



# Eating Together

A taste of charitable food provision.

*Could sharing be easier?*

## Abstract

The UK has seen a significant increase in charitable projects where food is an important part of their services, as a response to the public's rising concerns around poverty, social isolation and the environmental impacts of food wastage. This report outlines the work of twelve organisations with a specific focus on their food services. The purpose of this report is to give an overview of how such projects run, what their strengths are, and what difficulties they encounter. Common strengths and difficulties are explored from p.26, and suggestions are proposed on how certain issues could be tackled. This report is a selection of case studies and does not need to be read in sequence.

## Acknowledgements

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Many thanks to The Cathedral Archer Project, Ben's Centre, Cracking Good Food, FareShare Yorkshire, Pathways of Chesterfield, The Sunday Centre, FoodCycle Sheffield, Meeting Point: Christ Church Armley, Sheffield Christ Church Armley, Sheffield Mencap and Gateway, The Food Chain, Abundance and Food Works Sheffield.

## Aims

This report aims to provide an up-to-date overview of charities where food provision is an important part of their services. Through a collection of case studies, this report will provide an insight into the logistics of running these charities, their real strengths and the difficulties they encounter.

This report aims to highlight and celebrate the diverse ways food can be used in the charitable sector, and how organisations use different methods to achieve similar aims.

It also aims to promote cohesion between projects, allowing charities to help one another and share knowledge or facilities.

This report hopes to benefit charities themselves by being:

- A** A recognition and celebration of the work they do
- B** An informative tool through hearing what likeminded charities are doing, allowing the transfer of ideas between projects
- C** A reflexive learning tool whereby charities may learn of alternative effective actions and processes that could improve their own services or improve the ease of delivering their services.

# Contents

Abstract	02
Acknowledgements	02
Aims	02
<hr/>	
<b>Case Studies</b>	<b>05</b>
01 / The Cathedral Archer Project	06
02 / Ben's Centre	07
03 / Pathways of Chesterfield	08
04 / Sunday Centre	09
05 / Meeting Point Christ Church Armley	10
06 / Sheffield Mencap and Gateway	12
07 / FareShare Yorkshire	14
08 / The Food Chain	16
09 / Cracking Good Food	18
10 / FoodCycle	20
11 / Abundance	22
12 / Food Works Sheffield	24
<hr/>	
<b>Critical Reflections</b>	<b>26</b>
Strengths	27
Difficulties and Limitations	27
<hr/>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>28</b>
Recommendation 1	28
Recommendation 2	30
Recommendation 3	31
<hr/>	
<b>Concluding Remarks</b>	<b>32</b>
Map	33
Appendix	34
Weblinks	34

# Case Studies

## The Cathedral Archer Project

**The Cathedral Archer Project is an established independent charity in Sheffield's city centre, with its services having run since 1989. It is a day centre for homeless adults with a comprehensive help system. CAP provides crisis support, health and wellbeing support and development opportunities through activities and volunteering.**

### Services

CAP meet the primary needs of those in crisis by providing breakfasts, hot lunches and food parcels, as well as hot showers, clothing and a laundry service Monday to Friday. They provide health and wellbeing support by running medical and dental clinics throughout the week, where those without a permanent address can access necessary medical treatment and mental health advice. CAP is able to provide 1:1 support from a project worker which means each client receives a tailored response to their personal needs. Clients receive practical help around housing, benefits, substance abuse rehabilitation and are assisted in accessing other service providers who can help them make progress. They provide opportunities for development through:

- Activity classes in football, gardening, literacy, numeracy, art, and IT
- Enabling clients to achieve training qualifications, such as NVQ Level 2 Food Hygiene
- Their 'Partner Program'; a two-year volunteer program where clients help manage daily CAP tasks such as kitchen, warehouse or reception duties, cleaning, or supporting other clients with showers, laundry and finding them clean clothes. This program gives clients a sense of responsibility and of purpose as well as employability and life skills
- Their 'Just Works Program' helps clients who are ready to make the 'next step' to experience volunteering and paid employment in partnered micro-businesses. This project allows clients to experience employment, yet still be supported which makes the transition into the 'real' workplace more manageable.

### Food provision

The Cathedral Archer Project provides breakfast for around 70-80 individuals, a hot lunch for 50-55 individuals and food parcels to around 50 people each day Monday - Friday. Meals are prepared onsite and served in CAP's dining hall. A mixture of charitable partnerships, public donations and payments are used to source ingredients:

- Through partnering with a local supermarket, CAP receive 2 donations of surplus food a week
- Through partnering with a high street bakery, they receive surplus pasties, sandwiches and cakes every day
- CAP receive public donations (especially during Harvest) of long-life, tinned and packaged products to make up their food parcels
- They receive a weekly donation of fresh and store cupboard foods delivered by FareShare (through paid membership scheme)
- They pay a local greengrocer and wholesaler for vegetable produce, meat and cupboard staples etc

The food parcels CAP put together do not require an official referral from e.g. a GP. The staff at CAP make relationships with their clients, familiarising themselves with their situations. Clients not receiving benefits can collect a food parcel every day, and clients in receipt of benefits can collect one food parcel per week. There are two types of food parcel: 'No-cooker' parcels are given to rough sleepers and include ready-to-eat food, and 'Cooker' parcels contain e.g. tins and dried pasta and are given to those in hostels or other accommodation with access to cooking facilities. All services at the project are free for rough sleepers, or for those in accommodation there is a charge of 50p for breakfast and £1 for lunch.



## Ben's Centre

**Ben's Centre is an independent day centre providing a safe and comforting indoor place for Sheffield's street drinkers and addicts whilst they are under the influence. The Centre aims to provide sanctuary and shelter, providing for people's basic needs such as warmth and food. Once service users are ready, Ben's Centre also offers help with their mental and physical health, their addictions, and assists them in securing housing.**

### Services

Ben's Centre provides shower facilities and also collects and distributes clothing, sleeping bags and rucksacks to make street sleeping more comfortable and dignified for their service users. Ben's centre can also support their clients, who may struggle with organisation, in engaging with other services, by e.g. helping to arrange meetings and making phone calls. However, the services at Ben's Centre can only be accessed by clients who are willing to enter the centre. The role of their Outreach Worker is to form relationships with street addicts around the city, encouraging those reluctant to accept help to drop into Ben's Centre.

### Food provision

Ben's Centre provides 25-30 breakfasts and hot lunches each day, distribute sandwiches as part of their outreach program, and provide informal food parcels where they have surplus. Various means are used to acquire food for these services:

- FareShare's supermarket scheme 'FareShare Go' supports a relationship between Ben's Centre and a local supermarket, providing Ben's Centre with surplus food once a week
- They are partnered with two fast food restaurants and collect surplus chicken once a week
- They are partnered with a high street bakery, from whom they collect sandwiches, pastries and cakes twice a week
- They have relationships with some small private food retailers who will donate when they have excess. These organisations donate anonymously to prevent clients from going directly to their business to ask for surplus
- 'Save Our Sandwiches', a Sheffield University organisation, donates unsold sandwiches from university cafes and uneaten catering trays of sandwiches from events
- Ben's Centre receives funding from Foodinate (See Appendix.1 )
- The Centre also buys items from supermarkets that they do not regularly receive through charitable means, such as dairy.

Ben's Centre provides meat and vegetarian versions of the same meal, reducing potential meal envy between service users. The staff and volunteers sit down to eat communally with the clients which helps to strengthen relationships and reduces any feelings of an 'us' and 'them'. From eating together, Ben's Centre's staff and chef are able to frequently discuss food and gain feedback from clients. The chef works creatively with the surplus food collected but creates a meal, at least once a week, that guests have explicitly said they'd like to see on the menu. Clients are also actively included in other decision-making processes, such as voting on certain project rules. Ben's Centre prides itself in seeing their charity "as the clients' project that we work at, rather than our project that they are allowed to come to". Clients are more likely to access help when they feel listened to, are treated as equals, and are given agency to shape Ben's Centre into a project they want to attend.

Ben's centre accepts its clients and their need to drink or use daily. Clients are always welcomed in but volunteers help them to hot drinks and cutlery to limit anyone hurting themselves. Any comatose clients will be brought in and monitored by Centre staff. However, the social environment inside Ben's Centre is very important for everyone and therefore any aggressive or disruptive clients may be asked to sober up somewhat outside before being granted access.

Ben's centre also provides activities and enrichment opportunities that are just for clients to enjoy and are not centred around recovery or housing. Many of their clients have low self-esteem, so it is beneficial to provide games and music that can instil joy and a sense of pride.



## Pathways of Chesterfield

**Pathways of Chesterfield is the only drop-in centre for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness living in Chesterfield.**

### Services

Pathways is primarily a housing support service, providing 1:1 guidance to clients seeking emergency housing, local authority housing, housing association support and private rented accommodation. Pathways is an independent charity and provides around 200 housing interventions per month. They also provide 1:1 sessions with a benefits advisor, assisting clients in completing forms and accessing emergency payments. Pathways host a Citizens Advice Clinic where professional Money Skills Coaches advise clients on budgeting and on setting up bank accounts through 1:1 sessions.

As well as housing and finance services, Pathways also provides crisis management services. Pathways run a free breakfast for rough sleepers twice a week, providing a hot full English, with cereal, yoghurt and fruit. On Tuesdays a hot lunch is served at Pathways' social group. The centre provides emergency clothing, shoes and toiletries, as well as having a partnership with a local gym where clients can take a voucher to use the showers. Pathways have a specialist nurse on site who provides physical and mental health care which is a real benefit to the project, as around 90% of clients disclose a mental health difficulty. The centre's Outreach Worker tries to engage Chesterfield's rough sleepers who aren't currently accessing services, and can also visit recently housed clients to provide ongoing tenancy support, helping them to stay housed. Their Volunteer Activity Coordinator facilitates activities to develop clients' skills.

### Food provision

Pathways provide breakfast to between 3 and 18 people twice a week and provide a hot lunch for between 5 and 16 people once a week. The large variation in attendees can depend on various factors, from what other services are being provided in Chesterfield on those days to the weather, but it makes it difficult for Pathways to predict the food quantities needed. If meals are left over, Pathways ensures that these are taken away by service users or volunteers, or given out at drop-ins. Equally, if they have leftover bread and pastries clients are encouraged to take these away as informal food parcels, but clients are directed to the nearest food bank for official food parcels. Pathways source the food they need for their three weekly meals through various means:

- **The majority of Pathways' food is bought by the centre. Pathways have a weekly food budget of around £40 and spend this on fresh ingredients like vegetables and meat**
- **Donations during Harvest time of dried and tinned goods**
- **FareShare Go connects Pathways to a local supermarket from whom food is collected every Monday, though this is mainly surplus bread, pastries and occasionally a box of fruit**
- **Through Neighbourly, Pathways receive occasional surplus food donations from a high street department store (See Appendix.2)**

The breakfast at Pathways is a very useful tool for helping people to progress; first-time visitors are more likely to attend a breakfast than an advice session, as breakfast appears low-pressure and less formal. Once a client has come in for breakfast, staff and volunteers are able to approach them and invite them to stay after breakfast for the drop-in sessions. Staff and volunteers are then able to assess the personal needs of a client and get them to the right advisor.



## The Sunday Centre

**The Sunday Centre fills a food aid gap on a Sunday afternoon, when other charities in Sheffield's centre which can offer food at other times in the week are closed. It is an independent charity that provides a safe and warm environment with opportunities to socialise for those who are vulnerable and/or homeless.**

### Services

The project's main services are providing hot drinks, soup and a hot two-course meal every Sunday afternoon and distributing informal food parcels. The centre also has recreational facilities including snooker tables, table football, board games and books. They have a small clothes bank, provide general hygiene products and women's sanitary products. Sunday Centre volunteers lend a listening ear to guests' problems and signpost people on to more appropriate services, but are not themselves an advice service. They have strong links with the Cathedral Archer Project and often signpost guests there for comprehensive help.

### Food provision

In terms of food provision, the Sunday centre has usually served around 80 free meals each Sunday. Their guest numbers have recently risen to 90 and if numbers are sustained at 90, their food spend will need to increase to meet the increased level of need. They create large one-pot meals with a meat and equivalent vegetarian option. It is important for them to serve everyone the same dish, as it reduces any potential meal envy. Additionally, the Sunday Centre recognise that Sunday is usually a social day for eating with family, which they try to emulate through volunteers and guests all sharing the same meal. They distribute food parcels which always contain bread, a piece of fruit and a sweet treat, with a variety of other items, depending on donations.

They source the food they need through various means:

- **The majority of the food is bought by the centre, sourced from local butchers, wholesalers, markets and supermarkets. The centre receives weekly donations of bread from a local bakery**
- **They receive a weekly donation of pastries from a high street bakery**
- **When surplus is available, the Sunday Centre receives fresh fruit and vegetables from an urban harvesting group**
- **Tins and dried goods are donated by the public during Harvest time or collection drives**

The Sunday Centre does not have a catering grade dishwasher and therefore meals are served with disposable plates and cutlery in order to meet hygiene standards. The cost of food, consumables and disposables comes to £191 per week. A key volunteer buys and collects the food each week, using their own vehicle. Only cooking one day a week, having limited storage space and only having a short window of time in which they can use the premises to cook means it is difficult for them to utilise surplus food, hence the need to buy in most of the food they serve.

The Sunday Centre tries to enable anyone to enter the project. They welcome people in who are under the influence, with the knowledge that those who are addicts are most likely to have not eaten anything else that day. Those who cannot stand up, and could hurt themselves entering the dining hall are brought a hot meal to eat outside with a volunteer. People with dogs are welcome to eat outside too.

While the Sunday Centre is restricted in the variety of meals it can provide - as they cannot bake, roast, steam or grill - they do ask guests over mealtimes for their feedback and preferences. It was as a result of guest feedback that the meal time was brought forward from 3pm to 2pm, as people who had not eaten breakfast struggled to wait until 3pm.



## Meeting Point Christ Church Armley

**Meeting Point is a project which aims to provide for the needs of Leeds' refugees and asylum seekers, working with them towards social integration. They try to empower people to take ownership of the project, with many beneficiaries of Meeting Point also volunteering at the project. Meeting Point is an independent charity, part of Christ Church Armley Community Projects Limited.**

### Services

Meeting Point runs a drop-in session every Monday between 3pm and 6pm, allowing people to socialise and access a variety of services:

- A hot meal serving 100 people, refreshments and food parcels
- Pay-as-you-feel clothing, household items and children's toys
- Sanitary products
- Advocacy work and support with writing letters, applications and sourcing doctors or solicitors as needed
- A language café where volunteers who are TEFL trained and/or qualified teachers help teach English
- Free hairdressing and barbers' services run by volunteers
- Free computer access
- Pool table and other recreational facilities including a children's room with games and toys

A help and advice appointment service runs on Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10am-2pm where volunteers will help service users to access benefits and financial entitlements. Volunteers can also accompany service users to meetings if desired.

A women's group runs every Wednesday afternoon where refugee and asylum-seeking women can come together, make friends and feel safe and supported. A hot meal is prepared by members and around 30 meals are made. Women can partake in activities together such as knitting, sewing, cooking, arts and crafts, singing, computer use, and outings. The group aims to improve women's well-being, build self-confidence and self-esteem while developing new skills.

Meeting Point also runs additional educational and wellbeing groups such as English classes and an allotment group. Various day trips are organised to local museums, parks, nearby countryside and seaside towns, and every two years a weekend residential is organised for a larger group. Packed lunches and cooked meals are provided on these trips.

### Food provision

All food provision at Meeting Point is free. Volunteers cook the Monday drop-in meal every other week, and on the alternate weeks the meal is prepared off-site, brought in and funded by a UK charity. Whilst the charity-delivered meal provides a welcome decrease in their food expenditure, Meeting Point also feel that the fortnightly cooking is important for service users' social development and for feeling a part of the project. Meals mostly consist of a large curry with a salad option, dessert and fruit. There is always a vegetarian option and the meat option is halal where possible. Volunteers are asked what they would like to cook that week and anything needed that hasn't been donated will be bought. Meeting Point has an annual food budget of around £1,000.

Food for the food parcels is sorted and arranged on a long table, with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. Service users then pick their own food parcel items from the table. Volunteers pre-label the food with the maximum number of each item that service users should take, in order to try and make it as fair as possible and with the process not favouring first arrivals. All asylum seekers are entitled to a free food parcel, no matter what stage of the asylum process they are at.

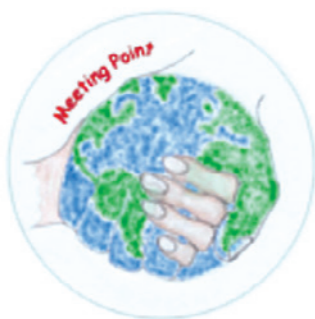
Various means are used to acquire food for these services:

- **FareShare Go scheme partners them with two supermarkets from whom they collect surplus fresh produce**
- **Neighbourly scheme partners them with another supermarket from whom they collect surplus**
- **Tinned and dried goods are donated by churches, individuals and community groups**
- **Fresh fruit and vegetables are donated from individuals' allotments**
- **Meeting Point's own allotment provides fresh produce for drop-in and food parcels**
- **They have links with an adult care home which has a bakery as part of their social provision and who donate bread and scones**
- **A local bread co-operative drop off any surplus they have from country markets over the weekend**
- **Meeting Point will purchase items they need that haven't been donated, e.g. meat, rice and oil**

Due to the large number of meals produced at the drop-in, volunteers start preparing from 11am, with food served at 4.30 pm, which is late enough for children to attend after school, allowing families to eat together. Meeting Point try to incorporate as many fresh fruits and vegetables where possible, to produce a nutritionally dense meal; this is valuable to everyone but is particularly beneficial for service users with HIV, immune deficiencies and iron deficiency anaemia. At the drop-in, service users queue up to the servery and are helped to a portion of whichever meal they'd like, then sit at communal tables with volunteers and staff. Meeting point try to cater to people with special dietary requirements as best they can, but it can be difficult compiling a food parcel for those with specialist needs. Service users are asked to write a list of things they can eat so that Meeting Point can try to source these for them, or hardship payments are sometimes arranged so that these clients can purchase the food they specifically need themselves.

Meeting point welcomes feedback from its service users, whether verbally, through their comment drop-box or their annual feedback questionnaire. It is important to

the staff at Meeting Point for the clients to feel empowered in shaping the project, although some desired changes are currently financially unattainable, such as holding the drop-in more frequently and reimbursing more bus fares.



## Sheffield Mencap and Gateway

**Sheffield Mencap and Gateway is a charity for children and adults with substantial to critical learning difficulties. Mencap aims to improve the lives of people with a learning disability and increase the opportunities available to them in their local areas. Mencap is a national charity with a network of around 300 member groups currently operating over England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Local groups adopt the name Mencap in order to demonstrate their shared vision and values, but operate as independent charities with their own governance and strategy. Local groups that pay to be members of the Mencap network are supported, receiving resources, guides, workshops, training sessions, opportunities to network and connect with other groups and use of Mencap branding.**

### Services

Sheffield Mencap and Gateway provide a supportive environment where people with learning difficulties can develop their soft and hard skills through physical activities, educational sessions, art, drama, music, cooking, ICT, sensory play and games. They help build the confidence of their service users and support their integration and interaction with the wider community. They also provide support and social activities for the parents and carers of people with learning difficulties.

Various groups and activities are managed including a women's group, snooker, bowling, youth, walking, fitness and football. The monthly Sunday lunch club provides a Sunday roast and a game of bingo for older adults with learning difficulties and/or older parents and carers of those with learning difficulties.

### Food provision

Mencap started a community café in 2016 with the aim of encouraging interaction between their members and the general public. They trialled the café in two different locations in the community, but due to issues around footfall at those locations, they now run the café from their day centre. Service users are supported by volunteers and staff to cook lunch using surplus food, providing low-cost nutritious meals for members twice a week, along with their family and carers as well as staff and local residents. The café provides numerous and varied opportunities to upskill service users; learning how to prepare food in the kitchen, about food hygiene and safety, experience with cooking, serving and using a till, and generally improving their confidence and social skills. Around two members of staff and two volunteers assist 10 members in carrying out each lunch service, where 40-50 meals are served. Mencap feels the café is a great celebration and testament to what members can achieve.

The lunch service runs from 1pm-2pm, with food preparation starting at 11am. There is usually a soup, a salad bar, a main course, dessert and fruit available. Meals are priced at around £1.50 to £2, covering the cost of any additional foodstuffs purchased by the service. There is always a vegetarian option and often a halal option. The variety of food types is important for members who have sensory needs or issues with swallowing.

Projects around service users' food memories are explored and personal favourites are cooked, involving service users in decisions around menu choices, whilst international food projects see food from different countries studied and cooked each week; these projects are really important for opening members up to new foods, textures and tastes to try to improve the variety of their diets. Service users often eat the same meal repeatedly and for some, their cooking ability is restricted to microwavable meals. A disproportionate number of people living with learning difficulties struggle with obesity and type two diabetes. Additionally, the majority of people who attend are benefit dependent. Therefore, it is really important that the food in the café is affordable and nutritious, as Mencap don't want their guests making poor nutritional choices based on financial restrictions.

As well as teaching members how to

cook nutritious food from scratch in the café, Mencap runs a group called the Shine Project which focuses on educating service users on diet, health and nutrition, such as what makes a balanced meal, portion control, healthy options and healthier alternatives. They also give recipe tips to encourage their more independent service users to cook more healthily at home, and work with the parents and carers on nutrition for the less independent service users.

Various means are used to acquire the food needed:

- **FareShare deliver surplus food to Mencap once a week. This provides a variety of foodstuffs, sometimes including higher priced items like smoked salmon, which guests wouldn't usually be able to afford**
- **FareShare GO connects them to a local supermarket from whom they collect surplus food around once a week. These tend to be mostly processed baked goods**
- **Mencap receive donations from other charities**
- **They grow produce themselves in their garden and greenhouse, which provides them with seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables**
- **They buy a small number of items which they don't receive through donations**

Service users are able to achieve accredited AQA entry-level qualifications with units in kitchen safety and food hygiene, receiving certificates and gaining recognition for the work they do.

Mencap's wish is for the café to have more community engagement and hopefully one day be based away from the day centre again. Being based in the community would allow service users to gain experience interacting with the public, strengthening their social communication skills. The café would also hope to raise the visibility of people with learning difficulties in the community and break down stigma.



## FareShare Yorkshire

**FareShare is a national charity that intercepts surplus food from the food industry, sorts it in their 21 regional centres and redistributes it to charities and groups who feed people in need. Three of the regional centres are managed directly by FareShare and the others are run by third-party independent charities. FareShare Yorkshire is supported by FareShare, which uses its fundraising budget to pay hauliers to transport surplus food, but is an independent charity with a track record of twenty years. FareShare Yorkshire supports 220 charities and groups in Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley, Doncaster, Huddersfield, Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Halifax and York. FareShare Yorkshire currently intercept and distribute over 740 tonnes of surplus food annually.**

### Services

Charities and groups apply to be FareShare Yorkshire members, paying a subscription fee of between £14-20 per week, dependent on their financial situation and whether they have it delivered. For this subscription, charities receive on average between £200-£300 retail value worth of food per week depending on their needs and preferences. 90% of the charities who subscribe to this system choose to have their food delivered to them. Charities are able to dictate preferences relating to their specific project's needs, in terms of quantity and type of food, as well as the ratio of fresh to ambient to long-life goods. This enables charities to reduce some of the randomness which comes with relying on surplus food and helps limit any potential waste. For instance, school breakfast clubs are able to specify that they require, milk, bread, cereal, yoghurt and fruit, ensuring they won't be sent any vegetables or meat that they would struggle to make use of.

FareShare also has a system called FareShare Go, using technology based on that developed by the Irish company FoodCloud. Under this scheme, FareShare link charities with local supermarkets, who send a text alert to member charities when they have surplus end-of-day food available. The charity can then reply if they would like to collect that food from the supermarket on that day. FareShare Go is free of charge for charities, but they must collect the food themselves from the store, and there is no option to request particular foodstuffs this way, so whilst the service is free there is less consistency and less variation in the foods available in comparison to the service provided by FareShare's core membership scheme. Charities also have to organise their own logistics of staff/volunteers to collect the food.

FareShare carries out checks on charities before they partner with them to make sure they meet the Food Standards Agency's health regulations necessary to store and cook food.

Food delivery and sorting process: Large supermarkets and food producers deliver their surplus straight to the Yorkshire warehouses in Barnsley and Leeds. 95% of the food that enters the warehouse is delivered to them, and the other 5% is collected by FareShare Yorkshire locally,

backhauled in their own vans. They receive deliveries to the warehouse from supermarkets daily and weekly, and from large food production companies when they have surplus.

In terms of food collection, this was previously a difficult area owing to the size of FareShare Yorkshire's vans, which could only fit around 25-50% of the available food being offered at pick-ups. In 2018, FareShare Yorkshire received a grant of £75,000 from WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) to fund a 7.5 tonne second-hand lorry, along with the salary of a full-time licensed driver, transport co-ordinator and the associated fuel costs. This lorry makes it financially viable for FareShare Yorkshire to pick up higher numbers of smaller volumes of food more regularly from local businesses, factories and farms. Previously, it would be too cost-ineffective to pay a haulier to deliver half-filled pallets whereas now, they are aiming to double the volume of food they intercept and ensure less food goes to waste. This is one of the first transport solutions to food waste in the UK and it is hoped that other regional centres will link up to share the costs of their own 7.5 tonne lorries.

A supermarket has also provided a van and a driver to FareShare Yorkshire for the main purpose of delivering fresh fruit and vegetables to Trussell Trust food banks, in order to improve the nutritional content of food parcels in Yorkshire.

When food arrives in the warehouse it is quickly sorted by volunteers from FareShare Yorkshire's employability programme and logged using their online system, GLADYS (Gather, Log And Distribute Your Surpluses). The system monitors the newly arrived food, the inventory, stock rotation, allocation of food to charity members, returns, sufficient information to make emergency recalls on behalf of food companies, transfers between regional centres and waste disposal. GLADYS also logs charities' information regarding the number of beneficiaries, meals and food parcels they cater for. FareShare Yorkshire staff are then able to create order sheets using their records of what charities want and need, whilst focussing on quickly allocating stock with the shortest shelf-life. This creates a very efficient system where charities' needs are met and waste in the warehouse is reduced. Volunteers use the order sheets to make up trays for charities, which are then delivered. 90% of charity

members choose to have their food delivered by FareShare Yorkshire and 10% of charities pick up from the warehouse.

On average less than 5% of food is wasted at the warehouse, most commonly from when lorries have had travel delays. Food unfortunately, can then arrive spoiled, either past its date or from being stored too long at incorrect temperatures. Any meat-free surplus that cannot be given to charities is sent to become pig feed. Any products containing meat are sent for anaerobic digestion at a nearby food waste recycling company, though FareShare Yorkshire has to cover the cost of this.

Employability Programme: In 2017 FareShare Yorkshire launched a volunteer programme. They enrol marginalised people who would generally be excluded from standard workplaces, such as people with learning difficulties, people who are unskilled or have low-level literacy, people with long periods of unemployment and people who have criminal records. They enrol people from the Job Centre, Mencap, Autism Plus, The Prince's Trust and from the charities they deliver food to.

Around 75 volunteers per year learn how to sort and organise the warehouse, make up orders and dispatch orders to charities. Initially, they are helped to understand the importance of food hygiene and manual handling and they can then volunteer for up to three days per week. At the end of their training period, they can also take two different forklift truck qualifications on-site funded by charitable grants. As well as gaining qualifications, the employability programme is really successful in building on volunteers' soft skills in terms of communication, confidence and professionalism. Some volunteers stay on longer-term as they enjoy it so much, whilst some go on to paid work in other warehouses or jobs. This volunteer programme allows FareShare Yorkshire to manage the costs of running the warehouse but also helps people in the local vicinity who need opportunities and skills. It enables FareShare Yorkshire to have a greater local impact and opens doors for people.





## The Food Chain

**The Food Chain is an independent charity providing crisis nutrition support for people living with HIV in London. The Food Chain's service users are mostly people who live on the margins of health and wellbeing.**

**People with HIV can struggle to access the food they need to stay healthy because of ill health, finances, isolation, depression leading to a lack of motivation to eat well, or limited skills or know how.**

**Even with antiretroviral drugs, a good diet is essential for people living with HIV, as otherwise the immune system cannot rebuild itself or protect itself from infections, weight loss and muscle wasting. Appropriate nutrition can also help the absorption and effectiveness of medication. During 2017, the Food Chain provided support for 493 people. The average weekly household income for the families supported was £69.65, with 18 households having no household income at all at the time of referral.**

**With poverty and health so interconnected, the quality of life of someone living with HIV can deteriorate very quickly and seriously from a small change in health or finances.**



### Services

Clients must be formally referred to The Food Chain by a healthcare professional, social worker or other HIV organisation. Once referred, beneficiaries have a phone call with one of the Food Chain's dieticians who are HIV specialists. The dieticians learn of their current health situation, medical needs, housing situation, available cooking facilities, if they have dependents, allergies, and any cultural and/or dietary preferences. The dietician can then provide a personalised nutrition care plan which involves a combination of their services.

As well as accessing the food provision services detailed below, service users can also partake in craft activities, gardening with a local community garden and exercise with a gym membership organised in partnership with the YMCA.

### Food provision

**Grocery deliveries:** The Food Chain oversees online supermarket grocery deliveries to the homes of their service users, who can use this service once in a 12-month period, or again in exceptional circumstances. 732 grocery deliveries were arranged to people's homes in 2017, representing 22,911 meals. Clients in nutritional crisis, but who are well enough to cook, will receive three grocery hampers over three weeks each with a value of £40, free of charge. Those in financial crisis will receive a single grocery hamper costing £50, free of charge.

The contents of the grocery parcels are made up in line with the needs and preferences of clients, as stated in their initial one to one talk with a dietician. The items in the grocery parcels are tailored to whether people need to gain, maintain or lose weight, and what cooking equipment they can affordably use. Beneficiaries with young children can also receive additional formula milk where needed.

The Food Chain uses the supermarket with the widest delivery reach in London and with the simplest ordering system for their needs. Food Chain get the best value out of the supermarket hampers by selecting own brand products and using accrued loyalty card points. Having a well-known supermarket deliver to clients' homes maintains anonymity and confidentiality which is important, as to not disclose their

HIV status in front of neighbours. If someone is homeless and does not have an address to deliver to, they can go in person to The Food Chain regularly to pick up smaller amounts of food. After a client's first grocery delivery, they are called to discuss how they found it and if their next delivery is in need of changes.

**Ready-cooked meals:** For clients in acute health need who are too unwell to prepare their own meals, Food Chain can deliver ready-made nutritionally tailored meals. Seven days' worth of prepared meals and extra groceries are delivered per week, for a maximum of six weeks in any 12 month period, to aid recovery or whilst long-term support is arranged. The Food Chain can also prepare frozen meals for clients who have been referred whilst still in hospital, ready for when they are discharged.

**Eating Positively:** This is a series of cookery classes led by The Food Chain's dieticians and chefs for HIV positive people and/or their families and carers. Classes are free but participants have to be referred. Four classes are held over four weeks, covering: An Introduction to nutrition and HIV; Eating well on a budget to manage symptoms and side-effects; How to keep your heart healthy; Reducing your risk of diabetes. Each session follows a simple structure of listening to talks about the theory behind nutrition and good HIV health, watching a cooking demonstration, preparing a recipe together and eating the meal communally at the end of the session. An evaluation form is completed after each cooking class reflecting on the topic covered.

The cookery classes aim to increase people's confidence in the kitchen, so that they can translate their new nutrition knowledge into their own cooking at home. They aim to upskill people so they can better manage their own health, reducing their risk of developing further health complications. Resources such as nutrition information sheets and recipe cards are given out, which supports the transition of putting what they learnt from the cookery classes into practice at home. The classes also act as a great social tool; preparing a meal together and sharing food experiences are effective in breaking down barriers between people. The classes enable people living with HIV to meet people with similar experiences, socialise in small groups and make relationships with one another.

**Eating Together:** This is a socially focussed lunch club for people living with HIV. A hot two-course meal is served twice a week to around 20 beneficiaries. To attend Eating Together, clients must have a referral from a healthcare professional, social worker or other HIV organisation, and attendance is for a maximum of three months. Membership can be paused if a client knows they will not be able to attend for a few weeks, enabling them to still access a full 12 weeks' worth of meals. These meals are free and The Food Chain will reimburse Oyster card receipts to and from the meal, facilitating those in tough financial situations to attend.

The lunch club begins with newspapers, coffee, tea, fruit and volunteer support, followed by internal and external speakers who talk for example on HIV, wellbeing & mental health or nutrition. The meal is served around 1.00pm and there are always three meal options including a vegetarian option. People queue at the servery to choose their meal. Second portions and dessert are offered, and any leftovers are boxed up to take away. Staff and volunteers eat amongst service users which gives everyone a chance to get to know one another. Often mealtimes are when service users disclose if they are struggling with something and the Food Chain team can then signpost them to other services such as housing, benefits, or medical support.

The kitchen manager is a chef, as are some of the volunteers. All volunteers undergo an induction that covers kitchen skills and safety, as well as mental health awareness and how to support service users. Volunteers must acquire a food hygiene qualification. Dieticians work alongside the chefs to create nutritious meals to meet the needs of their service users. Meals are planned on a seasonal cycle and the kitchen manager ensures they are varied and nutritionally balanced. Often service users return as volunteers, when in a better situation. The Food Chain has a volunteer program where new people shadow and follow older volunteers who are trained mentors. Some volunteers have eventually gone on to paid employment in the food sector.

**Sunday FoodCycle:** On Sundays, a team from the charity FoodCycle volunteers at the Food Chain to produce a three-course vegetarian meal. The meal is cooked from

scratch and involves lots of fresh vegetables and fruit, however, it is not as nutritionally guided by HIV specialist dieticians as the Eating Together meal is. The FoodCycle meal is free and there is no limit to how long you can attend, but travel expenses can't be reimbursed. Friends, carers, family and children are also welcomed. The Sunday meal acts as a great long-term social space for Food Chain members, even after they have improved their health and do not need the other core services anymore. Good relationships are formed at Food Chain and this meal acts as a free space to maintain those relationships.

Various means are used to acquire food for the Eating Together meal and FoodCycle meal:

- A local greengrocer donates its surplus
- FareShare Go links The Food Chain with a local supermarket
- The Food Chain occasionally pick up surplus from another supermarket
- A London-based surplus food redistribution charity drop off surplus food every Monday
- The Food Chain receive donations of food from A London based cooperative supermarket
- Donations of food from individuals and companies

The Food Chain carries out informal discussion groups about ideas and improvements to services/ meals, and a formal impact evaluation where clients rate their health and wellbeing before and after using the Food Chain's service, using the EQ-5D scale used by the NHS. Satisfaction ratings and comments about services are recorded.

## Cracking Good Food

**Cracking Good Food is an independent non-profit social enterprise that aims to get more people cooking and eating nutritious food. They run cookery courses for paying members of the public that helps support their core running costs, enabling them to deliver their community outreach work. Of the work they do, over 70% is community outreach work.**

### Services

**COOKBank:** This is a two-day course designed to empower communities with the knowledge to set up their own community cooking clubs. These courses are aimed at anyone interested in developing a good food culture in their community but who need structure and support in setting up a project. Past attendees have varied from community leaders, housing association workers to anyone else passionate about getting more people engaged to cook affordable healthy food, communally, socially and safely.

Attendees are taught about setting up their own cooking club, how to reduce start-up costs such as how to acquire cooking equipment needed cheaply, how to be resourceful and creative when it comes to cooking, about the importance of good food for health and wellbeing, about portion size, about seasonality and how to utilise freezers and stock cupboards to their full potential, and what the barriers are to people cooking nutritious food cheaply and how they can help overcome these problems. Attendees then partake in a group cooking session and receive written resources to take away with them.

**Upskilling School Cooks:** Cracking Good Food visit school kitchens and their catering staff, running sessions with them in order to try to improve the quality of school meals. They understand the pressure schools are under due to budget cuts, but try and show them simple and affordable techniques to increase the school dinner's nutritional content. They show how simple it can be to make things from scratch, reducing the amount of pre-made processed products used in school kitchens. Cooking things from scratch gives the cooks more control over the salt, sugar and oil content of the food they produce, as well as giving them opportunities to 'hide' nutritious ingredients into recipes such as finely chopped vegetables and lentils etc. They teach the cooks different ways of preparing and presenting vegetables in order to make them more palatable for children, increasing the amount of veg eaten at dinner time and reducing the amount of food wastage. They also try to reinvigorate the cooks to get them excited about and proud of the food they serve.

**Tackling Food Waste:** Cracking Good Food run sessions in local schools where they aim to change attitudes towards food waste. Children are taught about the global impact of food waste and are educated on the misconceptions around use-by dates. Cracking Good Food carry out interactive cooking classes with the school children in the school's food technology facilities, teaching them how to cook with food considered past its best. Whilst most food waste does occur higher up in the food system, a significant proportion of food waste happens in the home. This scheme hopes to educate young people about food waste with the hope they will waste less food when they become adults, and that they will also encourage their parents to waste less food in the home.

**YoungCanCook:** This is a cooking course run for parents and their children to learn how to cook together. The aim is to instil better eating practices at home, by showing easy ways to cook nutritious foods from scratch and the enjoyment that can be gained from eating together at the end.

**Cooking with Hostels:** Cracking Good Food has worked with hostels where users are on the brink of homelessness, teaching people in the hostel how to cook on extremely tight budgets with the equipment available in the communal hostel kitchens. This not only upskills people but also increases people's confidence and acts as a good social activity.

**Cooking with food banks:** Cracking good food ran a pilot with an organisation called the Bread and Butter Thing. The Bread and Butter Thing collect surplus food direct from supermarkets and from FareShare and bring it to food banks in Manchester. For a small fee, people are able to collect three bags of shopping, one of fresh fruit and vegetables, one of dried goods and one of dairy, meat and fish. Cracking Good Food recognised that not all users would be familiar with how to cook everything in their bags and so set up cooking demonstrations at the foodbank showing people how they could combine ingredients in their three bags to make meals. They also carried out questionnaires asking people which items they were unsure how to cook with. Rather than teaching people specific recipes, this scheme focused on what those

people currently had and how they could be creative to make these ingredients into enjoyable meals.

Additionally, Cracking Good Food currently has a chef working on a cookbook with recipes that only require using a microwave and toaster. Fuel poverty and limited kitchen equipment are real limitations to cooking and this collection of recipes aims to help people in hardship create good meals with the facilities they have.

Cracking Good Food use donated surplus food in their community cooking classes and buys ingredients for the Cookery Schools. They source their food from local independent shops to promote a stronger local economy. They promote seasonality as a low-carbon, fresher and cheaper alternative to food sourced from further afield. They promote eating resourcefully by using all of a food item and not just part of it. They encourage the cooking of leftovers to minimise food waste. Everything is composted afterwards.

Cracking Good Food is currently working as part of the Greater Manchester Food Poverty Alliance. The GMPA have highlighted various aspects of food poverty that need to be addressed immediately. Cracking Good Food is involved with helping to address the skills and training aspect. Within this they aim to:

- Increase cooking skills and nutrition information for adults and children across Greater Manchester by improving access to courses and sources of information
- Increase the awareness of programmes through General Practitioners, health service staff, Jobcentre staff, housing associations, councils, schools, faith organisations, Age UK and food banks in all communities in Manchester
- Help to advertise and increase the employment opportunities available linked to food and catering
- Promote access to food growing opportunities and healthy food for all communities via distribution links and allotments

Cracking Good Food, as part of the GMPA, are working with industry professionals, organisations and academics, but are most interested in the views of people who have experienced food poverty. Cracking Good Food believe that no one knows the problems faced by those in food poverty better than those people themselves and so they should be the people who drive the conversation.



## FoodCycle

**FoodCycle is a national charity with 39 projects running across England. Five of these projects are run in Sheffield; Sheffield Gleadless, Firth Park, Lowedges, Sharrow and St Bart's. This makes Sheffield the most FoodCycle dense city after London. FoodCycle's goal is a society where no one is hungry or lonely. It is a volunteer-led charity, where surplus food is cooked into large community meals, for anyone and everyone to enjoy. FoodCycle's guests are diverse and everyone has their own reasons for attending, whether that be a need for a hot nutritious meal, a desire to eat in the company of others or a desire to meet new people and make connections within their community.**



The majority of FoodCycle projects are directly launched by FoodCycle. FoodCycle identifies areas that could benefit from a project and works with community venues there to launch a meal. Already established groups with a community kitchen space can apply to become a FoodCycle Project, paying annual fees to receive membership and ongoing support from FoodCycle Central in London. These membership fees fund two-day induction training in how to set up a successful project, an operations manual, training resources and materials. Projects have a partnership manager that are contactable for advice and guidance over phone and email and through site visits. Being able to use the FoodCycle brand helps projects to foster relationships with large retailers and helps to secure funding. Membership fees also give projects access to online volunteer management system as well as annual impact measurements.

In Sheffield, all FoodCycle projects are run by an umbrella organisation called TimeBuilders. TimeBuilders has the franchise for running FoodCycle projects in Sheffield and most of the project management is provided by TimeBuilders staff rather than FoodCycle regional staff. TimeBuilders runs community meals, workshops, gardening projects, community groups, English classes in Sheffield and supports volunteers in delivering these different projects. TimeBuilders creates an alternative economy, exchanging skills rather than a monetary currency. For an hour volunteering at any of their activities, such as cooking, clearing up or helping to put tables away at a FoodCycle, people are given a time credit. Time credits can be exchanged for other community meals run by TimeBuilders. Additionally, social activities are organised that can be paid for with time credits such as a day trips to other cities. This enables those who wouldn't necessarily be able to eat out in the company of others frequently or pay for social activities normally, to partake in them. It also reduces the perception of receiving charity as they have 'worked' for their time credit and been included in an alternative exchange economy.

### Food provision

All FoodCycle projects in Sheffield run one meal a week each. Volunteers make a three-course meal from scratch entirely out of surplus food. Projects are run in very similar ways with only slight differences in how the food is served. All guests are first welcomed with hot drinks fruit or pastries. The meal at Sharrow is served in family-style large dishes at communal tables, eating along with other guests and volunteers. This style of serving is very effective in helping guests to start conversations with one another, as well as creating an atmosphere of togetherness. The meals at St Bart's and Gleadless both have waitress service rather than family style service, due to a number of practicalities including the availability of serving dishes, washing up facilities and the desire to make guests feel waited on. Lowedges FoodCycle meal is run slightly differently, as guests queue up to a servery to choose their meal. This system works better at this project, due to the large proportion of families with children who attend. Going up to the servery to choose exactly what and how much the children would like to eat reduces any food waste through fussy eating.

The meals created are entirely vegetarian, allowing them to be culturally inclusive. Not using surplus meat and fish also limits potentially dangerous food contamination, enabling a mix of experienced and less experienced volunteers to cook safely in the kitchen. These meals are free, but collection pots are left on tables for people to donate if they can and want to. FoodCycle doesn't advertise the meals as pay-as-you-feel, as they want everyone to feel welcome. They are aware many of their guests would struggle to give any donation at all, and so don't want to alienate those people who are most in need of food.

Volunteers and guests are encouraged to collect and donate Tupperware, so any cooked food not served can be boxed up and taken home for people to eat later that day. Any fresh produce that isn't cooked into the meals, is placed at a front table for people to take home anything they want. This gives everyone access to free nutritious produce. When projects have small quantities of packaged goods that can't be cooked into meals, FoodCycle set up informal shops; mini pay-as-you-feel supermarkets. Goods such as boxes of chocolates, cereal bars, crisps, single tins and

readymade sauces are laid out for anyone to buy in exchange for a donation. Donations are expected for these goods as they are in good condition and are not particularly nutritionally dense.

Various means are used to acquire food for these services:

- Each FoodCycle project has their own local links with local suppliers and greengrocers
- FareShare Go connects them with two local supermarkets who text them when they have surplus for collection
- Neighbourly connects them with two further supermarkets who contact them when surplus is available for collection
- Another supermarket contacts the FoodCycles directly when they have surplus
- Some produce from St Barts' allotment is used in the FoodCycle meals.

None of the Sheffield FoodCycles have any of their own transport, they rely on volunteers going on foot and using their own cars to collect the food needed. Each project has their own storage and cooking facilities, but they do informally share food between projects. Projects with larger storage facilities sometimes set fresh food aside which they know their project will not be able to fully make immediate use of, and take it to a project for cooking the following day. Additionally, if one FoodCycle collects an abundance of a certain food, volunteers will try to share this abundance across projects.

As the FoodCycle projects that just run one meal a week, it is not financially viable for them to pay for a FareShare delivery, as they would receive more food than they were able to utilise, store or freeze.

However, the unpredictability of food collections can be seen as one of FoodCycle's strengths. For volunteers, making a three-course meal together from a random selection of food acts as a big problem-solving activity. Volunteers have to work together as a team which encourages social bond formation, as well as allowing volunteers to be creative and have fun with food. It also encourages learning about different backgrounds, as numerous volunteers can look at the same selection of ingredients and think of entirely different recipes from their culture.

# Abundance

**Abundance is a non-profit, co-operatively run, constituted urban harvesting group based in Sheffield. They aim to bring people together and reconnect communities with food through rescuing, sharing, and preserving fruit that would otherwise be wasted. They work on the premise of labour exchange, whereby anyone who helps is entitled to take some fruit, chutney or juice away with them. There are Abundance groups all over the UK which share the same aims, but each group is run independently. Many of the charities interviewed noted that often the surplus food they receive from supermarkets is processed or low in nutritional value. Abundance showcases how organic surplus fresh produce can be accessed for free and works to get fresh produce to those who could benefit from it the most.**



## Services

Alongside the donation services and workshops detailed below, Abundance trains volunteers in how to scout out fruit trees, how to harvest and prune trees and how to run the workshops. Lead volunteers are trained in safe harvesting, health and safety and food hygiene. Abundance also works with community groups, advising them on how to run their own abundance style projects in their areas.

## Food provision

In 2017, Abundance volunteers rescued over 3 tonnes of fruit and shared 1.3 tonnes with 71 community groups. They donate to any group whose members would benefit from fresh produce. This has included but isn't limited to:

- Real Junk Food Project cafés
- Homeless charities (including Cathedral Archer Project and unday Centre)
- Addiction charities (including Ben's Centre)
- Community cafés in socially deprived areas (Including FoodCycles)
- Elderly lunch clubs
- Community centres
- Libraries
- Nurseries

Abundance doesn't have its own transport and so relies on volunteers to deliver the produce in their personal vehicles. Deliveries to community groups are organised on an ad-hoc basis dependent on harvest times, quantities and what volunteers are available to deliver to what locations.

Abundance also run free chutney making workshops. For attending and helping to make large volumes of chutney, each person receives a recipe card and a jar of chutney to take home with them. The workshops are social events and act as good ways of meeting new people from a variety of backgrounds. The rest of the chutney is sold at £3 a jar at food festivals and fairs. They also run juicing workshops in the same way, and some apple juice at the end of the season is put aside for cider pressing.

Sourcing and sorting the fruit:

- **Abundance members sustainably pick fruit from public trees and from consenting people's private gardens. When picking a public tree, volunteers leave 1/3rd of the fruit on the tree for others in the community. When picking a private tree they leave 10% of fruit unpicked for wildlife.**
- **The fruit collected is sorted into three categories depending on the quality. 'Firsts' refer to fruit in good condition that can be stored. 'Seconds' refer to fruit that may be bruised and are used for preserving. 'Thirds' refer to fruit that is damaged and are used for juicing. Tree owners may keep as much of the firsts that they think they will personally use, and then the remaining firsts are delivered to community groups and organisations around Sheffield.**

## Food Works Sheffield

(Formerly The Real Junk Food Project Sheffield)

The Real Junk Food Project (TRJFP) is a national organisation with its 47 regional centres run independently. Regional groups apply to be members and in return receive a welcome pack with information about how similar organisations have set up in the UK and contacts for food interceptions which they agree locally. TRJFP is an environmental organisation with the overall aim to reduce food waste and create a more environmentally sustainable society.

TRJFP Sheffield has recently rebranded and crowdfunded £45,000 in order to create Sheffield's first sustainable food hub, to be known as Food Works. Food Works achieves the overall aim by intercepting and collecting surplus food, selling it in their surplus food supermarket, cooking and serving it in their two pay-as-you-feel cafes, serving it at their fine dining and bistro evenings and using it to cater for large events like weddings.

The money raised from their crowdfunding is being invested in commercial refrigeration, an onsite kitchen and securing a long-term warehouse lease. An on-site kitchen will allow them to expand upon their food preparation, product creation and training sessions. A commercial walk-in fridge/freezer will enable them to collect and store a lot more surplus food and prevent food loss in the summer months. Currently, they are using 30 donated domestic fridges which are not fit for purpose, as they are inefficient and expensive to run.



### Services

**Sharehouse Market:** The Sharehouse Market is a pay-as-you-feel supermarket where customers pay a £1 service charge and then donate what they can in return for two bags of shopping. The supermarket is arranged so customers can pick what and how much they like for items in excess. They have a managed section where a volunteer helps customers to a portion of less abundant and higher valued items, in order to not favour first arrivals. Even though very little money is received through the pay-as-you-feel supermarket, the benefit of the large social impact it has outweighs this and they offset costs by generating income from other schemes.

**Pay-as-you-feel Cafés:** Food Works has two cafés based in community centres; Citrus Café at Zest Centre (Monday-Friday) in Upperthorpe and Steeple Corner Café at the Victoria Centre (Wednesday-Friday) in Norfolk Park. Each café receives between 20-40 people a day. Steeple Corner also have bi-weekly bistro evenings.

Due to the large number of collections at a variety of different organisations, Food Works collects an abundance of nutritious food. Café ingredient deliveries and menus are impacted by the shelf life of the food in the warehouse, but generally, Food Works have the variety to supply exactly what the cafés want to cook with. Food Works has daily feedback slips and know that customers are happy with the pay-as-you-feel concept but most would like a suggested donation to guide them. The cafés, like the Sharehouse, have a huge social impact, so as long as they break even cost wise, they are happy. Both cafés are run in partnership with the venues they are held in with any surplus profits being reinvested back into the café and venue itself.

**School Education Program:** Food Works has created a paid partnership program with primary schools. An education curriculum was developed by them out covering the following themes:

- Introduction to food waste
- Origins: Where does food come from?
- Sustainability & The Environment
- Nutrition & Wellbeing
- Fairness
- Enterprise

Food Works delivers workshops and assemblies, as well as networking days for the lead contacts in the schools to come together and learn, helping them to feel confident teaching the curriculum in their classrooms. Food Works believe it is important to teach children about food waste to instil good habits from an early age. Partner schools also get a weekly delivery of surplus food, enabling the children to run a weekly surplus market stall.

**Sustainable Entrepreneurship:** Food Works works with teenagers and young adults, empowering them to be enterprising with a difference, by focussing on impact rather than solely on profit. Current collaborations include:

- Making Things Happen: University of Sheffield Enterprise
- People in Organisations in Context: Sheffield Business School
- Talent Match Enterprise

**Catering:** Food Works caters ethical and high-quality food for events covering between 20-350+ people, including weddings, parties, events, business meetings and conferences. The catering service and menu can be tailored to the customer's desires. They offer a hot and cold buffet and more formal sit-down experiences. Due to the variety of their ingredients, they can easily provide vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free dishes. All food can be delivered and served at the venue of choice.

Food Works' catering and education schemes raise the money needed to cover the organisation's collection and storage costs.

Food Works is only able to collect as much surplus as they can store in their current warehouse and fridges, which has meant turning down huge volumes of surplus food in the past. Their recent crowdfunding

will enable them to intercept much higher volumes of surplus food. They now have five full-time and four part-time members of staff which is enabling the expansion of the project. There are plans to apply for charitable status with a trading arm. Catering projects and product development will go into the trading arm, financially supporting more social projects.

Currently, the social enterprise intercepts free surplus food from all manner of organisations:

- supermarkets
- online retailers
- local businesses
- restaurants
- food banks
- wholesale markets

Food Works have 27 suppliers from whom they consistently collect food daily/ three times a week at set times. They collect surplus directly from these organisations using their three vans: an electric van, a refrigerated van donated to them by Ocado and a long-term lease hire van. Such a high number of collections means Food Works need up to 6 volunteers a day, 7 days a week collecting between 8.00 am and 3.00 pm. The logistics are organised digitally via google sheets, in order to keep the whole operation running smoothly.

All food collected gets stored and sorted in their warehouse. Deliveries are then taken from the warehouse to the Sharehouse market and their cafes. All food collected by Food Works is used by them. They intercept surplus food and utilise it themselves, they do not deliver to any other third sector organisation apart from a small number of food banks and organisations requiring bread and fresh ingredients which are paid for.

Nothing in the warehouse goes to waste. All surplus is utilised in their various services; anything too spoiled is sent to farms for livestock to eat or compost and after that, anything left is sent for anaerobic digestion. Additionally, Food Works pays to recycle all packaging that comes from the surplus from their suppliers.

# Critical Reflections

**Across all twelve of the charitable organisations visited, there were common strengths and difficulties observed.**

## Strengths

One of the most positive observations were of organisations that made active steps to mitigate any prominent hierarchy between staff/volunteers and service users. This often presented itself in the organisations asking and listening to what the clients needed and wanted. Service users should be recognised as experts of their situation and should be included in decision-making processes. This can help alleviate the feeling of ‘us and them’ that can occur within charitable structures. Being consulted and asked their opinion can also feed into service users’ feelings of self-confidence and self-worth; feeling valued at a time where they may not feel valued in other areas of their life. Additionally, gaining feedback on the projects will inevitably help improve the sustainability and longevity of them, as they work for their users.

Projects shone out that had really strong relationships with their service users, with a comprehensive understanding of their intricate and complex needs. Where these projects didn’t have the resources themselves to meet all of someone’s needs, they actively helped people to access support from a variety of other organisations or charities more specialised in those areas.

An Oxford Economics study of 8,000 people showed that after mental health problems, eating alone was the second highest contributing factor to loneliness<sup>1</sup>. Often people who feel isolated are less likely to take care of themselves or put effort into cooking healthily. In the writing of this report, we observed many projects where social support was regarded as being as important as the food provision itself. Projects that improve users’ wellbeing, in addition to providing their core services, should help build users’ self-esteem. Greater self-esteem increases the likelihood someone will take care of and value themselves.

Another common strength observed across projects was the importance with which the nutritional content of meals was regarded. Each project strived to make their meals as nutritionally balanced as they could, given their resources. Some organisations (who could afford to) would buy additional fruits and vegetables when the donated surplus they received lacked

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**An Oxford Economics study of 8,000 people showed that after mental health problems, eating alone was the second highest contributing factor to loneliness.**  
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fresh content, in order to pack their meals with vitamins and minerals. When catering for lots of people, it is difficult to cater for specific dietary needs. However, cooking the majority of things from scratch enables projects to control the nutritional content of dishes.

## Difficulties and Limitations

One of the main difficulties observed across all projects appeared to be the logistics of coordinating food collections, deliveries and volunteers. Organisations collect the majority of food themselves which involves frequent visits to various supermarkets, wholesalers and small businesses. Only two of the twelve projects interviewed have their own transportation, with the rest relying on volunteers’ personal vehicles or walking. Collecting surplus food can be a laborious task and able-bodied volunteers are needed to lift crates of food.

Different supermarkets have their own systems of coordinating the passing on of surplus food to organisations, which can cause confusion for charities when organising collections. Supermarkets often pass on their surplus at the very end of the day which can mean volunteers have to be available to pick up late in the evenings

and be able to store it until cooking. By creating relationships with independent greengrocers, bakers and restaurants etc, projects may have a better chance of persuading these businesses to deliver their surplus to them instead.

Due to the nature of surplus food, collections can be random and inconsistent. The quantities and nutritional content of food can vary massively between collections. The same supermarket might donate a variety of surplus fresh fruit and vegetables and dairy one week, and the next week might give processed baked goods. This can create challenges for charities in terms of planning and cooking balanced meals.

Limited storage and freezing facilities can hinder organisations, leading to them having to make smaller, more frequent collections. A high level of organisation is necessary to coordinate which volunteers are collecting from what place at what time, as well as organising the stores so that food with the shortest shelf life gets used first, or gets prepared and frozen.

Short-term funding can be inhibitive for organisations, as it hinders them from being able to plan too far in advance, as well as restricting them from starting more ambitious longer-term projects.

<sup>1</sup> Dunbar, R.I.M. “Breaking Bread; the Functions of Social Eating” *Adaptive Human Behavior and Physiology* (2017) 3, 3: 198-211 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40750-017-0061-4>

# Recommendations

**In light of the observations and reflections recorded here, we will propose some ideas of how to possibly ease some of the difficulties discussed above. Having to coordinate collections and deliveries seemed to bring the most stress to organisations. The unpredictability of collection times and unpredictability of food content makes it difficult for organisations to set concrete collection plans in place. Organisations require flexible, reliable and able-bodied volunteers to be able to collect sometimes at very short notice. Many organisations collect on foot or volunteers use their own transport, however, parking in inner city areas can be prohibitively expensive for volunteers to use their own vehicles to collect and drop off food. Yes, FareShare does an amazing job of delivering food to charities, but this is only a cost-efficient method for charities who require and can make use of the large volume of food delivered. We believe the collection aspect of food charities could be made easier and more streamlined.**

## Recommendation 1/ An Electric Cargo Bike

The introduction of a city charitable delivery service. An electric bike with an attached cargo trailer could be funded, alongside the salary of a Delivery Rider responsible for collecting and delivering food to charitable projects. Charities could sign up to the scheme, outlining their specific project needs such as:

- What time and days they need food delivering
- The quantity of food needed for their services
- The general type of food they require.

This scheme would remove the need for charities themselves to organise collecting food, meaning more volunteer time and effort can be spent helping service users. It would hopefully allow charities to receive food deliveries at times that better suit their cooking and storage needs, rather than when best suits supermarkets. Additionally, if one delivery contained a huge glut of one particular foodstuff, rather than one project being inundated with, for example, more potatoes than they could sensibly make use of, the delivery rider could distribute this glut across various projects. This would help alleviate another problem recognised; the nutritional inconsistencies of collections. It would allow projects to get a better balance of foodstuffs, rather than only having e.g. baked goods and bananas to cook with, which we have seen happen first hand. Making this role as Delivery Rider a salaried position would improve consistency in deliveries. The rider would get to know the organisations on a personal level, thanks to frequent contact and so quickly learn of their needs and what works best for them. Using an electric bike is an environmentally friendly option whilst limiting delivery delays due to traffic, and reducing any issues regarding parking.

Using cargo bikes to distribute food is not yet commonly seen in the UK, but has been more common practice in Europe, and more recently America.

See the two examples opposite:

A bike like the ones pictured, due to their sizeable carrying facilities, could have a significant impact on simplifying the everyday running of local charities.



Plan Zheroes is a London based charity that has created a food donation platform enabling businesses to quickly and easily post their donations of surplus food online. Nearby charities and community groups receive email notifications from which they can claim the surplus and arrange to collect it.

They also work with food markets to collect and redistribute their surplus to charities. In partnership with Borough Market, Plan Zheroes operates an electric cargo bike delivery service, with volunteers making deliveries of surplus food to charities who are unable to collect it directly at the market.

## FOODLOGICA



FoodLogica is an Amsterdam based sustainable company. Their aim is to make a quick and sustainable last mile food logistics service, with its fleet of E-trikes transporting food from storage hubs to their final destination of cafes, shops and restaurants. Their project makes food transportation more eco-friendly and reduces inner city traffic and emissions.

However, this idea has its limitations:

- The cargo trailer would most likely need to be fitted with chill boxes in order to meet hygiene and safety standards, as well as some kind of padding to prevent soft foods from bruising.
- The cargo trailer would hold less than a car and therefore more frequent collections and deliveries would have to be made.
- Even with the bike's electric power assistance, the rider would have to be able-bodied and able to lift heavy food trays.
- If longer journeys or multiple consecutive journeys were needed to be made, recharging in between deliveries might become an issue.
- Electric bikes are valuable, contain expensive batteries and can be prone to theft. The cargo box itself would have to be lockable, as well as having a substantial lock to secure the bike itself. Insurance of the bike may have to be funded as well, in order to ensure the sustainability of the project.
- Bad weather such as ice could delay or prevent deliveries. If charities solely relied on the bike for their deliveries, it could be difficult to rearrange a collection from elsewhere at short notice, potentially resulting in them not being able to provide their food services. This could cause issues in the colder months when service users potentially are in greater need of food.
- Similarly, emergency cover would need to be available if the rider was ill.

## Recommendation 2/ A local charity help network

The essence of charity is helping, giving to, and sharing with those who have less than you. All the projects listed in this report do this tirelessly. However, the strain on projects often leads – understandably – to an inward approach, with volunteers stretching themselves thin to meet all their project’s needs by themselves. However, lots of projects could potentially relieve some of the stress on themselves by opening themselves out and sharing skills and ideas with other organisations. It could be beneficial for nearby projects to be connected via a social media platform so that relationships can be built between them. Working on the premise of a problem shared is a problem halved, projects could use each other as points of contact to help solve issues.

### Projects could share people:

**Example:** A project’s head cook can’t make it one day. Rather than all the responsibility being put on the other volunteers, they could ask if anyone with cooking experience from any other projects was available to fill in for them.

### Projects could share facilities:

**Example:** A certain project has a volunteer with a van that drives to pick up food at a supermarket at a particular time in the week. Another project that usually picks up by foot at that supermarket could ask if they could pick up their collection too, as they’re making that journey anyway, in return for something the other project could benefit from, such as access to use specific kitchen equipment like a blender.

### Projects could share services:

**Example:** A certain project has a service user they are concerned about, but don’t have the facilities to help them. Such as a service user with alcohol problems that is disturbing the dining atmosphere and is affecting other service users. Other projects with different specialities could be called upon to help, i.e. encourage them to attend an assessment at a substance misuse centre. This could enable the client to access the help they need, allowing them to remain attending the initial project as their issues are being helped by specialists. Or if a volunteer noted a service user seemed insular or isolated, they could suggest they attend an additional lunch club as well, to try to improve their social inclusion.

### Projects could share ideas:

It could be as simple as sharing recipes with one another to help when met with a random selection of surplus ingredients or sharing successful fundraising ideas.

### Projects could collaborate:

Projects could work together to attract larger followings to fundraising events and raise more money than each project could have separately. As charitable funding for small charities is becoming harder to secure, projects could merge certain projects, with the hope of being more successful in funding bids.

Having a clearer idea of what other services in Sheffield offer may A. help projects help their own service users better and B. enable projects to help one another. Having a social media platform where charities could connect would come with no necessary commitment, but would give projects the option to discuss problems and seek help, if and when they needed to. Sharing people, facilities, services and ideas prevents single projects having to be entirely self-sufficient, potentially decreasing the pressure and cost on single organisations.

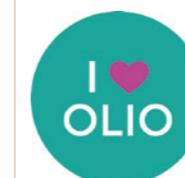
## Recommendation 3/ Utilising digital food sharing platforms

Recently, various companies have developed systems that help the general public and businesses reduce their food waste.

**OLIO** is a free food-sharing mobile application that connects neighbours with each other and local businesses. The app allows people to post a picture and description of food they no longer need or want. The app uses members’ location to show them what food is being shared nearby. Members can then contact each other to organise collecting food from one another. People list food they know they will not eat before the use by date, food they tried and didn’t like, food from cafes and restaurants that didn’t get used, and cupboard/ fridge items they have but will not use, as they are going on holiday or moving house etc. **OLIO** is another word for miscellaneous and so they are now introducing sharing household goods and hygiene products.

**OLIO** allows people to share food for free rather than throwing it away, as well as meeting new people in their community. Often people just share small portions of food, however, you find some users who have an allotment or own a bakery who are sharing larger volumes of produce. Additionally, as the app is becoming more widely known, larger companies are beginning to use it. For instance, an international sandwich shop chain is now donating their surplus food via **OLIO** whenever they’ve been unable to find a charity to collect from their stores that day.

**OLIO** is free to use, but users do need a smartphone or internet access. This app would not act as a consistent surplus food source for charities but could be a useful app to check every so often to see if people are sharing goods they could make use of. If a charitable organisation received a donation of foods they knew they couldn’t reasonably make use of, they could share it themselves on the app. Additionally, volunteers/ attendees of the various organisations interviewed in this report may be interested in using this app, as a way to access food for free and reduce the amount of food going to waste.



**Too Good To Go** is another free mobile application that assists the sharing of surplus food.

The company connects with a variety of businesses such as bakeries, restaurants, buffets, cafés, food-trucks, greengrocers, supermarkets, hotels and any other organisations that have surplus food. Businesses use the app to sell on their surplus food at discounted prices. The app uses your location and shows members of the public what businesses are sharing food near them and what time they can pick it up. Users can then select to purchase a portion of surplus food and collect it that day. This allows businesses to reduce their food waste and their financial losses due to wastage. It allows the public to access high-quality surplus food at heavily discounted prices and help reduce food wastage.

Like **OLIO**, users need a smartphone or internet access to use the app and need to be able to collect from the business they’ve selected. However, this app could be of interest for volunteers and service users who are looking to rescue food that otherwise would be wasted.





# Concluding Remarks

**In an ideal world, public services would be appropriately funded and there would be no need for the charities discussed in this report to exist.**

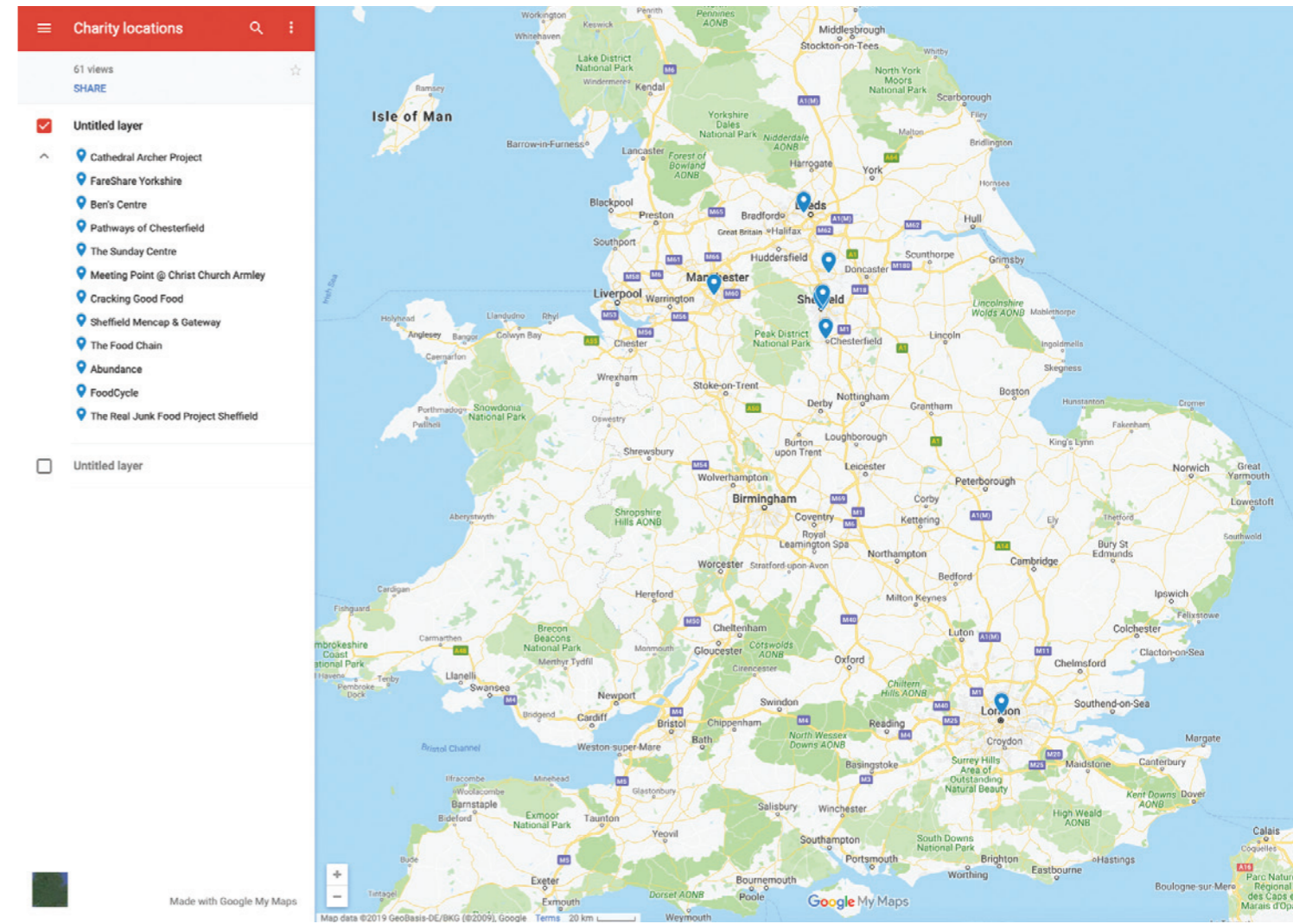
However, whilst this is not the case, it makes sense for charities with food services to utilise free and low-cost surplus food, in order to keep their expenses down. With the push for retailers to be more environmentally friendly and waste less food, it is probable that within the next 10 years retailers will try to reduce their food wastage at an earlier point in the retail process and before it reaches stores. This could result in less surplus food available for charitable use, which would have a massive impact on the services charities can provide. Charities may want to consider the possibility of saving financial reserves for the purpose of emergency food purchases. Although for many small charities that work close to the wire in terms of funding, this may not be financially viable. Charities could look into options around allotments and grow schemes in order to secure more sustainable food sources.

The organisations interviewed for this report were tirelessly hard-working, committed and resilient, despite all the difficulties they faced. We hope this report has achieved its aims in celebrating the work they do, enables projects to learn from one another and promotes more cohesion and collaboration between projects.

# Map

Below is an e-map made that locates the addresses of the organisations discussed in this report. This map is to act as a visual tool for charity members and the public to see where different organisations are in relation to them.

Click the link below to access the interactive online version, where you can find the exact addresses of the organisations. [drive.google.com/open?id=1acA\\_HDVw9oQOKiPsp23lFFysuZcu1mvY&usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1acA_HDVw9oQOKiPsp23lFFysuZcu1mvY&usp=sharing)



# Appendix

## 1. Foodinate

Foodinate is a social enterprise that forms partnerships with restaurants and food giving charities. Restaurants partnered with Foodinate designate certain meals on their menu where for every one of these meals ordered by a customer, the restaurant covers the cost of providing one meal at a local food giving charity, with no extra cost to the customer.



## 2. Neighbourly

Neighbourly is an online platform that connects charities, businesses and communities. It allows charities to promote themselves, fundraise online, find volunteers and receive donated items.

It allows people to see which local projects need volunteers, so they can make a difference in their community.

It allows companies to donate funds, time and resources, through a single site. Neighbourly manages corporate giving, employee volunteer programmes, charity vetting, surplus redistribution and more.



# Useful Web Links

**This is a comprehensive list of all organisations, companies, charities, non-profits and CICs mentioned in this report. All web-addresses are correct as of when this report was published.**

## Interviewed organisations

[www.archerproject.org.uk/about.php](http://www.archerproject.org.uk/about.php)  
[www.just-works.org.uk/for-business-partners](http://www.just-works.org.uk/for-business-partners)  
[www.benscentre.org/#we-are-bens-centre](http://www.benscentre.org/#we-are-bens-centre)  
[www.pathwaysofchesterfield.co.uk](http://www.pathwaysofchesterfield.co.uk)  
[thesundaycentre.org/about-us/](http://thesundaycentre.org/about-us/)  
[meetingpointleeds.org.uk](http://meetingpointleeds.org.uk)  
[www.sheffieldmencap.org.uk/about-us/](http://www.sheffieldmencap.org.uk/about-us/)  
[fareshare.org.uk/what-we-do/](http://fareshare.org.uk/what-we-do/)  
[fareshare.org.uk/fareshare-centres/yorkshire/](http://fareshare.org.uk/fareshare-centres/yorkshire/)  
[www.foodchain.org.uk/about-us/](http://www.foodchain.org.uk/about-us/)  
[www.crackinggoodfood.org](http://www.crackinggoodfood.org)  
[www.foodcycle.org.uk](http://www.foodcycle.org.uk)  
[www.timebuilders.org.uk](http://www.timebuilders.org.uk)  
[sheffieldabundance.wordpress.com/about/](http://sheffieldabundance.wordpress.com/about/)  
[realjunkfoodsheffield.com](http://realjunkfoodsheffield.com)

## Other organisations mentioned

[food.cloud/how-foodcloud-works/](http://food.cloud/how-foodcloud-works/)  
[olioex.com/about/](http://olioex.com/about/)  
[toogoodtogo.co.uk/en-gb](http://toogoodtogo.co.uk/en-gb)  
[www.neighbourly.com](http://www.neighbourly.com)  
[planzheroes.org/#/](http://planzheroes.org/#/)  
[foodlogica.com](http://foodlogica.com)  
[www.wrap.org.uk/food-waste-reduction](http://www.wrap.org.uk/food-waste-reduction)  
[refood.co.uk/about-us/](http://refood.co.uk/about-us/)  
[therealjunkfoodproject.org](http://therealjunkfoodproject.org)  
[foodinate.co.uk](http://foodinate.co.uk)  
[www.incredibleedible.org.uk](http://www.incredibleedible.org.uk)  
[www.unicorn-grocery.coop](http://www.unicorn-grocery.coop)  
[www.linkedin.com/pulse/we-bread-butter-thing-mark-game](http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/we-bread-butter-thing-mark-game)  
[thefelixproject.org](http://thefelixproject.org)  
[pennyappeal.org](http://pennyappeal.org)

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