The Glasgow Cash First Project 2024-2026

Siobhan Boyle & Nick Hopkins
Co-Chairs, Glasgow Fair Food for All Partnership

Good food for all
GLASGOW FOOD POLICY PARTNERSHIP

#GlasgowCityFoodPlan

Part 1: Findings from Glasgow Cash First Project



Quick History

- Glasgow Fair Food for All Partnership, born from:
  - Fair Food for All Subgroup of Glasgow Food Policy Partnership.
  - Glasgow Food Poverty Pathfinder Partnership.
- Focused on delivery of Cash First Approach using SG funding.
- Work on training and awareness raising around cash first and food insecurity- responding to needs, test of change projects, research projects.

Glasgow Cash First project - Summary of Final Report

Aim:

- To work collaboratively with key city-wide partners, and link with the Glasgow City Food Plan, to create sustainable pathways and practice that support the transition to cash and advice first, social retail and preventative approaches to food insecurity.

Objectives:

- Establish a multi-sector Glasgow Food for All Partnership which provides opportunities for shared learning and collaboration.
- Understand existing sources of cash first and social retail options and existing referral pathways.
- Collaborate with referral agencies and support the delivery of training to frontline staff to enable implementation of referral pathways.
- Use available data to identify people at risk of food insecurity and improve access to cash first.
- Support and learn from direct experience participation.

Actions

Establishment of a city-wide partnership focused on food insecurity.

Development of the Cash First approaches in Glasgow webpage. including concept explainer, relevant resources and signposting.

Provision of 18 training and learning opportunities relating to different aspects of cash first approaches (approx. 650 participants).

Commissioned work from Centre for Civic Innovation to understand more about SWF and Glasgow Helps data.

Provided additional financial support to extend Access to Advice project.

Support for lived experience panel commissioned by GCFN (outputs included Zine and toolkit).

Small cash first test of change using money-equivalent vouchers to encourage engagement in wider community services.

Findings 1

Data:

- Local level data on food insecurity is hard to access to understand needs in different population groups. Heavily reliant on NHSGGC H&W survey data.
- Glasgow Helps: 4,891 calls about food insecurity (Jan-Dec 24) relating to access (53%); affordability (46%) and culturally appropriate (0.5%).
- SWF: 96% (38,322) of Crisis Grant applications cited food insecurity as a reason (24/25).

Understanding:

- lack of shared understanding of ‘cash first’ which was reinforced by lived experience panel with GCFN.

Training for staff:

- There was a demand for opportunities to build understanding and a foundation for the cash first approach and confidence to signpost.
- After engagement in learning opportunities, attendees reported being more confident and informed about cash first and dignity-based approaches, and use of Worrying About Money leaflet and Glasgow Helps.

Findings 2

Lived Experience Panel:

- Recommendations included:
  - Training for staff and volunteers on why people experience poverty, cash first approaches, the asylum –seeking process, the importance of dignity and choice, addressing stigma, active listening.
  - Creating a welcoming and inclusive space.
  - Partnerships and collaborative working to share best practice.
  - Create a culture of empathy, compassion and care.

Test of Change

- Aimed to understand if the provision of money-equivalent vouchers distributed to those in need by trusted community partners in 2 areas could reduce future reliance on emergency food aid and encourage use of wider community support.
- 89% said they used another service offered by the provider for the first time when they got the voucher(e.g. advice hub).
- People reported being happier (67%), less stressed (44%). and more confident (17%) as a result.

Impacts

- Improved partnership working and collaboration across sectors, stronger relationships and better coordination.
- Increased awareness of cash first approaches and confidence to have these conversations.
- Improved and more consistent signposting to Glasgow Helps.
- Greater understanding of the particular challenges and barriers for NRPF communities.

Some Reflections on Difficulties and Policy Lessons

- A lot achieved.
- Saw that dedicated staff resource was essential to progressing this agenda.
- Key aspects of our work in the city now in a better place.
- But:
  - A critical area of learning that we didn't get to explore.
  - Emphasis on cash first necessitated a narrower focus.

What We Couldn't Test

- Initial hope to learn, through piloting cash first referrals with major foodbank referrers, how far the Scottish Welfare Fund could be a vehicle for reducing demand for foodbanks.
- Scottish Welfare Fund colleagues fully committed to the partnership, and remain so.
- But SWF in Glasgow under immense pressure and unable to meet current demand with available budget: no capacity for additional work, or spending for a pilot.
- We ran into the wall of having a cash first approach with no meaningful extra cash to give out, and that was predicted and predictable.
- SWF involvement did teach us something critical: to some extent we already have a cash first approach in the city; SWF is more the face of crisis response than foodbanks, even if not the public face.
- That experience might not be universal, we also learned that there are inequities between LA areas across Scotland in terms of the SWF support available.

The Downside of our Focus: Narrowing of Effort

- The things we delivered were important.
- But the group we convened had been involved in a much broader effort to address food insecurity, including wrap around support, social retail and foodbank development.
- Has delayed our work develop a full multi pronged approach, to develop a common understanding of what each prong offered and respond to the changing external context.
- The narrow approach did not fully sustain all partners' engagement.
- Perhaps we should have managed things differently, but we were committed to delivering on the full agenda promised to the Scottish Government.

Policy Lessons from This and Comic Relief Research

- Focus needs to be on the whole ecosystem not just cash first.
- Food insecurity plans need to reflect that.
- Think carefully about what we say about foodbanks, cash first phrased as ending the need for foodbanks:
  - Messages can be absorbed on the ground in a way that doesn't help.
  - 13 years in and no government support for a vital component of support ecosystem.
- Need a clear to push for better design of Scottish Government food insecurity response, we had a cash first approach without cash/ with inadequate cash, and now we risk an under-resourced set of food insecurity plans, and misdirected effort on the price of essentials.
- That response should be holistic.
- Do we need a Scottish Crisis and Resilience Fund?

Part 2: Next Steps- to develop a Food Insecurity Plan for Glasgow

Quick Stats of Current Glasgow Picture

- **Cost of living crisis:**
  - Over one in five Glasgow residents reporting at least one indicator of food insecurity.
  - Three in ten in 15% most deprived areas.
- Secondary school children going hungry pre-pandemic; 20% sometimes, 3% often, 4% always.
- Foodbanks still busy.
- Growth in pantry network.
- Scottish Welfare Fund under pressure.
- Human costs, long and short term.

The Opportunity

Chance to get ahead of the national game.

More critically, time is right for us.

Refocus on broader agenda.

Glasgow City Food Plan, and Food Poverty/ Fair Food for All Theme, dates from 2021.

That is pre (first?) cost of living crisis, pre growth of social retail sector etc.

Aim and Key Elements

Aim - to build a robust and effective food insecurity ecosystem for Glasgow that gets people to the right help at the right time and supports them to become more food secure.

- That system will encompass:
  - Cash first- state's responsibility, dignity and control.
  - Foodbanks for crisis, whilst the need exists (for a long time to come?).
  - Social retail responding to chronic food insecurity to prevent need for foodbanks and provide a route away.
  - Advice and support wrapped around each other element- key moments, opportunity and need for intervention.

The system needs to be effective as a coherent system, links within it creating routes around it, and outwith to others working with people impacted.

Principles Influence Structures

- Equalities will be at the heart- responding effectively to whoever is in need.
- Lived experience guiding what we do.
- Externally influence:
  - Proofing new policies.
  - Audit of key players.
- Structures will need to reflect different relationships with the work; those who will drive new initiatives, those who will be at the heart of delivery, those who will support the work, those who will need to know.

Working with the Fair Food For All Partnership

Continuous development of our understanding of the issues around food insecurity and facing different parts of the ecosystem.

Process for partners to determine collectively where we go after this.

Work in partnership to achieve a strategic, robust and deliverable food insecurity delivery plan that then forms a vital part of Glasgow's Good Food Nation plans.

Thank you.

Any Questions?

