing together

Increased understanding of the food system especially with regards to nutrition and sustainability.

A thriving local food economy which promotes fair work and principles of sustainability.

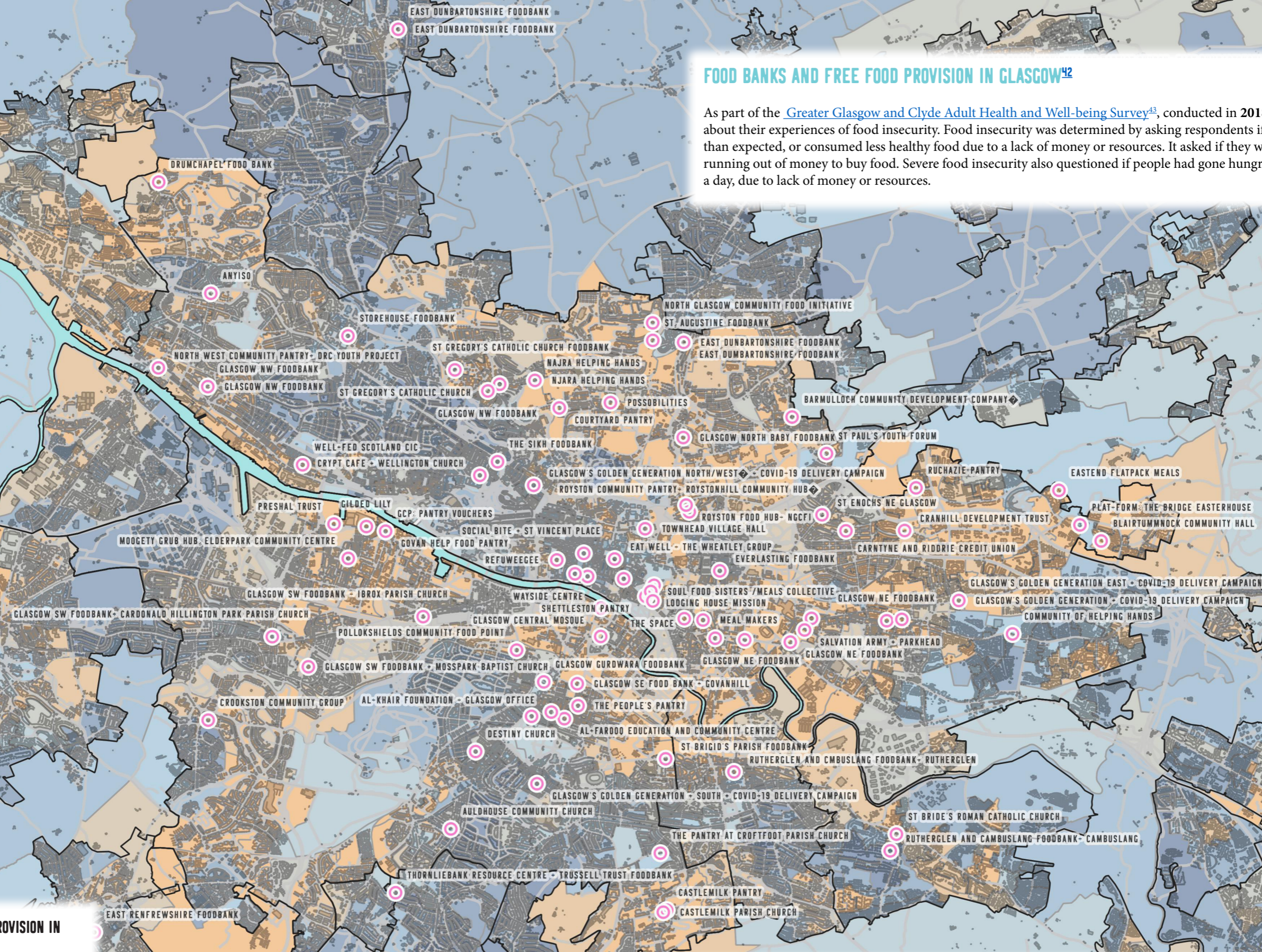


FOOD BANKS AND FREE FOOD PROVISION IN GLASGOW⁴²

As part of the [Greater Glasgow and Clyde Adult Health and Well-being Survey⁴³](#), conducted in 2018, people were asked about their experiences of food insecurity. Food insecurity was determined by asking respondents if they had eaten less than expected, or consumed less healthy food due to a lack of money or resources. It asked if they were worried about running out of money to buy food. Severe food insecurity also questioned if people had gone hungry or had not eaten for a day, due to lack of money or resources.

FOOD BANKS AND FREE FOOD PROVISION IN GLASGOW

- More deprived
- Less deprived
- Food banks and free community food provision



Across Glasgow, 10.8% of respondents had experienced food insecurity, and 4.6% had experienced severe food insecurity. Experiences of food insecurity and of severe food insecurity were higher in Glasgow than in Inverclyde, Renfrewshire or East Dunbartonshire.

[Scottish Health Survey 2017/18⁴⁴](#)

42 Understanding Glasgow: The Glasgow Indicators Project [Food Banks](#)
 43 Understanding Glasgow: The Glasgow Indicators Project [Food Insecurity](#)
 44 Scottish Health Survey 2018: main report - [revised 2020](#)



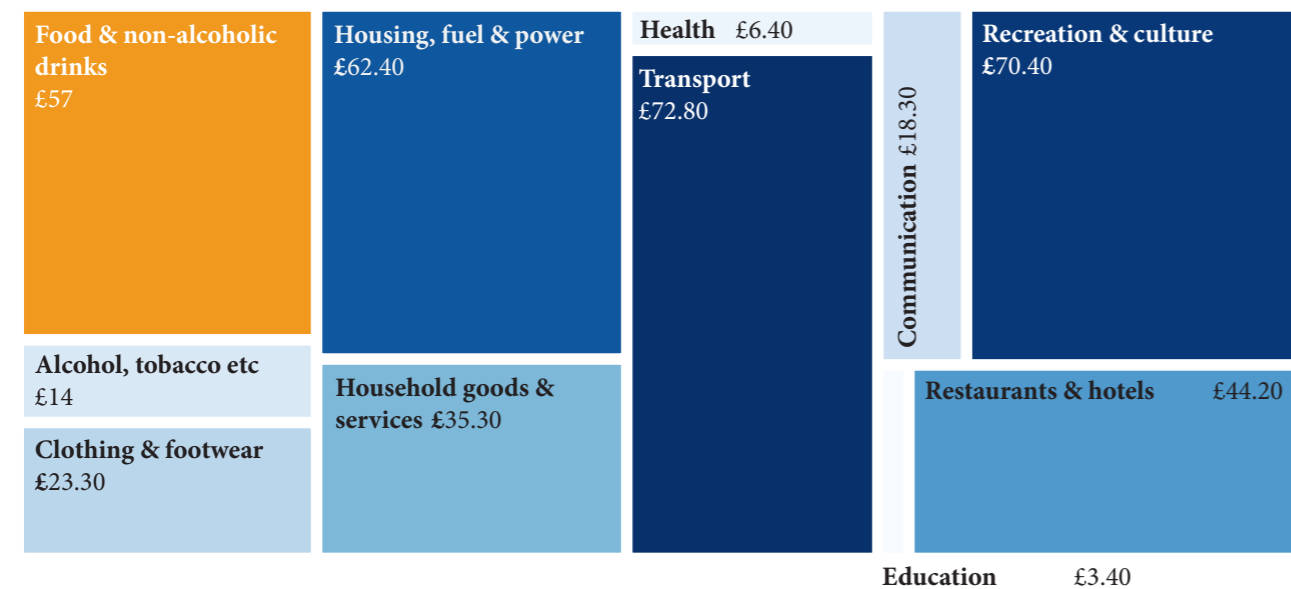
PREVENTING FOOD INEQUALITY

Food inequality does not exist in isolation – it exists in place and time and intersects with wealth, opportunity, and income distribution. It is now well understood that socio-economic factors and isolation cause food inequality. Food insecurity especially “is one of the key pathways through which income inequality is translated into the inequalities in health outcomes, such as the gap in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy, which remain challenges for the city. The stress and anxiety associated with all forms of material insecurity (food, income and fuel) prevent individuals from realising their full potential in their community, education, work and the economy and as fully engaged citizens” (GCPH Food Inequality Response⁴⁶, p1).

The GCFN Food Inequality Response response identified some short to medium term recommendations to tackle food inequality. They argue there is a need for:

- **Joined up services** that link community food projects to welfare advice. An example of this is the Northwest Citizen’s Advice Bureau project that has partnered with Woodlands Community Development Trust. A Welfare Advisor attends the community meal each Monday, sitting with people and answering questions, providing them with more focused support where needed.
- **Embedding food and health education** better within schools and in communities and challenge the perception of ‘poverty’ – everyone should have fair and equal opportunities.
- **Support to community food projects** that are alternatives to foodbanks. For example, North Glasgow Community Food Initiative runs pop up fruit and veg barras across Possil, Royston and Springburn. These provide affordable and accessible healthy foods to people in those areas and are well used.

WEEKLY SPEND IN SCOTLAND



POVERTY AND INCOME INEQUALITY IN SCOTLAND 2017-20

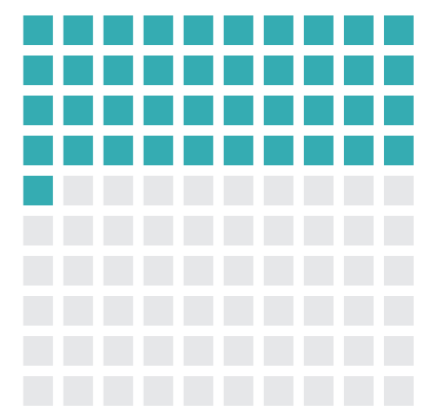
In 2021, a **Scottish Government report** on poverty and income inequality in Scotland found that:



19%
OF SCOTLAND'S POPULATION
WERE LIVING IN RELATIVE
POVERTY



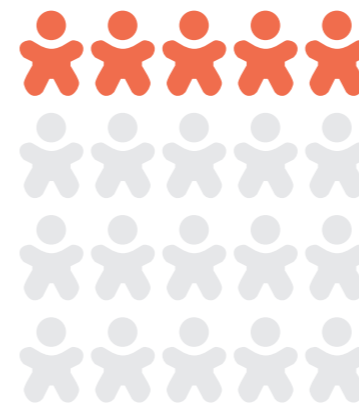
24%
OF CHILDREN WERE LIVING
IN RELATIVE POVERTY



40%
OF THOSE IN RELATIVE POVERTY,
AND **41%**
OF THOSE IN ABSOLUTE POVERTY
LIVED IN LOW FOOD SECURITY
HOUSEHOLDS

17%
IN ABSOLUTE POVERTY, AFTER
HOUSING COSTS IN 2017-20

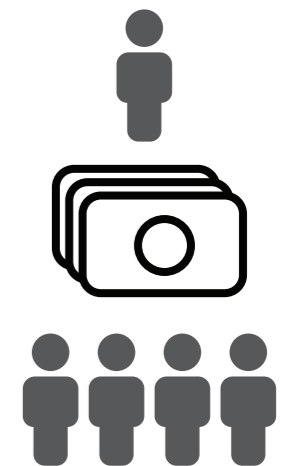
22%
IN ABSOLUTE POVERTY



25%
OF CHILDREN LIVED IN HOUSEHOLDS
WITH LOW FOOD SECURITY. CHILDREN
IN POVERTY WERE MORE LIKELY TO
HAVE LOW FOOD SECURITY: 52%
OF THOSE IN RELATIVE POVERTY,
AND 51% OF THOSE IN ABSOLUTE
POVERTY LIVED IN LOW FOOD
SECURITY HOUSEHOLDS

£481

IN 2017-20, MEDIAN INCOME AFTER
HOUSING COSTS WAS £481 PER WEEK
IN 2017-20, ITS HIGHEST LEVEL
SINCE REPORTING BEGAN.



HOWEVER, THE TOP 10% OF THE
POPULATION HAD 21% MORE
INCOME (BEFORE HOUSING COSTS)
THAN THE BOTTOM 40% COMBINED.

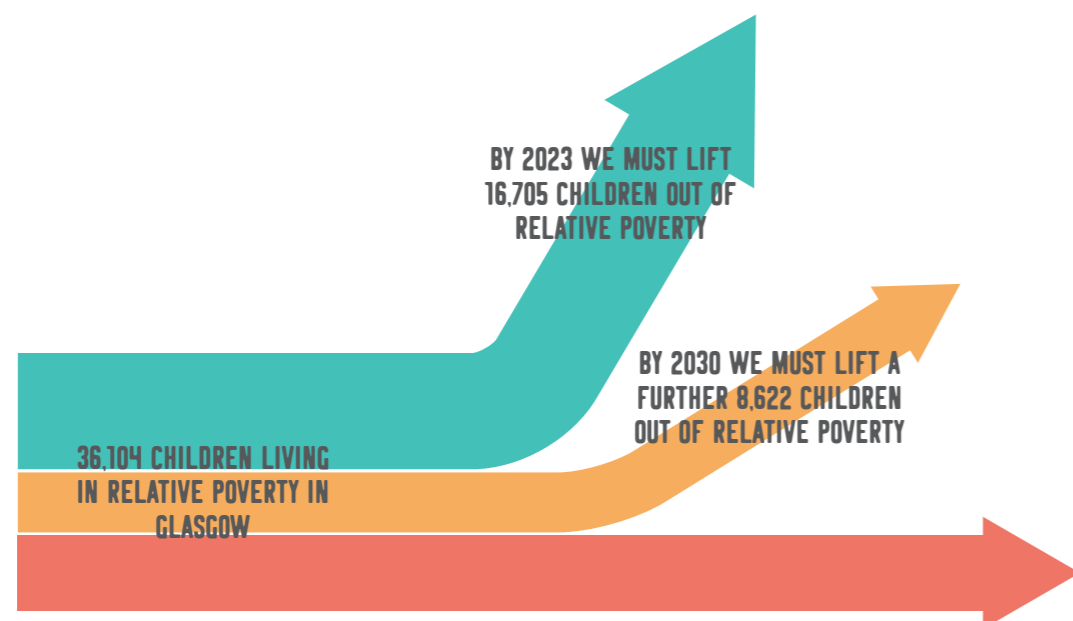
GLASGOW'S CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN

Food inequality has lifelong effects on children, including negative effects on development and learning, impaired disease management and increased likelihood of developing asthma, depression and other chronic conditions⁴⁸. Recent figures for Glasgow show that 1 in 3 (37,000 children) were living in poverty in 2017, rising to 41% in some neighbourhoods. Scotland's child poverty rates are predicted to steadily increase with 50,000 more children living in poverty by 2020/21, as a result of the UK government's austerity and welfare reform measures⁴⁹.

Glasgow established a Poverty Leadership Panel (PLP) in May 2013 to make 'poverty a thing of the past'. The PLP consists of people with direct experience of poverty, our Community Activist Panel (CAP), as well as representatives from other regional and national organisations. In 2018 the PLP decided to focus on [4 key priority areas](#)⁵⁰: Welfare Reform, Child Poverty, Housing, Employment and Training.

Pre-Pandemic one in three children lived in relative poverty in Glasgow, the highest level in Scotland. In December 2017, the Scottish Government passed the Child Poverty Bill into law which outlines targets to reduce the number of children experiencing the effects of poverty by 2030.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CHILD POVERTY TARGETS



WHAT IS RELATIVE POVERTY?

A household is experiencing relative poverty if their total income is below 60% of the average income for their household size and composition (equivalised income). As a result of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, Glasgow City Council has a duty to report a Child Poverty Action Plan each year⁵¹.

The Centre for Civic Innovation at Glasgow City Council produced the report [Child Poverty in Glasgow Report, Centre for Civic Innovation \(CCI\), GCC, 2020](#)⁵² looking at the impact of Scottish Child Payment in Glasgow:

“The Scottish Government statistics estimate that 34% of children in Glasgow are living in relative poverty. From the data we have currently, we have been able to identify 25,485 of those children. Where we are missing some of the Universal Credit data, the findings will be used to calculate an estimate based on the Scottish Government figures.”

48 Tarasuk V. (2018) Learning from population survey data on food insecurity: Learning from Canada. Presentation given to Understanding Food Insecurity in Scotland: using evidence for policy and practice change meeting.

49 GCPH (2017) Family and Child Poverty

50 [Poverty Leadership Panel](#)

51 *ibid*

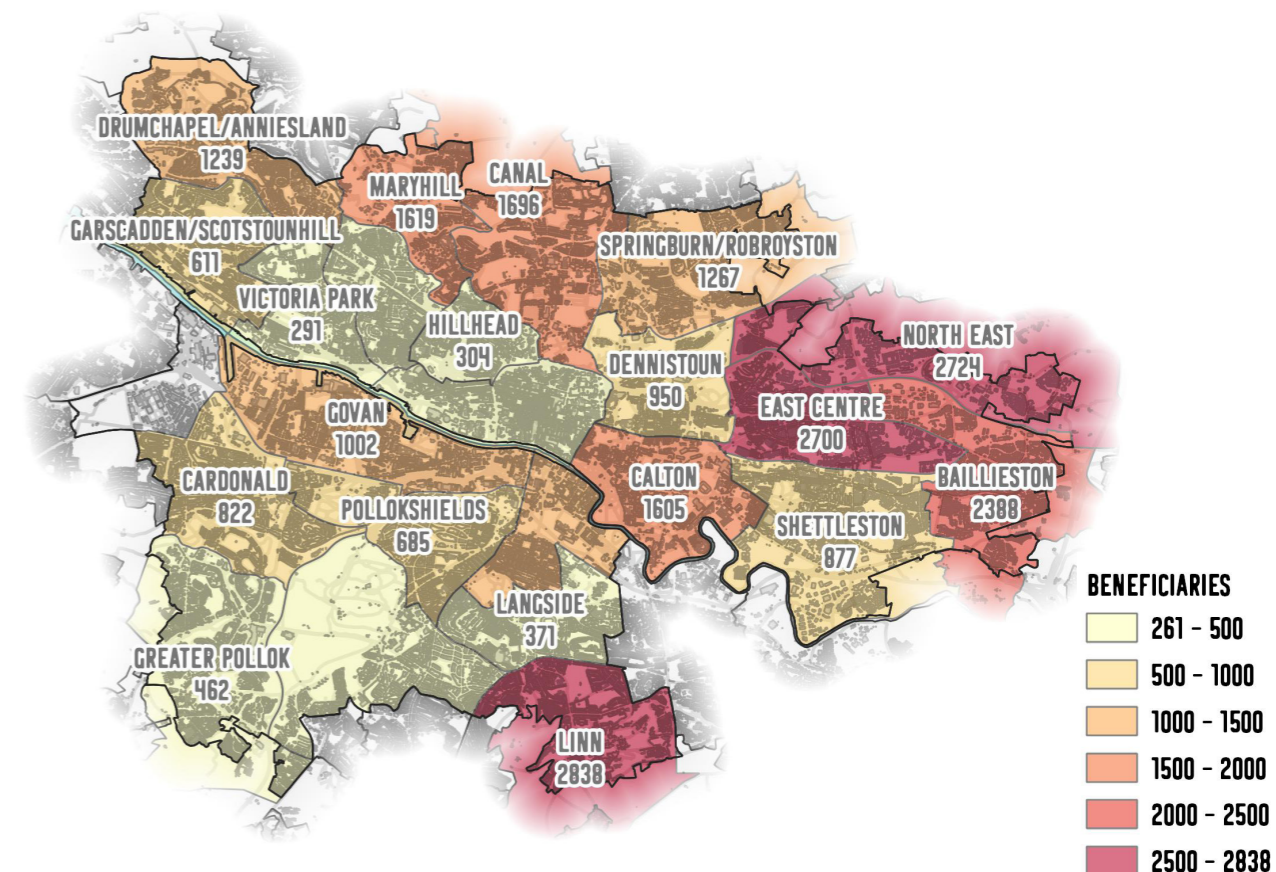
52 [Child Poverty in Glasgow Report \(2020\)](#)

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Glasgow was a leading city in running the Holiday Hunger programme and now Scottish Government are following in its path. Most recently (2020⁵³) the programme report has shown that during lockdown and the pandemic, third sector organisations adapted quickly to offer their support to families and children across the city.

Glasgow City Council's Summer Holiday 2021 Children's Holiday Food Programme is being supplemented by [the 'Get Into Summer' programme](#)⁵⁴ funded by the Scottish Government. Children and young people most impacted by Covid will be supported by £20 million across Scotland to create opportunities to socialise, play and reconnect this summer.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLIDAY HUNGER PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES 2020



The strength in the programme [GCC 2020](#)⁵⁵ has raised the confidence of young people and families around food and fun summer activities. The non-means tested element is proven to link people together who would have been unlikely to have mixed otherwise. These spaces for food, learning and fun are building connections between groups, local people and the places where they meet.

Glasgow Community Food Networks Food Inequality Inquiry⁵⁶ stated that:

“The Council's 'Holiday Hunger' funding programme should also be applauded although it encountered some delivery issues. It has been noted that some of its funded projects did not provide healthy food or balanced meals to young people or provide activities that brought young people together in a meaningful way’.

The Children's Holiday Food programme could work in a more holistic way, helping to not just feed people and build community strength, but also to offer support and signposting to families where required. The programme also needs food expertise like menu provision for schools to ensure nutritional balance. Good evaluations have come from groups built around activities like sport, cooking and nature.

53 [Glasgow Children's Holiday Food Programme Monitoring Report Summer 2020](#)

54 Scottish Government (2021) [Get into Summer](#)

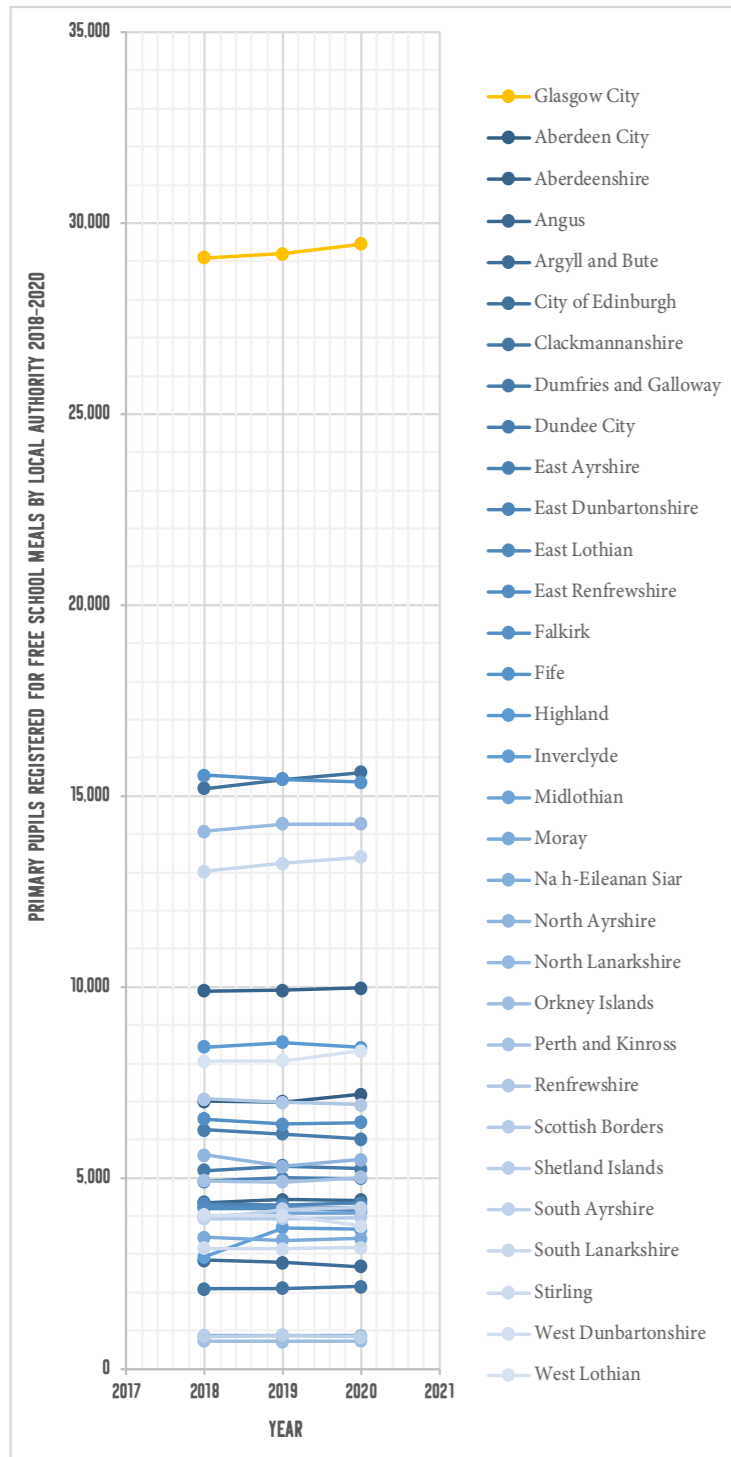
55 Glasgow Children's Holiday Food Programme Monitoring Report Summer (2020)

56 *ibid*

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

The Scottish government has committed to the introduction of Universal Free School Meals for primary school children and renewed its commitment to the 'Good Food Nation Bill' with the ambition to achieve universal access to high quality, nutritious and sustainably sourced food which is better for Scotland's people, animals and the planet⁵⁷. With this in mind, a working group has formed to see this work embedded with a holistic, far-reaching approach.

Scotland should adopt a 'whole school approach'⁵⁸ to food in order to harness the opportunities presented by the introduction of universal free school meals (UFSM). The call came from a working group across the school food sector which outlined recommendations for how Scottish children and young people can benefit from UFSM, which is due to be introduced for primary school children in 2022.



The working group, that includes Brakes Scotland, Assist FM and Nourish Scotland among other organisations, said in a [discussion paper](#)⁵⁹ that the adoption of a whole school approach should focus on consistent provision of fresh, healthy, and nutritious meals, valorisation of the catering profession, investment in catering infrastructure and dining environment, a focus on food waste reduction and links with the wider community.

It also recommended:

1. **Prioritising the local procurement of ethical and sustainably produced school food ingredients.**

2. **A focus on food waste reduction through pupil education and ownership, investment in meal quality and dining infrastructure. The development of a national recipe book of school meals that encourages the use of regional and seasonal produce and is actively promoted among local authorities and more widely across the public sector.**

3. **The development of universal standards and methods for measuring the impact of UFSM including local economic impact and carbon footprint.**

Glasgow Community Food Network as part of the Scottish Food Coalition supports this call and asks that the Scottish Government takes forward these recommendations in full.



PARTICIPANT ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

The idea for a Participatory Action Research project came from our former colleague, Jackie. During her 6 months as a CRO, she noted community voices were distinctly left out of design and decision making of local food provision services. Food Project Govanhill (FPG), was established with the aim to get service users' direct feedback on local food providers, in relation to the themes of our project - *food dignity, effective partnership working, sustainable and resilient supply chains, and food and income insecurity* - and then use this to influence local change. The project's objective was to centre participants' assets; the changes the community can make to underlying causes of food insecurity; and to equip participants as activists in their own right. FPG hoped to build local leadership in Govanhill, ensuring participants can be part of the future design process for adequate and dignified support.

FPG utilised part of Jackie's original plan to guide us in the preparation for Food Project Govanhill:

- Focus on groups who are missed e.g., older adults, asylum seekers and refugees, people living in food deserts
- Work directly in communities with experts-by-experience whilst building trust locally
- PAR could take various forms, depending on identified needs in the community and how community members wish to carry out their research. Use focus groups/workshops etc. to support/involve community members in:
 1. Determining what issues are in their community in relation to the themes of the project – what works, what doesn't and what needs to change
 2. Establishing what participants want to achieve e.g., get their stories, voices and experiences heard, evidence the need for and achieve positive change in the support and services provided to their community, connect with policy makers, communicate their needs to local authorities

With these ideas in mind, FPG centred on a course of six co-created workshops that were creative, engaging and productive. Sessions would run with a small team of 5-10 participants, and were incentivised as a participant's time, energy and expertise is hugely valuable to both the project and improvement of local food systems. FPG offered a delivered lunch, or the equivalent cost in voucher form, for a food shop of participant's choice, for every session attended. FPG were advised not to offer cash as this could affect potential participants' benefits. FPG also offered a time-accredited certificate of participation, employment, voluntary support and a £40 voucher upon completion of four or more of the six workshops.

Participants recommendations for local and national policy centred on five main pillars:

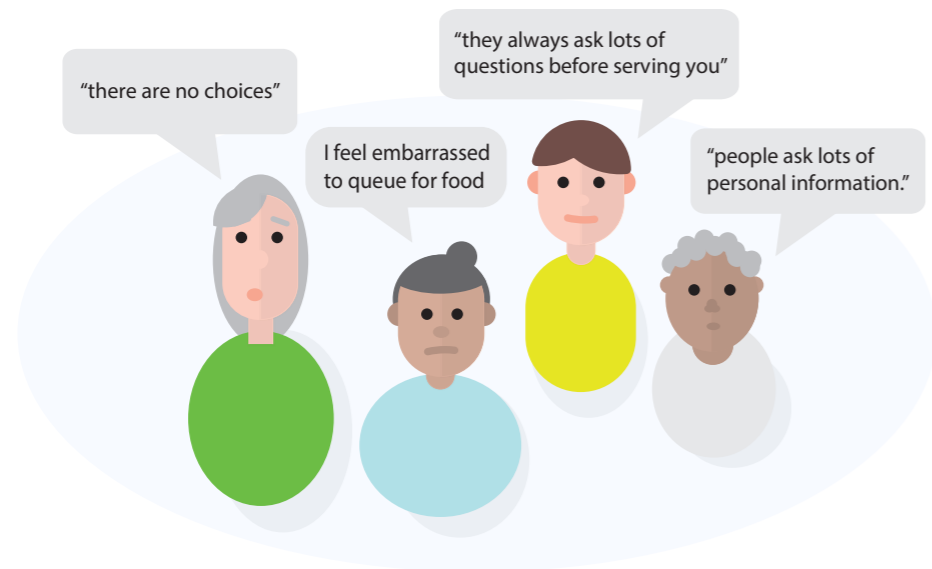


57 Scottish Government 2021 Free School Meals
 58 Footprint (2021) Should food be at the centre of school?
 59 The 'Good Food' Case for the provision of Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) in Scotland

By highlighting issues with local food systems and food insecurity, participants discussed all things food systems, COVID-19 and Govanhill. The insights and experiences collected during workshop discussions have been collated below. This information indicates where improvements should be made within Govanhill's food system. This project will inform practices and future changes within food aid provision; embedding dignified practices and the phasing out of inadequate food services.

As the sessions progressed participants decided to create two surveys: one to ask Govanhill residents what they thought of local food services, and one to ask local food providers about their services. The responses to these surveys raised topics present in many of FPG discussions.

Some results concluded from service users' responses:

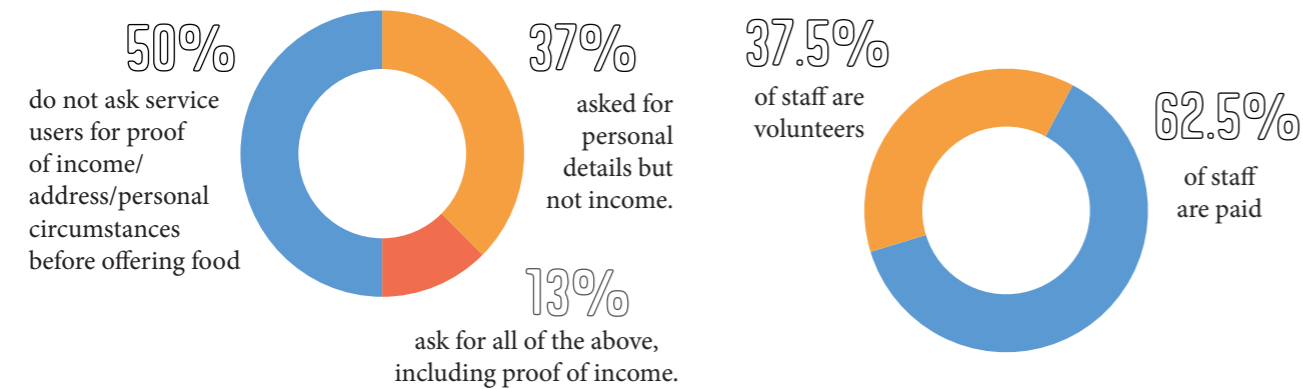


83% said they would prefer to receive money over food.

60% of that figure would rather have vouchers.

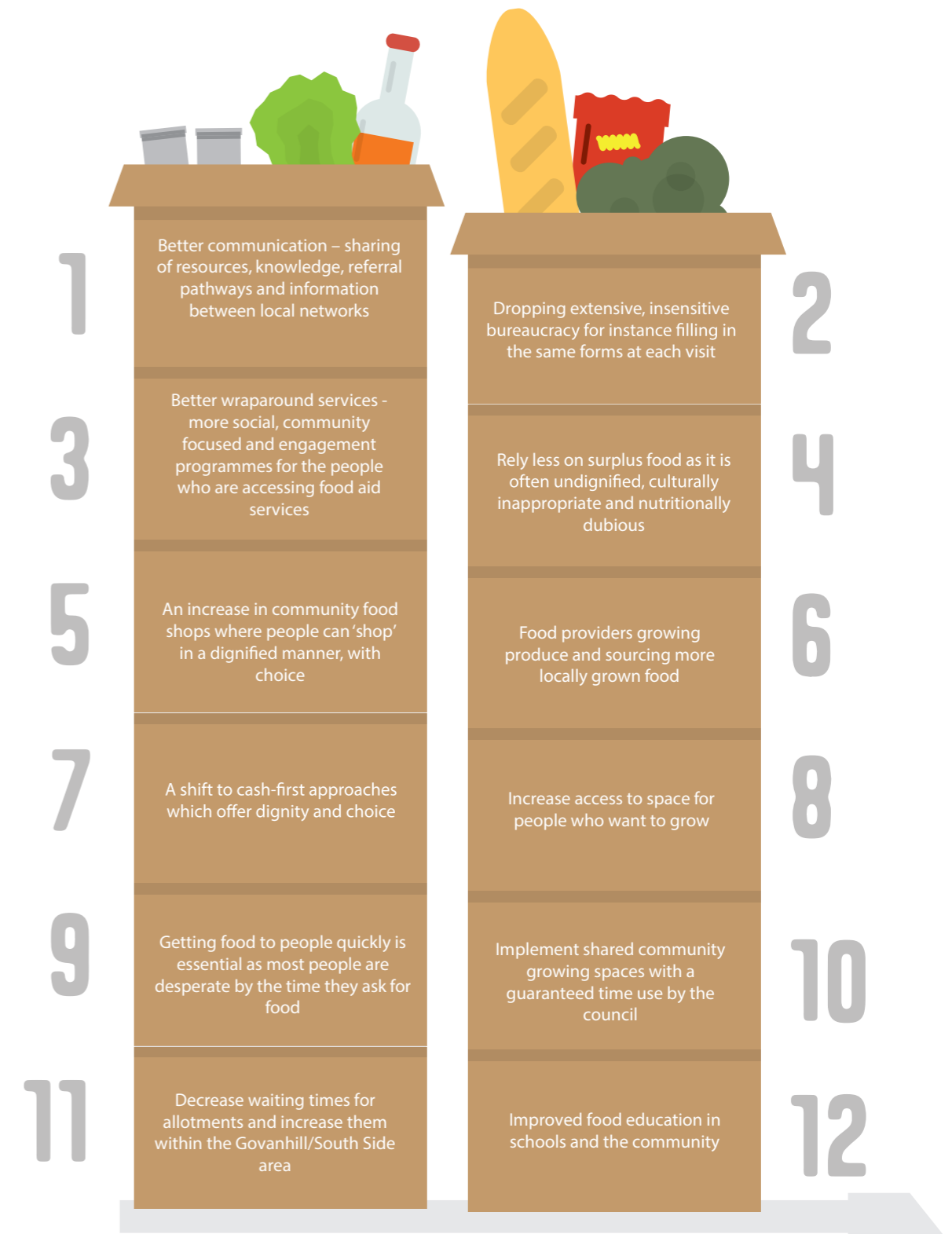
As one comment revealed: *“I don't prefer any [of the food providers]. Food vouchers and cash money is best.”*

Service Providers' Survey responses:



Volunteers citing 'bettering their local area', 'building stronger community' and 'helping others' as the reason they contribute their time.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY SERVICE PROVIDERS ON IMPROVING ACCESS TO FOOD IN GOVANHILL INCLUDED:



There should be increase support from GCC and Scottish Government for more dignified approaches to emergency food provision. Food Project Govanhill ran over a short period of 6 weeks, with all participant and survey findings collated during this time. More experiences, information and knowledge should be acquired over a longer period, which could further benefit the wider community, building local leadership and develop longer term solutions. PAR projects on community food provision should be replicated in different communities across Glasgow building local leadership among those with lived experience able to advise local and national decision making.

GLASGOW'S COVID19 FOOD AND INCOME EMERGENCY RESPONSE

GLASGOW LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSE – GCPP (2020)

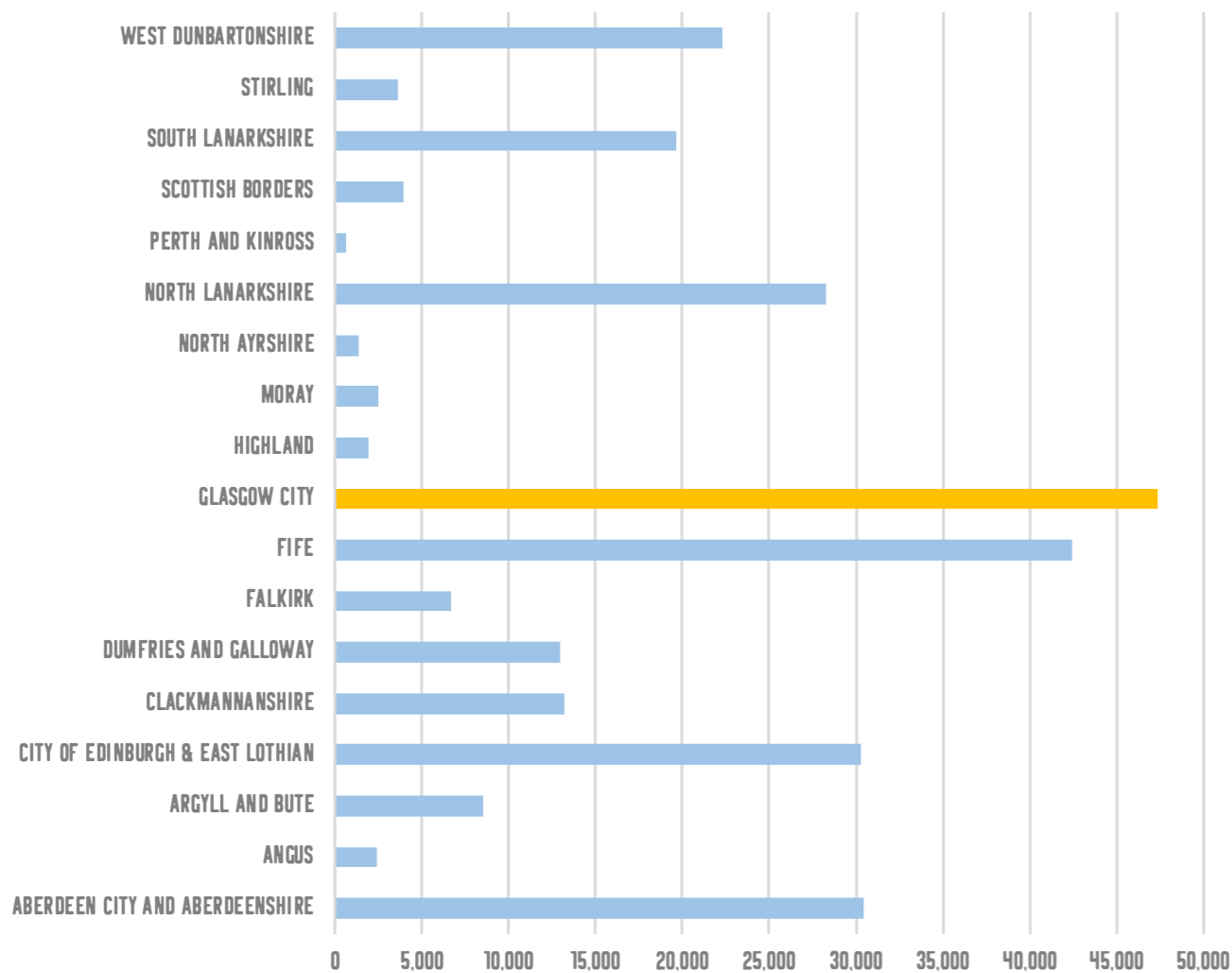
Examining Glasgow's cross-sectoral and community response to the Covid 19 Food and Income Emergency has revealed some fascinating learning, the implications of which could usefully inform approaches to future major emergency events. The experiences of those individuals and agencies involved may also act as pointers to a more just and dignified food security system in the longer term as we move through and beyond the pandemic.

In Glasgow, the first responders when the pandemic started were the quick and agile third sector community providers that understood their local residents needs best. Later, national and local Governments intervened with financial support to the third and private sector. Partnerships new and old were rapidly formed while the landscape constantly evolved.

PRE COVID 19

The foodbank sector was an essential source of emergency support for addressing hunger. There were 50 operational points for food banks in the city, many having adopted excellent models of practice.

NUMBER OF FOOD PARCELS DISTRIBUTED APRIL '18 – SEPT '19

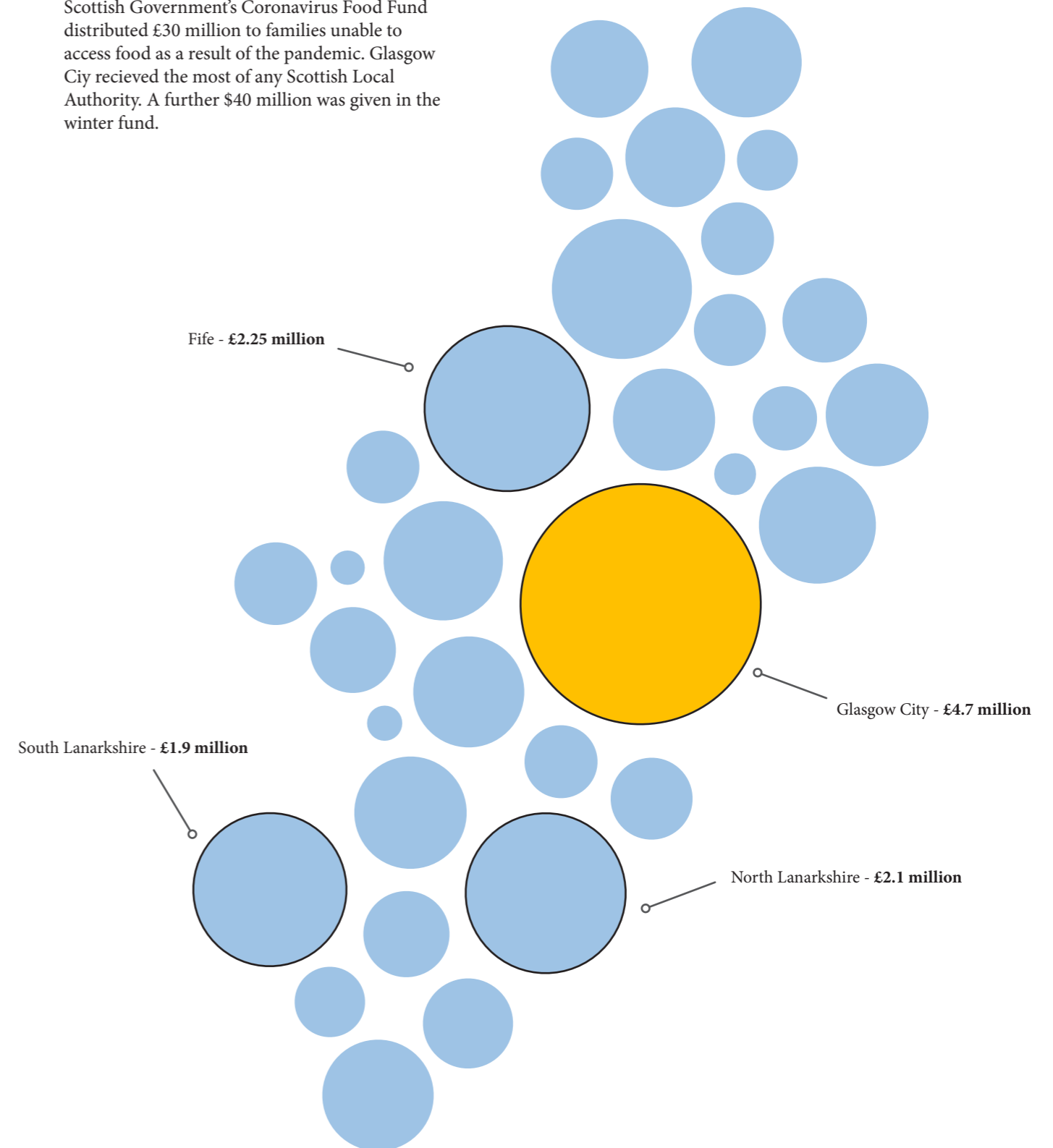


FINANCIAL SUPPORT DURING LOCKDOWN

Glasgow City Council initially received £4.7 million from the Food Fund covering the period from March into the summer 2020. This would support Shielding/Shielding Plus, Free School meal entitlement contingency plans and other work in partnership with schools and the third sector.

THE FOOD FUND

Scottish Government's Coronavirus Food Fund distributed £30 million to families unable to access food as a result of the pandemic. Glasgow City received the most of any Scottish Local Authority. A further \$40 million was given in the winter fund.





SHIELDING/SHIELDING PLUS

Around 22,000 people were shielding in Glasgow and over 5,600 opted into the Government weekly food box.

The GCC contact centre answered almost 10,000 calls regarding shielding and other support needs. The Council also issued more than 10,000 proactive letters to those shielding to see if they needed any further support from GCC. In addition, plans have been drawn up to schedule calls to vulnerable people who the Council had been unable to contact since lockdown.

Of those accessing the Shielding Helpline, 46% lived within the 10% poorest SIMD areas in the city. Around 4,700 food parcels were delivered weekly for shielding reasons and the British Red Cross also delivered hundreds of emergency food parcels weekly to those in critical need (Glasgow Local Child Poverty Action Group). GCC Financial Inclusion team volunteered to manage the shielding response for the city and following a team-level interview, a series of issues of significance were identified:

- There was a substantial backlog of inquiries regarding shielding and the support available
- Local strong partnerships developed to include extended GCC teams, the Fire & Rescue Service and voluntary sector organisations. A bespoke website and referral phonenumber were established in what was a fast-developing and dynamic situation
- Glasgow City Council offered a fresh food enhancement to those receiving the Shielding Box and, since April the council contacted our most vulnerable citizens and arranged the supply of 64,000 fresh food parcels.

Shielding Plus – was a process set up to identify people who were vulnerable due to health, disability, food poverty and have no other means of getting food. Almost 1000 people are now included in this weekly food delivery.

*Of those accessing the
Shielding Helpline
46%
lived within the
poorest 10% areas in
the city*

OTHER FOOD PROVISION AND SUPPORT

Parents and carers whose children were entitled to, or in receipt of, a footwear and clothing grant and/or free school meals, received a pre-paid Farmfoods card. This was in place until end June 2020.

Other initiatives supported by the Food Fund saw Glasgow City Council allocate funding to a number of community interventions:

- a small grant Food Fund being managed by GCVS (£50,000 available in total for small grants)
- funding for the provision of hot evening meals to homeless people who were supported in hotels during lockdown
- £60,000 was allocated to stabilise the food hubs established by FARE in partnership with Knightswood Secondary and Rosshall Secondary. The hubs were supporting around 500 families per week
- The GCC Holiday Food Programme and Free School Meals Scheme continued with their Spring 2000 programme delivering around 17000 meals, 105000 food parcels and cash payments of £10 per child per week for eight weeks initiall
- Emergency Food via British Red Cross (BRC), was put in place for people who need food within 24 hours and consists of provision of both dried food (Brakes) and fresh food (McLays) to BRC to enabled them to respond to current demand

All but a few of the Registered Social Landlords operational in the city have put support, including food provision, in place for their tenants. Liaison has been established between the Council and RSLs to optimise use of these services. Highlighted activities taken by Community Controlled Housing Associations (CCHA's) included –

- Providing and delivering food to those who cannot afford it or are in self-isolation
- Providing advice for people to access benefits and emergency funds
- Connecting services and volunteers to where they are needed
- Financial support for community organisations to increase or deliver new activities to meet additional demands for energy (e.g. fuel cards)
- Funding to support community organisations to deliver services in new ways in response to Covid-19, for example, digital tools to enable people to remain connected
- Funding to support and maintain the cash flow and staff costs of small community organisations while dealing with the emergency, for example, due to loss of other income sources
- Funding to meet costs of supporting personal safety

The Scottish Government has directly funded Fareshare (who distribute surplus supermarket food) and other organisations working nationally, such as Social Bite. In addition, around £940,000 has been allocated directly from the Food Fund to organisations working in Glasgow.

Glasgow City Council allocated around £2 million annually to the Childrens Holiday Food Programme to fund third sector organisations to provide nutritious food to children and young people. Flexibility was applied to funding allocated for the Easter school break to allow projects to focus solely on food.

NHS GGC Support and Information Service are provided a range of support. At main hospital sites a two-day patient emergency discharge food bag is provided to vulnerable patients experiencing poverty, money difficulties or social isolation. Toiletries are also provided to patients who need them as well as telephone advice, referral to financial inclusion services and other local services.

Volunteer Glasgow provided city wide coordination and management of volunteer activity working closely with Glasgow Community Food Network to support emergency food providers with new volunteer capacity.

A partnership was developed with the British Red Cross and the HSCP to pilot a hardship fund. This provided funding to a maximum of £30 per person per week for a period of 12 weeks.



The Glasgow City Council Financial Inclusion Team shared in an interview (November 2020) with GCFN that: “We all wanted to do the right thing...That’s the element of closer working that would produce better customer service, if we work collectively on that” (GCC Financial Inclusion Team, November 2020). These are some of the challenges the team faced during those times:

- technical issues at launch caused a surge in demand for food parcel sign-up on the GCC phonenumber that could not be managed effectively.
- supplementing the Scottish Government food parcel with fresh food
- extending support to those deemed vulnerable but not on the shielding list. This created a huge undertaking with deliveries, mis-deliveries, liaising with service providers and customers
- SG decided that if anyone on the shielding list hadn’t made contact, they needed to be contacted. This was a massive intervention. At the time of interview, numbers stood at around 23000 contacted, requiring real collaborative and front-line action
- The SG offer of support for shielding ‘paused’ from August 1st 2020 as restrictions were lifted. People then had to be referred to online supermarket home deliveries.
- Signposting and ensuring everyone’s needs are met
- Supporting people with limited digital access and capabilities
- GCC worked with GCVS and the shielding line to get people support based on their needs building on multi agency support and referral pathways. Just as GCC reduced the numbers needing shielding support services they provided, Isolate and Support began meaning GCC had to contact everyone who was being contact traced. As people had to quarantine GCC further developed these referrals to identifying peoples’ needs and develop the response
- Of the core lessons learned, it is clear that the reach of the systems put in place were both a major challenge and a major achievement on behalf of GCC. Sharing of experience with other cities and indeed the challenges faced in rural areas could usefully be studied in more depth in a bid to inform future good practice
- It is clear that while vast sums were expended in getting to those most in need, the capacity of both statutory and voluntary agencies has been stretched to, and beyond the limit, so there should be a parallel examination of these capacity issues and what legacy provision should be made for future similar events.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

IFAN⁶⁰ and GCFN emphasise the need to work with and empower front line food providers across this space to be a strong voice towards the direction of getting people to focus on cash-based entitlement, cash first approaches. Glasgow City Council should focus on developing a Foodbank Forum that is a well-attended, informative space for sharing concerns and best practice. Since the pandemic there has been little evidence of this type of activity taking place.

We urge the Glasgow City Council’s Financial Inclusion team to explore how to better link foodbanks with other advice agencies and community food organisations to provide more holistic support.

Further to this the Local Authority, Health & Social Care Partnerships and third sector partners should ensure there is a fair distribution of welfare and advice support along with other wraparound services across Glasgow’s emergency food providers and initiatives.

We urge the government to stand by its strategy to end the need for emergency food aid as laid out in the Programme for Government and to provide a timeline for action.

Scottish Government should invest in shared cross-sector referral pathways at a Local Authority level. Data being held by a trusted organisation such as the Health & Social Care Partnership.

60 IFAN (2020) Independent food banks in the UK

GLASGOW'S THIRD SECTOR RESPONSE

The third sector played a pivotal role throughout the pandemic and should be commended for its speed and agility responding to the quickly unfolding crisis.⁶¹

GLASGOW HELPS DIRECTORY

Within the first couple of weeks of lockdown, GCVS had created an online directory and helpline so people could search and connect to the services they needed. With hundreds of charities and community groups changing their service delivery, Glasgow Helps allowed members of the public to find someone to help, whether that was with food and prescription delivery, mental health support or financial advice.

FUNDING

Because of the developing pandemic and the pressures it was putting on local communities, third sector funders gave organisations more flexibility over how grants were spent. The report recommends that in the event of a similar crisis, communities would benefit from more directly targeted and coordinated grants preventing duplication and increasing more integrated support across a variety of services including mental health and digital inclusion.

FOOD

The most immediate need identified by both the third sector and the funding organisations was food provision. It is worth noting that there were two groups of people requiring food - those who could not afford it and those who could afford it but could not access it. In the case of the second group, it might make more sense to make greater use of food delivery services, such as Food Train.

It is important to note that many third sector organisations who became involved with food provision did not aim to simply drop off food parcels or cooked meals. Many organisations used food as the lead offer to open up conversations with people which led to household receiving other relevant support, such as access to Wi-Fi or additional devices, referrals to welfare rights services, etc. An identified priority was the urgent need for continued and improved data sharing to ensure more efficient coordination of services.

A framework for effective communication and messaging – not just around food – is another area which should be considered and developed during a time of non-crisis. A simple model should be developed ready to be rolled out immediately in the event of another crisis. That could be as straightforward as the council using its resource to print a leaflet and have it delivered to every door in Glasgow, directing recipients to a clearing-house type operation (such as Glasgow Helps provided) for onward referral to a third sector project.

FOOD SUITABILITY/QUALITY

Cultural and religious dietary requirements were often overlooked. However, the response from Sikh and Muslim groups was exceptional in its vigour and inclusivity. Some of the parcels received were not suitable for the person's diet. Some of the food parcels being delivered were of poor nutritional value. However, there were some great parcels being sent out to families, with organisations providing fresh fruit and vegetable boxes with recipes included and activity ideas for children.

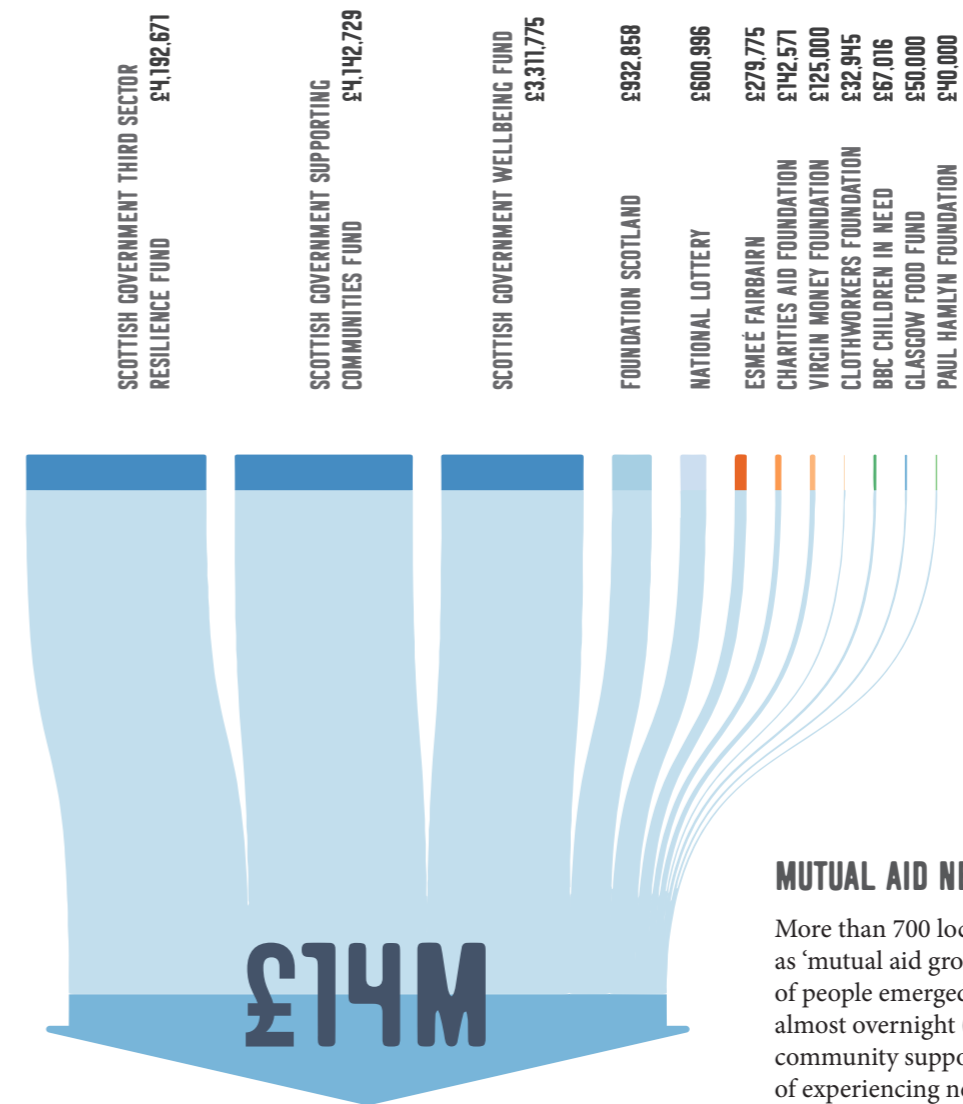
VOLUNTEERING

It's clear that in a similar situation a more localised response to volunteering would be appropriate. It would also have been beneficial to have a more targeted campaign and to place volunteers based on their skills and strengths.

DIGITAL INCLUSION

Access to the internet was crucial for people staying connected, getting information about the crisis as it developed, receiving vital services, and combatting social isolation. Many people in Glasgow are still excluded because they don't have the devices, the internet connection or the skills and confidence to go online.

61 Glasgow TSI (2020) Beyond the Covid Crisis – Lessons from Lockdown



£14 MILLION OF COVID-SPECIFIC GRANTS WERE PAID TO GLASGOW'S THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE FOR WORK IN GLASGOW DURING LOCKDOWN AT THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, COMING FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES

Glasgow's Third Sector Interface pulled together many of the issues facing organisations and people early in the pandemic in their report Beyond the Covid Crisis

MUTUAL AID NETWORKS

More than 700 local solidarity networks known as 'mutual aid groups' involving tens of thousands of people emerged spontaneously across the UK, almost overnight (Booth, 2020), to provide local community support to those who were more at risk of experiencing negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Glasgow Caledonian University\(2020\) report⁶²](#) found mutual aid groups complimented quick delivery services of food and prescriptions.

The following recommendations were made in the GCU report:

- Increased transparency from the Scottish Government and local councils about their on-going responses to a pandemic is critical
- Some mutual aid groups should be encouraged to take their data management more seriously, to consider their potential for sustainability going forward in a crisis (should they wish to), and to evaluate their safeguarding of the communities they serve through more formal background checks. This does not mean sacrificing organisational characteristics, but it could lead to more productive collaboration and improved community support

SUPPORTING REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE PANDEMIC

Our Community Response Officer interviewed 27 third sector organisations, community groups and churches that had been offering food support as a response to Covid. In line with the discussions above, they found that prior to Covid, the majority of organisations provided access to food as part of a holistic range of services that included a range of support activities (workshops, programmes or training). Crucially, food related activities that formed a core part of services offered most often had a social element such as community meals and cooking classes to counter social isolation.

During COVID-19, most organisations replaced their core services with food distribution services. It's important to highlight that the amount of people receiving food is an indicator of the amount of funding and resources available than the actual demand. Issues identified among those receiving food from these organisations included needing to shield, lack of produce in the shops, queuing for long periods of time with young children, increased anxiety, lack of supermarket delivery slots.

62 Glasgow Caledonian University (2020) Solidarity in a time of crisis : The role of mutual aid to the COVID-19 pandemic

RECOMMENDATIONS

Aligning with findings of Glasgow's Third Sector Interface (TSi):

- Priority must be given to developing a clear and co-produced communications strategy in any future crisis
- Using emergency food provision not as an end in itself, but as a tool to open up conversations in the community about wider needs was a better model than dropping off food parcels leading to innovations in service development and decreasing need for emergency food
- Reevaluate competitive funding processes which mitigate against longer-term collaboration between organisations
- The Scottish Government needs to recognise the potential of local communities to solve their own problems
- Better use should be made of Community Planning Partnerships to bring people together (at least at ward level) to consider how partners can work together and to address any local issues
- Solve the perennial issue of GDPR to enable organisations to identify people in greatest need and avoid duplication.

In a series of parallel recommendations, cross sectoral partners at the GCVS (2020) "Access to Food" event highlighted the following:

- Personal and community dignity was a core value that should underpin future programmes
- People want to make their own choices, so we should look at a cash first approach
- Individual needs assessment was ineffective and unnecessary but checking whether ongoing support was necessary was often useful
- Where partnerships between organisations were in place, they served to help avoid duplication and maximize support for people in need, but there was no need for organisations to demonstrate they were working in partnership with other organisations before receiving funding (leading to duplication)
- We cannot look at food provision in isolation; Universal Credit came up repeatedly as an issue which causes poverty, and emergency food dependence
- Organisationally, the need for community infrastructure and organisational partnerships/collaboration is clear. Some areas were already well linked in and provided a joined-up service to those in need, but in other areas there was duplication and organisations who did not know what each other were doing
- Particularly relevant for any future lockdown or similar crisis is co-ordination. There was (in some areas) a real need for a co-ordinated response, whether from the council, Community Planning or some other partner such as the TSI





● Locations of Allotments in Glasgow.

GCFN are in the process of mapping other community growing spaces and market gardens

COMMUNITY GROWING IN THE PANDEMIC

By Local Community Response Officer Louis Kitchen

During the Covid-19 pandemic, access to food growing spaces has been a lifeline for many. Kennyhill and Tollcross Park allotments reported a significant increase in activity during the pandemic, resulting in better maintained plots and more food grown. This was attributed to several factors including fewer holidays, and more time available due to furlough or job losses. This increase in use suggests that under normal circumstances, available leisure time is a limiting factor on growing food. Another widely reported reason for the increase in use was the value of access to isolated outdoor spaces, allowing people to spend time away from home with minimal risk of viral transmission. Garden Organics & Sustain (2014⁶³) showed the therapeutic benefits of food growing to physical and mental health, and it is unsurprising that people would turn to this activity in challenging times.

Many community gardens, however, ceased activity during lockdowns. This was largely due to concerns about viral transmission, combined with insufficient confidence in resources to disinfect shared equipment and facilities, and to manage social distancing. There was a feeling in some parts that government advice was unclear.

Some community gardens reported declining standards of maintenance in the growing spaces. As a result, it may take years to get these areas back to pre-pandemic conditions. Some spaces may need to find additional funds to support their recovery.

Community gardens that run rent-a-bed schemes were often able to allow plot-holders to access their beds. A challenge in some places however was that tool-sharing was not permitted, meaning that it was not possible for anyone without access to their own tools to maintain plots and grow produce.

Training and workshops were also cancelled for the most part, meaning that those without growing skills were often left without learning opportunities. Investing in provision of growing spaces and training opportunities now, could help harness and maintain the surge in interest seen during the pandemic.

63 Sustain (2014) The benefits of gardening and food growing for health and wellbeing

FOUR CASE STUDIES FROM ACROSS GLASGOW — THE THIRD SECTOR RESPONDS



FAMILY ACTION IN ROGERFIELD AND EASTERHOUSE (FARE)

Founded in 1989, FARE is a partnership based in the North East of Glasgow which works with disadvantaged communities throughout Central Scotland. FARE comprises of both voluntary and statutory organisations, including a range of third sector organisations, churches, social enterprises, schools, community groups, and with local authority and national government representation. Before the COVID-19 crisis, FARE was a member of Fareshare, and other food work included children's homework clubs, adult cooking lessons, and Christmas food hampers for senior citizens.

Prior to lockdown, FARE released emergency funding and met with around 20 partners in the Greater Easterhouse area – the 'East End Coronavirus Action Group' - including schools, organisations, and councillors, to develop a response to the crisis. The partners agreed to coordinate food parcels for vulnerable individuals and families and decided against implementing eligibility criteria. FARE supported whoever called the emergency hotline, which was promoted to partners and via social media. On the week commencing 16th March, FARE began delivering food parcels and more partners in the North East joined the group.

FARE's fundraising campaign raised over £100k within the first two weeks and operations soon outgrew FARE headquarters by early April. To increase capacity, FARE opened new hubs in the West and South of Glasgow. FARE brought partners together directly and coordinated logistics centrally. There were around 90 partners in total, including roughly 40 in the North East, 25 in the South, and 25 in the West.

FARE also worked in partnership with private organisations and supermarkets to source produce and support logistics, including both local supermarket branches (B&M) and national headquarters (Morrisons and Lidl).

Each food pack contained 24 meals minimum, comprising mainly non-perishable foods initially and later more fresh food. Partners who served communities with specific food requirements topped-up certain products (e.g., halal food), and FARE provided funding to do this. FARE also included non-food items such as household essentials and, when required, baby items or formula. Leftover items were distributed to partners and the second response phase focused on the provision of food vouchers - FARE's exit strategy from parcel distribution. Over £300,000 was spent on food vouchers in total. The third phase moved to working with food pantries as a longer-term solution to food insecurity.

The cross-sector partnership's diversity was a key strength and partners across private, statutory and voluntary sectors collaborated successfully to support an end beneficiary. The ability of community organisations in particular to move quickly was apparent, which FARE believes demonstrates the benefit of offering local authority and government procurement contracts to a third sector that can be relied upon to act quickly and effectively. New and enduring partnerships were formed as a result of the crisis, and partnership working meant duplication was avoided. In total, FARE's partnership was successful in:

- Raising £1.2million for food security
- Contacting two thousand families were contacted each week with FARE's family liaison officers and the Connect Community Trust
- Supporting over 10,000 households were supported
- Distributing over one million meals were distributed through food parcels

Going forward, FARE will continue to focus on tackling poverty and promoting a circular economy through partnership work in the community.

PARTICK THISTLE CHARITABLE TRUST, NORTH WEST GLASGOW

Partick Thistle Charitable Trust (PTCT) was formed in 2011 and manages a range of community projects. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, PTCT offered food throughout their key projects, including physical activity and mental health programmes, youth programmes and programmes for people with disabilities. The catering organisation Progress provided food for their activities and PTCT made a substantial contribution to the Children's Holiday Food Programme.

When the crisis began, PTCT wanted to utilise Firhill Stadium's hospitality facilities to continue supporting children and local people they knew to be isolating. NG Homes, who PTCT had previously worked with, also wanted to support their tenants, and Progress' catering base had closed. PTCT saw an opportunity and brought the partners together to develop the meals plan. PTCT repurposed Children's Holiday Food Programme resources and later was able to source more funding, as well as donations from their fans. Other partners involved were Young People's Futures and Possibilities.

The provision covered the North of Glasgow and included the neighbourhoods of Possilpark, Ruchill, Milton, Parkouse, Springburn and Balarnock. Food recipients were referred from other organisations such as other housing associations (HAs), Citizens Advice, NHS and Social Work practitioners. Possibilities had already provided a paid meals service and when they were unable to fund these clients, the PTCT partnership took on these clients provisionally and later coordinated with them. Promotion of the service consisted largely of word of mouth and by putting details on the Glasgow Food Map. Other partners and organisations in North Glasgow provided additional food support.

Progress chefs sourced food from wholesalers, while NG Homes sourced food from FareShare and Costco. Progress prepared hot meals daily at Firhill Stadium and PTCT staff delivered these directly to recipients. Each person received one meal containing soup and a main course, catering for dietary requirements, and every Friday, elderly residents received an extra meal for the weekend. From March to August, over 300 hot meals were provided daily, exceeding 30,000 meals in total. Around half of those were for elderly and self-isolating residents, and half were for children and families. Later in the crisis, PTCT offered meals five days a week at Firhill Stadium to support people to develop the confidence to leave home. This had its challenges, as messaging around social distancing and visiting other venues meant that numbers served were significantly below capacity.

The partnership was a reactive group and was not constituted. Partners trusted each other, and the collaboration was supported by goodwill and determination to help people. A key strength of the

cross-sector partnership was that PTCT were able to use their financial and logistical resources to support other partners. As an anchor organisation, PTCT were responsible for distributing funding - an application process they tried to simplify. The partnership highlighted the role of HAs in speaking to and getting to know residents and tenants, and the potential legacy of this. The partnership received positive feedback from families and residents about the service, including anecdotal feedback that children were waiting at their window for the daily delivery.



Going forward, PTCT believes there is an appetite for partnership working and useful collaborations. Partnerships strengthened as a result of the crisis, and PTCT were delivering a Christmas meal project with NG Homes, Possibilities and Progress in December 2020. PTCT is keen to work more closely with organisations delivering work on food insecurity to share best practice, and they want to use their hospitality and transport resources to support other organisations and work in partnership where possible. Their transport facilities are often used for children, too, and PTCT think they could better support Local Authority activity, including the Children's Holiday Food Programme, if they could contribute at planning stages with regards to transport, for example.

FOOD FOR GOOD GOVAN (FFGG)

Food for Good Govan (FFGG) was formed in May 2019, and comprises of organisations in the Greater Govan area with an interest in food. A hyper-local cross-sector partnership, partners include Housing Associations (HAs); third sector groups and youth projects, delivering food provision and community services, such as Aberlour, Gilded Lily, and Urban Roots; Glasgow Life; Glasgow City Council; and community members. The FFGG partnership is not constituted, but it is something they may consider in the future.

Food provision by FFGG and partners changed dramatically in response to the COVID-19 crisis and included two main elements: cooked meals and food parcels. Existing distribution lists from the Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) were used to promote the meals programme, while the distribution point was promoted through FFGG and the Thriving Places Network. Anyone in the Govan area who required support could access the service and people from a range of backgrounds benefitted, many being referred through different organisations, both voluntary and statutory.

An estimated 2000 meals in total were cooked over the period at the Elderpark Community Hall. Chefs sourced food from shops and food warehouses, while Urban Roots obtained supplies through FareShare. A two-course meal was provided with a range of options to suit different dietary requirements. Additionally, food parcels were distributed primarily via the Moogety Foods shop in Govan and were delivered by volunteers and collected. One hundred food parcels per week have been distributed since the end of March, to vulnerable individuals and families - around 3400 food packs to date. Some partners prepared their own parcels and delivered them directly, while others supplemented the main food packs with non-food items such as toiletries. When shielded support stopped, HAs continued to collect food out-of-hours to distribute to vulnerable tenants.

Previously, partnership work around food insecurity was gaining momentum through initiatives such as the Glasgow City Food Plan (GCFP). The COVID-19 crisis accelerated this insofar as the emergency response highlighted an immediate demand for food. The cross-sector partnership was a real strength as it brought together partners from the voluntary, statutory and community sectors. Despite working under pressure and taking some time to adapt, partners rose to the challenge and settled into the new way of working. Existing partnerships were strengthened significantly, and the crisis provided an opportunity to work together in a more focused way. New partnerships were also developed with organisations that were on the periphery or had become involved through bids. Many partners drove forward the food agenda during the crisis, and Urban Roots and Elderpark HA, the latter holding the partnership's budget, helped to develop the partnership in particular.

Going forward, FFGG and partners are looking to prioritise a range of issues, including food pantries; the growing agenda; supporting mental health through food; exploring partnerships with University and NHS sites; and planning around the GCFP with community members and organisations. Although the partnership approach worked well during the crisis, the nature of competitive funding bids means that individual partners may be more likely to make individual funding applications. Funding presented some challenges during the crisis and meant some tough decisions had to be made. This may be something to consider in future in terms of partnership working at the local level.

FFGG's previous direct food provision consisted of Urban Roots' community meals programme. When the COVID-19 crisis hit, FFGG had to pause many planned activities, and the group met soon after the beginning of lockdown to plan their response. FFGG developed a COVID-19 action plan based on ideas from partners and the NHS Health Improvement team. A budget of £38,000 in total was allocated to FFGG across all of their activities and this was spent between 18 May and 8 October. Partners could apply to FFGG's central development fund for small sums of money, and partners pooled resources to ensure support reached anyone in need.

THE CASTLEMILK TOGETHER (CT) PARTNERSHIP

The Castlemilk Together (CT) partnership began four years ago when a resident proposed a free Christmas meal. This evolved organically into a wider community partnership which brought together Cassiltoun Housing Association (CHA), Urban Roots, Castlemilk Parish Church and Castlemilk Against Austerity (now Women Against Austerity) to work on food insecurity and social isolation via small-scale community projects. CT aimed to create different platforms to enable residents to come up with solutions around food insecurity.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Cassiltoun Housing Association (CHA) contacted partners involved in Castlemilk Together to develop a community response in the form of food packs. CT received donations from various sources, including local housing associations, the Halliday Foundation, Farmfoods, Crossmyloof Morrisons, and The Trussell Trust, while Aldi, Iceland and local grocers provided resources in bulk. Local schools organised a money drive, and a GoFundMe page was set up. Services were promoted online and via referrals. People mainly accessed support via self-referral through Facebook and telephone. CT estimate around 45,000 bags were delivered in total and, additionally, partners continued to support food provision individually.

Partnership working was key to the successful response and a central contribution was the area's existing partnerships. CT also provided funding legitimacy. For example, when smaller organisations ran out of funding, they could apply under the CT umbrella. As new funding emerged, CT received an additional £110,000 as a partnership that supported further responses such as wellbeing projects, fuel poverty, and security devices for a local domestic abuse charity. The responsibilities of this process were shared, which meant that not one organisation had the full task of project design, project delivery and financial management making increased income more achievable in what was an extremely busy time. An example is Indigo Childcare Group, Cassiltoun Housing Association and Ardenglen Housing Association co-designing a Wellbeing Project; this bid was co-written, Ardenglen received the funds, and Cassiltoun delivered the project.

Despite its success, the partnership faced some challenges. A return to pre-lockdown activities meant many volunteers returned to work and the distribution point had to move. Additionally, though CT aimed to be an equal partnership, the group might have benefitted from clearer responsibilities around decision-making, ensuring that each partner's culture was respected and heard.

CT grew significantly and gained new partners during the pandemic. Though CT hopes this will create clearer aims and structure, concerns remain that implementing more procedures might reduce CT's manoeuvrability in response to another crisis. The partnership had begun the process of becoming constituted but is not currently; the pros and cons of that will be considered as part of the wider development programme.



DEMONSTRATING BEST PRACTICES IN PARTICIPATION: GIVING POWER BACK TO COMMUNITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC

“We work with our community as family. There is no big boss. We have personal and humane relationships. We talk to them in a simple way, not in a professional way. We let them know they are part of the organisation.”

Asma Elamin Abdalla, Empower Women for Change



EMPOWER WOMEN FOR CHANGE (CASE STUDY)

EWfC is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) established in 2015 in response to the advancement of women's rights and active participation across civic, economic and political settings. The organisation's office is situated in Glasgow city centre but their participants live citywide. They have provided thousands of meals, food parcels and vouchers in response to Covid, distributing from their office and through neighbourhood-based community activists.

Mutual support and reciprocity sit at the core of its approach. When people contact it for help, they are also invited to volunteer to provide help to others. Some have gone on to be employed within the organisation. This is recognised as beneficial to the organisation as these volunteers and staff are better able to identify challenges participants are facing and have insight into the right ways to solve issues. Volunteers and staff who share experiences are also better able to empathise and reduce participants' feelings of isolation.

During the pandemic, it developed a method of distributing food through volunteers in their local areas and communities in Moss Heights, Pollok, Kingsway, Scotstoun, Maryhill, East Pollokshields and in three hotels in Glasgow city centre. Rather than delivering to individual households, it drops food in bulk to community activists who have been identified as well-connected and committed to helping others. They then distribute to households close to them, building stronger local networks. These local volunteers have a more day to day relationship with participants and so have a much greater awareness of the types of support they need as well as being proactive and reaching out to others who may benefit from being part of the EWfC community.

“I'm not doing this so that I can be heard and that's it. I want to see change.”

Thandi, GCP researcher



GOVAN COMMUNITY PROJECT (CASE STUDY)

Govan Community Project (GCP) is a community-based organisation in Govan that offers a wide range of opportunities for and involving refugees, asylum seekers and people with no recourse to public funds, including social events, advice, advocacy, English classes, hate-crime reporting, an interpreting service and a destitution food project. Under ordinary circumstances, participants are well-represented in the volunteer team and are actively involved in running projects and in decision-making.

During the Covid pandemic GCP initiated a Participatory Action Research (PAR) group around food provision for people in the asylum process. The project involved 30 participants who all had experience of the asylum system and food poverty. The project explored access to good food for people in the asylum process in relation to income, knowledge and information, community projects, geography, mental health, social networks, discrimination, systemic injustice, gatekeeping and dignity. It conducted a stakeholder analysis around each of these themes and created a list of a recommendations, which it presented at an event attended by the Scottish Government Food Insecurity Team, local politicians, organisations and members of the public. It is currently developing further actions.

Quote from our Community Response Officer, Martha Williams:

“While in a moment of crisis it can feel difficult to ask ourselves these bigger questions or rethink our ways of working, it is also a moment when inequalities are thrown into stark relief and we are able to see more clearly the power that we hold and the way that we use it. If we embed participatory practices that involve meaningful relationship-building and power sharing at the heart of our organisations, we will build the resilient and interconnected networks we need to weather crisis, networks that do not reproduce unequal and unjust power dynamics but change them. And when this feels like an insurmountable goal, we can remember that the process is the purpose and that we must all simply start somewhere.”



SUPPORTING REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE PANDEMIC

Our Community Response Officer interviewed 27 third sector organisations, community groups and churches that had been offering food support as a response to Covid. The following are some highlights from our interviews:

PRIOR TO COVID:

The majority of organisations provided access to food as part of a holistic range of services that included: workshops, programmes or training in different areas e.g. wellbeing, volunteering, language learning/support.

Food related activities that formed a core part of services offered most often had a social element - community meals and cooking classes. Social isolation was highlighted as a key issue facing participants; thus relationship-building and socialising was considered as important as the food itself

DURING COVID:

Most organisations responded by focusing on developing food distribution services in place of their core services. Most organisations became completely focused on food provision, only later introducing adapted versions of their core services, e.g., online classes.

For most organisations this was a process in adapting or scaling up the small amount of food related work they did previously.

The amount that people needed or received food is more of an indicator of the amount of funding available than the demand that exists

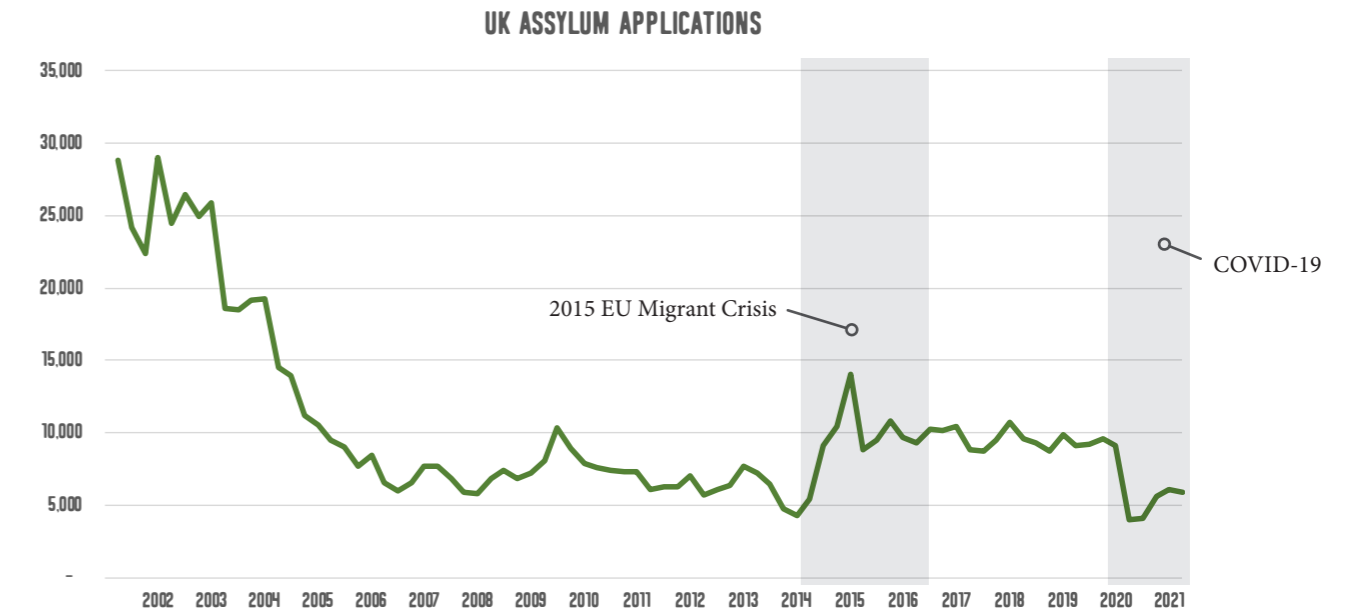
One organisation noticed that there was a correlation between the demand for food and the 'R' rate. Issues identified among people receiving food:

- needing to shield
- lack of produce in the shops
- challenge of queuing for long periods of time with young children
- increased anxiety
- lack of supermarket delivery slots

ASYLUM SEEKERS IN UK AND FOOD POVERTY

By Asma Abdalla

This report is based on the experiences of the Food Poverty project frontline staff of Empower Women for Change (EWfC) a charitable organisation based in Glasgow which directly serves hundreds of asylum seekers and refugees monthly. The quotes below are taken from face-to-face and telephone interviews with asylum seekers in Glasgow.



Changes in Quarterly Asylum applications to the UK

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

The majority of asylum seekers come from war torn and economic collapsing countries. Some of them have fled from hunger, human rights violations, torture, trafficking, domestic violence and sexual abuse. They are often vulnerable and are affected by food poverty, physical and mental health issues.

By seeking refuge in developed or high-income countries, asylum seekers are looking for a safe place to live, to be treated with dignity and have their human rights respected.

The UK does not have more asylum seekers than most countries. In the year ending September 2020, the UK received 31,752 asylum applications⁶⁴.

EU member states Germany, France, Spain and Greece account for around three quarters of all first-time applicants in the EU-27. These figures include all asylum applicants, not just main applicants (i.e., including children and other dependents). Worldwide around 85% of all refugees live in developing regions, not in wealthy industrialised countries. (Source: Home Office, EuroStat), Table2-Asylum Applicant Q1 2019-Q1 2020

Based on Empower Women for Change's face-to-face work with asylum seekers in Glasgow since 2017, the organisation has witnessed the prevalent issue of asylum seekers faced with food insecurity and deprivation that affects their already strained physical and mental wellbeing.

The barriers which people seeking asylum face regarding accessing good food are largely structural and require large scale changes to the asylum system, such as an increase in financial support, being granted the right to work and access to public funds.

⁶⁴ UNHCR (2021) Asylum in the UK

The reliance of people seeking asylum on food banks and other food projects to meet their basic needs echoes findings that the third sector is picking up significant slack around the needs of asylum seekers and the shortcomings of their support ⁶⁵. See section on Consultation for the Food Bill.

EMPOWER WOMEN FOR CHANGE'S FOOD POVERTY PROJECT

From the beginning of the lockdown in March 2020, Empower Women for Change (EWFC) experienced an increase in the number of asylum seekers and vulnerable refugee families. Therefore, EWFC decided to provide food in a dignified way, built on choice. They gave out food vouchers and food parcels of dry and fresh food to support families. EWFC's found there are multiple barriers to accessing food which have accentuated poverty and led to the deteriorating health of asylum seekers. These barriers include:

- Communication as a result of speaking another language
- Lack of awareness of their entitlements and opportunities available as a result of lack of knowledge and increasing bureaucracy
- Lack of systematic integration programmes of support from their housing provider
- And above all food insecurity especially in accessing culturally appropriate foods
- While people seeking asylum remain in a marginalised position, they rely on the third sector to meet their daily needs as they do not have access to public funds. A 'cash first' approach to food insecurity may not be effective as asylum seekers do not always have the right to access the appropriate funds. ⁶⁶

METHODOLOGY IN GATHERING INFORMATION

This information was collected by EWFC's Food Security project team as feedback from the asylum seekers who are recipients of the services. EWFC distributed 40 questionnaires to service users and 25 of them answered, with 15 providing us with case studies, highlighted below.

Users of EWFC reported that:

- 100% said their budget is not enough to buy fruits and vegetables, they only get them from foodbanks
- 100% are struggling financially, as a result, all of them are financially stressed, leading to mental health problems
- 45% suffer from physical health issues and need specific types of foods
- 80% said food banks are helping but they are mostly offered tinned foods, no fresh foods, and the food is close to expiry or has expired. Some food services they relied on have been closed due to lockdown measures

⁶⁵ Mayblin, L. (March 2019) Imagining asylum, governing asylum seekers: Complexity reduction and policy making in the UK Home Office. Migration Studies, Volume 7, Issue 1, March 2019, Pages 1–20

⁶⁶ Govan Community Project 'An ongoing emergency: barriers and solutions in access to fair food for people seeking asylum'

FACTORS LEADING TO FOOD INSECURITY AMONG ASYLUM SEEKERS

People in hotels can be left up to one year without any financial support as a result of delays from the Home Office. Some hotels residents only receive £8.00 per week/individual. Asylum seekers living in flats receive £40 per week/individual. From feedback with a random selection of 15 families of asylum seekers moved from hotels to flats, they explained that this £40 per person is divided between transport costs, food and clothing costs, internet, telephone bill and TV licensing, hygiene, sanitary products, PPE and cleaning products, over the counter medicines due to lack of adequate health services and children activities (e.g., swimming and football and other entertainments activities).

LACK OF ADEQUATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

CASE STUDY 1 – SINGLE MAN

"I came to UK in July, 2015 from Malawi. I am a single male, 36 years old. Home Office put me in Section 4 accommodation in Glasgow. It has not been easy living on £35 per week, where I have to budget £35 for food, clothing, transport, etc. I cancel appointments sometimes because I do not have money for transport e.g. before the pandemic I had appointment at Stobhill Hospital in Glasgow. I cancelled appointment and then pandemic came along.



I use food banks regularly. Yes, the food bank helps but they do not stock African foods. I'm really trying, after 5yrs in UK, to enjoy lasagna, African foods are more expensive.

I am ALWAYS making choices regarding the foods I eat. By this I mean, if I buy fruit one week, it means I cannot buy something else. I can't afford fruit, lamb, transport, vegetables all on the same week. Other than food banks, I have had help from other organisations e.g. Positive Action Housing and more. Migrant Help are not very helpful. I would like to ask British Government to give power to Scottish Government to help asylum seekers because Scottish Government are more kind. Please give asylum seekers more money every week.

I feel embarrassed when I speak to my family in Malawi and tell them of my mental health issues. I'm a man and this does not happen to men in my country. I believe my depression issues have come about because I'm always thinking about things and how to afford foodstuffs, transport etc.

Please can Government provide more information on food banks and charities which help asylum seekers."

Location is a significant barrier as services are unequally distributed across Glasgow, and people seeking asylum do not have the means to address this as they have no control over where they live and limited access to transport. As asylum accommodation is offered on a no-choice basis, geography is a huge factor in asylum seekers' access to food. There is inequality in terms of service provision across the city and the location of asylum accommodation can often mean that people seeking asylum are out of reach of services and shops that provide and sell appropriate food and costs for travelling to buy food reduces the budget available for purchasing good food (Source Govan Community Project Fair Food Report Jun21).



CASE STUDY 2 – A MOTHER WITH 2 CHILDREN

“I am an Asylum-seeker from Iraq. I came to the UK Seven months ago with my husband and two children. I have a 15year old son and an 11year old daughter. My husband isn’t allowed to work, it’s very difficult for a man to sit home and do nothing when he knows that we are not getting enough financial support.

Although I’m happy to be here, life can be very challenging at times. I get a very small amount from the council every week which is not enough for us. It can be very challenging to buy healthy and balanced food for my family. My kids are in their growing age and they need proper balanced diet so it’s difficult for me to cater to their needs with the amount we get. Son is in high school and my daughter is in primary. Both men suffer from low self-esteem and low confidence. My son often complains that he doesn’t feel like going to school as he feels that the other children are very posh as compared to him. He feels he dresses very poorly and his fellow mates are always wearing branded clothes. My daughter feels the same. My son often feels very low and depressed because of this. He is a young man and he notices the difference of the living standards of his fellow mates and his.

My husband and I feel terrible that we can’t fulfil their needs and their wishes. My son loves salmon and often requests me to cook it, but I can’t afford to buy it. It breaks my heart to see my son feeling so low. I wanted to register my son for free school meal. I have asked the school multiple times to register my son for free school meal. It has been six months but nothing has been done.

I would like to mention that Empower Women for Change has supported me a lot with free healthy food and clothes. I am truly grateful to them. The staff of EWFC has always been very kind and supportive to me. Whenever I came to EWFC I was helped with healthy, balanced and fresh food, but my issue is that I can’t travel regularly as I can’t afford to travel. “

EXPLOITATION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

Desperation to buy necessary stuff results in section 4 people being exploited by retailers because they cannot shop with cash. So, when they need to buy essentials from shops that do not take cards, they end up getting charged extra to get cash. For example, the retailers will take ten pounds and give them £7 worth of food. Being on Section 4 has many challenges.

CASE STUDY 3

“Yes, many food outlets and, indeed, most shops, accept ASPEN cards as a means of payment but this is still uncommon in shops that stock foods of African origin. Being unable to access cash means that I am unable to shop there. This leads nicely on to “how can I get cash when I’m on Section 4 Support? My neighbour is a smoker...it costs £9.50 for a packet of cigarettes. I buy the cigarettes with my ASPEN card and he gives me £ 6.00 in cash. I’ve tried negotiating for an equal split...a packet of cigarettes for £9.50 cash... but he won’t have it, “you’re the one that needs cash”, he says. “If you don’t like the deal, don’t come to me”. I feel I’m being exploited but I’m left with no choice as I need cash to board the bus and to purchase food at the African shop near me.”

“I feel I’m being exploited but I’m left with no choice as I need cash to board the bus and to purchase food”



LIMITED ACCESS TO CULTURALLY AND RELIGIOUS APPROPRIATE FOOD

CASE STUDY 4- A WOMAN LIVING UNDER SECTION 4

“I’m an asylum seeker living with my husband in Glasgow. We have been asylum seekers for the last 12 years. Our support is section 4, which means we can’t withdraw cash from the cash machine, we can only make purchases with an ASPEN card. Our main problem is buying halal food, many halal shops do not have a card machine available, as we don’t have access to cash it is a nightmare for us to buy from those shops, which is why we are always worried, those worries make us ill. I’m depressed and taking pills for sleep and anxiety. Due to eating unhealthy food last year I became a diabetic patient. We need balanced food to eat but, in this money, we are not able to manage. In the last few years, things have become very expensive; halal food stores have become 75% more expensive. To buy cheap and halal food we have to get bus tickets which is sometimes impossible for us. Due to all of these things, we feel inferior, my husband and I are suffering from depression and mental health issues. We request that section 4 financial support should increase and to allow us to withdraw cash from the cash machine.”

LIMITED ACCESS TO HEALTHY AND BALANCED FOOD

CASE STUDY 5 – A GENTLEMAN UNDER SECTION 4

“I live in a shared flat and get section 4 support from the Home Office which equates to just over £5/day. I cannot work and this amount does NOT suffice for healthy balanced food on a daily basis. My section 4 allowance does not in any way suffice for procurement of healthy foods on a weekly basis. The weekly amount does not allow for travel and other costs which dig deeply into the budget for healthy fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis.

The subsistence budget, as mentioned above, does not allow for travel, which is expensive, to both travels to buy food and to visit friends and relatives. This has a detrimental effect on both mental and physical health. I have had bouts of depression because I've not been able to afford visits to friends. Instead, I have had to stay indoors. Poor mental health has a knock-on effect on physical health which suffers because of no exercise. Poor diet also leads to poor physical health.

Without food banks, organisations and charities, I would NOT be getting as much healthy food as I am now, and even that is not enough. I will name a few that have made notable contributions to alleviating my food insecurity: Maryhill Integration Network, Govan Community Project, Empower Women for Change and Scottish Refugee Council. They have provided vouchers that are redeemable to find foods that are culturally appropriate to me (halal). Food banks provide tinned foods, in the main, and most are not culturally appropriate.

The third sector charities and other organisations have assisted greatly in getting me out of food poverty, but this has not always been the case. This is because I did not know of their existence until a friend told me about them.

There is a shop which stocks foodstuffs that I enjoy near me...however, they DO NOT accept cards. As I am on section 4, I have no access to cash. The shop(s) that accept cards are some distance away, involving one or two bus rides. A daily bus ticket costs more than the daily living allowance as provided by the section 4 support. I have, therefore, to withhold on buying foodstuffs on the one week, so that I can afford bus fares the next.

Foods, though available, are difficult to afford. Cultural foods are more costly and healthy/balanced foods fall into the same budget as clothes, transport, phone top-up/data and toiletries. It is not possible to afford all these on the weekly amount provided by the Home Office. During lockdown, food insecurity has been further enhanced by increased spending elsewhere e.g., data packs to access Zoom to maintain some sort of 'face-to-face' contact with friends and family, support groups to avoid deteriorating mental health.

I would recommend discounted travel for those in the asylum system in UK, the right to work or an increase in the amount of financial support and a reasonable time frame in which the Home Office makes decisions about asylum claims because the longer you are in the system the worse the situation gets.

(Image was inserted here) More than 50 asylum seekers and refugees' queue in front of EWFC office for halal food vouchers so they can have choice and dignity in purchasing the food they need

CASE STUDY 6 – ASYLUM-SEEKING MOTHER OF THREE

“I'm asylum-seeker mother of three kids with depression and heart patient husband. I came to know about Empower Women for Change and food bank and vouchers through friends. Being an asylum seeker, the money I'm getting is not enough to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables. Through Empower Women for Change I'm getting fresh fruits and vegetables twice a week which is giving me mental peace that my kids are getting fresh stuff and also during lockdown when we can't think about buying halal meat, we got halal shop vouchers to buy meat. Now I'm going twice a week to get fresh fruits thanks Empower Women for Change.”



THE INADEQUACY OF HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

CASE STUDY 7 – THE STORY OF A MECHANICAL ENGINEER FROM SUDAN

“I live in a hotel. We get three meals a day including fruit...the problem with the food is very high carbs make you gain weight fast in very short time and its the same food every week. It doesn't have flavour as it not cooked in the hotel, it is delivered to the hotel on daily bases and served to us. I always wonder why I can't cook my own meals. I didn't get any money for the first five months, couldn't buy anything and didn't even know where I could get basic hygiene items (socks, toiletries, etc) as I am running out, asking around to get an organisation to send me a set.

You are mentally stressed and pressured as the future is unknown and not clear how long you will stay here or when you can start being a useful part of the society again. Physical activity is restricted due to lockdown measures and the risk of group staying together in hotel makes it worse because there is a risk of one case infecting everyone in the hotel.

The hotel room doesn't have proper ventilation only a fixed-glass window that doesn't open. Laundry takes three days to return to you. Plus, it is not clean upon return and I actually lost a piece that was never returned.

Meals don't have any bread, and I don't eat pasta and rice every day. I used to get bread and other personal things from different organisations. I can't buy any items as don't have ASPEN Card yet, after six months. I can not get cultural Ramadan tradition meals in the hotel, only limited options.

Hotels are not the right place for asylum seekers.

The technical education and qualification is a good option for an asylum seeker. Multi-language trainers that can help teaching basic steps in these classes and make real different in an asylum seeker's journey, so that we can be productive members of society.”



MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM UNSAFE LIVING CONDITIONS

Vulnerable migrant families have been impacted disproportionately by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. This is due to the added layer of inequalities and oppression faced by some migrant communities, particularly those with insecure immigration status and no recourse to public funds. Language barriers and racism further exacerbated migrant families' experiences during the pandemic⁶⁷. Some accommodation that asylum seekers are placed in are often in the worst places in the city, making them feel even more vulnerable and unsafe. They have no say where they live and have to make do with what they are given.

CASE STUDY 8 – SYRIAN TEENAGER REFUGEE

“I am 14 years old. I want to get into a permanent house with my mother and two brothers. I want to move to a better area and school that understand my needs and helps me. I would like to have my house near the centre where I can buy the foods I miss and like. I would also have friends like me who want to study and work hard to get my dream to study engineering. I am very pessimistic and very bored from the place where we live. It is unsafe and all people who live here are either drunk or drug addicts. I cannot make any friends in this school. I cannot tell them anything about what I feel or dream. Most of them call me names and I don't like to talk about it or tell anyone. We cannot sleep at night because of our very noisy neighbour. Even my brothers and I cannot wake up early for school. He keeps shouting and making strange noises like breaking stuff or hitting his wife. I always feel it like we are back to the war we in Syria because of all the noises. I don't feel I am in a better situation compared to my situation in Syria. I start being really scared and cannot sleep sometimes all night. When we open the window, he starts shouting and calling us (me and my brothers and mother) bad names.”

Empower Women for Change believe transferring asylum seekers to flats should be followed by an increase in the allowance which now varies between £35-£37 per week per person including children. It is an average of £5 per day when they are in hotels or any other types of shared accommodation where services like ready meals and cleaning are provided. As asylum seekers move to flats, they need to cover all these necessities. We believe the pandemic should be a consideration as it will force them into a choice between spending the five pounds on eating or buying cleaning and Covid sanitising products.

67 McBride, M. Feeney, E. Brnner, C. and McLean, J. (2020) Refugee, asylum seeking and Roma families during the COVID-19 pandemic: Insights from frontline workers in Glasgow. Documentation. Children's Neighbourhoods Scotland.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Although asylum is a reserved matter to the UK Government, we believe Scotland can act according to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, of which the UK is a signatory. Accordingly, all the challenges facing the asylum seekers and the records of poor humanitarian, social, mental and physical health issues - can be avoided by helping the third sector to support asylum seekers mainly in the areas of mental health and other necessities e.g., food parcels, cultural food, food vouchers, cleaning and sanitising products
- While recognising that the asylum process is a matter reserved to the UK Government and the Home Office, consider further measures to alleviate the severe poverty and hardship faced by asylum seekers in Scotland, including provision for third sector organisations who act as intermediaries between families and statutory services⁶⁸
- Increase the financial support to asylum seekers to a level that will improve their dignity, food poverty and health and wellbeing
- Asylum seekers should get transport money or a bus pass separate from their weekly allowance
- Asylum seekers should have easy access to healthy and culturally appropriate food
- Food provision should be based on a nutritional model
- Improve links between food projects and culturally appropriate food suppliers
- Have a standardised approach for supermarkets to provide food donations – this should be donated before it is starting to lose its freshness
- Promote the use of supermarket vouchers to promote choice
- Food organisations should make special considerations for destitute people or people with no access to cash (pantry models require cash)
- There should be an independent review and research into asylum seeker income⁶⁹
- Asylum seekers accommodation should be close to affordable food stores
- The voices of deprived marginalised people should guide decisions
- Asylum seekers and vulnerable groups (e.g. pregnant women) should have a voice and more avenues for their issues to be heard including recommendations on how to improve the services offered to them. This will reduce or prevent the severe poverty and poor mental and physical health, as well as close the gap of inequality in the right to food. This will give them a better standard of living and with it respect and dignity as human beings who found themselves in a situation that has been created and imposed on them by their countries of origin
- Regular wellbeing check-ups need to be done for asylum seekers, especially the newly arrived and for those refused asylum
- Community-based mental health and wellbeing services should be resourced to cope with increased demand and designed to meet the specific needs of vulnerable migrant families, such as previous trauma, social isolation, and language barriers
- Ensure that approaches to food provision are underpinned by dignity, choice, and reducing stigma, and that nutritious and culturally appropriate foods are available⁷⁰.

68 Children's Neighbourhoods Scotland Evaluation Strategy (2019)

69 ibid

70 ibid

THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN: CURRENT ISSUES



The term Food Supply Chain (FSC) or Food System refers to the processes that describe how food from a farm ends up on our tables. Every step of the supply chain requires human or natural resources, and they are all interconnected. The food supply chain involves agriculture, primary and secondary processing, distribution and retail sectors. A wide range of economic, public policy, social and environmental factors also come into play. The Covid-19 pandemic, along with Brexit-related issues and decades of public financial austerity have caused unparalleled turbulence within the food supply chain and amongst consumers (particularly those on low or poverty level incomes).

The UK Government Office for Science report [The Future of Food and Farming: Challenges and choices for global sustainability](#)⁷¹ argues that in a sustainable system, resources are consumed and are allowed to replenish, “emissions are balanced by carbon fixation and storage, soil degradation and biodiversity loss are halted, and pollutants do not accumulate in the environment” (p.72). According to the report, sustainability also extends to financial and human capital, it entails resilience, such that the food system, including its human and organisational components, is robust to transitory shocks and stresses.

There is will among public institutions to make improvements to our food supply systems. For example, the [EU Farm to Fork](#)⁷² strategy developed in response to a “need to redesign our food systems which today account for nearly one-third of global GHG emissions, consume large amounts of natural resources, result in biodiversity loss and negative health impacts (due to both under- and over-nutrition) and do not allow fair economic returns and livelihoods for all actors, in particular for primary producers.” The strategy aims to accelerate a transition to a food system that:

- has a neutral or positive environmental impact
- helps mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts
- reverses the loss of biodiversity
- ensures food security, nutrition and public health, making sure that everyone has access to sufficient, safe, nutritious, sustainable food
- preserves affordability of food while generating fairer economic returns, fostering competitiveness of the EU supply sector and promoting fair trade

71 Foresight. The Future of Food and Farming (2011) Final Project Report. The Government Office for Science, London.

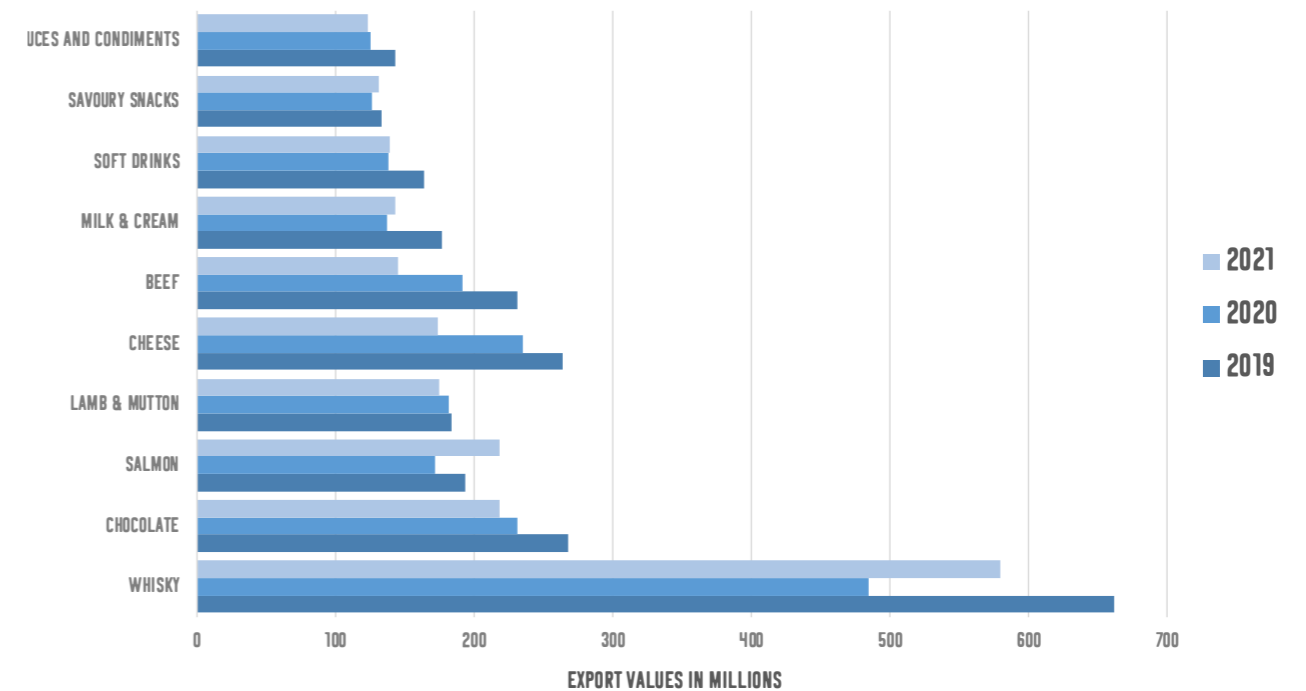
72 European Commission [Farm to Fork Strategy](#)

PANDEMIC AND BREXIT IMPACT

The UK imports food from over 200 countries, however we are heavily reliant on just a few of these for certain food types. For example, well over half (57% in 2019) of our vegetable imports come from either Spain or the Netherlands⁷³. EU countries account for more than half of all types of food imported to the UK.

There were widespread concerns that the simultaneous impacts of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic would have a serious impact on food supply to the UK. There have been periods – notably in the first quarter of 2021 immediately following Brexit taking full effect – where imports and exports were dramatically reduced. Statistics compiled by the [Food and Drink Federation](#) shows a 28% fall in exports compared to 2020, driven largely by a 47% fall in exports to EU countries. Compared with 2019s pre-Covid-19 levels the total fall in exports was 36%. There are supply chain issues created by a shortage of lorry drivers and exacerbated by Brexit along with other long term and international issues. Additionally, food supply has struggled to reach many people as worsening wealth inequality affects how able people are to access food. The overall picture also masks a lot of turbulence, with larger businesses having the capacity to make adjustments, such as bringing in produce from other markets when it becomes more difficult to trade with EU countries. On the other hand, small and medium sized businesses have been widely reported to be struggling to overcome the administrative challenges presented by Brexit⁷⁴. The Scotsman newspaper quotes Jimmy Buchan, of the Scottish Seafood Association, saying that “larger firms were absorbing smaller ones like a sponge because the latter could no longer afford to export”⁷⁴.

CHANGES IN EXPORT VOLUMES FOLLOWING COVID & BREXIT



Since the UK’s departure from the EU, there is potential to make changes to the systems by which agriculture is supported by public funds. In 2020, the UK Government unveiled its [plans](#) to move towards “a better, fairer farming system” in England (UK Government, 2020), with the [UK Agriculture Act \(2020\)](#) moving England away from the Common Agricultural Policy’s Direct Payments to instead focus subsidies on rewarding sustainable farming practices and habitat creation.

Another concern surrounding the UK’s exit from the EU is the potential for erosion of food standards. For example, Sustain (2021) highlight that the Pacific free trade agreement – the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership – that the UK is currently seeking accession to has the potential to bring pressure to allow use of 119 pesticides that are currently banned in the UK, or to bring competition to UK farmers from cheap imports produced to weaker pesticide standards.

73 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs [Horticulture Statistics 2020](#)

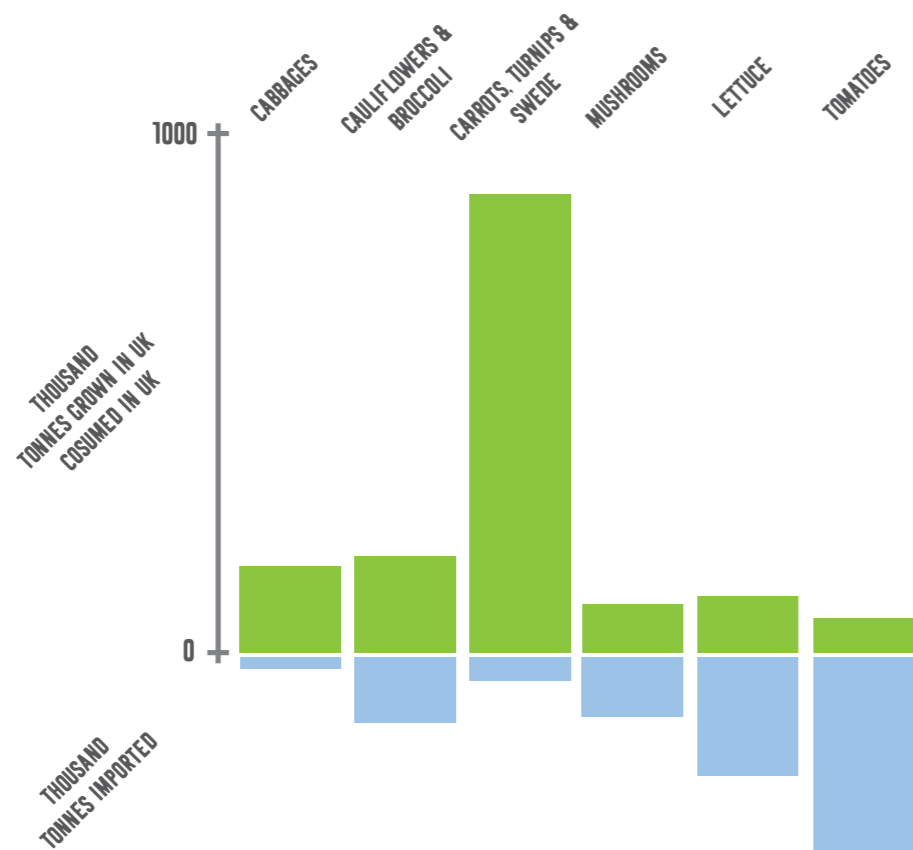
74 The Scotsman, (23/05/2021) The Brexit effect: Scotland’s food and drink industry needs more than rhetoric about ‘taking back control’ from UK government – Scotsman comment

These policy developments could cause potential tensions between the UK and Scottish governments over fears that the [UK Control of Public Subsidy Provisions](#) could be used to enforce Scottish alignment with UK provision (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2021). In addition, [the Scottish Government](#) is concerned that the Internal Market Act (2020) would also impinge on devolution, meaning that products meeting lower food standards - which would be allowed in England and would have to be accepted in Scotland as well. This would threaten Scottish producers who follow higher standards (Constitution and Cabinet Directorate, 2021).

Although food prices have been relatively stable in the UK, global prices are showing sustained increase since May 2020. With our reliance on imports, we are likely to see any continuation of these trends having an impact on the UK during our own economic recovery period – when many people are more vulnerable to fluctuations in living costs than ever before. As discussed elsewhere in this report and in other research, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on people’s ability to access enough good food has been significant – any deterioration of supply chains has the potential to exacerbate this problem further.

A York University study⁷⁵ concludes that the UK food system is vulnerable to present and future disruption. We “require new thinking and investment in British horticulture” so that we “grow more food sustainably in the UK” (p317). This requires a strategy for crop diversification as well as considering new technologies such as vertical farming.

There is also a danger that the apparent resilience of supply chains during the Covid-19 pandemic will mask the vulnerability of our food system. In reality the response to the pandemic, although successful in preventing the worst-case scenarios, was seen as inefficient, ad hoc and uncoordinated. The overall picture of stability masked fluctuations in prices of some specific crops. There are fears that worse may be to come. Initial findings of ongoing research from the British Nutrition Foundation finds that “economic pressures resulting from Covid-19 could yet cause major food crises around the world if people are unable to afford nutritious food. Whilst impacts to date, in aggregate, have been relatively mild, there is little evidence that this is the result of particularly effective or coordinated interventions. The global impacts of the pandemic, particularly the economic effects, will likely affect the UK’s food and nutrition security for the coming years”⁷⁶



UK reliance on imports for key vegetable products

75 Garnett, P, Doherty, B, and Heron, T (2020) Nature Food, VOL 1 June 2020, 315–318.
 76 Rivington et al (2021), UK food and nutrition security during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

SUPPLY CHAINS IN GLASGOW

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS FOR GLASGOW

Glasgow Community Food Network worked with Propagate to develop the Roots to Market report⁷⁷ compiling research that supports “the emergence and development of a local food economy” (p. 4). This piece of work evidences that there is a community of existing and aspiring market gardeners, producers, retailers, restaurateurs and Glasgow, as well as a community that wants access to their services. The report highlights barriers and opportunities to develop a more sustainable supply of food in Glasgow and makes recommendations towards moving Glasgow’s local food economy forwards. This is an ongoing project, and progress towards meeting these aspirations was highlighted in a 2019 update. Sustainable supply chains for Glasgow should:

- Be environmentally sustainable and not worsen the climate change crisis
- Maximises community wealth
- Provide access to enough nutritious, satisfying food for all
- Have enough diversity to be resilient against future shocks

MAXIMISING COMMUNITY WEALTH

If Glasgow can harness the current national trend towards shopping with small local businesses (Locavore, n.d), it would bring benefits to the local economy and to wider wellbeing. Locavore – a Glasgow social enterprise and food retailer, specialising in local and organic produce – analysed the economic impact of money spent in their stores. They say that every £1 spent with them generates £2.36 for Scotland’s economy, including £1.92 for Glasgow’s economy. This is based on methodology developed by The New Economics Foundation (NEF), whose [Money Trail](#)⁷⁸ publication finds that around 80% of the money spent in a local business will continue to circulate in the local economy, generating further value, while only around 20% of money spent in a national chain will do the same.

The public sector must also lead the way, procuring more food from businesses that have the greatest impact on generating wealth for the community. Building on the [Preston Model](#)⁷⁹ would keep money circulating locally, generating further wealth for the community. The Glasgow City Food Plan aims for an “increased proportion of locally sourced and low carbon produced food used in public sector catering” however specific targets are yet to be set beyond aligning with the Soil Association Food for Life programme in schools. A local sourcing pilot is under consideration as part of the plan, which could include work to increase the number of small and medium sized businesses involved in public procurement. There is also a commitment in the Glasgow City Food Plan to create more opportunities for crossovers between local, community-focussed growing and retail projects and commercial organisations, informed by [community wealth building principles](#)⁸⁰

“Community Wealth Building purposefully redirects wealth back to communities by encouraging more democratic and inclusive forms of economic ownership of land and economic activity more generally”

(Social Renewal Advisory Board to the Scottish Government, 2021).

77 GCFN (2018) Roots To Market: Towards A Sustainable Local Food Economy In Glasgow
 78 New Economics Foundation (2002) THE MONEY TRAIL- Measuring your impact on the local economy using LM3
 79 The National Organisation for Local Economies (2013) The Preston Model
 80 The National Organisation for Local Economies, [The principles of community wealth building](#)

DISENTANGLING THE FOOD SURPLUS AND FOOD POVERTY PROBLEMS

Most community food providers use surplus food in one form or another and are often signed up to the major food redistribution charity FareShare⁸¹.

Covid-19 has seen the scale of emergency food aid provision grow to an extent unimaginable before March 2020. This conflation of food poverty and food surplus crises has led to the institutionalisation of charitable food aid. Although it may appear to be an obvious win-win solution to the food waste and food poverty problems to channel food surplus towards people unable to afford food - and a much cheaper approach for the Government to invest in than an adequate social security system - the growing use of surplus food is entrenching a two-tier system.

The [Plenty to Share](#)⁸² campaign has been launched and there's now a real opportunity to raise the critical issue of the fusion of these two huge problems and to call for the systemic changes that will address both food waste and food poverty separately.



ACCESSING FOOD

Our current market-led supply chains are failing to provide everyone with opportunities to eat nutritious, satisfying food produced and supplied using environmentally sustainable methods. There are several reasons for this, but affordability is at the heart of many of these - see section X/pageX for section on food poverty. Whether through reforming subsidies for producing and supplying food, or through ensuring that everyone has enough money in their pockets to purchase food at higher cost, there is a need for public money to be invested into the food system if it is going to become both environmentally sustainable and affordable. This investment is necessary to kickstart a sustainable, self-sufficient reform of our food system.

There has been a clear reported change in how people in the UK buy food during the pandemic. The Food Standards Agency's [Food in a Pandemic](#)⁸³ report gives the results of surveys in which 28% of respondents said they had bought more locally produced food during the pandemic (8% said they had bought less) and 81% of those people said they expected that change to continue post-pandemic. 29% said that they had shopped more in smaller grocery stores (18% said less) with 72% of those saying they expected to continue shopping more often in smaller premises. We don't know the reasons for these changes, but it does appear clear that a lot of people do wish to make more use of local businesses. Creating more diverse opportunities for buying food helps to give wider access to good food. Local markets, veg box schemes, and better offerings in small local shops can bring better food into communities where access is poor.

81 IFAN (2021) Disentangling the food surplus and food poverty problems

82 This is Rubbish, [Plenty to Share](#)

83 Food Standards Agency (2021) Food in a Pandemic

According to a survey from [The Food Foundation](#)⁸⁴, across the UK there was a 111% increase in sales of veg boxes from the end of February to mid-April 2020, during the first lockdown of the Covid-19 pandemic. Reporting in mid-April 2020 they said that a "total of 3.5 million veg boxes are likely to have been delivered since the beginning of March, but if waiting lists could be met, 5.3 million veg boxes could be supplied over the next six weeks." Also, 65% of these box schemes said they were prioritising key workers or those who were isolating or vulnerable. Building more capacity to bring food directly into neighbourhoods would clearly have been welcome and valuable during the pandemic, and during future shocks. Glasgow's box schemes also saw a large increase in demand, such as that the one delivered by Locavore which now hopes to take forward further expansion of this to deliver 5000 veg boxes alongside online shopping for other goods. Wash House Garden also introduced a box scheme in 2020, which quickly reached capacity, and they have plans to expand this scheme as well as looking into finding ways to offer subsidised veg boxes for those on lower incomes.

[The Glasgow City Food Plan](#)⁸⁵ includes a commitment to provide more accessible and affordable markets and shops, "prioritising socially and environmentally conscious producers". Locavore's Bigger Plan has some potential alignment with these goals - with their ambition to take their total number of organic grocery stores up to ten, including their three existing Glasgow shops. This GCFP commitment also includes finding venues for more markets and making it easier to use subsidised food vouchers at markets. A number of organisations in Glasgow do run community food shops and veg barras in areas with limited access to healthy food - for example those run by [North Glasgow Community Food Initiative](#)⁸⁶ or the community shop at Cranhill Development Trust and St Paul's Youth Forum. Glasgow should build on these projects to reach more areas, as well as supporting and engaging them to facilitate the inclusion of local, sustainably produced food while maintaining affordable prices.

The public sector has a role in providing access to good food through its catering contracts. Notably, the Scottish Government commitment to provide universal free school lunches and breakfasts for primary school children from 2022 presents an opportunity to ensure that all children are being provided with healthy, ethically produced food at school. A discussion paper by a working group representing organisations across the school food sector, [The 'Good Food' Case for the provision of Universal Free School Meals \(UFMS\) in Scotland \(2020\)](#)⁸⁷, concludes that "there has never been a better time to invest in serving 'Good Food' and harness the benefits for Scotland's future" (p. 10). Currently, Glasgow City Council is setting the target to achieve bronze level [Food For Life accreditation](#)⁸⁸ for school meals - using a higher percentage of fresh, seasonal and healthy produce. Achieving gold accreditation should be a further ambition, incorporating a greater proportion of organic and locally sourced produce, while also providing pupils with opportunities to engage with and learn skills from food producers. Nearby North Ayrshire is an example of where this is being achieved. It has held the gold standard since 2013, with The Soil Association reporting that "73 per cent of the Council's ingredients are produced in the UK, with over 57 per cent of fare coming from Scottish suppliers, of which over 27 per cent of the annual spend is from Ayrshire food producers."

Food Deserts

The matter of access to food becomes even more pressing in areas with limited food facilities. Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector's Access to Food Event (GCVS 2020) highlighted the realities of 'food deserts' which are areas of the city where local food provision is limited due to lack of shops and poor access to public transport: "*Glasgow already had an issue of communities being unable to access public transport due to barriers of affordability, accessibility and public transport not going to where people require to travel, particularly directly across areas, in the evenings and at the weekends. Therefore, there is a requirement to design and deliver a new model of transport provision*" (Graham Dunn, Community Transport Glasgow). Food Swamps is another term which highlights an urban environment where there is a lot of food for sale that is not nutritious and is a threat to public health. Areas such as Castlemilk and Milton have been previously identified as 'food deserts'.

84 The Food Foundation (2020) Covid-19 UK Veg Box Scheme Report

85 ibid

86 [North Glasgow Community Food Initiative](#)

87 [The 'Good Food' Case for the provision of Universal Free School Meals \(UFMS\) in Scotland](#)

88 [Soil Association](#), Food for Life

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS TO FOOD

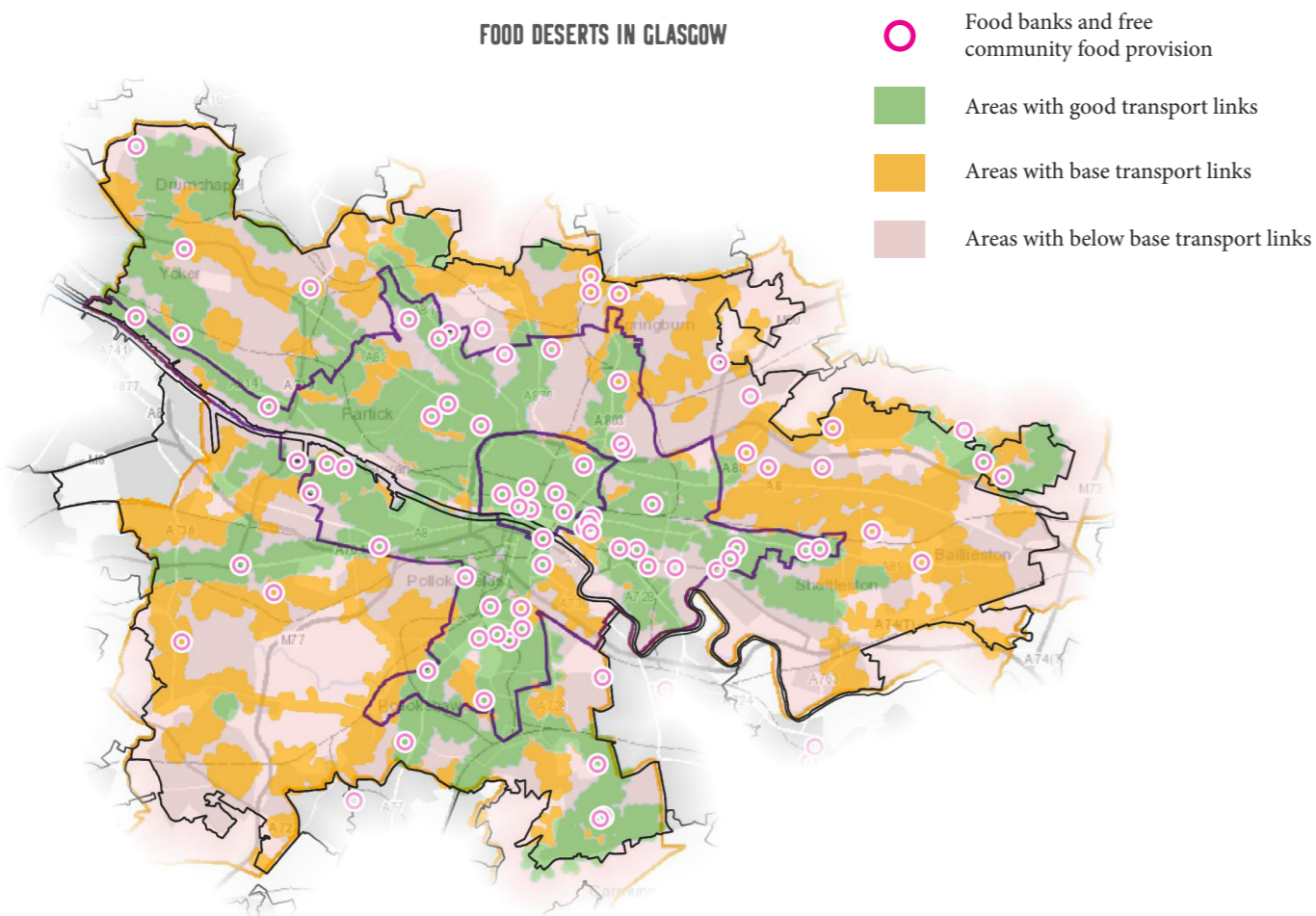
Transport becomes particularly important in providing access to food, especially in the context of challenges like “food deserts” or “food swamps”. [GCC transport Strategy Outcomes \(2021\)](#)⁸⁹ argue for more sustainable transport access to food, healthcare, education/ training and employment. They have now developed four outcomes for transport policy in Glasgow:

- Transport contributes to a successful and just transition to a carbon neutral, clean and sustainable city
- Transport has a positive role in tackling poverty, improving health and reducing inequalities
- Transport contributes to continued and inclusive economic success and a dynamic, world class city
- Places are created where we can all thrive, regardless of mobility or income, through liveable neighbourhoods and an inclusive City Centre

Findings from the [GCC Public Transport Consultation, Feb 2021](#) highlight some key issues, including the:

- High cost of public transport and impact on low-income workers
- Inequality of public transport connections for outlying areas particularly in areas of deprivation
- Inadequate bus services within and to communities in some parts
- The lack of accessible local rail and subway stations
- Inadequate bus services and connections to nearby areas and crucial services such as healthcare. High cost of buses, lack of integrated ticketing and failure of bus privatisation

These issues emphasise the role of transport in tackling poverty – transport improvements should benefit everyone and not just those in more deprived areas.



COMMUNITY FOOD RETAIL IN GLASGOW

Clara Pirie, June 2021

This section provides an overview of community food retail and its role in addressing and mitigating the effects of food poverty and insecurity. It identifies some common characteristics of different models of community retail and explores Glasgow’s community retail provision.

BACKGROUND: THE FOODBANK MODEL

Foodbanks are designed to function as an emergency food response. Although evidence demonstrates differences in delivery across the vast network of foodbanks in Scotland, foodbanks typically operate on referrals from a designated source (for example, from a GP or from Citizens Advice). Users are given food for free, typically for a short duration, with varying degrees of choice, and food is often provided via food donations, [FareShare](#)⁹⁰, or via anchor organisations in the community - such as church groups. Foodbanks increasingly offer additional support services - including benefits checks and welfare advice⁹¹ but function primarily as a temporary solution to food insecurity.

Though the Trussell Trust⁹² and its referral-based model represents a significant proportion of foodbanks in the UK and Scotland, other foodbanks operate independently, including some which are referral-free, are not means tested, and which have fewer restrictions on the frequency of access to food⁹³.

While foodbank use has increased significantly in recent years – in 2020/21 alone The Trussell Trust network saw an increase of 33% in the number of food parcels delivered compared with the previous year – many foodbank users report feeling shame and fear when using the service⁹⁴. A 2018 GoWell research project explored foodbank use in deprived communities in Glasgow. It found that most users of foodbanks were facing an acute financial crisis, and that many found reliance on foodbanks to be stigmatising within their communities⁹⁵. Additionally, constraints on food choice have been reported amongst foodbank users, further leading to a reduction in choice and dignity⁹⁶.

MODELS OF COMMUNITY FOOD RETAIL

Community food retail is growing throughout the UK as an alternative, dignified approach to addressing food insecurity within communities. Community retail or community food retail comprises a variety of models, including food pantries, social supermarkets, and food co-operatives. In community retail, food is purchased by the end user for a reduced price. The market transaction subsidises the operational costs and purchase of food, meaning the food support is less reliant on external funding and is therefore more sustainable. According to Sustain⁹⁷, community food retail projects aim to play an intermediary role; they provide a consistent and more affordable option than traditional supermarkets and aim to help people avoid emergency situations. Unlike most foodbanks⁹⁸, community retail is open to anyone without referral, sometimes with a membership requirement. This has been cited as contributing to a more dignified approach to food provision, enabling users to be ‘customers’ rather than recipients of a foodbank⁹⁹.

Social supermarkets have been operating in other countries – particularly in mainland Europe - for several decades¹⁰⁰, with Saxena and Tornaghi¹⁰¹ noting an increase since the economic downturn in 2008. Social supermarkets are typically characterised by the selling of low-cost food and household items, often surplus items, combined with wraparound services in the form of social support services. Within the last decade, social supermarkets have become increasingly popular in the UK in response to economic austerity measures and welfare reforms which have led to increases in food poverty (as explored elsewhere in this report).

90 [Fareshare](#)
 91 Glasgow SE Food Bank [More Than Food](#)
 92 [Trussell Trust](#)
 93 [The Good Food Fund](#) operated by Locavore Glasgow supports a range of organisations who tackle food poverty in more dignified ways.
 94 Garthwaite, K. (2016) Stigma, shame and ‘people like us’: an ethnographic study of foodbank use in the UK, *Journal of poverty and social justice.*, 24 (3), pp. 277-289.
 95 Lawson, L. and Kearns, A. (2018) Food and beyond: exploring the foodbank experience. Glasgow: GoWell
 96 Purdam, K., Garratt, E., & Esmail, A. (2016). Hungry? Food Insecurity, Social Stigma and Embarrassment in the UK. *Sociology*, 50(6), pp.1072-1088.
 97 Sustain (2020) Community Food Retail and Food Poverty. Examples of different models and guidelines for developing projects. Sustain: London
 98 Citizen’s Advice [Using a Foodbank](#)
 99 Saxena, L. P. and Tornaghi, C. (2018). The Emergence of Social Supermarkets in Britain: Food poverty, Food waste and Austerity Retail. Research Report. Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University: Coventry.
 100 Holweg, Christina & Lienbacher, Eva. (2016). Social Supermarkets in Europe - Investigations from a retailing perspective in selected European countries.
 101 *ibid*

Food pantries are another common model of community food retail. [The Scottish Pantry Network¹⁰²](#) was established by Councillor Mandy Morgan of Glasgow City Council and Jim Burns of FareShare. The Network now comprises seven locations across Scotland and provides support to organisations looking to open a pantry in their locality. Pantries were selected as the chosen model of community retail within Glasgow based on their possibility for self-sufficiency and their previous success in countries like France and the US. The Network is currently exploring the possibility of growing spaces and urban farms so can grow certain produce. This would allow the Network to provide its own food to supply pantries, create a stable supply, and employment and training opportunities, and is looking into feasible sites throughout the city with GCFN and Locavore. For example, a site near Ruchazie Food Pantry has been selected for the development of allotments, which will serve both the local community and the pantry itself. Glasgow City Council has expressed an interest in accelerating the pantry model throughout the city, particularly in response to the recent publication of the [Glasgow City Food Plan 2021-2031¹⁰³](#).

However, community retail is not without criticism. Some argue that, like foodbanks, it is not a long-term solution to food insecurity and poverty – and that only fundamental changes to welfare provision and government policy can address [this¹⁰⁴](#). Nonetheless, it is argued that the key features of community retail models such as food pantries and community shops (see Table 1) are useful as a more dignified, medium-term approach to food support.

	FOODBANKS	FOOD PANTRIES	SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS / COMMUNITY SHOPS
Food supply	Often donated, surplus food, and funded by charities	Surplus food; purchased, including from ethical local suppliers; increasingly grown locally or by the pantries themselves	Surplus food; purchased
Cost to user	Free	Initial low membership then small cost per shop (e.g. £2.50 for £15 of food)	Initial low membership then low-cost food
Access	Referral typically required	Open to all (sometimes in a geographical area)	Open to all
Food choice	Some choice but often limited; less fresh food	Range of choice but limited to financial value or coded products	Range of choice and no limitations on selection
Community participation	Typically limited or no community participation in decision-making; volunteering opportunities	Community membership and participation in development; volunteering and employment opportunities	Community membership and participation in development; volunteering and employment opportunities
Additional services	Some offer financial support and advice	Some offer financial support and advice	Many offer financial support, food support, and wellbeing (community cafes etc.) common

Key features of different models of community food retail

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, OWNERSHIP AND DIGNITY

A key aspect of community retail is the involvement of community members in decision-making processes. In contrast to less dignified approaches, where community members may feel like recipients of ‘aid’, community retail often attempts to offer choice and ownership to service users. Many community retail projects are created jointly with residents and local organisations and aim to involve communities in more participatory ways. This includes through memberships, co-operative working styles, and through providing volunteering and employment opportunities for local people.

102 [Scottish Pantry Network](#)
 103 [ibid](#)
 104 [ibid](#)

FOOD SUPPLY AND FOOD WASTE

Food offered by community retail outlets is often provided via mechanisms such as FareShare. FareShare operates by coordinating food surplus from a range of sources, including commercial supermarkets, growers, and major manufacturers, and this often underpins the operation of community food retail as a means of keeping running and food costs low. This fulfils the dual purpose of providing reduced-cost or free food to those who need it and ensuring food does not go to waste.

Additionally, local food is increasingly grown by community food retail organisations. Some also use ethical local suppliers that are cooperatives and social enterprises; for example, the Cranhill Cabin purchase food from Glasgow-based [Greencity Wholefoods¹⁰⁵](#). Greencity is a wholesaler of ethically sourced food and drink which, as a worker co-operative, is democratically run by its members. Greencity only purchases items that are suitable for vegetarians and are not tested on animals.

While research on community retail in other countries suggests that they positively contribute to food waste prevention¹⁰⁶, some have criticised the reliance on food surplus as part of a solution to food poverty. It has been argued that the conflation of food surplus and food poverty crises supports the ‘institutionalisation’ of charitable food aid and enables governments to avoid investing in adequate social security, leading to the development of campaigns such as [Plenty to Share¹⁰⁷](#). According to some, this undermines attempts to reduce the root production of surplus food and the systemic drivers of food insecurity, in effect ‘depoliticising’ hunger¹⁰⁸. However, redistributing surplus food is recognised as a way of reducing carbon emissions through waste, as is the reduction of food waste¹⁰⁹.

The GCFN Food Inequality response¹¹⁰ acknowledged that Fareshare provides an essential service and helps feed thousands of people. However, it was raised that other cities throughout the UK have a Fareshare online platform that allows you to choose allocation from the assortment, there is little choice in Glasgow. There’s also a lack of logistics: FoodCloud and Fareshare are reliant on small community organisations having vehicles, which isn’t always the case. Alternatively, they charge an excessive fixed rate for local drop-off. The cost for the operation is almost entirely on the shoulders of community organisations.

The large companies offloading their unwanted and surplus food to Fareshare do not pay any kind of fee, even though they are diverting the food from commercial waste streams – thus saving them money while earning them ‘brownie’ points.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Food provision is recognised as only one aspect of mitigating the effects of food poverty. It is widely acknowledged that addressing the systemic causes of poverty and insecurity is crucial. As such, ‘wraparound’ advice and support services are often provided through community food retail in order to address some of the root causes of food poverty. Examples of this (explored below) include income maximisation services such as financial and welfare advice; food knowledge and skills; and employability support.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that there is an increasing demand for a wider range of models which empower communities and contribute to affordable and resilient food systems. Though the need to address the systemic causes of food poverty – primarily sufficient income from social security – is understood by many experts by experience and organisations to be the principal solution to food [insecurity¹¹¹](#), foodbank use continues to rise in Glasgow and Scotland. Dignified approaches to involving and supporting communities to access healthy and affordable food are therefore needed now more than ever. Community food retail offers a range of alternatives which might offer a sustainable alternative to existing emergency food provision. Indeed, many of the actions within the recently published Glasgow City Food Plan 2021-2031 can be supported through community food retail, including the development of urban farming and market food retail to supply community retail; the adoption of circular economy principles and redistribution of food; and the prioritisation of community wealth-building principles.

105 [Green City](#)
 106 Schneider et al. (2015) Advancing social supermarkets across Europe. WP4 – Testing Social Innovation Feasibility Study Final Report. Vienna and Paris: FUSIONS EU.
 107 Goodwin, S. (2021) Disentangling the food surplus and food poverty problems [online] Independent Food Aid Network
 108 Caraher, M. and Furey, S. (2017) Is it appropriate to use surplus food to feed people in hunger? Short-term Band-Aid to more deep-rooted problems of poverty. Food Research Collaboration Policy Brief.
 109 [ibid](#)
 110 [ibid](#)
 111 Bramley et al. (2021) State of Hunger: Building the evidence on poverty, destitution, and food insecurity in the UK. Year two main report. The Trussell Trust.

THE FOOD PANTRY MODEL

By Jackie Stockdale, Local Community Response Officer, December 2020

INTRODUCTION

As a Community Response Officer, I was interested in finding out how communities perceived pantries and the extent to which they reflected GCFN values of food dignity in practice, strong partnership-working and sustainability. The following summarises impressions gained from visiting pantries, discussions with service users, attending food group meetings with pantry workers present and information on pantrys' social media.

THE MODEL

The food pantry was generally viewed as complementary to the food bank model - or a natural progression from it. Pantries, however, are set up similarly to a regular shop, which helps to normalise their use and counter stigma and sense of shame.

However, for the pantry model to work where space/storage is limited and demand is high, it is necessary to limit choice. Furthermore, while it is good that there are now charitable food redistributors redirecting excess food from landfill, the type of food that they supply to pantries is dependent on what surplus food is available from supermarkets. This means that food pantry customers can only choose within the parameters set by supermarkets and then only from items rejected by more empowered consumers.

DIGNIFIED EXPERIENCE

Overall, pantry staff and volunteers endeavoured to make the experience as dignified as possible. However, it was pointed out that this runs the risk of making it, *'More humiliating to shop alongside people who can afford to buy food in the normal way'*. Overall, while the food pantry experience may feel more dignified than other options, the model itself relies on an ambiguous interpretation of dignity.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

There is often a social and community benefit to food pantries experience as it's a place where people can meet and catch-up. Govanhill pantry for example, also involved a local artist to create a mural which shows how places like this can help develop a sense of community by creating a wider sense of ownership.

Pantries can also create local partnerships. For example, Ruchazie pantry partnered with Glasgow Community Transport to help people get to and from the pantry- a much-needed service in an area where access to supermarkets is very limited. There were also efforts on the part of food pantry workers/volunteers to engage with local organisations by, for example, attending local food groups set up to respond to the Covid-19 crisis.

NEED FOR ACTION

The pantry is clearly popular among its users but the income insecurity that generates the need for food pantries persists. Nonetheless, there is a need for a campaigning dimension to food pantries. A campaigning arm would provide opportunities for community members to empower themselves and fight for structural change that would bring about real dignity through greater economic equity. This also raises questions about the long-term sustainability of the pantry model's supply chain. Some advocates of the pantry model are enthusiastic about this, arguing that: *'...it absolutely offers a long-term solution to food insecurity'* and hoping that in the future we will see: *'...more pantries across Glasgow and for the pantries to be sustainable in their own right.'* As it stands, surplus food is only available for people experiencing food poverty, with the environmental benefits being an added bonus. In this way, the model of redistributing food excess relies on the existence of people experiencing food insecurity and, in doing so, it: *'effectively makes food insecurity sustainable.'*

In an ideal situation, methods would be put in place to reduce the amount of surplus food in the system. Pantries are already fundraising to buy additional stock directly from local shops so that they can cater for the needs of their communities. This seems like a positive way forward; to seek out supply chains that are more reliable in the short-term.



CONCLUSION

Further local research is needed to establish what pantry/community members think about pantries as a concept through exploring the issues of poverty, dignity, sustainability, current food aid models and alternatives to them (increased income/cash first approach). Moreover, there seem to be unanswered questions surrounding the origins of food pantries and the extent to which community members were involved in its creation/development. Modern anti-poverty approaches are centred around giving people with direct experience a voice and real influence over the decision-making that affects them. If people with direct experience of food insecurity were not involved in developing the idea of the pantry, then, in the interests of genuine community empowerment, we need to ask why.

FOOD PRODUCTION

DIVERSIFYING PRODUCTION

In order to sustain the growing population's needs for food, farming systems need to adapt to changing circumstances like climate change, biodiversity loss, and changes in global markets. This can be enhanced by introducing a greater level of diversity into these systems. In attempting to solve this challenge, The James Hutton Institute is investigating how to implement further crop diversification, and how this would contribute to more sustainable ways of producing food.

Scientists working on these projects [say that](#) “diversified farming systems will only emerge if clear benefits to farmers and society can be demonstrated, value chains are fully engaged, and crop diversification is supported by policies.”

Locavore is one organisation developing a route to market for a more diverse range of crops in Glasgow. [Working with the James Hutton Institute](#) on underutilised crops, Locavore says it is “trying to take these crops and find a route to market which will often include trying to find a way to process them in some way. This might include contracting crops to mills for flour or flakes, finding someone who can make crisps, or maybe sending barley for malting and brewing/distilling.” Locavore is also working with Scottish farmers and other suppliers to encourage a switch to organic production and provide a market for the resulting produce.



allotments and adjacent derelict land alongside the Clyde

LAND FOR GROWING

A key part of creating more sustainable supply chains must be to maximise the amount of food that can be produced locally, which means identifying new land on which to create growing projects. There is huge potential for cities like Glasgow to be part of this mix.

A 2020 [study](#)¹¹² in Sheffield demonstrated that allotments, domestic gardens, and the wider green infrastructure could provide more than four times the land that is currently used nationally to meet the British fruit and vegetable demands of the city's population. In addition to allotments, parks and gardens, Glasgow also has 954 hectares of vacant and derelict land (2019 figures) which can be identified using the [Glasgow Vacant and Derelict Land Supply Map](#). There is a lot of space that can be explored for urban food production, and the potential for local production to contribute far more to the city's diet than it currently does.

In Scotland, the Community Empowerment Act¹¹³ gave communities new powers to take ownership of local land: Communities in urban areas have the right to register an interest in land and have priority in purchasing the land (should it be available on the market).

It enabled communities to make compulsory purchases of neglected land for sustainable development. It gave community groups rights to request and be granted asset transfers – through purchase, lease or use – of public land for purposes which bring social, economic or environmental benefits.

112 <https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-020-0045-6>
113 Scottish Government (2017) Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act: summary

In theory, any vacant and derelict land in Glasgow is available to community groups who can raise the funds and demonstrate that they will use the land for the benefit of the community. In practice, an asset transfer or community buyout can be a slow and complicated process, beyond the capacity of many groups. For example, while ownership of land can usually be established via the [Scottish Land Information Service](#)¹¹⁴, groups have reported practical difficulties in identifying land owners and in making contact with them.

LOCAL STRATEGIES TO ACQUIRE LAND

The Glasgow Food Growing Strategy acknowledges that acquiring areas of land for larger projects can take time, while offering guidance for groups looking to establish smaller community growing projects. There is also a commitment from Glasgow City Council to map existing growing spaces as well as council land with the potential to be developed as a growing space, which should help community groups to identify potential sites. The Food Growing Strategy also commits the council to simplifying the process for community groups to get permission to use council-owned land.

The Glasgow City Food Plan has a number of key actions to achieve a stated goal of increasing the amount of space used for food growing in the city by at least 50% by 2023. This includes a commitment to look at reducing asset transfer times while also exploring making long term leases easier to access.

A lot of the food growing vision in Glasgow appears to focus on grow your own projects such as allotments and community gardens. But farms and market gardens will be necessary to meet the supply chain challenges outlined in this report. These projects are often unsuited to the more challenging pieces of vacant and derelict land that form much of the available land in urban areas. However, there is also a lot of underutilised peri-urban land on the outskirts of Glasgow. Often those looking for land have to compete financially with housing developers for good agricultural land, despite the presence of so much empty land within the city that is less suitable for agriculture.

Roz Corbett of the Landworkers Alliance says: “We need regional planning strategies across councils that protect peri-urban agricultural land from development and prioritise highly contaminated land for this kind of development if we are serious about protecting our soil”¹¹⁵.

There is ambition among Glasgow's existing market gardeners to develop more land for food production in Glasgow. Locavore has recently begun growing food at commercial scale in a site that previously operated in a council nursery in Bellahouston. Wash House Garden consider availability of land to be one of its main limiting factors, and although not actively looking to expand at present this is likely to be desirable at some stage. The other existing market gardening group in Glasgow is Tenement Veg, which has struggled to find a settled site, having moved its growing operations three times in the four growing seasons in which they have been operational. Despite support from Glasgow City Council to identify and investigate potential growing sites, no secure locations have been found that are suitable for commercial growing. Currently, they are utilising land adjacent to Queens Park, leased by Locavore, in addition to a small site in East Renfrewshire. However, there is a desire to find a more settled location in which to scale up growing operations, as well as supporting educational work. Mark Hanlon of Tenement Veg has a vision of setting the example for other collectives to transform unused spaces across the city into havens for biodiversity, food production and education – “more plants, more food, more people connected to food”.

The challenges of finding land appear to contribute to Glasgow being an unattractive place to establish as a market gardener.

Roz Corbett of the Landworkers Alliance says: “Glasgow is currently losing skilled and qualified market gardeners, who leave the city because they haven't had success in finding sites in or near the city. There is a serious lack of site development, with an expectation this will be met by third/private sector investment”¹¹⁶.

Public sector investment would seem to be important to enable new, market scale growing projects in the city. Initiatives such as the [Scottish Farm Land Trust](#)¹¹⁷ are aiming to support aspiring growers in getting access to land, including holding agricultural land in trust and renting it out in small parcels on an affordable basis. The Landworkers Alliance also has initiatives to support growers to expand its operations, including establishing a series of [Peri-Urban Practitioners Forums](#)¹¹⁸ addressing issues such as access to land and access to finance.

114 [Scottish Land Information Service](#)
115 Place saver: Focus group discussion
116 Place saver: GCFN focus group discussion
117 [Scottish Farm Land Trust](#)
118 Land Workers Alliance [Peri-Urban Practitioners Forums](#)

Making smaller growing spaces available can be comparatively straightforward when dealing with council-owned property, especially for temporary projects that don't require the security of long-term access to a site to be viable. Over a hundred projects, many of them involving food growing, have made use of [Stalled Spaces](#)¹¹⁹ support – funding for projects on temporarily vacant patches of land. The Glasgow City Food Plan also includes a commitment to prioritise the incorporation of growing space into new developments at the planning stage. Glasgow City Council are invested in helping groups to identify suitable areas of land and offer support to groups in this area and welcome contact from community groups who require this service. However, for all the benefits of making use of a stalled space, security of tenure is important for projects to have a meaningful long-term impact, and secure funding to invest in that.

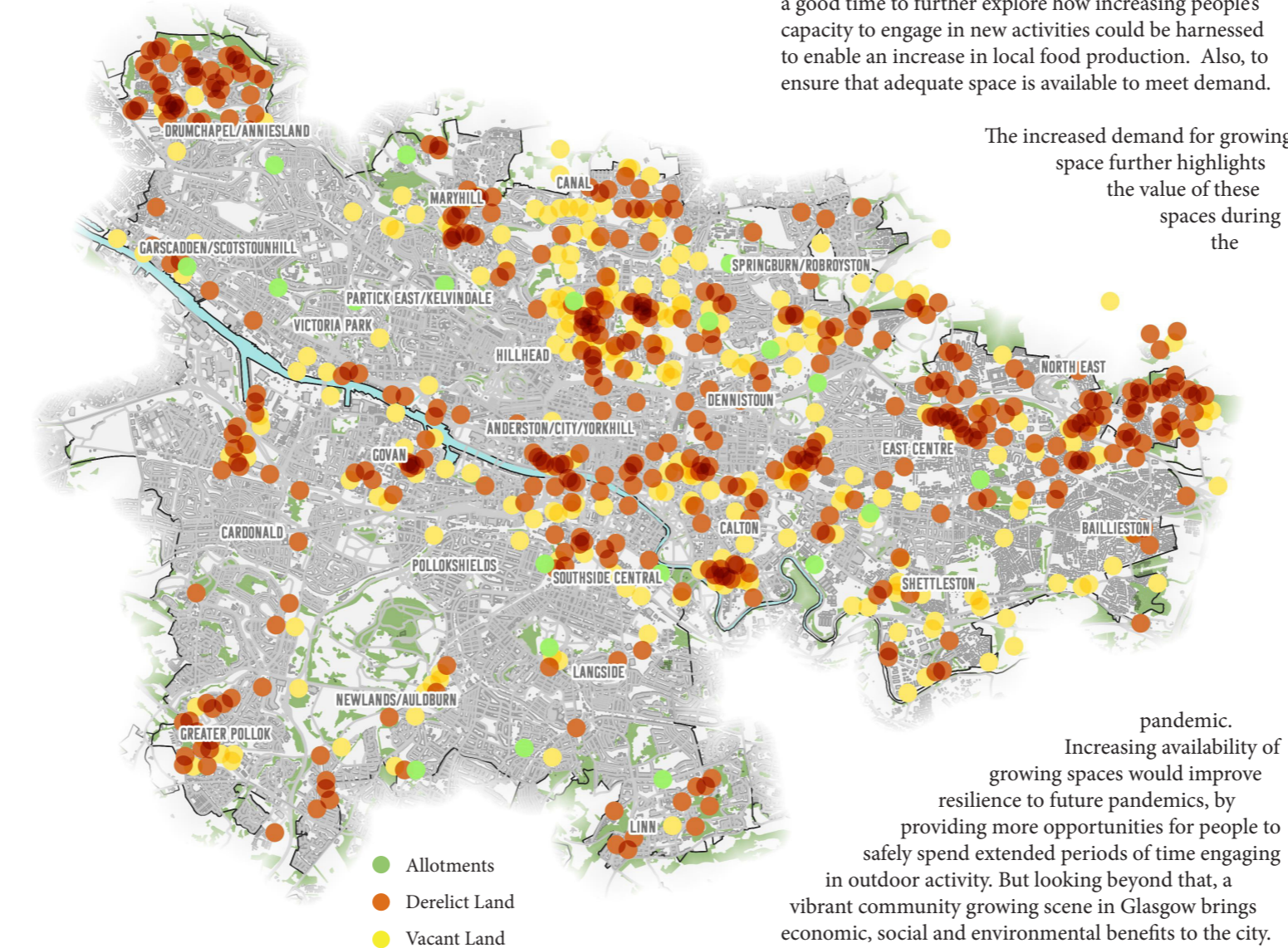
These concerns highlight a need for greater connection between growing groups. Glasgow Community Food Network has a role in providing platforms for the sharing of knowledge and information – including about funding pots. As part of the GCFN Food & Climate Action Project there is an intention to develop resources to help establish new community growing projects, including offering direct support to groups going through the processes of acquiring use of council land. There is also a Community Food Growing Mentoring Group in development with the support of GCC Officers, which aims to bring together the vast wealth of knowledge and experience of growers from across the city, support the development of new growing spaces, identify common issues and develop solutions. Potentially linked to this is a proposed new participatory budget fund to provide seed capital for new community growing projects – the “Let's Grow Together Fund”.

When asked about the limitations on growing projects achieving their ambitions, access to land is consistently one of the top answers. Of the organisations contacted for this section two have current plans in motion to expand their growing operations into new land. Cranhill Development Trust are in the early stages of developing a community allotment site on an area of vacant, publicly owned land adjacent to their current garden. They are currently working with Glasgow City Council to secure access to the land, and applying to Scottish Land Fund to take forward plans for the site.

Blackhill's Growing has identified a 0.5 hectare site for a potential future field-scale market garden. The piece of land is attached to a school and they are working with the Department for Education to secure access. These plans have been in development for four years and they are hopeful of taking them forward during 2021. In their own words, the project “will produce more locally grown fresh veg for the community and city, whilst also providing training and job opportunities for local young people. This is what we see as the first stage in developing

a Blackhill Health Hub which will one day include sports facilities, a community-run healthy café and biodiversity area.”

Glasgow Community Food Network is working with strategic partners to acquire land for an urban agroecological farm in Glasgow, to incorporate production of fruit and vegetables as well as poultry and honey production. There is also the possibility to



The increased demand for growing space further highlights the value of these spaces during the

demand during the pandemic. For example, Tollcross Park Allotments reported a 400% increase in applications for plots in 2020, and Shettleston Community Growing Project says interest in its plots has doubled. This is on top of levels of demand for allotment and community growing plots that already hugely exceed availability. These increases demonstrate that there is tremendous interest in people growing their own food when they have free time available to do so. With ideas entering mainstream political discussion such as a four-day working week or a Universal Basic Income – it would be a good time to further explore how increasing people's capacity to engage in new activities could be harnessed to enable an increase in local food production. Also, to ensure that adequate space is available to meet demand.

pandemic. Increasing availability of growing spaces would improve resilience to future pandemics, by providing more opportunities for people to safely spend extended periods of time engaging in outdoor activity. But looking beyond that, a vibrant community growing scene in Glasgow brings economic, social and environmental benefits to the city. It is possible to bring more land into food production in Glasgow, but it requires processes to be simplified and the development of resources and networks to help guide community groups through them.

GOOD FOOD JOBS AND THE FOOD SECTOR

The UK food and drink supply chain has long been heavily reliant on migrant labour, primarily from EU countries. The Food and Drink Federation's [Breaking the Chain](#)¹²¹ reports survey respondents saying that

34% of permanent workers across the food supply chain were from non-UK EU countries in 2016, with a further 6% being non-EU nationals. Seasonal jobs within the supply chain are far more reliant on non-UK EU nationals, including around 70,000 jobs within the horticulture industry according to a 2016 survey by the British Growers Association. To mitigate the impact of Brexit and Covid-19 for the 2021 season, the UK government made a late concession to grant 30,000 Seasonal Workers Permits for the horticulture industry, allowing recruitment of seasonal workers from abroad. Many voices in the industry feel that this will still leave a significant shortfall in labour, and result in significant losses in the sector as a whole.

Reliance on seasonal migrant labour leaves an industry vulnerable to global shocks such as those seen in 2020/21. Skills Development Scotland's 2021 [Sectoral Skills Assessments](#)¹²² for the sector states that “the impact of Brexit has led to labour shortages in key areas, particularly seasonal workers, as the availability of EU workers has declined. There is the potential opportunity to attract indigenous workers into these roles”.

Filling these gaps requires a skilled, educated workforce in Scotland. The Glasgow City Food Plan includes a number of targets to increase children's knowledge of food systems, including partnering every school with a local community food organisation who can assist with learning. This could contribute towards a key educational target within the plan that “all children and young people are provided practical cooking and growing skills as a life skill and expand opportunities for developing the future workforce in the food industry”. Members of the community food sector in Glasgow have a wealth of experience working with schools, and the GCFP acknowledges that building on this work and co-developing resources to fill gaps would be a positive way forward. The development of pathways through schools and colleges and into sustainable food growing and farming is also given as a target, working with educational institutions and food producers to achieve this.

There are also opportunities identified within the GCFP to continue training beyond schools. One target is to create funded apprenticeships within the educational institutions, growing projects, food businesses and in the community food sector in order to increase the skills of food workers in the city and help more people into employment in the sector. GCFN are currently looking to establish an urban farm as part of the Food & Climate Action Project, with the aim of providing accredited training for new food producers, as well as employment opportunities and space for the development of further onsite enterprises.

119 Glasgow City, Planning and Building, [Stalled Spaces](#)

120 Sustain, [Fringe Farming Project](#)

121 Food and Drink Federation, [Breaking the Chain](#)

122 Skills Development Scotland, [Sectoral Skills Assessments](#)

Investing in creating attractive jobs in the sector and producing good food could help to deliver an economic recovery from these shocks and a more resilient food industry for the future. [The Glasgow City Food Plan¹²³](#) includes a commitment to improve pay and employment rights for the community food sector, including forming a union of community food workers as well as supporting and promoting the [Living Wage¹²⁴](#) campaign, but these actions must translate into meaningful improvements to conditions within the sector in order to attract people into these jobs. The Nourish Scotland [Food Atlas¹²⁵](#) includes five key steps to ensuring that good, attractive jobs are the norm in the food industry:

- Being a living wage employer is a requirement for all public tenders
- Regulation tackles precarious employment practices and ensures all workers, including those on zero-hour contracts, enjoy their full rights
- The UK and devolved Governments enforce fair practices in supply chains
- Targeted support for the agri-food sector to make workplaces safer and better equipped, and to promote life-long professional development, including in health and safety
- The Scottish Government and Local Authorities develop a strategy to support 'local food economies' in which growers, communities, and local businesses work together to everyone's benefit

The findings of Sustain's¹²⁶ briefing: [Putting good food jobs at the heart of the economic recovery](#) are that smaller scale agriculture "provide[s] quality, year-round jobs compatible with family life" when compared to larger scale agriculture. Enabling the development of new small-scale agriculture in Glasgow and surrounding areas would help to provide jobs in food production that are more attractive to a wider range of people.

There are also opportunities to create jobs that support sustainable food producers. A coalition of Scottish environmental charities have produced a report outlining proposals to enable a [Nature Recovery Plan¹²⁷](#). They highlight how supporting climate and nature-friendly farming would require tailored advice for farmers, and the creation of 460 FTE jobs to give this advice.

Better jobs can also be created through improvements throughout the supply chain. [The Preston Model¹²⁸](#), focussing on diversifying public procurement to providers that support the building of community wealth – including a greater number of local providers – has shown some success in building up the local economy and supporting the development of local jobs. Applying a similar model in Glasgow could help to support the economic recovery of the city while creating new jobs in the food supply chain.

Smaller retailers, including local grocery stores, veg box schemes and markets, also tend to support more jobs in relation to their market share than the large supermarkets which dominate the industry. Sustain has championed the creation of a [local food retail diversity plan](#) among other policies for cities to increase the diversity of food retail options which should be considered for implementation in Glasgow. Currently, small independent retailers account for 3.7% of UK market share and Sustain proposes a target of 10% by 2030¹²⁹.

A push towards better employment practices as outlined above, and celebration of good practice seen in some of our local businesses, will be important in shaping supply chains for Glasgow. A number of food businesses in Glasgow are signed up to pay the real living wage, and further uptake of this should be encouraged and facilitated. Examples of good practice include Green City Wholefoods which operates as a democratically run workers' cooperative, with all staff empowered by having a vote in how the business is run. There is a wealth of expertise available on establishing similar organisations, including [Seeds for Change¹³⁰](#) – a workers' cooperative which offers support and resources to other cooperatives, charities and community groups to establish and run efficiently and effectively. The idea of establishing a Glasgow Grower's Cooperative has been floated in the [Roots to Market report](#) as a means of supporting businesses engaged in food production¹³¹.

123 ibid
 124 Living Wage Foundation, [Living Wage Campaign](#)
 125 Nourish Scotland, [Food Atlas](#) 2018-2030
 126 Sustain (2020) [Putting good food jobs at the heart of the recovery](#)
 127 RSPB (Scotland), Scottish Wildlife Trust and World Wildlife Fund, [A Nature Recovery Plan](#)
 128 Preston City Council, [The Preston Model](#)
 129 Sustain, [Good Food Retail](#)
 130 Seeds for Change, [Skill up, co-operate, take action!](#)
 131 GCFN, (2018) [Roots to Market](#)



RECOMMENDATIONS

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Prioritise agroecological farming for state support
- Support and promote work to diversify the types of food produced and sold in Scotland, with particular focus on expanding the horticulture industry
- Incentivise the shortening of supply chains
- Prioritise supporting good jobs in the good food sector as part of the green recovery package

GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL

- Fully commit to the delivery of GCFP and Food Growing Strategy
- Support organisations to establish markets and shops selling healthy, affordable produce. Prioritising areas with poor access to food
- Commit to the local sourcing pilot being considered in GCFP and explore an approach similar to the Preston Model for public procurement
- Build on GCFP ambition to achieve Bronze Food for Life accreditation for school meals, with a medium-term target of achieving gold accreditation
- Work with schools, colleges, community organisations and businesses to develop educational pathways for people interested in food as a career in Glasgow
- Simplify and shorten processes for growing projects to gain secure access to land in and around Glasgow
- Facilitate the development of networks of growing groups in and around Glasgow
- GCFN recommends resources to create a business options appraisal for a citywide Community Food Fruit and Veg Bulk Buying partnerships with Community Transport Glasgow
- Further actions such as a logistics working group can be taken to provide transport and storage by public sector and third sector organisations (and private) for community Food Sector to have better coordinated supply chains

CONCLUSION

The pandemic has helped shine a light on the strength and agility of Glasgow's third sector. New and old partnerships grew and linked together across boundaries and organisations. For continuous crises, whether a pandemic, financial or environmental to be averted or at least minimised, we must continue to work together and work strategically, coordinating long-term solutions that tackle the root causes of food poverty.

Our research, backed by local participative research, has shown the need for radical change to our current social security system. Further academic and social research has backed maximising income for individuals and families as the key route out of poverty. Our report found key issues which we believe need to be immediately addressed.

FIRSTLY,

We need to see an end to foodbanks. At a bare minimum, the UK Government should reinstate the £20 uplift which will lift thousands away from emergency aid. A Minimum Income Guarantee could give what is needed to get by. However, Universal Basic Income at the highest level, set by the Fraser Allander study, could be transformative for the entire population if a Scottish pilot is tested widely and fully inclusive. The results from this could then be used as evidence for change.

SECONDLY,

Community food provision should be supported by developing more progressive models that move away from surplus and food waste reliance. Having more control over the supply of food can create opportunities for growing, learning, and bringing communities together.

THIRDLY,

A community development approach should be backed-up by involving local people and groups in the design and implication of regeneration projects within their neighbourhoods. Good Food jobs could be a great way to produce local food economies that serve to support local businesses.

FOURTHLY,

GCFN want third sector, local food growers, enterprises, and those looking to challenge poverty to participate in the continued development of Glasgow's City Food Plan. We believe the plan is cross cutting and holistic in its outset and inclusive and optimistic regarding its ambitions.

FINALLY

We stand with the Scottish Food Coalition and an ambitious Good Food Nation Bill asks the Scottish Government to set up an independent commission to ensure accountability and that targets are met.





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