



Community &
Voluntary Services
Cheshire East

Cheshire East Food Alliance meeting #10

- Findings from Cheshire East food-aid count
- Developing a new food strategy.

Graham Brown, Sector Development Officer, CVSCE
(Food Alliance project lead).

September 2026

A systems approach

SUSTAINABLE
FOOD PLACES
-and- PEOPLE



1: Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action



2: Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement



3: Tackling food poverty and diet related ill-health and increasing access to affordable healthy food



4: Creating a vibrant, prosperous, and diverse sustainable food economy



5: Transforming catering and procurement and revitalizing local and sustainable food supply chains



6: Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food & farming and an end to food waste

Image source: Sustain / Sustainable Food Places

Running order...

- Hello and welcome
- [Food policy update](#)
- Local updates
 - Updates on promoting Healthy Start and Macclesfield 'holiday hunger' pilot
 - [Temperature check - how are things for you](#)
 - [Food Aid count findings](#)
- [Getting involved in the food strategy development process](#)
- [Jamie Oliver Ministry of Food project](#)
- [WhatsApp food sharing group](#)
- [Asda Foundation - Foodbank Fundamentals Fund.](#)

Key food policy headlines

Food Insecurity affecting one in eight (12%) households in the UK

New PM Andy Burnham urged to bring forward a Good Food Bill

Fix food environments to tackle obesity, says new Health Committee report

Sun-tanned cauliflowers and knobbly spuds - the heatwave veg that's good to eat

Food production recognised in new planning reforms, but resilience gaps remain

**FREE SCHOOL MEALS
ARE EXPANDING**

FROM SEPTEMBER 2026 

Deep-fried food banned under new school dinner rules in England

Redistribution charities announce 'historic' food surplus collaboration

UK food self-sufficiency lower than 30 years ago, NFU says

The organisation's Ready to Grow report showed the UK provides less of its own wheat, oilseed rape, fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, beef, poultry, eggs, pork, sugar and potatoes than it did 30 years ago 

Sources: Sustain, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, UK Parliament, The Food Foundation, BBC, NFU, The Grocer, Cheshire East Council.



Local updates

Promoting Healthy Start

Macclesfield 'holiday hunger' pilot

Temperature check - how are things for you

Food Aid count findings

Temperature check: how are things for your project

What does demand look like, what are your challenges and pain points...

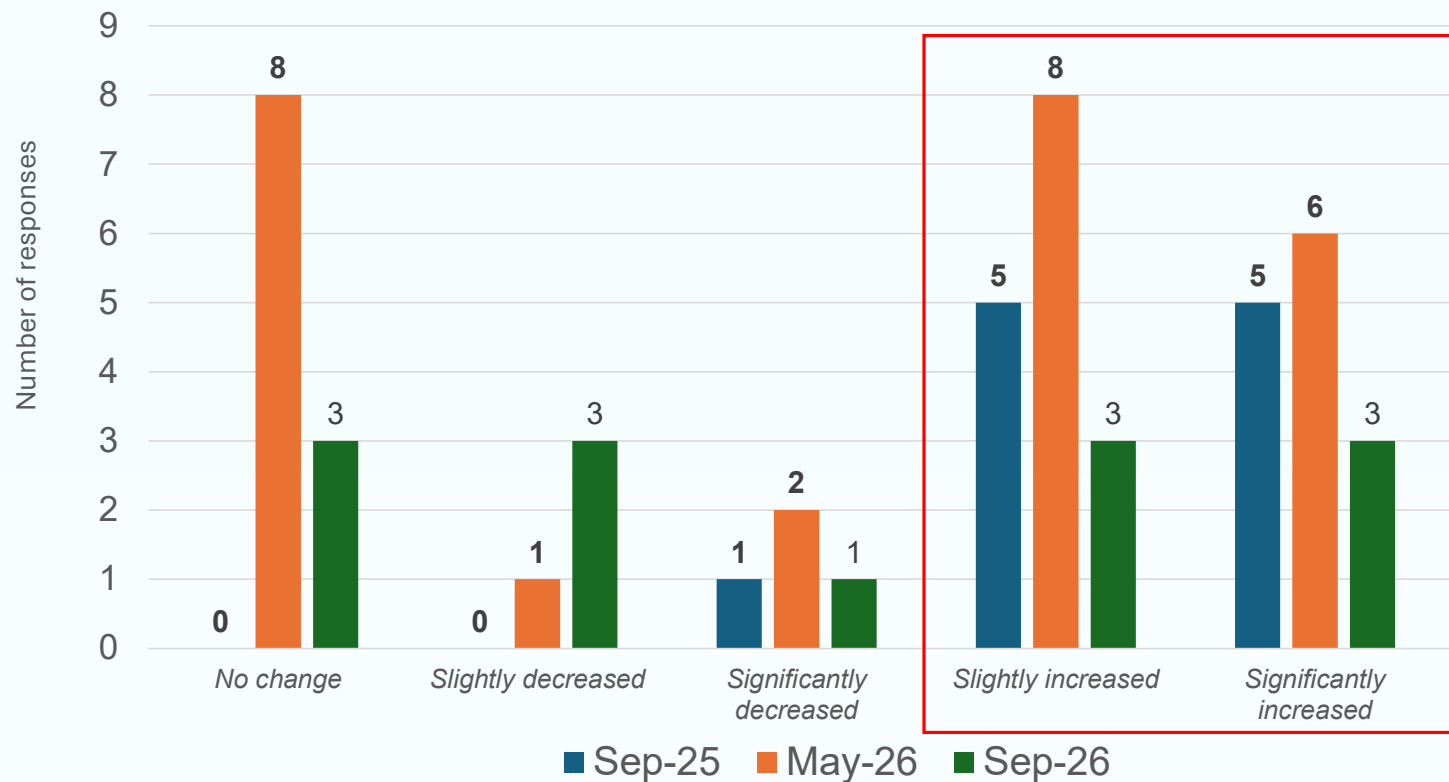
1. Over the past 6 months, how would you describe the level of demand for the food support your organisation provides?
2. Has the change in demand been consistent or has it fluctuated?
3. Thinking about your food project(s), what have been your biggest challenges or pain points over the last 6 months?
4. Do you have any other comments?



Image source: Vector Illustration 24606766 Vector Art at Ve

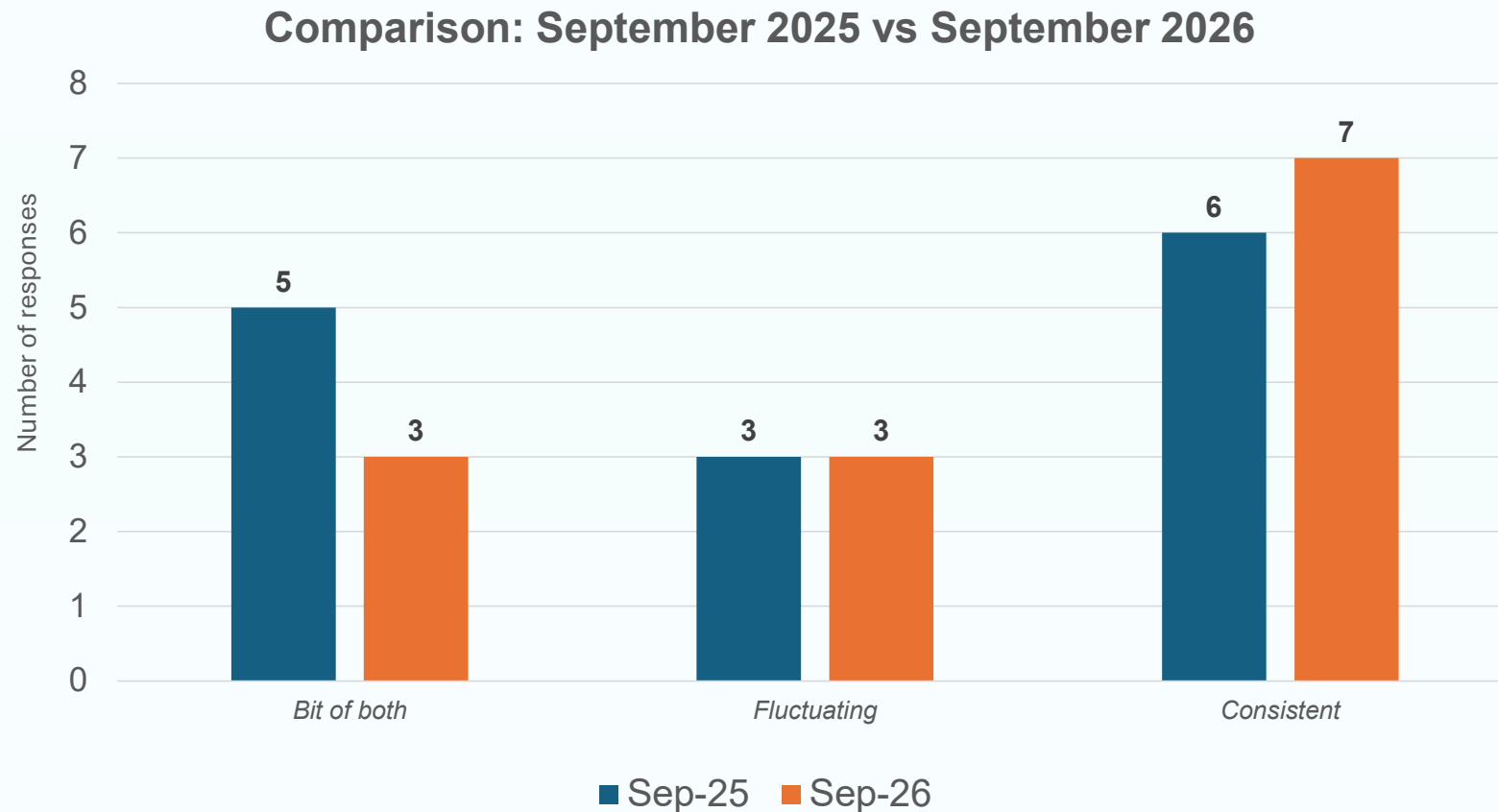
What does demand look like...

Comparison: September 2025 vs May 2026 vs September 2026



Responses (n): September = 14 / May = 21 / September = 14

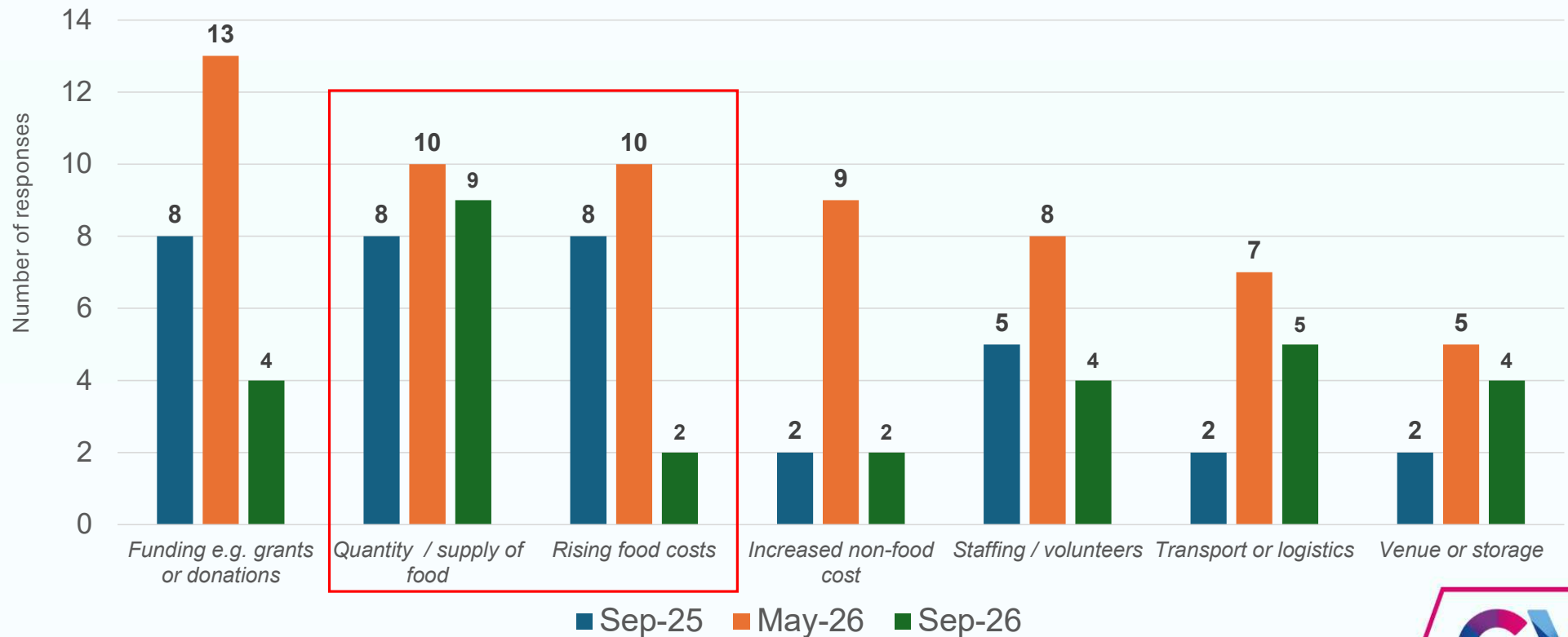
Has the change in demand been consistent or has it fluctuated?



Responses (n): September = 14 / May = 21 / September = 14

Greatest challenges or pain points

Comparison: September 2025 vs May 2026 vs September 2026



Responses (n): September = 14 / May = 21 / September = 14

4. Do you have any additional comments?

As a grant providing charity we are seeing more and more applications for funding for food insecurity/poverty projects coming through and we are unable to fund them all

Demands has varied in some venues, some hosts are more collaborative and supportive than others

Increasing the quantity and frequency of regular donations from individuals or organisations would help us immensely and reduce our costs in buying in food directly.

Donations appear to be noticeably down at our various donation points around Macclesfield and Bollington. No real definite idea why, but the cost of living would appear to be the most likely reason!

Due to the increase of homeless, hostel users, prison leavers and people losing jobs through redundancy and 0 hours contracts it has massively affected our numbers.

Need more volunteers trained in food hygiene so it doesn't rely on one person



Community &
Voluntary Services
Cheshire East

How many people are accessing food-aid across Cheshire East?

Findings from Cheshire East food-aid
count (undertaken 11 - 17 May 2026).

Report author: Graham Brown, Sector Development Officer,
CVSCE (Food Alliance project lead).

July 2026



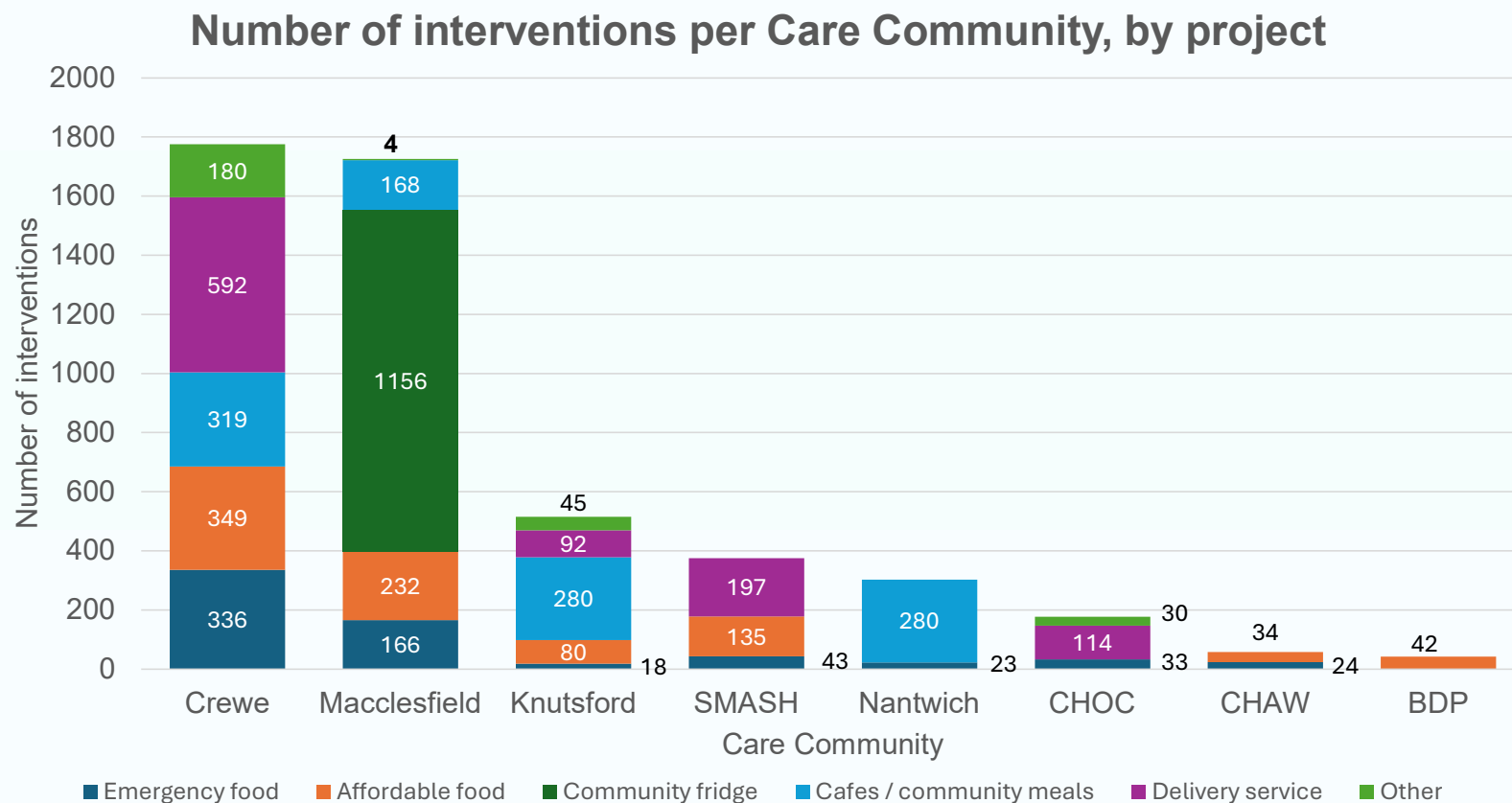
Image source: Trussell Trust

Headline findings (11 - 17 May 2026)

	5,014 The number of interactions with a community food project over the count period
	8,577 The minimum number of people who accessed food as a result of the interaction (based on average household size)
	160% increase Potential increase in the number of interactions with a community food project (compared with 2023)
	29 organisations, 41 projects Both the highest number of projects (11) and people supported were in Crewe (1776 (interactions) / 2,666 (number of people). Some form of food-aid is available in all care communities.
	Confidence in, and frequency of, referring is high 23 out of 24 organisations are confident in referring those who need support, with 9 making referrals weekly (some as high as 20 per week)

Source: Based on data from Cheshire East Food Aid count (May 2026).

Interventions by care community by project category



Source: Based on data from Cheshire East Food Aid count (2026).



Community &
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Developing a new food strategy for Cheshire East place: setting out the process and the opportunities to get involved.

Graham Brown, Sector Development Officer, CVSCE
(Food Alliance project lead).

September 2026

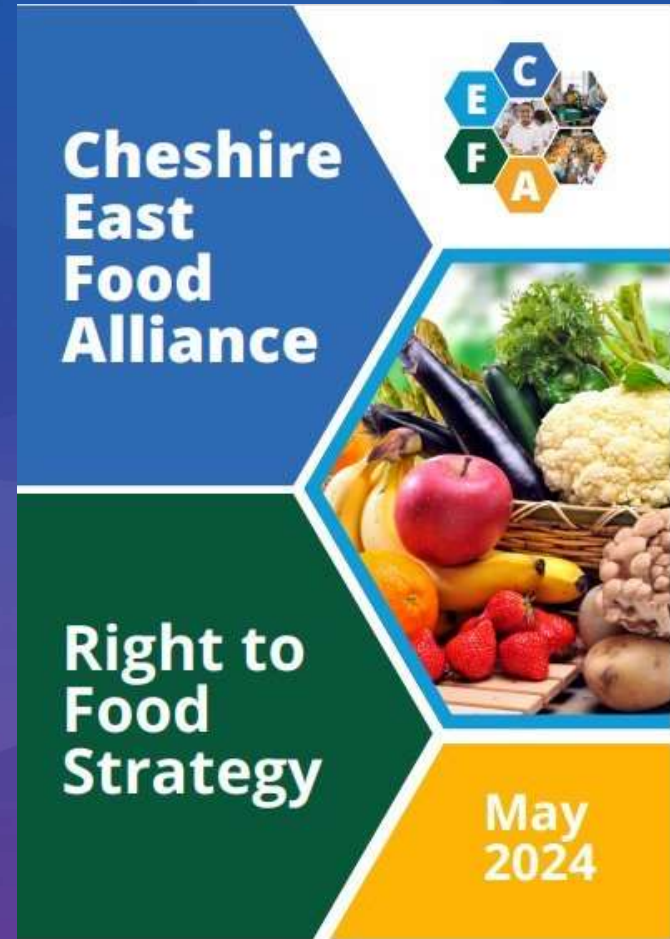


Image source: CVS Cheshire East

Cheshire East food coordination role – KPIs / priorities

Guiding principles: strategic lens · collaboration · capacity building · advocacy · good practice.

Existing themes:

Reduce food bank reliance

Food literacy

Government nutritional 'safety net' schemes e.g. Healthy Start

Supporting community food projects / initiatives

Strategic priority:

Revise 'Right to Food' strategy

Taking whole-systems approach and aligned to place priorities e.g. Commercial Determinant of Health (CDoH), Carbon Neutral plan, place strategy, neighbourhood health, and Government food strategy.

Two-way approach

Priority KPIs

1

Strengthen community food groups

Build capacity to deal with current pressures and Commercial Determinant of Health (CDoH) recommendations.

2

Maximise local resources

Scale food, equipment and volunteers to support projects to reach more people.

3

Reduce foodbank reliance

Co-locate or align debt, employment and resilience support within / with food projects.

System enablers

4

Coordinate Food Alliance

Link food groups, voluntary sector, CEC & NHS health partners.

5

Advocacy

Influence local, regional and national food policy.

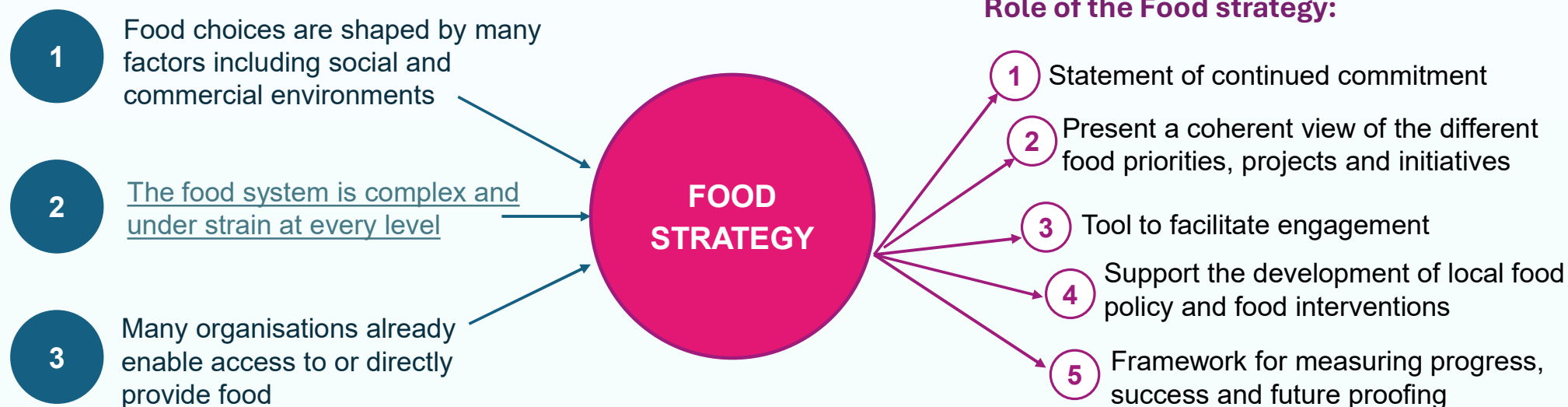
6

Share good practice

Work with Cheshire West and Warrington food coordinators, Feeding Britain and others.

Impact sequence: frontline capacity → resources → resilience → system alignment.

Why a food strategy is needed



Development principles:

- 1 Recognise progress
- 2 Systems-based approach
- 3 Evidence-led JSNA · CEFA · PPFI
- 4 Align local + national priorities
- 5 Not to duplicate instead – identify interrelationships / opportunities
- 6 Co-developed + co-owned
- 7 Supported by a delivery plan
- 8 Existing governance reviews progress

Potentially wrangling all of this lot and more...



Research briefing
17 May 2022
By Wright Thomas Davies

High cost of living: Impact on households



Summary

- High cost of living has been a major concern for households since the start of the year.
- Impact on households includes increased food prices, energy costs, and inflation.
- Impact on food security and food waste.
- Impact on mental health and physical health.
- Impact on social inequality and poverty.
- Impact on the environment.

[View full briefing](#)



A national analysis of Meals on Wheels service provision, predicted demand, and current need

Mapping gaps and opportunities for equitable service provision



University of Bristol



FIT FOR THE FUTURE

10 Year Health Plan for England





The Good Food Bill: Fixing Food for Good

Preventing the next cost-of-living crisis

UK supermarkets urged to consider voluntary price caps on essential foods

Retail sources rebuff government proposal as 'unjustified' and likely to push costs up across board





Policy paper

A UK government food strategy for England, considering the wider UK food system

Published 12 July 2022



RIGHT TO FOOD UK COMMISSION



School food standards: updating the legislative framework

Government consultation

Launch date: 13 April 2022
Respond by: 12 June 2022



May 2020

Beyond Ultra-Processed Foods: A Review of Evidence-Based Interventions for the UK Food Environment

Summary Report





Home > Business and industry > Trade and investment > Importing > Import controls

Open consultation

Call for input on goods for cost of living tariff suspensions

Supermarkets in talks on 'hyper local' food poverty action

By Joe Drake | 11 May 2022

Supermarkets and other food businesses are being asked to consider a range of interventions including help for schools, food charities and the government's Healthy Start scheme.

The government is planning a series of 'hyper local' interventions, backed by supermarkets and other businesses, to help tackle food poverty across the country. It says the plan will help to reduce the number of people who are struggling to afford food.

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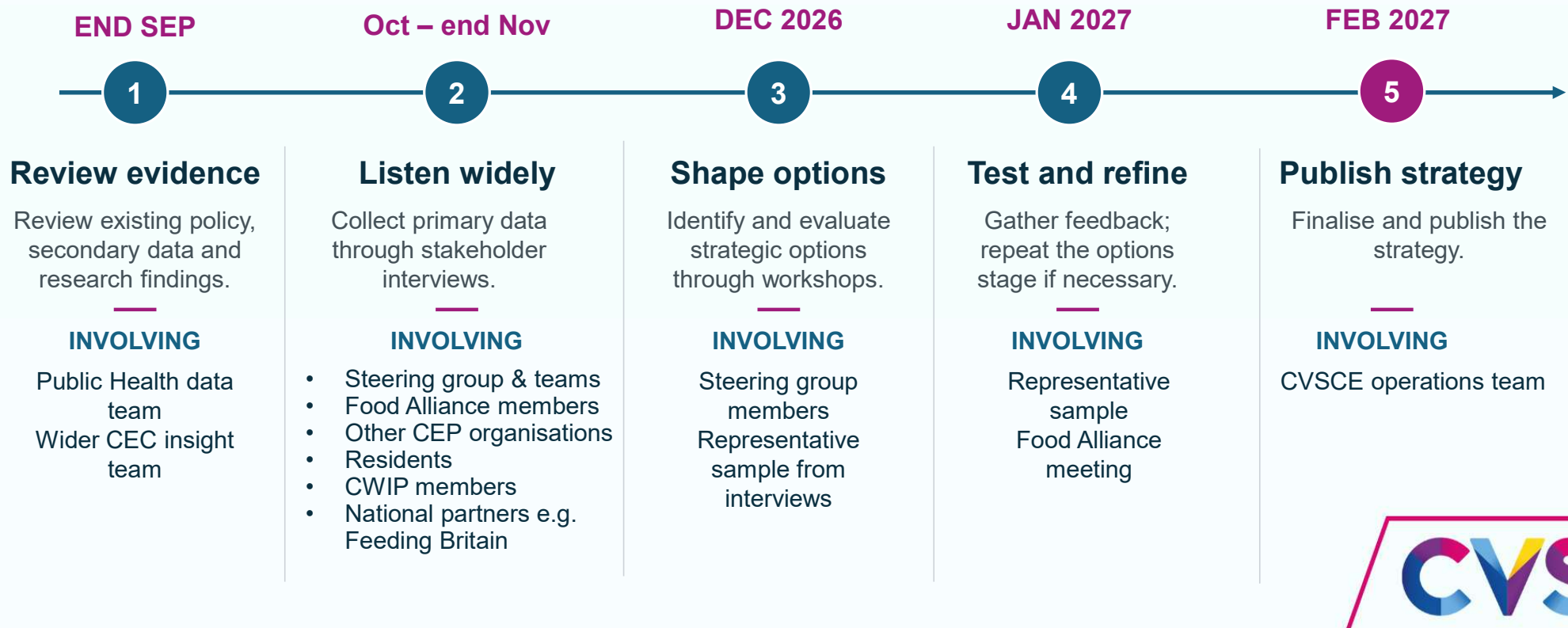
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Sources: Sustain, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, UK Parliament, The Food Foundation, BBC, NFU, The Grocer, Cheshire East Council.



Food strategy development - process and timings

Food coordinator will own the process for coordinating the development of the + elements of delivery - but won't own the whole strategy.



How to get involved / feedback...



Interviews with a sample of:
Steering group & food alliance
members, other CEP
organisations, residents.



Online survey for other
stakeholders



Workshops x 4: Crewe,
Handforth, Holmes Chapel &
Macclesfield (w/b 14/12).

Group exercise



Card sorting - two tasks:

Task 1 – themes or area of focus

- Sort through the themes on your table and identify which should be included (add others you feel are missing)
- Rank them by priority.

Task 2 – existing project areas

- Sort through the existing project areas on your table and identify which are still relevant
- Rank them by priority; and
- Categorise them by the themes from task 1.

Framing and scope of the strategy to be determined

Potential areas of focus:



Food insecurity



Nutrition



Healthy Weight



Environment



Economy



Skills



Other



Other

Cheshire East Food Alliance

**Cheshire
East
Food
Alliance**



**Right to
Food
Strategy**

May
2024



Overarching themes, focus:

Enabling
long-term
support to
reduce the
dependence
on food
banks

Increasing
community
engagement
with food
and food
knowledge

Government
funded
'nutritional
safety net'
schemes
e.g. Healthy
Start

Supporting
community
food
projects /
initiatives

Cook Well. Eat Well. (food literacy & cooking programme)

Issue: In addition to cost, food literacy and practical cooking skills are key barriers to people cooking healthy food at home.

Aim: Help community organisations support individuals experiencing food insecurity (FI), by equipping them to cook affordable, nutritious meals from scratch, strengthening resilience and supporting healthier eating habits.

Support the delivery of Nutrition, healthy weight + 5 a day priorities locally and Government food strategy.

Approach:

- Working with **Jamie Oliver Ministry of Food** community food programme
- Initially **8 organisations** - one per care community will be involved - **supporting up to 80 residents**
- **Train the trainer**' approach could enable the upskilling of other groups to deliver in their community.

What is available to groups:

- **1 x funded training place** (2 online and 3 face to face sessions)
- **1 x funded Food Hygiene level 2 training place**
- **£1000 funding** (equipment)
- Access to over **200 recipes, teaching resources, lessons plans**
- **Support and governance** from JOMoF - including **quality assurance** checks and **networking meeting**.

Next steps:

- Identify groups
 - Training: October / November
 - Initial delivery*: Jan 2027
- *Flexibility to deliver one off workshop or full 8-week course (or both).



WhatsApp food sharing group

Why...

In response to survey findings - asking for better collaboration and communication

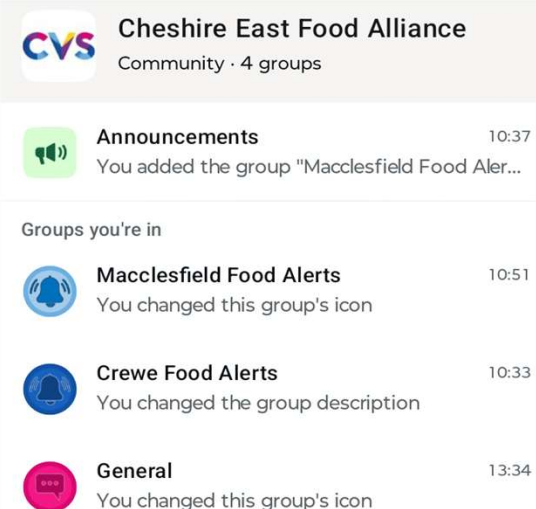
It's about:

- equity – I've got 500 food hampers to share
- immediacy - I'm at supermarket and there's more food than we can pick up
- Asking for help – our vans broken down
- Convenience /ease – quicker than sending an email
- Knowledge sharing – new shop opening
- Community – opportunity for peer to peer support.

Appreciate one already exists in Macclesfield, so hope groups will swap.

How...

1. Straight forward sign-up process
2. CVSCE will assign you to groups e.g general (CE wide) + one per care community (suggest you sign up general + your local one)
3. You're then free to post and reach out others
4. The group is the community's – so can suggest changes
5. CVSCE will post relevant updates e.g. confirmed workshop dates.



Asda Foundation - Foodbank Fundamentals Fund

The funding is for groups whose core focus is providing food aid to their service users, for example, food banks, community pantries, social supermarkets, soup kitchens, breakfast clubs.

To be eligible:

- Be not-for-profit.
- Have an annual income below £250,000 (the Foundation prioritises supporting grassroots orgs)
- Have governing documents.
- Have a safeguarding policy.
- Have a bank account (that accepts cheques) in the group's name and be able to provide proof.

Groups who have already received Asda Foundation funding in 2026 are not eligible + you can't use it to set-up a food project.

Funding can only be used for:

- Essential food (including baby food/formula).
- Basic hygiene items (including toiletries, nappies and baby wipes).
- White goods (eg, fridge, freezer).
- Storage and essential fixtures/fittings (containers, shelving).
- Fuel costs for delivering food provisions to isolated members of the community.

Up to £1,000 available

Deadline of 22 September 2026 (10am)

<https://asdafoundation.org/our-grants/foodbank-fundamentals-fund/>



Save the date(s)...

Food strategy workshops w/b 14/12:

Crewe - 15/12 (venue and time TBC)

Handforth - 16/12 (venue and time TBC)

Holmes Chapel - 17/12 (Holmes Chapel Community Centre, 10 am – 12)

Macclesfield - 18/12 (Holy Trinity Church, 1.30 pm – 3.30pm).



Community &
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Cheshire East

Thank you

If you want to get in touch:

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W: <https://www.cvsce.org.uk/cheshire-east-food-alliance>