

Local Action in Scotland to Tackle Food Insecurity During the Coronavirus Crisis

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Local action in Scotland to tackle food insecurity during the coronavirus crisis

June 2020



Main Messages

The Poverty and Inequality Commission tasked the Scottish Poverty & Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) to help it better understand emergency food provision in Scotland during the coronavirus crisis.

How do we talk about these issues?

- Food insecurity is running out of food, due to a lack of money or other resources.
- Emergency food provision refers to the provision of food to households during the coronavirus crisis.
- Emergency food provision aims to provide for those who are food insecure, and those who have sufficient money or resources, but who might have difficulty accessing sufficient food for other reasons.

What did we know at the outset?

- Before the coronavirus crisis, almost one in ten adults in Scotland reported that they had worried about running out of food at some time over the last twelve months, as a result of lack of money or resources.
- Case study, anecdotal and survey evidence suggests that food security, access and availability have all worsened as a result of the coronavirus crisis.
- The Scottish Government has invested £70 million through the Food Fund to tackle food insecurity and problems associated with access to food, and availability of food during the coronavirus crisis.
- The Poverty and Inequality Commission has previously recommended that the Scottish Government provides more visible leadership around emergency food provision, and that it appoints a spokesperson to reassure people during the coronavirus crisis.

What did we do?

- We administered a survey in mid-late May 2020 to canvass the experiences and opinions of frontline organisations working in communities across Scotland.
- 211 organisations responded, with multiple responses from (organisations working within) each of Scotland's 32 local authorities.
- As we received uneven responses across Scotland, we weighted the results to increase confidence that our evidence base is representative of Scotland as a whole; we generated headline statistics for Scotland; we explored differences among frontline organisations; and we reflected on case study experiences.
- From this data, we established a national understanding of current experiences; changes over the previous month; anticipated changes over the next month; resourcing; and the nature of frontline organisations providing emergency food support.

What did we find?

On the whole, the provision of emergency food provision is reported to be working well. The vast majority of frontline providers of emergency food are reporting that they are satisfied with the majority of issues related to that provision. However, specific stress points are highlighted and a sense of emerging concern over what lies ahead is also evident.

What's happening right now?

- **What's working.** The vast majority of frontline organisations report that they currently: (i) have enough volunteers; (ii) have enough funds to deliver work; (iii) think that there is effective local co-ordination; (iv) have an adequate supply of food; (v) are not concerned over PPE equipment for workers/volunteers; and (vi) are not concerned for the physical health of their workers/volunteers.
- **Emergency food provision takes many forms.** Three-quarters of frontline organisations were sourcing their food from multiple sources. The most common form of support was distributing food parcels to people to prepare their own food (76%).
- **Organisations providing emergency food support are also providing a wide range of non-food related support.** The majority of frontline organisations providing emergency food were also providing three or more forms of non-food based support. The most common forms of such support that were reported were signposting people to other sources of financial support (77%) and befriending and/or check-up calls (70%).
- **Not reaching everyone in need.** Four out of every five frontline providers are concerned that they are not reaching everyone in need of emergency food support (80%). A further one in ten report that they do not know whether they are reaching everyone in need (11%).
- **Unsure whether Scotland is delivering.** Only 15% opined that Scotland is successfully delivering emergency food. The vast majority report that they 'don't know' (77%).
- **Contact with local authority.** The vast majority report that they are in contact with their local authority (91%), although only 41% report "a lot" of contact.

Have things improved?

- **Many things have improved over the last month.** The majority of frontline organisations report that improvements have been experienced: (i) co-ordination by local work by local authority; (ii) supply of food; (iii) access to funding; (iv) amount of funding, and (v) advice and support provided locally.
- **Largely staying the same, but where there is change, it is more likely to be for the better.** This best describes the recent trend for (i) number of workers; and (ii) access to PPE equipment for workers.
- **Demand has risen.** The vast majority of frontline organisations report that demand for emergency food has risen over the last month (65%).
- **Cost of buying food.** While the most common experience was that the cost of food had remained the same over the last month (52%), a significant minority of frontline providers reported that the cost of food had increased (34%).
- **Wellbeing of workers/volunteers.** The headline is positive (18% reporting that wellbeing had improved and 64% reporting that wellbeing had stayed the same). However, a sizable minority of organisations report that wellbeing is worsening (18%), and some described the stresses on workers/volunteers were building and reaching a 'pinch point'.

Will things get better?

- **More of the same.** No change was the most common response; for ten of the eleven issues on which expectations over the next month were canvassed, the majority of frontline organisations expected nothing to change.
- **Funding concerns are emerging.** Although the majority of frontline organisations anticipate no change over the next month, a sizable minority expected the amount of funding to reduce (33%) and access to funding to worsen (30%).
- **Rising demand.** The vast majority of frontline organisations anticipate that demand for emergency food will rise over the last month (73%).

Who is serving their community?

- **Independent community organisations.** Although a diverse group of organisations reported that they were providing emergency food support, 60% of them could be described as ‘independent community organisations’.
- **Diverse backgrounds in food provision.** Frontline providers of emergency food provision were almost equally split between those for whom food has always been their core business (30%), those that have always offered a food service (31%) and those who were extending their work to provide a food service during this coronavirus crisis (39%).
- **Background in tackling poverty.** The majority of frontline providers reported a background in tackling poverty, either as their core business (34%), or in acknowledgement that their core business has a tackling poverty impact (41%). One-in four did not have a background in tackling poverty, with one in seven perceiving that they were extending their work to have a tackling poverty impact during the crisis (16%) and one in ten perceiving that their actions were not about tackling poverty (9%).
- **Diverse range of geographies.** Frontline organisations reported a range of geographical reach, ranging from focused on their neighbourhood (18%) to those serving the whole of their local authority (21%) and those with a wider reach across multiple local authorities.
- **Serving everyone.** Two thirds of frontline organisations provided a service that was not targeted or oriented toward particular population groups (69%). Only one-in-ten provided a service that was targeted at a particular population group (10%).

How are community groups being resourced?

- **Scottish Government funding.** Two thirds of frontline organisations (67%) responding to the survey reported some form of funding from one of the Funds introduced by the Scottish Government in March 2020 to provide £350 million of emergency support in Scotland.
- **Prevalence of donations and charitable funding.** The majority of frontline organisations reported receiving donations from individuals (57%) and grants from charitable organisations/foundations (56%).
- **Drawing on reserves.** Two fifths of frontline organisations reported drawing on their own organisational reserves to provide emergency food support (39%).
- **Diverse range of food supplies.** The majority of frontline organisations reported sourcing food from at least five sources (51%). Three quarters of frontline organisations reported having bought food from local shops and suppliers (73%), while almost two thirds had received public donations (64%) or donations from local supermarkets (61%).
- **Fareshare supply.** More than one half of the frontline organisations responding to the survey reported receiving food to distribute from Fareshare (53%).

What happens now?

- The Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit of Glasgow Caledonian University has made this report freely available as soft copy.
- The Poverty and Inequality Commission will publish a response to this independent research report.
- The Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit will disseminate findings by contributing to webinars and specialist professional publications.
- The Poverty and Inequality Commission will continue to monitor food insecurity during the coronavirus crisis and may resolve to publish a third research-based briefing to reflect on changes since late May 2020.

Our recommendations

- 1. Provide National Reassurance.** In April 2020, the Poverty and Inequality Commission recommended that the Scottish Government provides national leadership and guidance about food provision during this pandemic. Despite the considerable Scottish Government investment, only 15% of community organisations report in mid-May 2020 that they were aware that emergency food was delivering what Scotland required. This expert opinion tends to suggest that Scotland might not yet be reassured that it is tackling food insecurity during the crisis.
- 2. Supporting worker/volunteer wellbeing.** Two-fifths of organisations now have concerns over the wellbeing of workers/volunteers (43%), with less than one in five of all organisations anticipating that this will improve over the next month (16%). Taking steps to support those who are providing emergency food support should be an immediate priority.
- 3. Understanding and meeting rising demand.** The vast majority of organisations report that demand has increased over the last month (65%) and that demand for emergency food is expected to increase further over the next month (72%). There is a need to better understand the drivers of these demands, the populations who remain vulnerable, in order to take steps to tackle food insecurity at the current time.
- 4. Impact of return to work after furlough.** There are concerns that the rising stress reported among the emergency food workforce and the rising demand for emergency food will coincide with a loss of labour as some workers return to the labour market at the end of furlough. There is a need to ensure that emergency food can continue to deliver what is required as Scotland moves out of lockdown.
- 5. Understanding how to reach unmet need.** The vast majority of organisations report concerns that they are not reaching everyone who needs food support (80% think they are not and a further 10% are unsure). We need to find out more about potential level of unmet need and develop strategies to extend help.
- 6. Action on funding.** Concerns are now beginning to emerge over access to funding, and the amount of funding over the next month. Around one third are concerned about the amount of funding available (33%) and accessing funding (30%). On announcing the launch of the Food Fund, the Scottish Government committed to extending support if necessary. It is now necessary to look ahead to beyond the end of June to confirm whether more funds will be required to ensure food security in the months ahead.
- 7. Resilience of frontline organisations.** A significant proportion of frontline organisations report that they have drawn on organisational reserves to deliver emergency food during the coronavirus crisis. There is a pressing need to ensure that the viability of these community resources is not threatened, and to examine the longer-term implications of any significant diversion of funding to deliver emergency food support. In the short-term, the immediate concern is to ensure that these organisations have sufficient resource to continue to deliver emergency food support, particularly those that typically experience an increase demand for their services over the summer period (such as organisations 'substituting' for the loss of free school meals over the holiday period).

Continued overleaf

8. **Utilisation of public buildings and community resources.** Although there was evidence of responsive adaptation to meet demand, some concerns were expressed over the use of public buildings, kitchens and other community resources. Some reflection is required to ensure that such local resources can be mobilised effectively to tackle any future national emergency.
9. **Exploring qualitative differences across frontline organisations.** In the longer-term, it would be instructive to reflect on differences in how emergency food provision was delivered in Scotland. Our evidence highlights variations in geographical reach, population targeting, prior expertise in food, and prior role in anti-poverty activity. Furthermore, our evidence suggests that there may be ways in which these differences among organisations may be related to how this work is being delivered. Understanding and evaluating different approaches to delivering emergency food support would be of value to inform future anti-poverty practice, both in and beyond crisis situations.
10. **Transformative and collaborative practice.** Some concern was expressed that some of the best practice that has emerged during this period may be lost in a future that 'returns to normal'. It is recommended that any evaluation of emergency food provision reflects closely on lessons that might be learned for future practice in public service provision and anti-poverty action.
11. **What people with lived experience of poverty think.** The objective of this work was to better understand the experience of frontline organisations. More generally, the Poverty and Inequality Commission, and Scotland's anti-poverty sector, is committed to 'giving voice' to the lived experience of poverty. There are both immediate and longer-term issues to consider. Of immediate concern is the need to learn from the wide range of studies in Scotland and beyond which, although not focused on food, are providing insight into food insecurity through sharing the lived experience of poverty during the coronavirus crisis. In the longer term, it would be useful to engage those with lived experience of poverty to better understand the impact of receiving emergency food support during this coronavirus crisis.
12. **Acknowledge the work of frontline organisations.** It is readily apparent that community organisations are firmly committed to their work, take pride in what they do, and report how they are making a positive difference in their communities. The contributions of frontline community organisations should continue to be acknowledged by all with responsibility for managing local and national response to the coronavirus crisis.

Table of Contents

Main Messages	2
Table of Contents	7
Acknowledgements	8
1. Food Insecurity in Scotland	9
1.1 – What is food insecurity?	9
1.2 – What is the scale of the problem?	9
1.3 – What is the Scottish Government’s interest in food insecurity?	9
1.4 – How is the Scottish Government tackling food insecurity during the COVID-19 crisis of 2020?	10
1.5 – Is Scotland’s interest in food insecurity shared more widely?	10
1.6 – How do we measure food insecurity?	10
1.7 – The work of the Poverty and Inequality Commission	11
1.8 – The Poverty and Inequality Commission and food insecurity during the coronavirus crisis	11
1.9 – What else do we know about food insecurity during the coronavirus crisis of 2020?	12
1.10 – What is the purpose of this report?	13
1.11 – How was the evidence gathered?	13
2. What’s happening right now?	14
2.1 – What did we ask?	14
2.2 – What did we find?	14
2.3 – What needs to happen now?	25
3. Have things improved?	26
3.1 – What did we ask?	26
3.2 – What did we find?	26
3.3 – What needs to happen now?	31
4. Will things get better?	32
4.1 – What did we ask?	32
4.2 – What did we find?	32
4.3 – What needs to happen now?	36
5. Who is serving their community?	37
5.1 – What did we ask?	37
5.2 – What did we find?	37
5.3 – What needs to happen now?	43
6. How are community groups being resourced?	44
6.1 – What did we ask?	44
6.2 – What did we find?	44
6.3 – What needs to happen now?	47
7. Conclusion and Recommendations	48
Annex 1: About This Research	52
A1.1 – Introduction	52
A1.2 – Survey Design	52
A1.3 – Ethics	53
A1.4 – Survey Distribution	53
A1.5 – Appraising the Survey Population	54
A1.6 – Data Cleaning	55
A1.7 – Data Analysis	56
A1.8 – Conclusion: Appraising the Survey Data	57

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1. Food Insecurity in Scotland

1.1 – What is food insecurity?

This report is framed around the Scottish Government’s social justice focus; food insecurity is running out of food, due to a lack of money or other resources.¹

1.2 – What is the scale of the problem?

Almost one in ten adults in Scotland (9%), report that, at sometime over the last year, they were worried about running out of food, because of a lack of money or other resources.² Furthermore, it was self-reported that the same lack of money or resources, also led to 6% of adults eating less than they should, and 3% of adults running out of food. Globally, it is estimated that 820 million people regularly go to bed hungry.³

1.3 – What is the Scottish Government’s interest in food insecurity?

Reducing food insecurity is one of the ways in which the Scottish Government measures whether or not “Scotland Performs”.⁴ In July 2018, food insecurity was added to the list of (now 81) Indicators that work toward achieving the eleven National Outcomes that are part of Scotland’s National Performance Framework.⁵ With the status of a national indicator, the Scottish Government is committed to measure whether Scotland is making progress in tackling food insecurity and – together with local government, businesses, voluntary organisations and people living in Scotland – to take action to make this happen.⁶ Food insecurity is one of seven indicators that together allow Scotland to appraise whether progress is being made toward tackling poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.⁷

¹ It should be acknowledged that there are other ways of conceptualizing food (in)security. For a useful review of some of the key ideas, refer to Food Source (2018) What is Food Security? [online]. FCRNfoodsource/ (viewed 4 June 2020). Available from: <https://foodsource.org.uk/building-blocks/what-food-security>

² Scottish Government (2020) *The Scottish Health Survey. 2018 Edition, Amended in February 2020. Volume 1. Main Report.* [online]. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. [viewed 20 May 2020]. Available from: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2018-volume-1-main-report/pages/40/>.

³ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2019. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019. Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns.* [online] Rome, FAO. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5162en/ca5162en.pdf>.

⁴ Scottish Government (n.d.) *National Performance Framework* [online]. Scottish Government. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>.

⁵ Sturgeon, N. (2018) First Minister’s Speech [presentation]. *Launch of National Performance Framework 2018.* Edinburgh, July 4th. Available from: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/launch-of-national-performance-framework-2018/> (viewed 30 May 2020).

⁶ Scottish Government. (n.d.) *How it Works, National Performance Framework* [online]. Scottish Government. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/how-it-works>.

⁷ Scottish Government. (n.d.) *Poverty, National Outcomes, National Performance Framework* [online]. Scottish Government. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/poverty>.

1.4 – How is the Scottish Government tackling food insecurity during the COVID-19 crisis of 2020?

On March 18th 2020, the Scottish Government announced a £350 million package to support people in need in Scotland.⁸ This fund comprises eight funding streams, the largest sum of which was the £70 million that was allocated to the Food Fund. The Food Fund comprises three elements:

- £30 million of support to local authorities, for ‘structured public sector responses working with local resilience partnerships’, with each of Scotland’s 32 local authorities receiving financial support to tackle food insecurity within their district.
- £30 million set aside for national programme to deliver food to the shielded group (those unable to leave their home due to high clinical risk)
- £10 million set aside for investment in third sector organisations that are responding both at a national and at a local level.⁹

Support to promote food security is also available, either directly or indirectly, through the seven other funding streams.

1.5 – Is Scotland’s interest in food insecurity shared more widely?

The 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015,¹⁰ agreeing a global indicator framework in March 2016, better known as the (17) Sustainable Development Goals.¹¹ SDG2 commits Member States to “end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote agriculture by 2030”, better known as ‘Zero Hunger’.¹² Eight targets underpin this goal, including Target 2.1, which aims to, by 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round”.

1.6 – How do we measure food insecurity?

The United Nations use the eight-item Food Insecurity Experiences Scale (FIES) to measure the severity of food insecurity, which then positions those experiencing food insecurity on a scale ranging from mild food insecurity to severe food insecurity.¹³ It is also used to estimate the proportion of the population experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity, which has been adopted as SDG indicator 2.1.2. FIAS asks people directly about their experience of food insecurity;

⁸ Campbell, A. (2020) Supporting Communities Funding: Speech by Communities Secretary 18 March 2020. [speech]. *Address to the Scottish Parliament*. Edinburgh, March 18th. Available from:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-communities-funding-statement/> (viewed 30 May 2020).

⁹ Scottish Government (2020) *Coronavirus Food Fund*. Scottish Government. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://www.gov.scot/news/coronavirus-food-fund/>

¹⁰ United Nations (2015) *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Resolution 70/1. Adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September. Available from:

https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E (viewed 30 May 2020).

¹¹ United Nations (n.d.) *Sustainable Development Goals*. United Nations. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>.

¹² United Nations (n.d.) *Goal 2: Zero Hunger, Sustainable Development Goals*. United Nations. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/>.

¹³ Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (n.d.) *The Food Insecurity Experience Scale: Measuring Food insecurity Through People’s Experiences*. [online]. FAO: Geneva. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7835e.pdf>

since 2014 it has been used to measure food insecurity among the adult population in over 140 countries.

The Scottish Government uses three items from the FIES to measure food insecurity in Scotland, framing the questions over the last twelve months and only asking the latter two questions, if the answer to the first questions affirms worry. Since 2017, the Scottish Health Survey has asked a representative sample of adults in Scotland if, during the last 12 months was there a time when:

- *You were worried you would run out of food because of a lack of money or other resources?*
- *You ate less than you thought you should because of a lack of money or other resources?*
- *Your household ran out of food because of lack of money or other resources?*

The first indicator provides a headline estimate of food insecurity in Scotland.

1.7 - The work of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

The Poverty and Inequality Commission is an advisory non-departmental public body, which scrutinises the work of Scottish Ministers on poverty and inequality. It also has a statutory remit to provide advice to Ministers, comment on progress toward child poverty targets, monitor progress in reducing poverty and inequality, and promote the reduction of poverty and inequality.¹⁴

1.8 - The Poverty and Inequality Commission and food insecurity during the coronavirus crisis

On the 16th of April 2020, the Poverty and Inequality Commission published a briefing on the *COVID-19 crisis and the impact on food security*.¹⁵ This briefing was based on case study analysis of the experiences of six organisations that were providing emergency food support, and which were already well embedded in their host communities. While applauding the work of the Scottish Government, local authorities and the third sector for their rapid response to provide emergency food assistance, the report identified emergent issues, i.e. (i) the scale and nature of the crisis is changing; (ii) organisations are overwhelmed by the rise in demand for their help; (iii) there is a lack of co-ordination of access to food, resources, communication and funding, and most significantly in the context of their work, (iv) there is a rise in the number of households who are food insecure, and (v) poverty is exacerbated as a result of the problems being experienced. The Commission presented two key recommendations:

- that the Scottish Government provide more visible leadership around emergency food provision to be sure that help is reaching those working in local areas and those people who need food.
- that a spokesperson is appointed to clearly communicate and reassure people about food provision during this pandemic and its aftermath.

¹⁴ Poverty and Inequality Commission (2019) *What We Do*. Poverty and Inequality Commission. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://povertyinequality.scot/what-we-do/>.

¹⁵ Poverty and Inequality Commission (2020) *COVID-19 Crisis and the Impact on Food Security*. [online]. Poverty and Inequality Commission. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission-Food-insecurity-evidence-briefing-.pdf>

1.9 - What else do we know about food insecurity during the coronavirus crisis of 2020?

On the 29th of May 2020, the Office for National Statistics released data from the Covid-19 module within the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey that was collected between May 21st and 24th.¹⁶ Although based on a small number of respondents and not collecting enough data to comment specifically on Scotland, it is considered to be representative of the GB population. Furthermore, although no question asked specifically about food security, it does collect information on access and availability to food, and wider key issues that are related to food security. Of note:

- One quarter of the GB population report that
 - They expect their financial situation to get worse over the next 12 months (29.9%, Table 9);
 - Availability of groceries, medication and essentials are being affected (25.8%, Table 10);
 - Access to groceries, medication and essentials are being affected (23.7%, Table 10).
- One fifth of the GB population report that their household finances are being affected (20%, Table 10), and of this group, two thirds report reduced income (65.9%, Table 12) and one-in-twenty report no income (5.6%, Table 12).

The Food Foundation maintains a COVID-19 tracker to monitor the impact of the coronavirus crisis on food across the UK.¹⁷ Four polls have been administered, the latest evidence drawing from data collected between 14th and 17th of May and sharing the experiences of 4352 adults across the UK.¹⁸:

- One in ten of the UK population report that they are currently food insecure (9.3%), a fall from the GB estimate of 15.6% for the first two weeks of lockdown. This is equivalent to almost five million adults across the UK (4.9 million).
- More than half of those who describe themselves as food insecure also report that they have not received any help (54%, or 2.6 million people).

The Food Foundation's preliminary report, published on April 14th 2020, suggest that food insecurity in the UK has quadrupled during the COVID-19 lockdown,¹⁹ although more recent estimates suggest the increase is now in the order of 250%.²⁰

¹⁶ Office for National Statistics (2020) *Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain data*. [online]. Office for National Statistics. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/datasets/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritaindata>.

¹⁷ Food Foundation (2020) *COVID-19 Tracker: Latest Impacts on Food*. [online]. Food Foundation. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/>

¹⁸ Food Foundation (2020) *NEW FOOD FOUNDATION DATA: Food insecurity and debt are the new reality under lockdown*. [online]. Food Foundation. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/new-food-foundation-data-food-insecurity-and-debt-are-the-new-reality-under-lockdown/>

¹⁹ Loopstra, R. (2020) *Vulnerability to Food Insecurity Since the COVID-19 Lockdown. Preliminary Report*. [online]. London: King's College. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: https://foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Report_COVID19FoodInsecurity-final.pdf

²⁰ op cit., Note 17.

1.10 – What is the purpose of this report?

This objective of this report is to follow-up on the issues raised in the Poverty and Inequality’s briefing of April 2020 (1.8). It canvasses the experiences of organisations working locally to deliver emergency food support in Scotland around mid May 2020. Whereas the original briefing was a Commission investigation of six key organisations; this report is an independent investigation for the Commission that attempts to establish a nation-wide understanding of community provision of emergency food across Scotland. The Commission intends to publish a separate briefing, commenting on the findings and recommendations reached in this report.

1.11 – How was the evidence gathered?

The research was conceived, designed, administered, analysed and reported over a period of four weeks from mid-May to early June 2020. 211 community organisations shared their experiences by completing an online survey, which canvassed their experiences on:

- Delivering emergency food “last week” (mid-late May 2020) – reported in section 2 of this report
- How things have changed over the last month – reported in section 3
- How things are expected to change over the next month – reported in section 4.
- What is the nature of the organisations and provision that is being delivered locally in Scotland – reported in section 5.
- Resources for emergency food – reported in section 6.

Respondents were encouraged to share additional information and commentary throughout. This report comprises national summaries and local experiences. Although rapid research, every opportunity was taken to check and control for the quality of the data. The results presented in this report are weighted to better reflect the Scottish population. Any reference to a difference among organisations is one that has been determined using the appropriate statistical tests and thresholds.

Technical details of the research are presented in Annex 1.

2. What's happening right now?

2.1 – What did we ask?

We wanted to find out what is happening right now in Scotland and so we asked four questions about last week. “Last week” refers to mid-May 2020. First, we asked what food-related support was provided, asking organisations to identify all of the services provided from a list of six (2.2.1 and Figure 2.1). Next, we asked what non-food related services were being provided, with a list of five services identified (2.2.2 and Figure 2.2). In the survey, we asked respondents to evaluate one dozen aspects of their emergency food provision; below they are presented in a single chart (2.2.2 and Figure 2.3). Finally, we asked how much contact there was between the organisation and the local authority in their area (2.2.4 and Figure 2.4).

2.2 – What did we find?

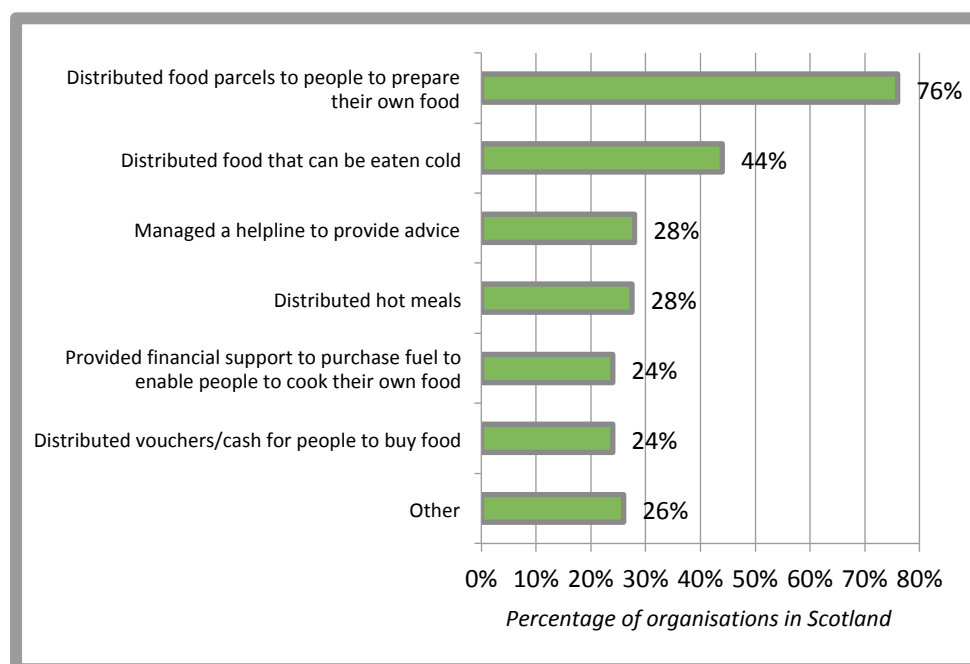
Five Key findings

1. **System is working (on the whole).** On the whole, the vast majority of community providers of emergency food are reporting that they are satisfied with the majority of issues related to that provision.
2. **Stress points – not meeting local need.** Many community providers are concerned that they are not meeting the needs of everyone who needs emergency food
3. **Unknowns – are we delivering?** The vast majority of organisations reported that they ‘didn’t know’ whether Scotland is successfully delivering emergency food. In part, this was explained by the lack of information; in part by being so focused on the local situation that they were unable to pay attention to the national picture.
4. **Wide-ranging provision of food support and non-food support.** Almost three-quarters of community providers are offering more than one form of emergency food support. Similarly, an overwhelming majority of community providers of emergency food are also providing at least one non-food related service to their community. Around three-quarters of community organisations are also signposting people to sources of financial support and providing a support/befriending service
5. **Contact with local authority.** Two-fifths of community providers are reporting that they are having “a lot” of contact with their local authority.

2.2.1 – What food support is being provided?

Emergency food provision takes many forms. Almost three-quarters of frontline organisations were sourcing their food from multiple sources (72%), with 2.5 sources being used on average. The most common form of support was distributing food parcels to people to prepare their own food (Figure 2.1). Of note, was that although less likely to report distributing food parcels, on the whole, those organisations whose geographical reach was focused on a neighbourhood were more likely to be providing a wider range of food support. Thus, one-half (51%) who exclusively serve their neighbourhood provided three or more food services, compared to just over one-third (38%) of frontline organisations who had a local authority wide reach.

Figure 2.1: Emergency food-related services provided by organisations serving communities in Scotland, mid-May 2020



Notes: 180 organisations answered this question (weighted sample).

Among the diverse range of food support that was described (in addition to those reported in Figure 2.1) were the following:

- Signposting or formal referrals to foodbanks and other sources of food provision
- Direct provision and delivery of food parcels and meals
- Community cupboards, pantries and larders
- Cash for kids' food vouchers
- Grocery shopping and delivery for isolating or shielding households
- Community kitchens providing pre-cooked meals to be frozen and reheated at home
- Redistribution of food at the end of its sell-by date from local shops and Co-ops
- Support for people growing their own food
- Funders allocating grants to organisations helping people with food parcels
- Setting up accounts with local shops (including a Halal shop) for people to access food
- Redistribution of excess food from well-resourced organisations to small groups
- Provision of supplements to foodbank staples
- Provision of printed recipes for recipients to use food parcels effectively
- Provision and delivery of second-hand white goods such as fridges and freezers, cooking equipment and utensils

Although the breadth of food services provided is commendable, a small number of organisations reported significant or even insurmountable operational issues, which were compromising their ability to deliver a food service due to the pandemic and the lockdown. For example, one organisation had to close down its Lunch Club for the elderly due to the higher-risk this group faces. Another organisation reported that it was staffed almost entirely by volunteers over the age of 70, and that they were unable to operate safely in the current environment. In cases such as this organisations tended to deliver signposting and referral support via telephone where possible.

More positively, in sharing their experiences, there was no shortage of ‘success stories’ of emergency food provision during the crisis. The first shared below is from an organisation, which had no previous experience of emergency food provision; the second is an example of collaborative partnership working and efficient use of resources during the crisis.

Case Study 1

In the space of around one week at the end of March, we converted our community hub into a high-hygiene, socially distant workspace producing and distributing volumes of food beyond our previous experience and in a way which married the commercial and culinary expertise of chefs with the networks, community-focus and safeguarding expertise of the third sector. We are working with an almost entirely volunteer workforce. These people are largely chefs and catering/hospitality managers who have lost work or been furloughed, but also lots of existing volunteers and local residents. Despite their own challenges, they are giving their time and expertise in a voluntary capacity to support others. Our commercial suppliers have stepped in to provide donations of equipment, space, expertise and produce despite the financial challenges that they face in the current uncertain economic climate. We are now producing and distributing just under 1000 cooked meals a day to people in the EH16 and EH17 areas of Edinburgh along with packs of essential items for families and people self-isolating.

Case Study 2

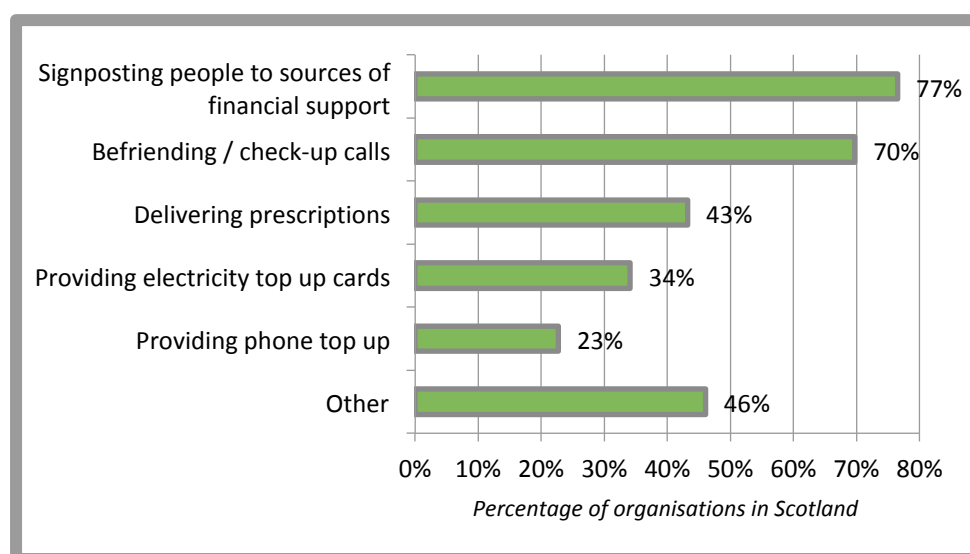
Ardenglen is a member of Castlemilk Together: Community Food Action and from the 16th March this pre-existing collective of local people and organisations mobilised and organised as COVID-19 became an ever-closer reality: through an asset-based approach we were able to quickly structure a response that avoided duplication and filled gaps in provision to ensure all food related needs were met. Made up of community members, local housing associations, youth and play organisations, a community football club, NHS health improvement staff, cafes, churches, the senior centre, money advice, the relaxation centre, schools, nurseries: everyone is playing an equally valuable role sharing skills and resources. This process supports all those living in the community who require support from families to older adults. The provision of ambient food bags that include fresh produce and freshly prepared cooked meals are distributed each week. Volunteers even support those who wish to pay by carrying out daily shopping for essentials. Art packs/activities such as Health Cooking Kits are distributed along with the food parcels. Funding has also been sourced to support a package of financial insecurity that will enable emergency gas/elec top ups to be supported; and to have a dedicated member of staff acting as a wellbeing officer who can provide a listening ear, then signpost to the relevant agency for support.

On the whole, frontline organisations appear to have developed effective, creative and innovative solutions to food provision in the crisis.

2.2.2 – What other (non-food) support is being provided?

Organisations providing emergency food support are also providing a wide range of non-food related support. The majority of organisations providing food support are also providing three or more forms of non-food based support (58%). The most common forms of such support reported were signposting people to other sources of financial support and befriending and/or check-up calls (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Non-food services provided by organisations delivering an emergency food service to communities in Scotland, mid-May 2020



Notes: 169 organisations answered this question (weighted sample).

Some frontline organisations with a background in tackling poverty provided a narrower range of non-food services, compared to organisations that did not have a background in tackling poverty. A much greater proportion of poverty-focused organisations only provided a single non-food service (18% of those with a background in tackling poverty provided only one such service, compared to 3% of organisations who did not have a background in tackling poverty). Those organisations with a background in tackling poverty were less likely to report that they were delivering prescriptions, providing befriending service/check-up calls, and signposting people to financial support. On the other hand, organisations that were based in one of Scotland’s 20% Most Deprived Areas were more likely to report providing phone top ups last week (35%, compared to, for example, 14% of those which were based in one of Scotland’s 60% Least Deprived Areas). These findings are not necessarily inconsistent. They may be suggestive of a sharper focus on the key crisis challenges being faced by those experiencing poverty among those with longer-standing awareness of the problems that poverty presents.

As with food services (2.2.1), a diverse range of additional activities was identified, in addition to the services that were reported in Figure 2.2. Some common themes emerge.

- *Stimulating and supporting well-being.* Many organisations are focused on alleviating the negative mental and emotional effects of the lockdown, especially for families with young children. This is done primarily through the provision of diversionary and educational activity packs for children, as well as online social connectivity and inclusion for adults. Some examples include; mindfulness and singalong classes, cooking classes, parental support classes, or simply one-to-one or group peer support sessions.
- *Physical health.* Other organisations focus on physical health by providing home exercise sheets, online exercise classes, or bike provision and repair schemes. One organisation reports organising socially distanced walks for exercise and socialising. Another common form of non-food support is dog walking and other pet support.
- *Social dimensions of food support.* We also see examples of organisations taking a ‘joined up’ approach to their food and non-food support by providing e.g. online cooking classes or access

to white goods. Other examples include volunteers being encouraged to chat with residents as they make deliveries to reduce social isolation, or the development of a virtual 'community lunch' whereby people receive food which they then all eat together from home.

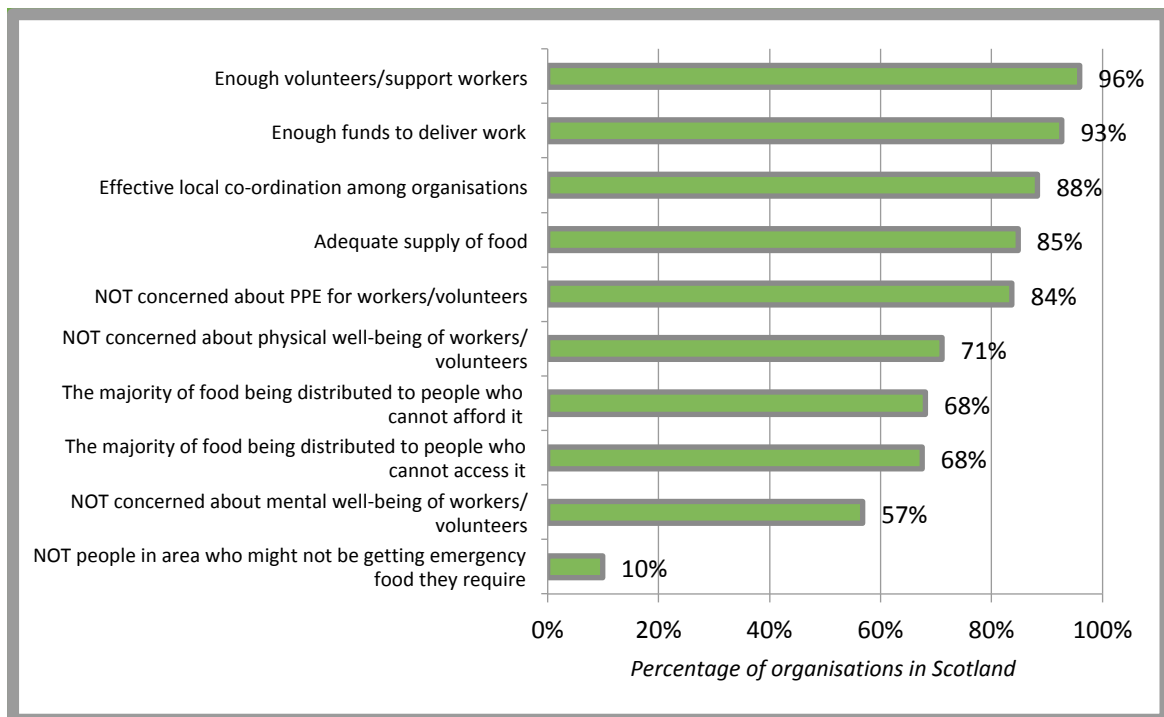
- *Advice services.* Several organisations offer generalist or specialist advice on issues such as welfare benefits, debt and employment via telephone or webchat. Many other organisations offer signposting or referrals to this type of support.
- *Tackling digital exclusion.* Many organisations are also focused on tackling digital exclusion at a time when this may be the only method many have of social interaction e.g. by offering digital support and training or via the direct provision of Wi-Fi, laptops, smartphones and tablets. Several of the organisations offering this kind of support are particularly focused on children without internet access at home to enable them to continue their schooling.
- *General fuel poverty support.* Finally, many organisations are offering money for fuel top-ups and many others are attempting to develop strategies or access to funding that will allow them to deliver this type of service. This suggests that many organisations are noticing an increase in fuel poverty and that this new need is currently going unmet.

2.2.3 – What is working?

The vast majority of frontline organisations report that they currently: (i) have enough volunteers; (ii) have enough funds to deliver work; (iii) think that there is effective local co-ordination; (iv) have an adequate supply of food; (v) are not concerned over PPE equipment for workers/volunteers; and (vi) are not concerned for the physical health of their workers/volunteers (Figure 2.3). However, there are some stress points. Only 10% of frontline providers are confident that they are reaching everyone in need of emergency food support in their community (Figure 2.3). The vast majority think that they are not (80%), with a further one in ten uncertain (11%). Furthermore, only 15% are able to agree that Scotland is delivering what is required through emergency food. The vast majority of organisations report that they 'don't know' (77%) (Figure 2.4).

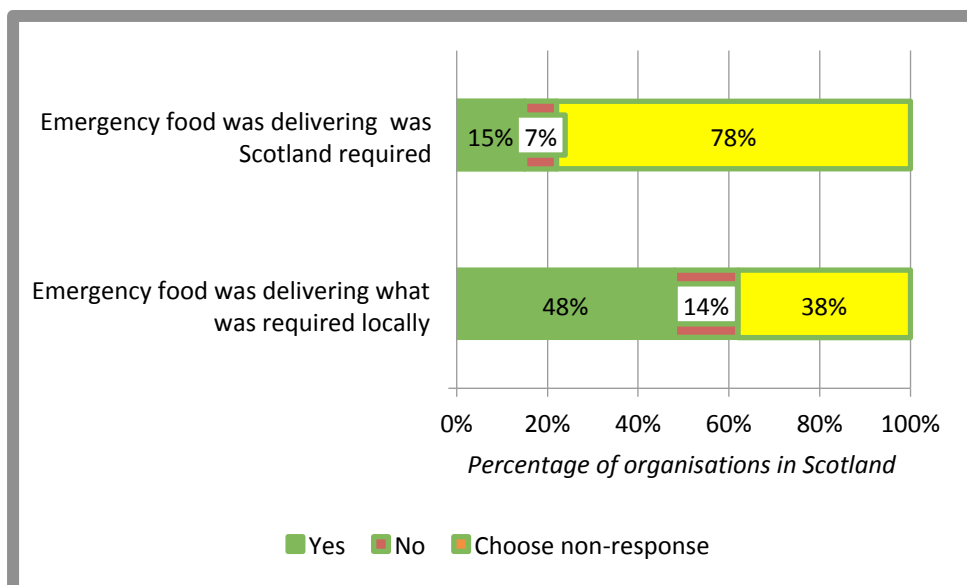
Interesting differences were evident across various aspects of 'last week's' emergency food provision. First, the concern over workers' wellbeing was expressed more acutely in urban Scotland. More organisations from urban local authorities (LAs) reported concerns over workers'/volunteers' wellbeing last week (53%, compared to 30% of organisations from authorities that were mainly rural in character (64% in large cities). Second, organisations with a background in tackling poverty were more likely to report concerns over the supply of food and the amount of funds that they had available. For example, concern was expressed about having a lack of food last week by almost one in five (18%) of those organisations for which tackling poverty was always part of their business (compared to 5% of those for whom it was not). They were also more likely to be of the opinion that the majority of the people they were serving could not afford to buy food (76% of those from whom tackling poverty was always part of their business, compared to 46% of those for whom it was not). This could suggest that different types of organisation are reaching different groups, or that some organisations are more sensitive to particular problems in the community. Third, organisations that had a neighbourhood focus were more likely to report concerns with lack of funds last week (13% of those only serving their neighbourhood, compared to 2% of organisations with a broader geographical reach). Thus, in various ways the experience of providing emergency food was uneven across different types of frontline organisation.

Figure 2.3: Evaluating emergency food services to communities in Scotland, mid-May 2020



Notes: The data presented in this figure was collected across nine questions in the survey. This chart presents the 'positive' responses. The remainder comprises either a negative response (e.g. *there might be people in my area who are not getting emergency food*) or an inability to express a positive response (e.g. *don't know whether there are people in my area who are not getting emergency food*), or rather not say, or not applicable to respond). The number of organisations responding to these questions, ranged from 173 to 179 (weighted sample).

Figure 2.4: Evaluating whether emergency food services are delivering what is required to communities in Scotland, mid-May 2020



Notes: The data presented in this figure was collected across two questions in the survey. This chart complements Figure 2.3. Data for these issues are presented apart, given the high proportion of 'non-response' options (see footnote to Figure 2.3). Data are provided for 180 organisations.

From the wide range of issues reported in Figure 2.3, we focus on two in greater detail below.

2.2.3a – Focus on Food Supply

Many organisations shared details of the volume of the food that they were distributing (1,2,3), although some also reported that there was still unmet demand (3,4,5). Many organisations are receiving supplies from FareShare, the UK-wide network of charitable food redistributors. Though many organisations praise FareShare's work, other report some issues in terms of the choice available (6,7,8)

1. *We have an excellent system in Dundee in which some support comes through City Council sourced funding for food purchases; some other grant funding and food provision purchased through Fareshares; we also fund raise locally and purchase what else we need to supplement the food obtained from elsewhere.*
2. *We were able to supply 600kg of food last week, 350kg bought with Glasgow City Council and Scottish Government money. 250kg was supplied by FareShare.*
3. *We provided 81 bags of shopping but could have provided 20 more.*
4. *I could easily have given out three times the amount.*
5. *Demand always exceeds supply*
6. *It is always a struggle to ensure that all food groups are represented to meet all of the nutritional needs of people. Due to the nature of FareShare it can also be difficult to ensure that there is a choice. Yet, without FareShare we would only be able to offer the most basic and restricted food provision as distributed by FirstBase.*
7. *Our paid supply chains are fairly robust. Our donated and FareShare supply chain - tends to be 'feast then famine' - very limited last week and expected Wednesday delivery did not arrive - now Monday and no sign of goods*
8. *The food is from Fare Share and while valuable for families in financial hardship, is uneven in terms of what you can prepare for a family meal. Some weeks are better than others. We have topped it up for families with additional food we have purchased ourselves.*

Many organisations reported shortages with specific items (1,2,3,4), or challenges that were being encountered in managing distribution (5,6,7):

1. *Coffee, sugar, toiletries shortage*
2. *Our stock levels are improving as we have accessed funding to bulk buy food but there are some items that we are short of and struggling to source.*
3. *Food supplies are inconsistent.*
4. *We are continually running out of items to make up full food parcels for families, esp tinned food (not soup or beans), coffee, sugar, milk, rice, bread.*
5. *... we are finding it difficult to get our food supplies in sync with demand. We have access to bulk buying but coordinating the purchase, payment and transport of this has taken time. Food is moving so quickly we need to constantly replenish.*
6. *Yes ... but needed 17 trips to various supermarkets so that we could access low cost food to stay within budgets. The closure of cash and carry's to new accounts has severely impacted voluntary organisations capacity to take on this new stream of work. National Suppliers of catering food are also facing shortages, last minute shortages mean community groups are run ragged trying to access sufficient quantities.*
7. *Yes, although we rely almost solely on continued donations from Fareshare and supermarkets directly. We are needing more fridge freezer space, and are having to rely on the hire of a commercial refrigerator van.*

One respondent pointed out that, while the service they provided was essential, it was providing no more than short-term support and that demand was recurrent (1,2,3):

- 1. My clients did not have enough money for all their most essential costs: food, utilities, phone costs, I can provide vouchers for food parcels, but this lasts only 3 days, and the inadequate income of my clients usually lasts much longer than 3 days. The help I provide does improve the situation, but does not resolve it, as income (while usually improved somewhat after our intervention) remains inadequately low, due to extremely low level of benefits, and harsh regime of deductions from benefits. Our clients with food insecurity issues almost invariably have fuel poverty issues and even if they had a little more food, if they can't pay for power to store it (fridge) or heat it (cooker), their problems persist.*
- 2. When income from benefits, or from poorly paid employment is so low, other interventions can only be temporary, and our clients, need repeated assistance.*
- 3. Finding that I am busier than usual. If I manage to support one of our members they often come back to me to ask support for a friend.*

2.2.3b – Focus on Worker/Volunteer Wellbeing

Though most organisations have either recruited more volunteers, adapted their working practices or 'just about' manage to deliver their services, many reported difficulties. These include the loss of volunteers due to shielding and the lockdown (1,2,3) worker/volunteer sickness and turnover (4,5) and anticipation of a volunteer shortage once the furlough scheme ends and people return to work: (6,7).

- 1. Current Covid-19 restrictions have meant a loss of active volunteers.*
- 2. Our volunteer programme is suspended, we have some volunteers helping with collections and deliveries and our meals on wheels service but staff are now undertaking volunteer roles.*
- 3. We lost 18 of our volunteers who were over 70. The local resilience team have provided people to help meantime.*
- 4. Just about although losing volunteers as people going back to work or getting sick.*
- 5. The volunteers change on a weekly basis due to the needs of their job or self isolating.*
- 6. For the moment we have more volunteers in our local area presenting themselves than are needed. We currently have enough staff capacity although this may be challenging if need continues to grow at the current rate. The logistics of securing the food, packing it and delivering it continues to be challenging. This includes accessing suitable space to complete this work while adhering to social distancing measures.*
- 7. As businesses re-open it will be more difficult to secure volunteers to distribute essential items.*

Several organisations report that they have safeguards in place for the mental and physical wellbeing of their staff and volunteers and that these appear to be working well. In many cases it is reported that the very act of helping those in need during the crisis has a positive effect on workers' wellbeing (1,2,3,4,5,6)

- 1. Yes but ensuring safe social distance has resulted in fewer volunteers doing more work. We could get more volunteers but feel it's safer with fewer in Storeroom areas.*
- 2. Wellbeing is high on my radar and we have invested in providing mental health awareness training and support to counselling. We have also instigated a wellbeing day that staff and volunteers can take each week as required to look after themselves. Hopefully though this we can limit the impact that ill health can have on the provision of our service.*

3. ... all say it helps their mental wellbeing. 2 Volunteers have lost parents to Covid 19 during this period and have said it has been really important to help them through their grief and loss.
4. I believe our staff and volunteers are supported to support our community and not over worked during this period. Many of our volunteers would like to do more!
5. It is a stressful time for all, although as a general comment I think that the staff team are happy to be working and busy and contributing to helping people.
6. A couple of volunteers have iterated that they need the volunteer post to keep their own mental health good.

However, most organisations report some concerns regarding the physical health (1,2,3,4) and, particularly, mental wellbeing (1-13, 15) of their staff and volunteers, including the fact that even when all possible precautions are taken, service delivery entails higher risk of infection (12-15):

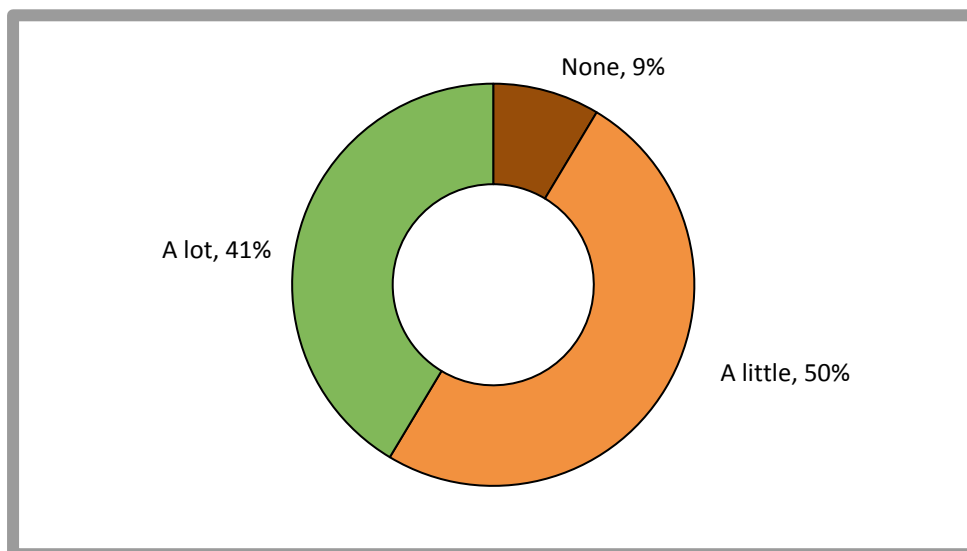
1. The physical demands related to logistics of food delivery and the emotional burden for volunteers delivering food to vulnerable people both present their own challenges. This is especially true of the difficult situations faced by volunteers when delivering food. Burnout of staff and volunteers remains something that we need to guard against.
2. COVID-19 is having such an effect on everyone, our staff are being pushed to the limits physically making up & distributing aid as well as supporting peoples mental health & hearing some of the struggles others are facing it is important to support our staff & de-brief.
3. We are working non-stop and this is taking it's toll on the employees both mentally and physically. Not only is the delivery and organisation physically exhausting - we are often dealing with upsetting stories from members of our community and so emotional and mental well-being is often compromised
4. I am very concerned for everyone's mental health and physical wellbeing - I think there will be a significant increase in need for mental health funding post covid. There was already a shortfall and long waiting lists - an overhaul is required to create a fairer and more accessible support system for all.
5. As a CEO i'm concerned that the staff and volunteers are putting themselves at risk every day. This in turn has an effect on their day to day mental well-being.
6. ... we are all working very long hours on a completely new service. some volunteers have had to stay home and are now more isolated than before. those who are still engaged are at risk of stress, fatigue and at risk by being out of their homes.
7. It is difficult for volunteers to refuse help to those who need it due to not having enough.
8. Our community volunteers have taken on responsibilities - they have cared - worried - stressed - cried - shared and coped. We are then bombarded for good news stories, statistics requests, heartfelt but ultimately useless support calls - from our local authority.
9. Some of my colleagues have confirmed that they are suffering from extremely high levels of anxiety, working from home and the IT problems and challenges that brings has been a significant problem.
10. Some volunteers are more anxious even those working in administrative roles with no close contact with other Volunteers or clients. Increased level of enquiries and generally more stressful time.
11. This has been a stressful time for staff and volunteers. For staff working from home, back problems have been an issue [...] Staff also delivering hot soup at a safe distance can hear some tragic stories and this can be really hard. One staff member purchased clothes and food for a new born baby that had only 3 baby grows due to her husband not having recourse to public funds.

12. *Last week was the funeral of a worker /delivery driver of another food service in our city. Therefore as someone who allocates drivers to deliveries, you feel responsible sending people to deliver food parcels at homes that may have the virus. We talked it through with the volunteers about best practice on the day and all were fine with that, but in life there are no 100% guarantees.*
13. *We still have a lot of public facing work, and shopping to do so the risk of catching the virus is there and a stress. also, delivering parcels to very vulnerable people can be draining.*
14. *... working from home is difficult when the majority of the work force is used to and enjoy face to face community work Also, anyone going out and about to work on a regular basis increases the risk of infection.*
15. *The safety and well being of my volunteers is paramount. We have continually been providing a good service to those in need. Often the public are the ones who are making this more stressful for us. (Not adhering to social distancing, open hours for donations). We are often having to ask people to come back during open hours for donations to keep our volunteers and service users safe and we have received verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, ignoring our requests, demanding to come into our food bank without PPE, overstepping boundaries. The public donors are not making the stressful situation any easier and are often causing more stress for us. This has put a huge strain on our mental health. We are trying to find ways to alleviate these issues but the current situation we all find ourselves in does not allow the space to think or find time to make these easier. The work we do is also very physical and we are all exhausted by carrying heavy loads every day. We are also becoming the only face/person someone speaks to and we are often given so much information about a service users state of mental and physical health that we find it difficult to find ways to not worry about these service users. The death of a service user by COVID19 hit us especially hard.*

2.2.4 – How much contact between local authorities and community organisations?

The vast majority of frontline organisations reported that they are in contact with their local authority, although only less than one-half report “a lot” of contact (Figure 2.5). Interestingly, it was in primarily urban local authorities (LAs) that also serve a rural area that organisations were most likely to report that they have had a “a lot” of contact with their local authority over the course of the coronavirus crisis (55%, compared to 31% of city LAs and 31% of primarily/exclusively rural LAs).

Figure 2.5: Contact between providers of emergency food and their local authority in Scotland, mid-May 2020



Notes: 169 organisations answered this question (weighted sample).

Some respondents report very strong communication between local authorities and community organisations (1-6),²¹ with several reporting regular involvement with local councillors (1,4,5), and for some, more contact than usual (6). On the other hand, larger organisations working across local authorities report a more mixed-picture (7,8), while others still are concerned about the quantity (9) and quality of engagement (10) with their local authority:

- 1 *Local Councillor is volunteering one afternoon a week to collect the meat from the local butcher to be included in the food bags given out by the Annexe.*
- 2 *Glasgow City Council have been a terrific support throughout, signposting individuals on & they have adapted departments to ensure support goes to the correct places & swiftly.*
- 3 *I regularly call the Glasgow City Council shielding line to register vulnerable and shielding patients to be set up for weekly food parcels from Scottish Government.*
- 4 *Our local councillor has been very helpful and hands-on. The community resilience team has provided a whole range of practical advice.*
- 5 *We have had a lot of contact with Cllrs and MSPs - some are volunteering with us.*
- 6 *We have had more contact in the last month than probably the whole of the last year.*
- 7 *... depends on each LA.*
- 8 *In the main communication has been great but some LAs have been more on the ball than others about co-coordinating all the different groups and charities offering help.*
- 9 *Nice individuals but no practical help.*
- 10 *We have had contact with the Community Officer but nothing else.*

A few other organisations report an initial willingness and discussions of collaborative partnership working but advice that this has since abated or come to little (11-13):

- 11 *I originally had a couple of phone calls from the 'hub' but none since.*
- 12 *Initial conversations of collaborative working which came to nothing.*
- 13 *Initially, quite a lot with Zoom meetings but it all seems to have gone quiet now.*

²¹ Throughout the report, we use a numbering system to pair our summary comment to the specific evidence from frontline organisations that supports the point we make (*italicized text*).

2.3 – What needs to happen now?

Although the outlook from frontline community organisations delivering emergency food support is broadly positive, there are issues that need to be addressed.

In April 2020, the Poverty and Inequality Commission recommended that the Scottish Government provides national leadership and guidance about food provision during this pandemic. Despite the considerable Scottish Government investment, only 15% of community organisations report in mid-May 2020 that they were aware that emergency food was delivering what Scotland required. As this is expert opinion, it tends to suggest that Scotland might not yet be reassured that it is tackling food insecurity during the crisis.

Two-fifths of organisations now have concerns over the wellbeing of workers/volunteers, with less than one in five anticipating that this will improve over the next month. Taking steps to support those who are providing emergency food support should be an immediate priority.

The vast majority of organisations report concerns that they are not reaching everyone who needs food support. It is important to clarify whether this reflects specific limitations in the response to the coronavirus-crisis, for which practical steps could be taken immediately to address, or whether this reflects more enduring concerns about service delivery to vulnerable groups (which are also important to address, but which may not be amenable to immediate actions which result in positive outcomes)

3. Have things improved?

3.1 – What did we ask?

We wanted to find out whether emergency food provision in Scotland had changed, specifically in the period after the first Poverty and Inequality Commission briefing on food insecurity was published in mid April 2020.²² We asked a single question, which asked organisations to evaluate whether each of ten aspects of emergency food provision in Scotland had improved, stayed the same, or worsened over the last month, i.e. since the Easter weekend (3.2 and Figure 3.2 below).

3.2 – What did we find?

Three Key findings

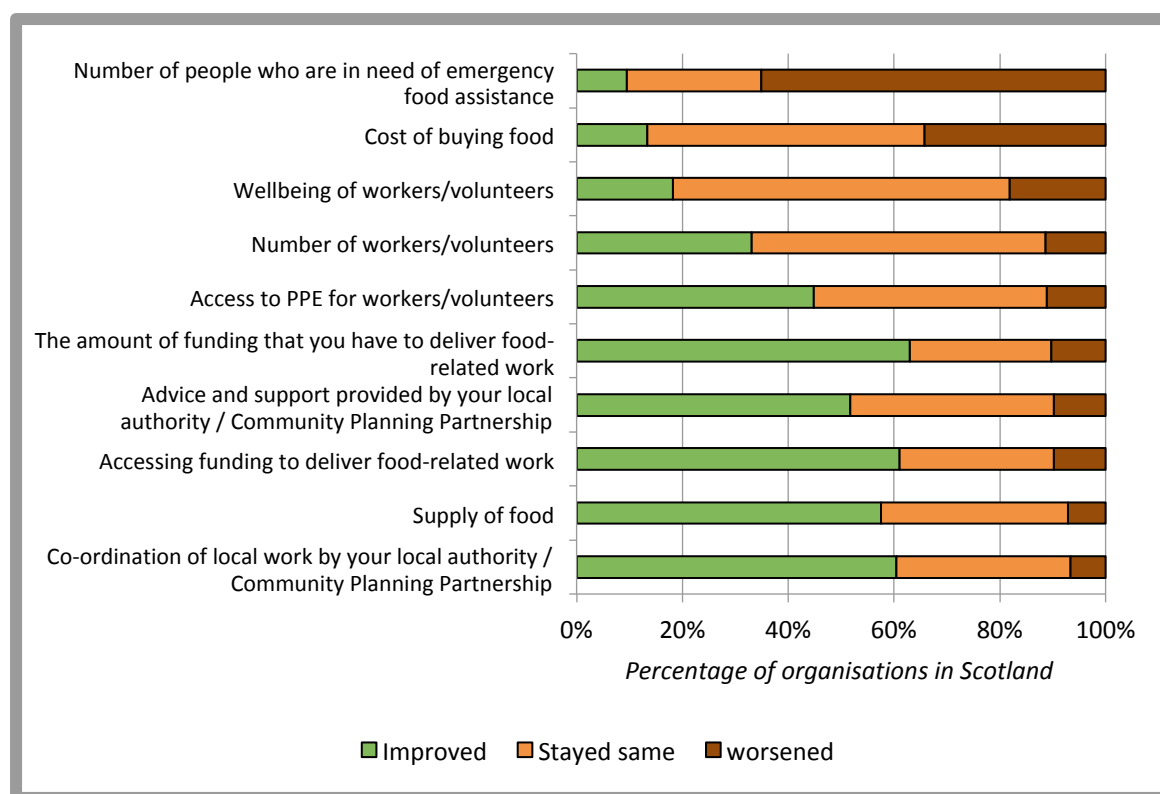
1. **Things have improved (on the whole).** On the whole, over the last month, there have been many signs of improvement with the local provision of emergency food.
2. **Stress point – demand is rising.** The majority of organisations report rising demand for emergency food over the last month
3. **Local problems are intense problems.** Although the ‘big picture’ is positive, there are many reports of specific local problems that have emerged over the last month. Where problems are shared, they are often very intense and highly problematic for organisations and the people they serve.

Many things have improved over the last month (Figure 3.1). In particular, the majority of frontline organisations report that improvements have been experienced: (i) co-ordination of local work by local authority; (ii) supply of food; (iii) access to funding; (iv) amount of funding received, and (v) advice and support provided locally. Furthermore, in many instances where change is reported, it is more likely to be for the better. This best describes the recent trend for (i) number of workers; and (ii) access to PPE equipment for workers. On the other hand, there are a few issues that seem to be emerging as concerns.

First, demand has risen. The vast majority of frontline organisations report that demand for emergency food has risen over the last month (65%). Second, while the most common experience was that the cost of food had remained the same over the last month (52%), a significant minority of frontline providers reported that the cost of food had increased (34%). Finally, the well-being of workers is emerging as a cause for concern. Once more, while the headline is positive (18% reporting that wellbeing had improved and 64% reporting that wellbeing had stayed the same), a sizable minority report worsening wellbeing (18%), with some going on to highlight that the stresses on workers/volunteers were building and reaching a ‘pinch point’.

²² Poverty and Inequality Commission (2020) *COVID-19 Crisis and the Impact on Food Security*. [online]. Poverty and Inequality Commission. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission-Food-insecurity-evidence-briefing-.pdf>

Figure 3.1: Changes in emergency food provision, as perceived by organisations providing a community service in Scotland, mid-April to mid-May 2020



Notes: 176 organisations answered this question (weighted sample). For each issue, respondents were asked to indicate whether ‘things had improved’, ‘stayed the same’ or ‘things has got worse’ over the last month. Respondents also had the option of indicating that they were not able to answer the question (rather not say, don’t know, or not applicable).

On the whole, more improvements over the last month were reported from frontline organisations based in urban areas. Higher rates of urban improvement were reported for co-ordination with their local authority; advice and support provided by local authority; supply of food, cost of food; and access to PPE. For example, 63% of those based in urban LAs reported improvements in the supply of food, compared to 46% of organisations from authorities that were mainly rural in character. This broad picture of relatively greater urban improvement heightens the significance of an adverse trend for worker wellbeing. More organisations from urban LAs reported that the wellbeing of their workers had worsened over the last month (24%, compared to 7% of organisations from authorities that were mainly rural in character).

Frontline organisations who had a background in tackling poverty were less likely to report improvements (i.e. reduction to more manageable levels) in the number of people in need of emergency food assistance over the last month (73% of those from whom tackling poverty was always part of their business reported that things had worsened, compared to, for example, 45% of those for whom it was not).

Neighbourhood-focus organisations, particularly those based in Scotland’s 20% Most Deprived areas were also more likely to report improvements over the last month in terms of access to funding, the supply of food and the cost of buying food. It is unclear whether this means that neighbourhood

organisations are now better placed than those with a wider geographical reach, or whether it means that initial inequities have been addressed.

The vast majority of respondents report increased demand (1,2,3); many report up to a threefold increase in emergency food need. However, many respondents report that they have been able to meet the new challenge (1,4) thanks to a combination of increased and flexible funding (4,5,6,7,8), coordination and partnership working (2,6,7,8,9,10,11), with both local authorities (6,7,10) and other community organisations (6,7,8,10,12), developing an emergency response system (10,13) and an influx of donations (3,8,11) and volunteers willing to help (2,8,11):

- 1 *I feel by now things are balancing out, we are now in a routine of where we are giving daily/weekly support to those that require, referrals are now being drip fed in & numbers are manageable.*
- 2 *Govan Housing Association has been really lucky to have volunteers and dedicated staff and partnership working to assist in every way we can in Govan. We have a daily food truck 5 days a week in different locations every week with Salvation Army and GYIP who are providing pack lunches for children. We also have food supplies being delivered with fresh bread and milk at the cost to the Association to assist our tenants in financial difficulty. We have another partnership Well-fed providing ready meals daily also we have provided over 2000 meals to our local community and tenants, delivered food parcels to the elderly and families. We have been fortunate to provide Emergency Energy vouchers as fuel poverty has increased due to more people staying at home. We also have digital lending library this has been challenging trying to get i-pads to residents and get them set up but it is improving. It has been a time for organisations to all join forces and this has successfully done in the Govan area to help and support the local community.*
- 3 *We have seen an increase in demand 100 more during April 2020 compared with April 2019. However this has been matched by an increase in food and cash donations.*
- 4 *I think that at first it was really tough to access enough food. That has changed for the better but most because of Grants we received.*
- 5 *The simplified access to funding has worked extremely well.*
- 6 *Working Well - Incredible local community response and capacity to mobilise Flexible support from funders, and new funding available We have been impressed at how all sectors – public, private and third sectors – are collaborating together and how this crisis situation has enabled us to develop new partnerships, build relationships with new service users and hopefully embed these in a way which is sustainable and which helps strengthen our communities as we exit the current crisis.*
- 7 *A number of our funding applications have been successful which has provided us with enough money to deliver our project. Some of this funding has been from grant providers and some from government projects/schemes. We seem to have a good partnership with those we work with, local groups and council and as we have progressed through the weeks the process has become smoother.*
- 8 *We receive great support from the community [...] this has increased since the onset of COVID-19. We are also finding it easier to get funding for our project. People/Gov are offering funds to get us through this difficult time. Half of our volunteers are staying home as they come into the at risk categories. However, because, we have had to change how we deliver our service to follow the social distancing guidelines, we are managing well with the number of volunteers we have left. We have many offers of help from people wishing to volunteer. We have a partnership with British Gas who are carrying out some deliveries for the Foodbank, to people who have no one to collect the food and cannot leave the house due to self-isolating. There are also a few companies coming forward and donating hand gel and face masks which is helpful. Hand gel was*

very difficult to access in the beginning. There is a lot of overlap of emergency food provision, which is causing a bit of confusion, but a lot of great work being carried out. Renfrewshire Council are providing food to those shielding which is essential and also have Community Hubs. The community hubs are a good idea and I think are an ideal opportunity for good partnership working."

- 9 *What has worked particularly well has been the co-ordinated partnership response allowing for us to act quickly*
- 10 *The partnership between ourselves, Dundee City Council, DVVA and the local projects - starting the weekly meetings in March has allowed us to hear the needs of local people directly from local projects; it has allowed the Council to shape their responses to fit these needs (as much as they can); it has ensured the right information is getting to people who are struggling (the Senior Manager for Council Advice Services is involved in the weekly Zoom meetings and we have disseminated information about the Scottish Welfare Fund and other money advice support through the projects - printed leaflets into food parcels); 2. The involvement of a local business - John Alexander Painter and Decorators have used their premises, vans and furloughed staff to store and deliver the Council and donated food stock to the 24 projects. Their help has been invaluable, but wouldn't have happened without the coordination from the start."*
- 11 *A number of our volunteers have had to self-isolate as in a high-risk group, but [...] other volunteers are doing more shifts. We have had great support from IFAN over PPE. We have had much more contact with our local authority since lockdown than we normally have. Local community has really rallied support and food donations and cash donations have been up on normal. Grant funding has been easier to access from a number of extra streams coming online.*
- 12 *Worked well: Co ordination between third sector - problem solving, joint funding bids, resource and knowledge sharing. Working with community activists on the ground. Finger on the pulse, street by street of what needs are. Compassionate community movement- trying to provide good with dignity - maximum choice, examples of kindness included in boxes, nicely packaged, not utilitarian.*
- 13 *The hard work of 3-4 weeks ago has built logistical, financial and communication channels that are reliable and understood.*

However, where challenges do exist respondents have found them to be significant and persistent. These problems tend to be centred around: increased demand (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9), increased costs (6,10,11,12), operational and delivery issues (7,8,9,12,13,14,15), and a lack of support offered by some local authorities (9,15,16).

- 1 *Need has trebled.*
- 2 *Every week we are getting more numbers due to people using up their savings.*
- 3 *Initial applications for funding were estimated on the demand before the virus with a slight increase. As an organisation we have found that the demand for support is much higher than anticipated and therefore the funding has no[t] lasted as long as planned. When then looking for funding to continue this work it is more difficult and more competitive.*
- 4 *The amount of people who have been referred to us is increasing each week. Compared to this time last year it has increased ten fold. Each week more and more families are being referred to us.*
- 5 *We are noticing that funding is getting more and more scarce, tighter and more competitive and so the sustainability of our project in the future is questionable. Between this and the reduced food donations we are depending more on our local community than anything else. However we are getting many more referrals coming our way making us have to ration our stocks.*

- 6 *We have noticed an increase in pricing for some of the food / ingredients that we are buying, especially around fruit and veg. The number of people we support each week has increased and we are now at capacity.*
- 7 *Fewer volunteers are now delivering 61% more parcels than the previous month.*
- 8 *All of the regular volunteers are having to isolate due to their age so the whole workforce has changed and new staff have had to start a lot of the processes from scratch, as usual suppliers are unable to cope with the demand of increasing number of families needing food parcels. A lot more families are struggling and their circumstances haven't and won't change for a long time so they need food every week and not just for a few weeks as before.*
- 9 *Early applications for funding have meant we have been in a position to provide support before the local authority put anything in place. Our on going challenges are keeping up with demand, social distancing space and reapplying for funding again. If schools had been utilised we would have had access to more space and facilities, which would have meant a higher number of volunteers could have been utilised without the need to purchase freezers and fridges for a small hall, which we outgrew 2 weeks in.*
- 10 *Due to geography of some isolated communities, access to food at the same price as that of urban customers is non-existent. Meaning availability is lower in those communities, prices are higher and choice is negligible.*
- 11 *Food costs have rocketed with families nervous about going further afield to purchase cheaper options. They have to rely on public transport, which feels unsafe. Often they are on key card for purchasing electricity, which is the most expensive way of payment. In order to reduce amount of times for travelling, families fork out cost of taxi on return. This is an extra cost. Due to language and literacy barriers those with the most need are not connected in with the most up to date info to get support.”*
- 12 *Community organisations need advice now - we have all adapted rapidly - we need support from funders - community umbrella organisations and third sector interfaces, not support calls - but dedicated offers of practical help that will go beyond platitude. Not a single stream of funding has given assistance with co-ordination, volunteers are taking this on themselves.*
- 13 *The number of volunteers who can go out and about have fallen some of the people who signed up to volunteer have now returned to work, so numbers will fall*
- 14 *As a local partnership spearheaded by local people the project was quickly up and running, support from agencies has increased over last few weeks but hasn't made any significant improvement to the delivery. [...] The supports that are in place through council and Scottish government aren't always reaching the right people. e.g. we have contact with some who are in the shielding group and when contacting the secondary free phone number are given more contacts and are eventually referred back to the community projects.*
- 15 *We are in a desperate situation where we need access to a local community centre to ensure we can retain and grow our provision and the council have been less than impressive with this request. Three weeks on and we are still no further forward to getting the access we need - despite everyone acknowledging what a great job the project is doing and the fact our local halls management committee have approved the use.*
- 16 *Council convinced that community didn't need a supply of cooked meals, despite all our evidence to the contrary. Blocking our set up of a new kitchen Council horrific attitude to community volunteers, who are doing an amazing job and easing the burden for charities and council by shopping, signposting etc. Lack of trust for the public. Over zealous Environmental Health officers inspecting every few days, using their own guidelines rather than following national ones regarding using donated food. Council*

“it will do” attitude- supplying male toiletries to women, families given food in black bin liners. Eroding dignity.

Finally, even where organisations have successfully adapted to meet increased and changing demand, many expressed grave concerns and anxieties about the future. Much of this concern was focused on the sustainability of funding (1,2,3,4) in a context of persistently high demand and others drains on finance (1,2,3,5,6), as well as the impact the work was having of volunteers and workers (4,7), and the wider community (6,8).

- 1 We are worried about the longer term impact of job losses/unemployment - and that there will still be much higher numbers of people needing food and essentials. Will there still be funding to help us?*
- 2 Concerns about sustaining this financially, as we recognise that the level of poverty in Dundee has risen and is unlikely to reduce in the near future.*
- 3 Biggest challenges The uncertainty of knowing how long the current restrictions will last, how long our funding has to last, whether food donations might dry up, the trajectory of need and the challenge of ensuring our emergency response service is rooted in our knowledge and experience of community food support and informs our transition back to that kind of support in future [...] We operate in an already socio-economically deprived area ... and many of our service users and volunteers experienced social isolation, food poverty and mental health issues already. These are likely to be worsened during the lockdown and we will need not only to manage this period, but also the after effects and the transition to a post-pandemic period.*
- 4 ... there seems to be a huge effort locally and nationally to meet the demands raised/identified during these difficult times. How can this be sustainable over a longer period of time if shielding and restrictions remain? My sense is that locally, folk are overwhelmed by the generosity of those giving and delivering items, at times unsure of where food boxes etc has come from or how long these charitable acts will continue.*
- 5 All is working well at the present however we are deeply concerned that families with children receiving free school meals may experience a crisis once school holidays kick in. This could put additional pressure on the local food bank and there may not be the resources to respond adequately.*
- 6 We envisage poorer physical and mental health due to lock down. Increased costs for basic food ingredients, utilities, insurance etc.*
- 7 we have put support measures in place to circumvent a deterioration of well being but in general working from home is difficult for us as it's very intense and full on.*
- 8 The on going challenges are that as time marches on, those who are classed as vulnerable are becoming more and more isolated due to shielding (which is absolutely needed). How is it affecting their mental health and ability to "do" for themselves. For young carers, the burden placed on them is massive, but what a great job they continue to do with no regard for their own health and well-being. I worry that the impact on them, once all this is over, will hit them hard as they are holding back and carrying on because of their caring responsibilities.*

3.3 – What needs to happen now?

The vast majority of organisations report that demand has increased over the last month (and that demand for emergency food is expected to increase further over the next month. There is a need to better understand the drivers of these demands, the populations who remain vulnerable, in order to take steps to tackle food insecurity at the current time.

4. Will things get better?

4.1 – What did we ask?

We wanted to find out whether organisations were optimistic about the immediate future prospects for emergency food provision in Scotland had changed, i.e. over the next month. We asked a single question, which asked organisations to evaluate whether each of the same ten aspects of emergency food provision in Scotland had improved that were evaluated for improvements over the last month (Figure 3.2) will improve, stay the same, or worsen over the next month, i.e. to mid June 2020 (4.2 and Figure 4.2 below).

4.2 – What did we find?

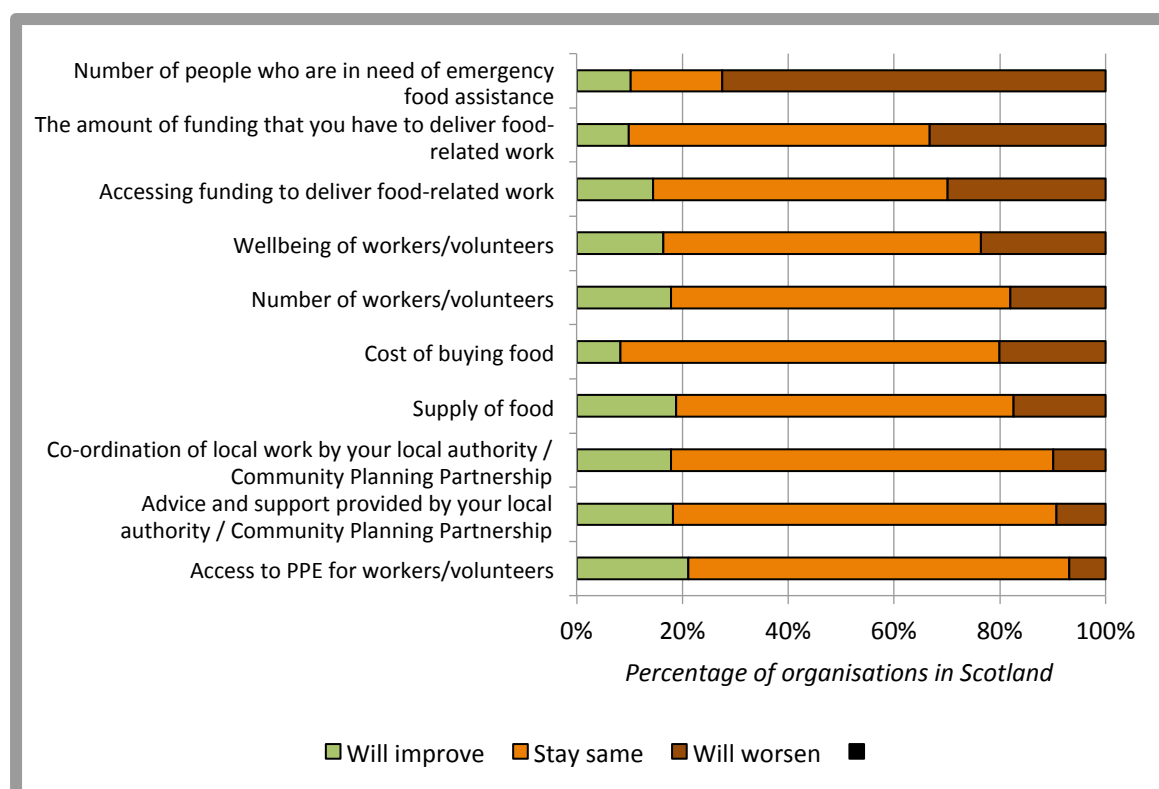
Three Key findings

1. **Expecting more of the same.** The vast majority of community organisations are expecting no change for the vast majority of issues related to their provision over the next month.
2. **Change that is not for the better.** In contrast to the positive direction of travel over the next month, where change is anticipated over the next month, expectations are more negative, than positive.
3. **Stress point – demand is expected to continue rising.** The majority of organisations report that they expect the demand for emergency food to keep rising over the next month.

More of the same is expected over the next month. For all but one of the eleven issues on which expectations were canvassed, frontline organisations were anticipating no change over the next month (Figure 4.1). This can be both positive and negative, i.e. this can imply continued success and perpetuation of problems (section 2 of this report). Furthermore, funding concerns are emerging. Although the majority of frontline organisations anticipate no change over the next month, a sizable minority expected the amount of funding to reduce and access to funding to worsen. Of particular note given what was reported over the last month (Figure 3.1) is that the vast majority of frontline organisations anticipate that demand for emergency food will rise over the last month.

Organisations with a background in food provision were more likely than those who did not to express concerns over working with local authorities over the next month. Far fewer expected co-ordination with their local authority to improve (2%, compared to for example 25% of organisations for whom providing a food service was not their core business prior to the coronavirus crisis) and far fewer expected improvements in advice and support (0%, none of 40 organisations), compared to for example 26% of organisations for whom providing a food service was not their core business prior to the coronavirus crisis).

Figure 4.1: Anticipated changes in emergency food provision, as perceived by organisations providing a community service in Scotland, mid-May to mid-June 2020



Notes: 176 organisations answered this question (weighted sample). For each issue, respondents were asked to indicate whether ‘things will improve’, ‘things will stay the same’ or ‘things will worsen’ over the next month. Respondents also had the option of indicating that they were not able to answer the question (rather not say, don’t know, or not applicable).

Although the overview suggests stability in the short term, frontline organisations expressed a wide range of concerns over what lies ahead. Much of this concern is for the medium-to-long term (4,5), although some immediate concerns were expressed, in relation to the easing of lockdown (1,2,3). One organisation was expecting an upsurge in demand when lockdown eases as hard-to-reach demand becomes more readily apparent (2,6); this contrasts and cautions the prevailing view that the coronavirus has had the inadvertent gain of identifying previously unmet need. There was even a suggestion that things have already begun to change, with commitment to address the emergency issues waning (7):

1. *I am concerned about a second surge as measures are relaxed*
2. *Concern that more people with complex needs - not just food / income, fuel / unemployment- will be identified including mental health, affects of long term isolation and family issues. A considerable wave of people and families may come forward after lockdown restrictions are eased - there needs to be capacity to respond quickly and accurately.*
3. *Next month some volunteers will go back to work. Funding to support organisations will have to be reviewed and this will have an impact on the most vulnerable.*
4. *[all] stages of coming out of lockdown are going to have their own challenges that we may anticipate but will , as always be unexpected challenges ahead....so good to be prepared for each stage.....preparation is 3/4 s of the job!*

5. *I expect only a slight increase over the next month, but sadly in our area we expect a significant increase in demand as people lose their jobs in the second half of the year*
6. *I think a lot more people will feel the strain of the current situation as not much will improve for a while yet. I think more people will be identified that need help as people are less restricted socially.*
7. *The initial hype and the urgency seems to have passed ... the cost of food already is greatly increased, supermarkets aren't providing the same offers and the cost of feeding families has risen and isn't being addressed directly, our organisation supports families who are already benefit dependant and the additional strains e.g. access to food, the additional cost will be felt more as the weeks pass.*

The primary concerns were expressed over the capacity to deliver the service in the longer-term. This partly reflected: an expectation that current staff and volunteers will be lost, when a return to work of furloughed staff is possible (1,2,3); an expectation that demand will increase as a result of economic shock (4,5,6,7), and a concern that existing support will stop before demand falls (8,9,10). These forces may come together in a(n) (im)perfect storm (11,12,13,14)

1. *As chefs who are furloughed leave this may affect our volunteers. However many volunteers are committed local residents and volunteers already.*
2. *As it is mainly school staff who are now running the foodbank it will become a major staffing issue once schools start to re open.*
3. *Our concern is that volunteers will be returning to work and the need from our community will still be here.*
4. *Once the furlough scheme finishes, we think many people will eventually lose their jobs, putting further demand on foodbanks, as there is a 6-week delay to receive Universal Credit.*
5. *As people come out of furlough we expect an increase in unemployment and reduced hours of work to adversely affect incomes.*
6. *More employers will be struggling with their finances with the lockdown continuing, so more people will have problems resulting from lower income arising from lower pay etc, food security, debts, fuel poverty, threat of eviction,*
7. *This is a tourist area with nothing opening and more families going on to universal credit. If the season doesn't start soon there will be no jobs and businesses cannot keep staff on furlough indefinitely. I am convinced the need for food support and help to pay bills is going to increase dramatically in this area.*
8. *In the weeks to come, the emergency food programme & funding may cease to exist putting additional strain on food banks.*
9. *We are worried about food donations slowing up and relying on trying to freeze what we get now.*
10. *We expect pressure on family finances. Unless food aid assistance continues to be provided centrally by Council and Government we anticipate a significant increase in demand. Unsure that we can expect the local community to continue to donate at the current level.*
11. *As economic impact and global supply chains come to bite, I expect a growing number of firms may not return and will make redundancies. In addition to funding for third sector organisations becoming more difficult to access as local & national governments react to an economic tailspin as a result of COVID19 will mean that while our services will become increasing necessary, delivery will be difficult due to reductions in funding and support.*
12. *At the end of this time we will have large demand and less resource to fulfil the demand. Some of our volunteers will be returning to work and this will have an effect on us. Need will continue to grow steadily. Many people were struggling or just about coping before*

this crisis and the effect on the poorest in our societies will be profound and lasting. We will continue to do what we can with whatever budget we have, however this will be a challenge.

13. We expect funding to dry up and need increase and lockdown is lifted and people realise they don't have jobs to back to in many cases.

14. We feel that there will be an increasing financial crisis over the next few weeks as furloughing comes to an end and peoples savings drying up. We believe that the need for free, high quality food is going to be a priority as it will offset the increased costs of living at home 24/7 and the debts that we know families are accruing on credit cards etc. We believe that the funding support has been excellent, with an emphasis on getting money out there to us to enable us to do the work we are doing, but have concerns that it may not be as forthcoming in 2 or 3 months time as the fallout from COVID and the lockdown starts to hit home - i.e. mental health crisis, baby boom, child protection and domestic violence concerns. We KNOW that the crisis is going to have a huge lasting impact that is predictable and we should be giving funding opportunities now to start preparing for it - i.e. money for additional staff hours to cope with increased referrals and also access to funds for counselling for families.

Resourcing was not the only concerns expressed for the future. It was noted expressed that organisations need to find new ways of working together (1,2), although this is not always presented as a problem (3,4,5). Some specific problems were noted, e.g. that the return to a vibrant community life may generate transitional tensions where there remains a need to continue to use resources to provide emergency food (6), and that there may be a shift away from concern with basic needs toward economic issues, implying that it becomes more difficult to address their needs with less/no resource (7). Some concerns were also expressed about those exploiting the current situation (and what lies ahead) to meet their own ends (8,9), while some speculated on rising costs and the wider implications that presents for vulnerable groups (10)

1. My worry is that after this is all over, the local authority and government will slide back into complacency and things won't change.

2. We hope better co-ordination of all community services in our area through this will result in long-term co-ordinating planning and partnership working. We will be affected by loss of income and have to consider new long-term ways of sustaining the organisation.

3. Working in collaboration there are many opportunities that we have identified. The new Community Growing Forum Scotland, which we coordinate and includes The Royal Horticultural Society, Greenspace Scotland, Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society, Central Scotland Green Network Trust, Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society, Social Farms & Gardens Scotland, Transition Edinburgh South, Trellis, Nourish, Glasgow Allotment Forum now has a top priority to work together on our climate, nature, and now COVID 19, emergencies, however we need a bit of funding to get traction for a network of connected community growing hubs, connected to the growing network of food hubs and expanding both of these, to form a resilient responsive and innovative network of community led food across Scotland.

4 I think projects will continue provision as long as possible and will get better at delivering over time. I believe it will strongly pave the way for more partnership funding and bids

5 Have increased capacity to make home made meals by starting 2 other kitchen so this frees our kitchen up to look at making recipe boxes to gently help people cook nutritious food for themselves if they want to. This could be an exciting opportunity as we've delivered over 2000 boxes allowing us access to many more vulnerable families than before. We are determined not to take anything for granted and help people have

access to any cooking equipment they need before sending the boxes and follow up to continually refine what we're doing. Large partnership application bids with social housing agencies coming up.

- 6. There is the possibility of a clash of use of the community hub if a large scale food delivery operation continues for month whilst restrictions loosen and people will want to start accessing the facility again if safe to do so, for community services and outdoor groups.*
- 7. I think that whilst the focus at present is on the obvious need this situation has created, within 6 months to a year funding for food provision will dry up and employability, etc will become the focus for funding.*
- 8. I am also concerned that people might be taking advantage of the good nature and are duplicating requests for food provision where they might not actually be in need of it, adding pressure to already stretched services.*
- 9. More of our clients are reporting more malpractice by their employers, due to inappropriate implementation of furlough.*
- 10. As certain foods reappear in shops.....will prices be much higher, the cost of public transport.....more expensive, making journeys for our young carers even more out of reach.....cost of fuel higher.....how will they heat homes etc.....afford to use personal vehicles??*

Re-iterating points that were made earlier (refer to section 3.2), concerns were also expressed for the wellbeing of workers/volunteers (1,2,3,4), as well as those in the wider community (5)

- 1. I am concerned about volunteers having to return to work soon and I am concerned about everyone's mental health on-going, especially amongst my colleagues in the community who are dealing with things at the coalface (and more especially in the smaller groups who have recently stepped up to help fill gaps in provision and are not necessarily working within guidelines or have the safety net of guidance etc*
- 2. rates of mental ill health are increasing including among volunteers as or potential volunteers as their circumstances get worse e.g. running out of money and resources.*
- 3. I have concerns as the length of time continues Volunteer's, become unwell or burnt out,*
- 4. Our volunteers are showing signs of strain and fatigue. We are up by 300% from last year and are providing food parcels per week on the scale that we provide at the holidays. This is unsustainable.*
- 5. We are concerned that in particular single-parent households suffer disproportionately, affecting many children who already struggle on many fronts. This is exacerbated by the phase out of the furlough and lack of childcare options but also by the hyper-vigilance that many parents will suffer (especially if they have suffered abuse or other trauma before); we already have reports of some parents not daring to go outside to buy food, even if this is possible and legal, because they fear contracting COVID 19 - the whole family therefore lived of lentils for a month.*

4.3 – What needs to happen now?

Concerns are now beginning to emerge over access to funding, and the amount of funding over the next month. Around one third are concerned about the amount of funding available and accessing funding. On announcing the launch of the Food Fund, the Scottish Government committed to extending support if necessary. It is now necessary to look ahead to confirm whether more funds will be required to ensure food security in the months ahead.

5. Who is serving their community?

5.1 – What did we ask?

We asked five questions to better understand who is delivering emergency food provision at the community level in Scotland at the current time. First, we asked organisations to describe the ‘sector’ to which they belonged (5.2.1 and Figure 5.1). Next, we asked whether the organisations had a background in providing food (5.2.2 and Figure 5.2) and tackling poverty (5.2.3 and Figure 5.3). Finally, we asked organisations to describe their emergency food support in terms of its geographical reach (5.2.4 and Figure 5.4) and population reach (5.2.5 and Figure 5.5).

5.2 – What did we find?

Four Key findings

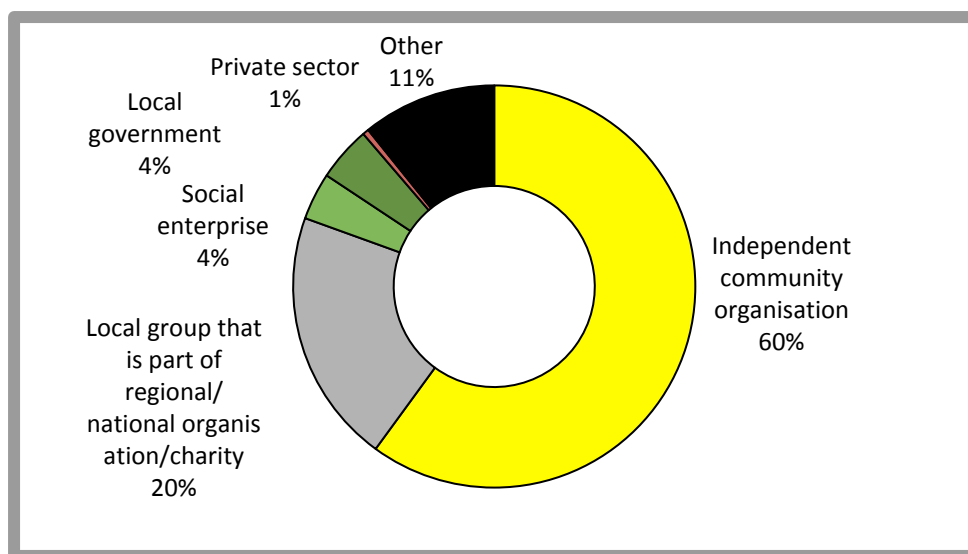
1. **Local action.** The majority of providers of emergency food support are independent community organisations.
2. **Extending expertise.** A significant proportion of providers have only started to provide a food-related service in response to the coronavirus crisis.
3. **Tackling poverty.** The vast majority of organisations understand that the provision of emergency food is a form of tackling poverty in Scotland.
4. **Broad geographical reach and broad community reach.** The majority of providers are not targeting their work at particular population groups and the geographical reach of organisations is varied (from neighbourhood to across the whole local authority area and beyond).

5.2.1 – Who is providing emergency food?

The majority of frontline organisations responding to our survey described themselves as ‘independent community organisations’ (Figure 5.1) - a wide range of organisations from housing associations, faith-based groups, community alliances, and many others. Some of these organisations were formed in direct response to the coronavirus crisis (1), while others have a long-standing commitment to tackle food insecurity (2). Some were a mixture of both, i.e. new organisations that have recently formed to undertake the work that existing organisations were not able to continue (3), while others have continued their work with more limited staff resources (4).

1. *Ad hoc community organisation put together to address this situation and accessing the governance of a local community company.*
2. *Castlemilk Together Community Food Action is a 4-year long partnership of local organisations and community members who meet and organise on the topic of food poverty/insecurity.*
3. *I am part of the local Community Council. However, when the local food bank had to close due to inappropriate venue during the crisis we formed a task force to cover*
4. *Our organisation ... is managed by parent volunteers, and whom them self have children with disabilities, most of our staff has been furlough to protect our charities future, leaving limited staff and volunteers to continue to support 168 families through uncertain times.*

Figure 5.1: Type of organisations delivering emergency food support in communities, Scotland, mid-May 2020



Notes: 174 organisations answered this question (weighted sample).

5.2.2 – Do providers have a background in providing food?

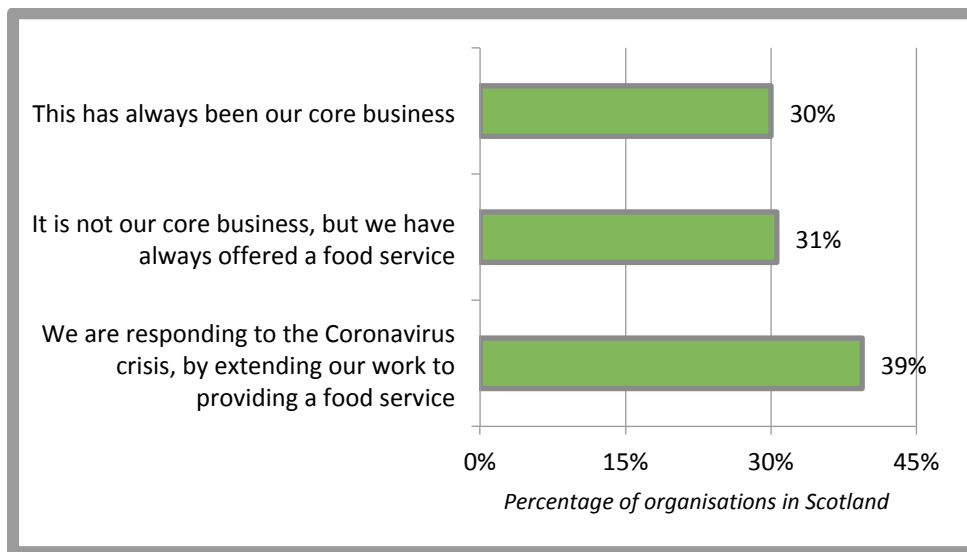
As suggested in 5.2.1, frontline providers of emergency food provision were almost equally split between those for whom food has always been their core business (30%), those that have always offered a food service (31%) and those who were extending their work to provide a food service during this coronavirus crisis (39%) (Figure 5.2).

Some of these frontline organisations report long-standing experience in tackling food poverty (1,2), while others have started tackling food insecurity more recently (3,4,5). Although some organisations have experience in delivering services that are required during the coronavirus crisis (2,7), others are adapting their work (4,5,6). Some expect to revert to core business when the crisis has passed (6), while others are hoping to strengthen their service as a result of the community engagement that results through coronavirus-related work (7).

1. *We have always had several food initiatives and we have had a destitution cupboard since 2006, set up for asylum seekers whose Home Office case has been rejected and in later years, for people who have been sanctioned or in between benefit claims*
2. *We have always provided emergency food parcels and usually run a weekly free community lunch as part of our community health & wellbeing programme.*
3. *Our focus was improving diet and raising awareness of environmental impact of food, rather than response to food insecurity. However, over past two years have found can't solve one without the other.*
4. *We recently started our community fridge project to tackle food poverty in the community a few weeks before the outbreak*
5. *We were in the process of setting up a Social Supermarket and adapted our model to address the crisis*
6. *Social enterprise at Arnotdale House is our public cafe. Before COVID-19 we supported our clients with food bags. The distribution of food and food bags to local communities and public is new for us and will only last until the cafe is able to open again.*

7. *Food is one of our core purposes (Learning, Eating and Exercise), and we have a community cafe, weekly community meal, monthly international meal, twice weekly volunteer lunches, a small food delivery service before this and various community cooking training courses. This was all part of our Food Support programme. This has been ramped up and increased a lot as a response to Covid-19. We've only had our completed community hub for just over 2 years so only recently had the facilities and capacity to provide this kind of service and support. We hope to refer people back to the community food services after this for longer term engagement and social change*

Figure 5.2: Food expertise of organisations delivering emergency food support in communities, Scotland, mid-May 2020

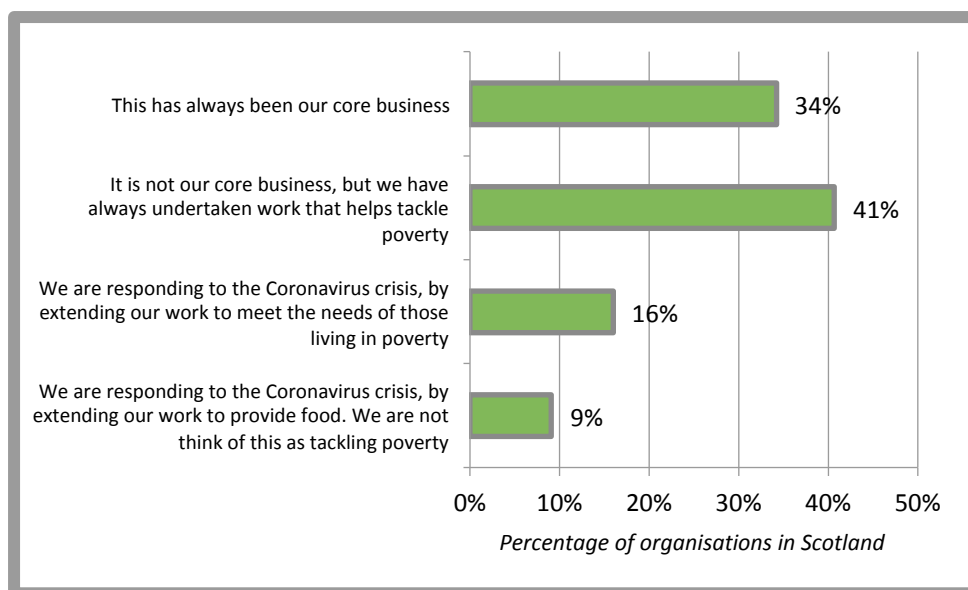


Notes: 175 organisations answered this question (weighted sample).

5.2.3 – Do providers have a background in tackling poverty?

As Figure 5.2 demonstrates, the majority of frontline providers reported a background in tackling poverty, either as their core business, or in acknowledgement that their core business has a tackling poverty impact. One-in four did not have a background in tackling poverty, with one in seven perceiving that they were extending their work to have a tackling poverty impact during the crisis and one in ten perceiving that their actions were not about tackling poverty.

Figure 5.2: Tackling poverty expertise of organisations delivering emergency food support in communities, Scotland, mid-May 2020



Notes: 175 organisations answered this question (weighted sample).

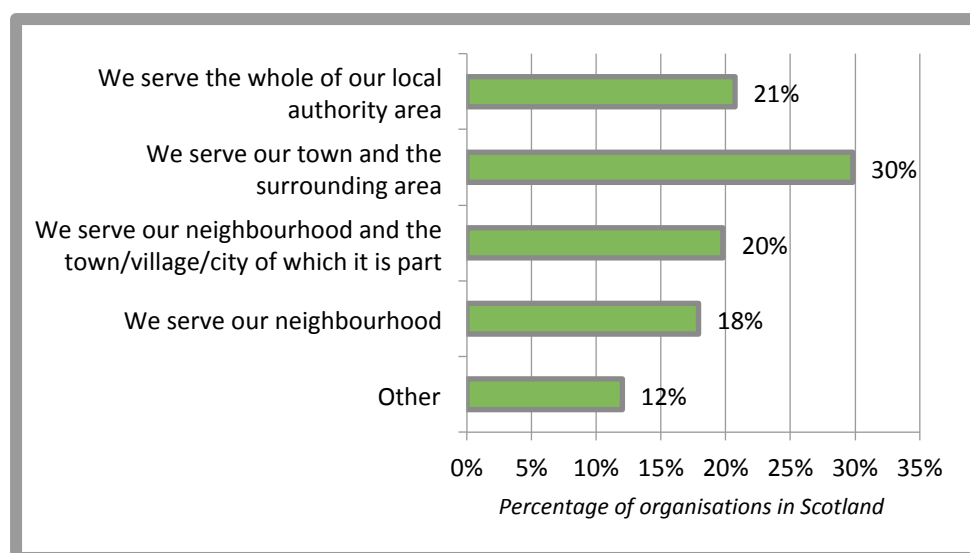
As for food provision (5.2.2), some of these frontline organisations report long-standing experience in tackling poverty (1), while others have started this work in response to the coronavirus crisis (2). (3,4,5). For many poverty is part of the problem their organisation seeks to address (3,4), while some observed that the reach of poverty is extending (5), or that the issues that people experiencing poverty typically encounter are now presenting to a broader demographic (6).

1. ... alleviation of poverty was the reason we were set up in 1947
2. ... we are a food bank set up because of the virus at the beginning of April after two weeks of preparation
3. We are about social inclusion but tackling poverty is intrinsic to our work.
4. Asylum seekers are affected by state enforced poverty - the prohibition from accessing paid employment, education and been forced to lived on £5.00 a day in unsafe houses. Our main area of work is around Asylum seekers to accessing Education, Employment, decent housing to improve the quality of their lives
5. At the moment Poverty, Coronavirus and inequality becomes a Mental Health Issue for the total planet.
6. We focus our work on supporting projects that are addressing multiple issues including poverty, poor health. However interestingly, though food is not exactly a 'leveller' it has caused issues for a wider range of people than it normally does. So we have heard from groups that they want to broaden their work from focussing on the people who are identified as having financial or health issues, to a community wide approach, as many they are helping have not been previously engaged and needed help. For example elderly people shielding, who are not in poverty, however have clear issues with social isolation.

5.2.4 – Are providers serving their whole neighbourhood?

Frontline organisations reported a range of geographical reach, ranging from focused on their neighbourhood to those serving the whole of their local authority and those with a wider reach across multiple local authorities (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Geographical range covered by organisations delivering emergency food support in communities, Scotland, mid-May 2020



Notes: 178 organisations answered this question (weighted sample).

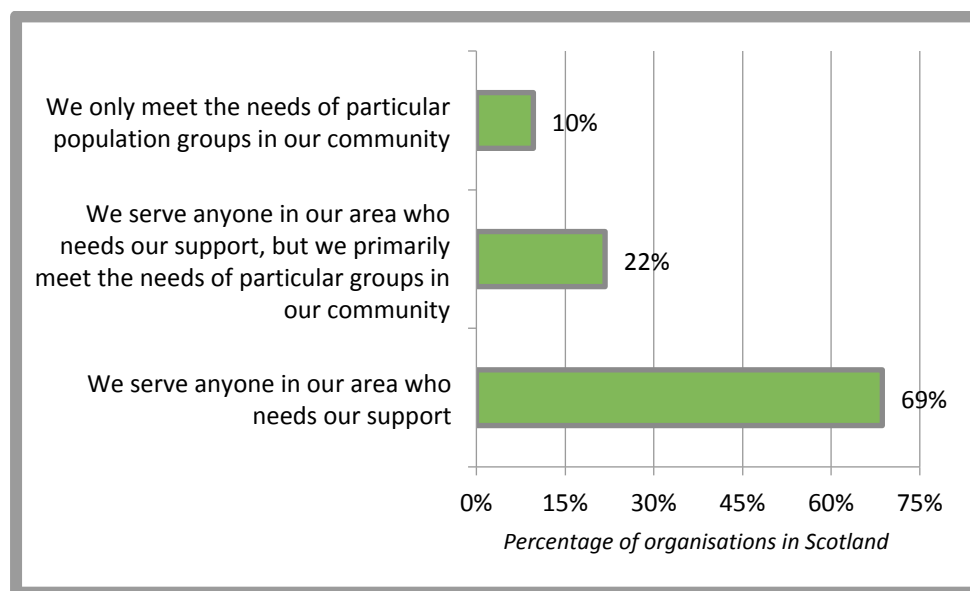
While some organisations focus their work on tightly defined communities (1,2), other cover large expanses of Scotland (3,4). Many explained that already geographically focused, they extended their service as required (5,6,7), while some had extended their geographical reach during the coronavirus crisis (8,9).

1. We cover the Braes (upper and lower) area of Falkirk Council
2. We cover Whitfield in Dundee
3. Large geographical area from the Ord of Caithness to Forse, Lybster.
4. We run projects across Berwickshire
5. Although mostly serving Glasgow area we are not restrained by that. We have members wider.
6. Our work is rooted in the Gorbals area of Glasgow but work with people throughout Glasgow and beyond. Our schools transition programme work with 4 feeder secondary schools and 14 primary schools in Glasgow and 2 secondary schools in Airdrie.
7. Because we work closely as a team effort with other food banks we primarily have responsibility for our local area DD5 but as appropriate we assist elsewhere as required
8. before corona we mainly focused on providing service within Rosyth but have now expanded to cover SW Fife
9. We serve the communities of Lochalsh (7 community council areas) but during this outbreak we also extended our support to a neighbouring Kyleakin & Kylerhea Community Council.

5.2.5 – Are providers serving all population groups?

Two thirds of frontline organisations provided a service that was not targeted or oriented toward particular population groups. Only one-in-ten provided a targeted service (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5: Population range covered by organisations delivering emergency food support in communities, Scotland, mid-May 2020



Notes: 174 organisations answered this question (weighted sample).

A wide range of populations were supported by the frontline organisations delivering emergency food (1,2,3,7), including some whose remit was to provide for those experiencing poverty and disadvantage (4,5,6,8). As for geographical reach (5.2.4), many would extend their reach as required (6,7), while some were finding their services were being utilised by a wider range of groups during the coronavirus crisis (8).

1. Only support our tenants
2. [we] support Asylum seekers, Refugees and Migrants without recourse to public funds
3. Predominantly we provide services for the 50+ age group and families with vulnerable people within their household.
4. those with experience of poverty
5. We primarily serve those with no food and no money to buy food. Those in a crisis or those who feel they have no one else to turn to for food. Any who drop in receive food.
6. Anyone in our area of benefit we serve, however we focus on people most disadvantaged by life circumstances and inequalities. Through partnerships and collaborations we target certain groups like people suffering with their mental health, people in recovery, single parents, New Scots including Syrians resettled in the area, elderly and isolated, and young people (mostly 16-25) and local families.
7. We are primarily there to support tenants and their families, however if anyone outside of that group should contact us we will signpost to another body or organisation that can support them
8. We serve all people who are struggling financially. However, during this crisis, we have been supporting elderly people who are not struggling financially but who are struggling to access food where they have no family support or are not receiving a government food box.

5.3 – What needs to happen now?

The issues covered in this section of the report are largely descriptive. In this report, the significance of these issues is primarily as a means to account for differences in how emergency support has been experienced. It would be instructive to reflect on differences in how emergency food provision was delivered in Scotland. Our evidence highlights variations in geographical reach, population targeting, prior expertise in food, and prior role in anti-poverty activity. Furthermore, our evidence suggests that there may be ways in which these differences among organisations may be related to how this work is being delivered. Understanding and evaluating different approaches to delivering emergency food support would be of value to inform future anti-poverty practice, both in and beyond crisis situations.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to consider the longer-term implications of the transitional arrangements that have been introduced by frontline organisations during the coronavirus crisis, which have been described in terms of extending focus, geographical reach and population served. These implications may be both external (how understanding of the organisation by others has shifted) and internal (how these experiences have impacted on future work of the organisation).

6. How are community groups being resourced?

6.1 – What did we ask?

We asked two questions to better understand how community organisations were being resourced. First, we asked a single question, which asked organisations to identify which sources of food they had used, providing a list of twelve options (6.2.1 and Figure 6.1). Next, we asked organisations to identify their sources of funding, listing eleven possible sources from which to choose (6.2.2 and Figure 6.2).

6.2 – What did we find?

Three Key findings

1. **Complex supply chains and organisational financing.** Only one in ten community organisations are sourcing their food from a single source. One in three community organisations are sourcing food from more than five separate sources. Similarly, only one in ten community organisations are being funded from a single source. One quarter of community organisations report that they are being supported by four or more sources of funding.
2. **Local supply chains.** Local suppliers feature prominently as the source of food that is being distributed.
3. **Beyond Grant-funding.** Although Scottish Government is a significant source of funding, the most common ways in which community organisations are being funded are through donations, charitable grants and by drawing on their own organisation's reserves.

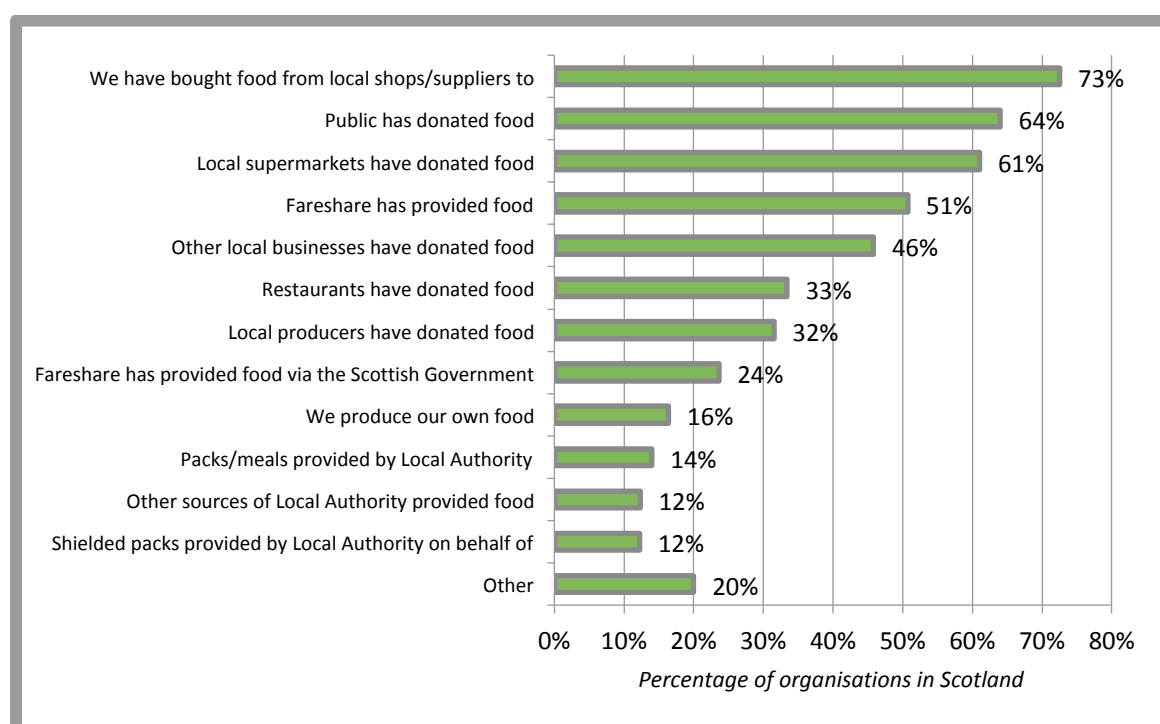
6.2.1 – Sources of food

Multiple sources of food are being sourced by frontline organisations during the coronavirus crisis (Figure 6.1). The majority of frontline organisations reported sourcing food from at least five sources (51%). On the other hand, some sources are widely used: three quarters of frontline organisations reported having bought food from local shops and suppliers, while almost two thirds both had received public donations, or donations from local supermarkets (Figure 6.1).

There were several interesting differences among different types of frontline organisation in terms of how food was accessed. First, counter-intuitively, more organisations from urban LAs reported receiving donations from local producers (37%, compared to 20% of organisations from authorities that were mainly rural in character). This tends to suggest that the community food providers in urban areas are contributing toward crisis provision. Second, organisations with a background in tackling poverty were more likely to report receiving food from Fareshare food (31%, compared to 2% of organisations for whom tackling poverty was not a focus of their work prior to the coronavirus crisis), but also more likely to report that they had sourced food locally from shops/suppliers; supermarkets; businesses; and public donations. For example, 70% of organisations with a background in tackling poverty reported receiving public donations, compared to 49% of organisations for whom tackling poverty was not a focus of their work prior to the coronavirus crisis). Third, interestingly, those with a background in food provision shared the experiences of

anti-poverty organisations, but were also more likely to report sourcing food from local businesses and local producers. For example, 41% of organisations with a background in food provision sourced food from local producers, compared to 17% of organisations, which have extended their work to provide a food service during the coronavirus crisis. Fourth, and in contrast to those with a background in food provision, those with a neighbourhood focus were less likely to source food from restaurants and local businesses. For example, only 10% of those only serving their neighbourhood sourced food from restaurants, compared to 37% of organisations with a broader geographical reach.

Figure 6.1: Food sources used by organisations delivering emergency food support in communities, Scotland, mid-May 2020



Notes: 170 organisations answered this question (weighted sample).

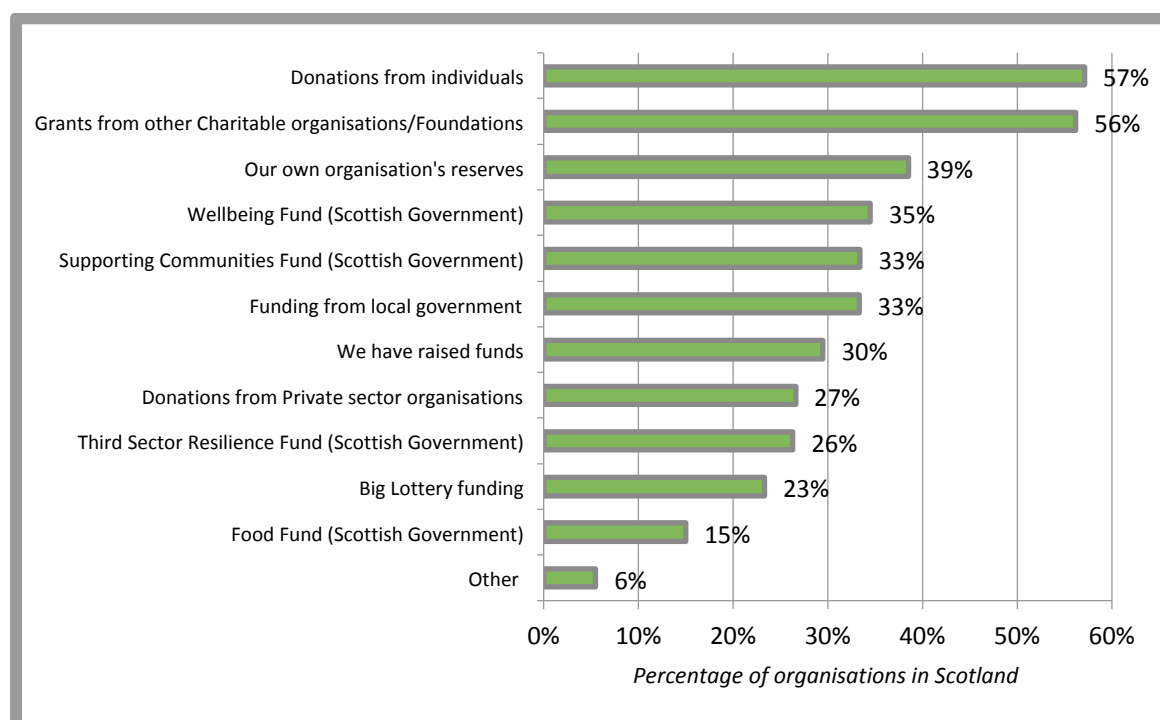
Procuring food does not always imply purchasing food, for example, when the food service provided is shopping. Where food is being bought it can be from usual suppliers or may be new suppliers where necessary. Ordering in bulk and receiving food from a central source were also noted. Not all food received is welcomed, although there is evidence of this being redistributed to avoid waste, as was noted by one organisation who reported that “[P]eople have donated food, which they don't want from Government boxes)

6.2.2 – Sources of funding

The Scottish Government has provided substantial funding through the Food Fund and other support funds. It is possible that some of the food received by frontline organisations is ultimately funded by Government (see extracts 1,2 below) although attributed to some other Third Party that is presenting this to the frontline organisation: Two thirds of frontline organisations reported some form of funding from one of the Funds introduced by the Scottish Government in March 2020 to provide £350 million of emergency support in Scotland (67%). Figure 6.2 reports the funding

sources acknowledged by frontline organisations, including the four Scottish Government funds. From what is reported, it is clear that the Food Fund is not the only Government funding stream that is supporting the work of frontline organisations that are providing a food service. Government is also not the only source of funding. The majority of organisations highlighted the prevalence of donations and charitable funding. The majority of frontline organisations reported receiving donations from individuals and grants from charitable organisations/foundations (Figure 6.2). One cause for concern was the extent to which organisations reported that they were drawing on reserves. Two fifths of frontline organisations reported drawing on their own organisational reserves to provide emergency food support.

Figure 6.2: Funding sources of organisations delivering emergency food support in communities, Scotland, mid-May 2020



Notes: 161 organisations answered this question (weighted sample).

One point to note (and possibly explore further) is the question of using reserves to finance emergency food provision. Those frontline organisations who had a background in tackling poverty were more likely to report drawing on their own organisation's reserves (45% of those from whom tackling poverty was always part of their business, compared to 21% of those for whom it was not). It would be instructive to consider the longer-term impacts of this draw on organisational resources. On a quite different point, those organisations with a background in food provision were more likely than those who did not to receive funding through donations from private sector organisations, i.e. 34%, compared to for example 17% of organisations who have extended their work to provide a food service during the coronavirus crisis)

As noted above, although many were able to identify their funding sources, not all were sure of all sources of funding (1,2). It is also significant that existing funds were being deployed to support work to address need during the coronavirus crisis (3,4,5), sometimes reported as being useful in enabling frontline organisations to source additional resources to meet new demands (3). Caution is also required. Although support has been substantial and would appear to come from many

sources, in itself this diversity of sources may present a challenge in management and administration (6,7,8), and may be a source of pressure until such times as resources are secured. Furthermore, there was some evidence of funding placing restrictions on what frontline organisations could achieve (9).

1. *I don't know what it comes under but we have had funding from Scottish government, I don't deal with the money coming in*
2. *Local government funding came from the Scottish Government but I cannot remember the name of that fund*
3. *NHS Highland core funds in place prior to Covid-19 was a springboard to our accessing other funding*
4. *Existing funds but others are being applied for e.g. Supporting Communities. Communities Lottery already funds our BeFriend service*
5. *Existing grants from Lottery and other trusts/foundations have supported staff salaries and have been flexible in redeploying staff to emergency response where needed.*
6. *The amount of funding we have should see us through the crisis however we are concerned about access to funding for post COVID19. Partly because of the process of having to go through our local TSI and partly because of know which funds to apply for as it's a bit of a minefield.*
7. *If funding is made available to third sector without undue bureaucracy we are well placed to respond*
8. *Our organisation has received funding from the Wellbeing Fund to cover some salary costs during this period. However, all other funds secured are for the provision of food for the 24 projects. We secured funds from: small charitable trusts - The Northwood Trust - £34,000 for micro-grants for projects, especially important during the first 3-4 weeks of lockdown as there was nothing else immediately available despite the rapid increase in food poverty; The NHS Tayside Innovation Fund - £9,900 to purchase fresh veg for projects; The Alex Ferry Foundation - £5,000 for micro-grants to projects; Dundee City Council - are using £100,000 of the Food Fund to purchase food for the projects (£10,000 per week for 10 weeks).*
9. *This funding (scf) has become very restricted. It started off as very broad but has since narrowed for 'audit' purposes and be one more difficult to respond to the individual hardships our clients face.*

6.3 – What needs to happen now?

A significant proportion of frontline organisations report that they have drawn on organisational reserves to deliver emergency food during the coronavirus crisis. There is a pressing need to ensure that the viability of these community resources is not threatened, and to examine the longer-term implications of any significant diversion of funding to deliver emergency food support.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 – Key findings

What did we find?

On the whole, the provision of emergency food provision is reported to be working well. The vast majority of frontline providers of emergency food are reporting that they are satisfied with the majority of issues related to that provision. However, specific stress points are highlighted and a sense of emerging concern over what lies ahead is also evident.

What's happening right now?

- **What's working.** The vast majority of frontline organisations report that they currently: (i) have enough volunteers; (ii) have enough funds to deliver work; (iii) think that there is effective local co-ordination; (iv) have an adequate supply of food; (v) are not concerned over PPE equipment for workers/volunteers; and (vi) are not concerned for the physical health of their workers/volunteers.
- **Emergency food provision takes many forms.** Three-quarters of frontline organisations were sourcing their food from multiple sources. The most common form of support was distributing food parcels to people to prepare their own food (76%).
- **Organisations providing emergency food support are also providing a wide range of non-food related support.** The majority of frontline organisations providing emergency food were also providing three or more forms of non-food based support. The most common forms of such support were signposting people to other sources of financial support (77%) and befriending and/or check-up calls (70%).
- **Not reaching everyone in need.** Four out of every five frontline providers are concerned that they are not reaching everyone in need of emergency food support (80%). A further one in ten report that they do not know whether they are reaching everyone in need (11%).
- **Unsure whether Scotland is delivering.** Only 15% opined that Scotland is successfully delivering emergency food. The vast majority report that they 'don't know' (77%).
- **Contact with local authority.** The vast majority report that they are in contact with their local authority (91%), two fifths (41%) report "a lot" of contact.

Have things Improved?

- **Many things have improved over the last month.** The majority of frontline organisations report that improvements have been experienced: (i) co-ordination by local work by local authority; (ii) supply of food; (iii) access to funding; (iv) amount of funding, and (v) advice and support provided locally.
- **Largely staying the same, but where there is change, it is more likely to be for the better.** This best describes the recent trend for (i) number of workers; and (ii) access to PPE equipment for workers.
- **Demand has risen.** The vast majority of frontline organisations report that demand for emergency food has risen over the last month (65%).
- **Cost of buying food.** While the most common experience was that the cost of food had remained the same over the last month (52%), a significant minority of frontline providers reported that the cost of food had increased (34%).

- **Wellbeing of workers/volunteers.** The headline is positive (18% reporting that wellbeing had improved and 64% reporting that wellbeing had stayed the same). However, a sizable minority of organisations report that wellbeing is worsening (18%), and some described the stresses on workers/volunteers were building and reaching a ‘pinch point’.

Will things get better?

- **More of the same.** No change was the most common response; for ten of the eleven issues on which expectations over the next month were canvassed, the majority of frontline organisations expected nothing to change.
- **Funding concerns are emerging.** Although the majority of frontline organisations anticipate no change over the next month, a sizable minority expected the amount of funding to reduce (33%) and access to funding to worsen (30%).
- **Rising demand.** The vast majority of frontline organisations anticipate that demand for emergency food will rise over the last month (73%).

Who is serving their community?

- **Independent community organisations.** Although a diverse group of organisations reported that they were providing emergency food support, 60% of them could be described as ‘independent community organisations’.
- **Diverse backgrounds in food provision.** Frontline providers of emergency food provision were almost equally split between those for whom food has always been their core business (30%), those that have always offered a food service (31%) and those who were extending their work to provide a food service during this coronavirus crisis (39%).
- **Background in tackling poverty.** The majority of frontline providers reported a background in tackling poverty, either as their core business (34%), or in acknowledgement that their core business has a tackling poverty impact (41%). One-in-four did not have a background in tackling poverty, with one in seven perceiving that they were extending their work to have a tackling poverty impact during the crisis (16%) and one in ten perceiving that their actions were not about tackling poverty (9%).
- **Diverse range of geographies.** Frontline organisations reported a range of geographical reach, ranging from focused on their neighbourhood (18%) to those serving the whole of their local authority (21%) and those with a wider reach across multiple local authorities.
- **Serving everyone.** Two thirds of frontline organisations provided a service that was not targeted or oriented toward particular population groups (69%). Only one-in-ten provided a service that was targeted at a particular population group (10%).

How are community groups being resourced?

- **Scottish Government funding.** Two thirds of frontline organisations (67%) responding to the survey reported some form of funding from one of the Funds introduced by the Scottish Government in March 2020 to provide £350 million of emergency support in Scotland.
- **Prevalence of donations and charitable funding.** The majority of frontline organisations reported receiving donations from individuals (57%) and grants from charitable organisations/foundations (56%).
- **Drawing on reserves.** Two fifths of frontline organisations reported drawing on their own organisational reserves to provide emergency food support (39%).
- **Diverse range of food supplies.** The majority of frontline organisations reported sourcing food from at least five sources (51%). Three quarters of frontline organisations reported having bought food from local shops and suppliers (73%), while almost two thirds had received public donations (64%) or donations from local supermarkets (61%).
- **Fareshare supply.** More than one half of the frontline organisations responding to the survey reported receiving food to distribute from Fareshare (53%).

7.2 – Recommendations

- 1. Provide National Reassurance.** In April 2020, the Poverty and Inequality Commission recommended that the Scottish Government provides national leadership and guidance about food provision during this pandemic. Despite the considerable Scottish Government investment, only 15% of community organisations report in mid-May 2020 that they were aware that emergency food was delivering what Scotland required. This expert opinion tends to suggest that Scotland might not yet be reassured that it is tackling food insecurity during the crisis.
- 2. Supporting worker/volunteer wellbeing.** Two-fifths of organisations now have concerns over the wellbeing of workers/volunteers (43%), with less than one in five of all organisations anticipating that this will improve over the next month (16%). Taking steps to support those who are providing emergency food support should be an immediate priority.
- 3. Understanding and meeting rising demand.** The vast majority of organisations report that demand has increased over the last month (65%) and that demand for emergency food is expected to increase further over the next month (72%). There is a need to better understand the drivers of these demands, the populations who remain vulnerable, in order to take steps to tackle food insecurity at the current time.
- 4. Impact of return to work after furlough.** There are concerns that the rising stress reported among the emergency food workforce and the rising demand for emergency food will coincide with a loss of labour as some workers return to the labour market at the end of furlough. There is a need to ensure that emergency food can continue to deliver what is required as Scotland moves out of lockdown.
- 5. Understanding how to reach unmet need.** The vast majority of organisations report concerns that they are not reaching everyone who needs food support (80% think they are not and a further 10% are unsure). We need to find out more about potential level of unmet need and develop strategies to extend help.
- 6. Action on funding.** Concerns are now beginning to emerge over access to funding, and the amount of funding over the next month. Around one third are concerned about the amount of funding available (33%) and accessing funding (30%). On announcing the launch of the Food Fund, the Scottish Government committed to extending support if necessary. It is now necessary to look ahead to beyond the end of June to confirm whether more funds will be required to ensure food security in the months ahead.
- 7. Resilience of frontline organisations.** A significant proportion of frontline organisations report that they have drawn on organisational reserves to deliver emergency food during the coronavirus crisis. There is a pressing need to ensure that the viability of these community resources is not threatened, and to examine the longer-term implications of any significant diversion of funding to deliver emergency food support. In the short-term, the immediate concern is to ensure that these organisations have sufficient resource to continue to deliver emergency food support, particularly those that typically experience an increase demand for their services over the summer period (such as organisations ‘substituting’ for the loss of free school meals over the holiday period).

- 8. Utilisation of public buildings and community resources.** Although there was evidence of responsive adaptation to meet demand, some concerns were expressed over the use of public buildings, kitchens and other community resources. Some reflection is required to ensure that such local resources can be mobilised effectively to tackle any future national emergency.
- 9. Exploring qualitative differences across frontline organisations.** In the longer-term, it would be instructive to reflect on differences in how emergency food provision was delivered in Scotland. Our evidence highlights variations in geographical reach, population targeting, prior expertise in food, and prior role in anti-poverty activity. Furthermore, our evidence suggests that there may be ways in which these differences among organisations may be related to how this work is being delivered. Understanding and evaluating different approaches to delivering emergency food support would be of value to inform future anti-poverty practice, both in and beyond crisis.
- 10. Transformative and collaborative practice.** Some concern was expressed that some of the best practice that has emerged during this period may be lost in a future that 'returns to normal'. It is recommended that evaluation of emergency food provision reflects closely on lessons that might be learned for future practice in public service provision and anti-poverty action.
- 11. What people with lived experience of poverty think.** The objective of this work was to better understand the experience of frontline organisations. More generally, the Poverty and Inequality Commission, and Scotland's anti-poverty sector, is committed to 'giving voice' to the lived experience of poverty. There are both immediate and longer-term issues to consider. Of immediate concern is the need to learn from the wide range of studies in Scotland and beyond which, although not focused on food, are providing insight into food insecurity through sharing the lived experience of poverty during the coronavirus crisis. In the longer term, it would be useful to engage those with lived experience of poverty to better understand the impact of receiving emergency food support during this coronavirus crisis.
- 12. Acknowledge the work of frontline organisations.** It is readily apparent that community organisations are firmly committed to their work, take pride in what they do, and report how they are making a positive difference in their communities. The contributions of frontline community organisations should continue to be acknowledged by all with responsibility for managing local and national response to the coronavirus crisis.

Annex 1: About This Research

A1.1 – Introduction

In this annex, we describe and appraise how the online survey was administered. It is not a full technical report; rather, only the key information is presented to assist readers to better understand the research, and to reach judgement on its strengths and limitations. Further technical details about the survey research can be provided on request.

A1.2 – Survey Design

Professor McKendrick of the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) designed the survey, with the support of the Poverty and Inequality Commission (hereafter Commission). Soft copy of the survey can be provided on request.

The final survey comprised 35 questions. Two of the questions were in relation to ethical principles of informed consent (Q1 and Q2) and four of the questions were in relation receiving results (Q32 – Q33) and the possibility of getting involved in follow-on research (Q34 – Q25). Two questions concerned survey administration (role of respondent in organisation (Q4) and how survey was received (Q5). Four questions collected background information about the organisation, i.e. name of organisation (Q3), sector to which organisation belongs (Q20), local authority in which organisation operates (Q24), and postcode of organisational base (Q26). Each of the remaining 21 questions examined a substantive issue on emergency food provision in communities across Scotland.

The survey was structured into five sections, findings for each of which are shared in a separate version of this report. Question wording and response options were developed iteratively, in the week prior to the survey opening. Following an initial briefing at which the key themes of interest to the Commission were outlined, Professor McKendrick drafted a survey. This was revised in two stages. First, a series of revisions were made following Commission review. Second, the survey was piloted with a representative from each of the six organisations that had been involved in research for the Commission's earlier briefing.²³ The survey progressed through several iterations before it was judged ready for distribution. The survey tools (questions and answers) and introductory text were approved by the Commission prior to launch.

The online survey platform, SurveyMonkey.com, was used to manage the survey. This was a platform that was familiar to the research team and which provided the full functionality required to administer an effective online survey in an ethical manner.

Survey design is always a compromise between functionality and coverage. To include questions on all issues of interest would have made the survey unwieldy and may have compromised survey

²³ Poverty and Inequality Commission (2020) *COVID-19 Crisis and the Impact on Food Security*. [online]. Poverty and Inequality Commission. (viewed 30 May 2020). Available from: <https://povertyinequality.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Poverty-and-Inequality-Commission-Food-insecurity-evidence-briefing-.pdf>

completions. Although it may have been interesting to canvass opinion on other issues pertaining to emergency food provision in Scotland, on balance, the final survey ensured that opinion was canvassed on the most important issues without asking too much of respondents. The questions in the survey were fully-functional.

A1.3 – Ethics

The Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Sciences at Glasgow Caledonian University approved the survey. At each stage of the research design and administration, steps were taken to ensure that the research adhered to recommended practice for online surveys. Specific steps taken included:

- Providing respondents with detailed information about the purpose of the research and the research requirements, to ensure that participation was based on informed consent.
- Disabling the function that allows IP addresses to be collected for online surveys.
- Offering opt-out and additional options for every survey question, e.g. rather not say, don't know or 'Other'.
- Only collecting personal details (names and contact details) of respondents who want more information about the research, and storing this in line with General Data Protection Requirements.
- Storing research data securely, for example, password-protecting data files.
- Removing personal details (names and contact details) from data files and storing in line with General Data Protection Requirements.
- Ensuring that no respondents are identified by name in the published report arising from the research.
- Offering respondents the opportunity to receive copies of the survey results.
- Offering respondents the opportunity to become more fully involved in the research.

A1.4 – Survey Distribution

The survey was launched on Friday 15th May 2020, initially with a target end date of Friday 22nd May 2020. As the survey coincided with a holiday weekend, and given the observation of some that the short-time frame may make it difficult for some organisations to find time to complete the survey, the deadline was extended to Tuesday 26th May 2020.

It is acknowledged that online surveys have disadvantages, compared to the approach taken in those social surveys that aim to generate official statistics. In particular, online surveys are not equally accessible to the total population. Of note:

- The survey is less accessible (inaccessible) to those whose English language skills are less well developed.
- The survey is less accessible (inaccessible) to those who do not have personal access to online computing and personal e-mails.
- Those with stronger opinions on community provision of emergency food may have been more highly motivated to complete the survey.

Furthermore, the limited time frame in which this particular online survey was live, when taken together with the primary mechanism for distribution through umbrella organisations, should be acknowledged as factors that may have shaped who responded.

To broaden the reach of the survey across Scotland, the primary approach taken was to e-mail member-based organisations to promote the survey among their network. The invitation to participation was made on Friday 15th May. Suggested text for Facebook, Twitter and e-mail was provided to reduce the administrative burden on organisations

- The Third Sector Interfaces in each of Scotland's 32 local authority areas.
- Community Development Alliance Scotland; Community Food and Health (Scotland); Community Transport Association; Disability Equality Scotland; FAREShare; FAREShare Central and SE Scotland; FAREShare Glasgow and the West of Scotland; FAREShare Grampian; FAREShare Tayside & Fife; Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing; Glasgow Disability Alliance; Independent Food Aid Network; Lottery Fund; Nourish Scotland; Poverty Alliance; Scottish Community Development Centre; SCVO; Social Enterprise Scotland; Trussell Trust; Voluntary Health Scotland; and Volunteer Scotland

Some organisations responded to confirm that they were able and willing to promote the survey among their network. However, information was not collected on how many of these 67 member-based organisations raised awareness of the survey among members.

The core strategy for distributing the survey was supplemented in various ways:

- Some Commissioners provided details of specific organisations that we were recommended to contact
- Some respondents asked if they could pass on details of the survey to other organisations, which we encouraged
- Initial analysis identified 23 organisations that had left their name, but not completed the online survey. We were able to find e-mail addresses for 12 of these organisations and contacted them on Thursday 21st May to advise them that they still had an opportunity to complete the survey if they were so minded.
- We also identified 19 local authorities that had fewer than five returns by Thursday 21st May. Although a lower return is to be expected for smaller local authority areas, we made contact on Thursday 21st May with the TSIs in each of these districts to ask if they would be able to offer (further) encouragement to members to complete.
- We send an email to all other organisations on Friday 22nd May to thank them for their support, and to advise them that the survey would close on Tuesday 26th May; providing them with an

The next section reports on the extent to which the survey population is representative of organisations providing emergency food in Scotland.

A1.5 – Appraising the Survey Population

No single database listing the number and nature of organisations providing emergency food support in Scotland during the coronavirus crisis was available to the researchers. It cannot be asserted that this survey is representative of the landscape in Scotland as a whole.

It is conceivable that either a census, or a community/population projection based on geographical size, number of settlements, total population, population expected to be in need of emergency assistance, number/nature of organisations in receipt of Scottish Government emergency support funding, number/nature of community organisations could be modelled generate a fair estimate of the organisational base for Scotland's emergency food delivery. However, the resources were not available to attempt such an undertaking.

Therefore, there is a need to be cautious when presenting findings from this survey. On the other hand, it is significant to note that:

- Responses were returned from each of Scotland’s 32 local authority areas.
- 211 surveys were completed

Sufficient data were returned to explore variations in responses across organisations, according to:

- Type of organisation
- Whether or not from urban/rural local authority area
- Whether or not organisation was based in an urban/rural area
- Whether or not organisation was based in an area of multiple deprivation
- Whether responses were qualitatively different from the others and Argyll and Bute (19), Glasgow (33) and the Scottish Borders (35), three areas for which response rates were much higher than elsewhere in Scotland.

In the report, data are presented without confidence levels. This is solely for the purpose of ease of data interpretation. It is not asserted nor implied that the percentage figures presented are highly accurate estimates of current provision across Scotland. Rather, it is contended that – given the steps taken to improve generalisability – the evidence can be presented as broadly representative of provision across Scotland at the point of survey administration.

A1.6 – Data Cleaning

Data were cleaned in four stages, prior to data analysis. A pre-cautionary principle was applied; changes were not made to the original responses if there was significant doubt over meaning. In these instances, data were recorded as missing.

First, errant codes were corrected. The use of the online survey tool eradicated errors that were associated with data entry, and question routing ensured that respondents only answered questions that were relevant to them (e.g. only asking current employees to indicate the sector in which they worked). However, for identifying the organisational base of the organisation, respondents were asked to provide the full postcode. There were two types of error in the way that survey respondents recorded their postcode, i.e. an extra space was inserted between component parts, or no space was inserted between the outward code (postcode district, comprising between two and four characters, e.g. EH1, EH21) and the inward code (postcode sector, i.e. the last three characters of the postcode). Several edits were made to the postcodes. This was necessary as the full postcode, properly constituted, was used to identify the datazone to which the postcode belonged, which in turn allowed us to identify Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) rankings for the organisational base. The Scottish Government’s online postcode converter tool was used to convert postcodes to datazones and associated SIMD rankings (Scottish Government, 2020).

Second, data were appraised to identify any inconsistencies within the data. For example, some of the multiple response questions offered the option of ‘don’t know’ in addition to the listed answer options. ‘Don’t know’ was included as a response option to capture the opinions of respondents who were unable to offer an opinion to the question. However, in a very limited number of cases, some respondents indicated ‘don’t know’ in addition to selecting listed options. It is reasonable to deduce that the respondent positively identified relevant answers, but then selected ‘don’t know’ to indicate uncertainty over whether there were any additional relevant answers. In this instance, don’t know was de-selected to give confidence that remaining ‘don’t know’ options indicated only those who were unable to answer the whole question.

Third, many questions offered the opportunity for respondents to select ‘Other’ and then to describe their response. This was important so as not to constrain respondents to provide a

response with which they did not agree. However, in a limited number of cases some of the 'Other' options described one of the fixed-response options. In these instances, 'Other' was de-selected and the listed answer was selected instead.

Finally, to enable counts to be automatically generated for multiple response answers, i.e. to specify sources of food (Q29) and sources of funding (Q30), system missing response were converted to zeros where the respondent had answered the question, but had not selected that particular option. The judgement was made that where no responses were given to any of the options, the respondent had missed the whole question, rather than chosen not to select any of the options. Counting these as missing avoided inflating negative responses.

A1.7 – Data Analysis

Data analysis was pursued systematically through five stages, following data cleaning.

First, frequency counts were generated for each issue. Headline findings were often generated from these frequency counts.

Second, response distributions for each variable were appraised to identify whether it was useful to generate different variations of the same. New variants of existing variables were created to facilitate further data analysis if there was substantive significance in the new variable and sufficient responses for the new response options to provide functionality for subsequent analysis. For example, the question on 'how many of the people who received food from your organisation last week were experiencing difficulty accessing food' (Q9) was reduced from five options ('all of them', 'the majority of them', 'about half of them', 'a minority of them' and 'none of them') to two options ('the majority of them', and 'about half of them or less') to facilitate cross-tabulations (to ascertain whether any apparent differences are statistically significant).

Third, new variables were generated from the original variables. For example, the question on PPE equipment (Q11) was used to create four separate measures, i.e. (i) one on whether or not concerned over the quality of equipment; (ii) one on whether or not concerned over the lack of equipment; (iii) one on whether or not concerned over both the lack and quality of equipment; and (iv) one on whether or not they had any concerns over PPE equipment.

Fourth, exploratory bivariate data analysis was pursued to explore whether there might be any significant variations across the population (as noted in A1.6). Appropriate tests of correlation (for ordinal data) or association (for nominal data) were used to identify whether any differences were statistically significant, with the standard threshold of 95% significance deployed as the indication of this. In general, differences were explored for each substantive issue by examining variation across organisations' urban/rural status, geographical reach, approach to population targeting, whether based in one of Scotland's 20% Most Deprived Areas, whether organisation had a background in tackling poverty, and whether organisation had a background in providing food. In this report, for ease of reading, we report the findings as descriptive results (using tests of association for nominal data). Where the reporting of ordinal data have been simplified in this manner, readers should be assured that the reported finding was also upheld with correlation data analysis.

A1.8 – Conclusion: Appraising the Survey Data

Online surveys are not unproblematic and the same degree of confidence in findings cannot be attributed to online surveys, compared to social surveys administered using more conventional survey techniques. On the other hand, this survey of emergency food provision in Scotland, achieved:

- A large number of responses
- A sufficient number of survey returns to explore differences among sub-populations
- Returns from each of the 32 local authority areas across Scotland.

The approach taken throughout the report is to describe the nationwide experience for each issue. Without losing sight of majority opinion, differences are then explored. Reference is only made to statistically and substantively significant differences in this report.