Food Security & Civil Society

Research Findings Report, 2022

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Overview

About this report

This report, entitled 'Food Security & Civil Society', shares new findings from an in-depth qualitative investigation of Food Security with people from civil society organisations (CSOs). The study provides insights from local stakeholders for the food security strategy of the London Borough of Barnet (LBB), who are already working to support communities. In December 2021, a team of researchers from UCL ran series of focus groups with CSOs, where participants shared their views on current priorities as well as their aspirations for the future. This enabled study of three overarching topics: 1) priorities, 2) activities, and 3) aspirations of stakeholders today in a future Food Security Action Plan (FSAP). The research provides a 'boots on the ground' perspective, which reveals the concerns about food security, and stakeholder evaluations of what they think needs to be done. Our interdisciplinary research team from UCL has drawn out implications for the work of the Public Health Department of LBB as it works towards a new food security strategy.

Summary of findings

The findings give an account of local views on food security in LBB today, expressed by people working in CSOs. They come from research conducted by UCL in December 2021, using an interdisciplinary methodology. The following box (Box 1), summarises the findings. More details on methods, as well as fuller findings, and the commentary on implications for the FSAP can be found in subsequent sections.

State of food insecurity

The challenge of food insecurity remains significant across Barnet.
- Food insecurity has psychosocial and health dimensions, and CSO definitions of the challenge centre on three interlocking issues: complex personal problems, deep seated feeling of stigma, and isolation from local communities.
- Beyond income poverty, which is critical in explaining food insecurity, there is a range of associated factors, around food access, individual health, and local connectedness.
- CSOs highlighted the prevalence of people who are newly vulnerable and noted common triggers for food insecurity.

Current food security measures

CSOs make a major and vital contribution to food security in Barnet.
- The CSO offer in Barnet involves a diverse range of activities to support nutrition and well-being of individuals, and to maintain social capital in the community.
- There has been a strong collective emergency response from across the borough during the pandemic.
- These capacities have been enabled by LBB support, volunteering, local knowledge, and input from local voluntary sector networks, with a view to long term food security.

Aspirations for the future.

The CSO offer in Barnet is fragile, but a more holistic approach to the food system and more understanding of CSO operations is considered key to food security in the long run. The view is that more funding and resource management support would enable this.
- There is a recognition of the grant funding from LBB and collaborative approach that exists but CSO resources need to be less precarious longer term.
- Heavy use of voluntary capacities and consequent burden on the sector is poorly understood, and the value of CSO contributions not fully accounted for. The distribution of support to communities needs review.
- Reflecting on their experiences, CSOs note both immediate issues of core funding and communications.
- There are wider systemic issues of waste in respect of food security in Barnet that need to be recognised and addressed.

Box 1: outline of findings from focus groups conducted December 2021 in LBB

Research methodology

The goal of the research project 'Food Security & Civil Society' is to inform future action on food security in Barnet. Food insecurity and hunger are experienced by individuals through a poor diet, and it leads to worsened health with all of its consequences. As the London Borough of Barnet's Public Health Directorate updates 'Food Secure Barnet: Action Plan 2019-2021', it is seeking "to understand perceptions around food security, identify any gaps in the current provision and support the development/refinement of the new strategy's aims and vision" (LBB, 2021).

The research project 'Food Security & Civil Society' aims to contribute to LBB's efforts to engage stakeholders and draws together knowledge from local voluntary associations as part of that. LBB's work on an updated Action Plan led to three overarching topics for the investigation: **1) priorities** of stakeholders vis-à-vis the current state of food security in LBB today; **2) activities** of food security measures in LBB, both current and recent work during the pandemic to support communities in Barnet; and **3) aspirations** for the future around those efforts that might be needed as part of a future Food Security Action Plan.

The research work was timed to feed into LBB thinking about current priorities. It was conducted by an interdisciplinary UCL team put together in late 2021. This team includes researchers from urban planning, clinical nutrition, and public health (including mental health). The UCL team collaborated for a rounded investigation that could: document local food security experiences during the pandemic; elicit stakeholder views on local responses; and draw out implications for future actions, as follows.

The research was designed to learn from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), who are important local partners in LBB's food security efforts. Moreover, CSOs are the main direct providers of support for people in the Borough, and they are familiar with local processes around food distribution, challenges for local communities related to food-security. Therefore, they bring deep knowledge about the nature and experiences of food insecurity, due to their trusting relations in the local community.

It is critical to hear about the diversity of experience of food security in any locality, including Barnet. As such, the research needed to included voices from across the range of CSOs, including foodbanks and other voluntary community associations responding to food insecurity in LBB. Focus groups are a well-established method for work on lived experience of food insecurity and related service provision[1], however the limitation of this approach is that the experiences of those people who are not being served by CSOs cannot be fully explored here. Instead, particular attention was paid in focus group discussions to those people who are underserved or seldom heard. In addition, the interdisciplinary nature of the UCL team provided the

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[1] See for instance: Middleton, G., Mehta, K., McNaughton, D., & Booth, S. (2018). The experiences and perceptions of food banks amongst users in high-income countries: An international scoping review. *Appetite*, 120, 698-708.; & Wetherill, M. S., White, K. C., & Seligman, H. K. (2019). Nutrition-focused food banking in the United States: a qualitative study of healthy food distribution initiatives. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 119(10), 1653-1665.

opportunity to reflect on potential exclusions through drawing upon other relevant research.

The UCL team conducted fieldwork with CSOs in mid-December 2021, to ensure reporting in early 2022 to LBB. The other key consideration was to hear from a diverse range of CSO from across LBB. The qualitative sampling frame required input from food banks, and local voluntary associations catering to children, young people, parent and carers, faith-based organisations, and other interest groups. Despite the constraints of the pandemic (online events, prevalence of illnesses, etc.) and the busy season for these CSOs (i.e. in catering for instance for Christmas, Chanukah, and other festive days, school holidays, winter pressures on logistics and needs in the community), there was a good spread of participants. In total, 21 local people participated in the study (see table 1), the majority (18) were female. The diversity of their CSOs' operations is unpacked in section 2 (theme iii).

CSO Categories	# Research Participants
Youth, parents, and carers	7
Local organisations	9
Foodbanks and the insecure	5

Table 1: research participants, by three key CSO types.

As with all research involving human subjects, care was taken with the protocols and methods, which were approved by the ethics committee of UCL[2]. The fieldwork consisted of five focus groups and two interviews and, given the rise of the Omicron variant at the time, these were all conducted online. Focus groups are discursive research events, and a well-established social research method for studying views and experiences. Two participants were not able to join the focus groups, and were interviewed instead. The focus groups lasted around two hours, and interviews around one hour. Research participants were offered a £30 shopping voucher as a token of thanks. With written informed consent, fieldwork was audio recorded, anonymised, and transcribed. This produced a rich qualitative data set, that was synthesized and analysed by the UCL team.

The findings are presented for each of three overarching topics, which are the 1) priorities, 2) activities, and 3) aspirations of stakeholders in a future Food Security Action Plan (FSAP). Data on each topic, was analysed thematically using standard methods and data reduction techniques. This involved coding within the qualitative software NVivo and cross-checking the application of coding independently by two members of the UCL team, then identifying key themes within the data, while representing range of perspectives of the diverse stakeholders and multiple focus group events. The resulting themes are illustrated using anonymised quotes from research participants.

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[2] UCL ethics ID 2185/028

1. Local food security priorities

Data on this topic centred on the definition of food insecurity, its existence in LBB, and how this matters for people today. Themes are the significance of insecurity, those people who are 'newly vulnerable', the causes of insecurity, and the associated psychosocial processes.

i. Significance of insecurity: Stakeholders see food security as a high priority for LBB. They highlighted the high level of insecurity currently experienced. Food insecurity is reported to be affecting the whole borough, including people living in more affluent areas.

ii. Causes of insecurity: Poverty is the most critical factor in any instance of food insecurity, and this is well acknowledged. Other factors were associated with insecurity, including transitional life stage, low residual income, caring responsibilities, existing disabilities, refugee status, and experience of domestic violence.

iii. The 'newly vulnerable': There is a notable growth in newly vulnerable residents, to a great extent as a result of the pandemic as well as change in personal circumstances.

iv. Associated psychosocial processes: CSOs define food security holistically, not simply as a nutritional challenge but a matter of mental health and wellbeing. As such, food insecurity is bound up with and exacerbated by three interlocking issues, which are complex personal problems, deep seated feeling of stigma, and isolation from local communities.

Box 2: key themes under 'the state of food insecurity'

i. Significance of insecurity

Stakeholders stated that food security is a high priority for LBB. They highlighted the high level of insecurity currently experienced. Food insecurity was reported to be affecting the whole borough, including people living in more affluent areas.

Food insecurity was seen as significant for the whole of the borough. Across the research events, CSOs characterised food insecurity as a major problem that is on the rise in Barnet. Several research participants had not previously been involved in food security work and became involved in response to immediate perceived need. These statements on the prevalence of insecurity are supported by quantitative data from local food banks (see figure 1, next page).

"...the last time on [name of] Road Wembley, the queue was one mile long with 2,500 families being supported..."

"it is borough wide and there can be a great deal of emphasis on certain areas of funding, for an example and suddenly, you're playing a Postcode Lottery where..., 'well, you come from this part of the borough, so you can't possibly need any money' and that causes its own problems."
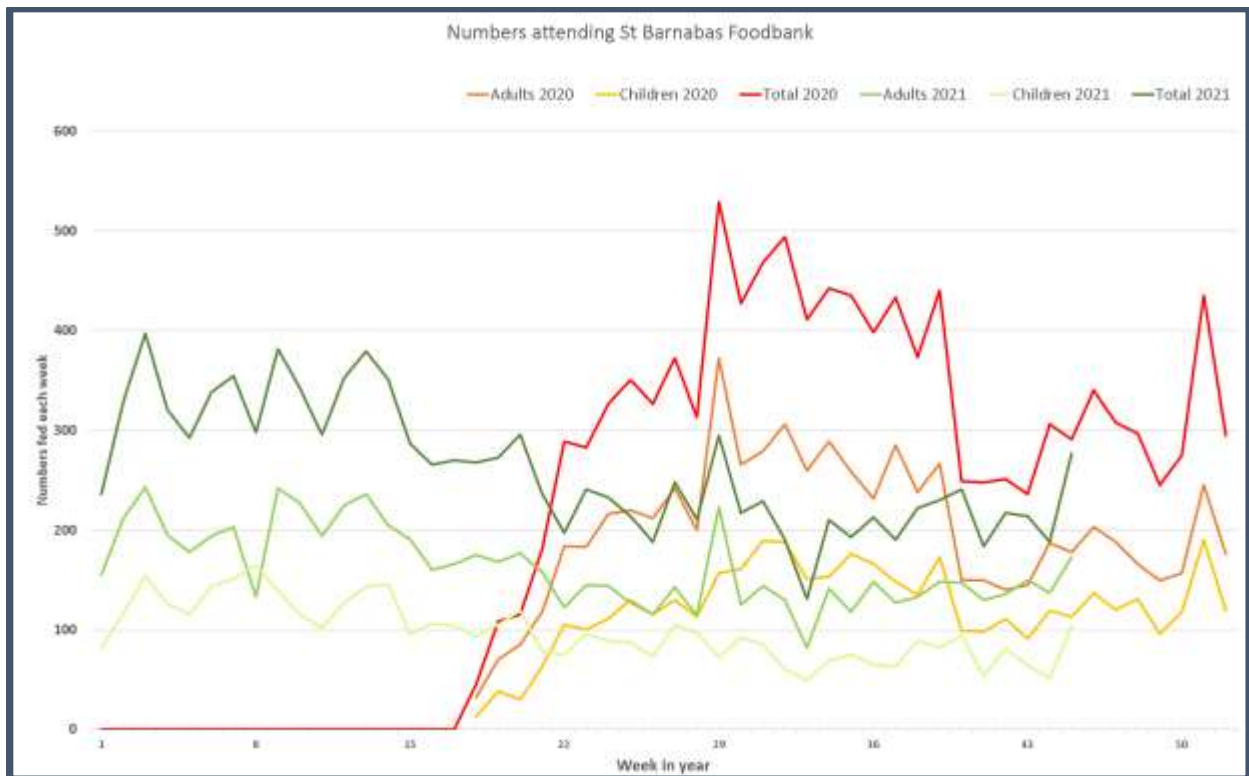
Figure 1: # adults / children @ St Barnabas Foodbank 2020-2021 (©Prof Grimble)

ii. Causes of insecurity

Poverty is the most critical factor in any instance of food insecurity, and this was well acknowledged by CSOs. Other factors were associated with insecurity, including transitional life stage, low residual income, caring responsibilities, existing disabilities, refugee status, and experience of domestic violence.

Poverty is the main underlying factor in food insecurity, yet some people were identified as having complex issues that interlocked with low income. Research participants stated strongly that particularly those on low income due to part-time, precarious or irregular employment, often had a disability or higher caring duties (either for larger families with children/babies, older people, or chronic health conditions). For these people, insufficient income is coupled with dealing with special nutritional needs (e.g. infant feeding), and no buffer financially resulting in a particularly sharp impact from any changes (e.g. they were particularly hit by the removal of the Universal Credit £20 uplift and the pandemic generally).

"…there's still a majority of people who are unemployed or people who are benefit dependent – but we are seeing people that are really struggling on the incomes they've got, partly because of the rising utility bills, cost of living, all of those things are really impacting…"

"You've got a lot of people who've got dependencies of some form, single parents, all that kind of stuff. …all their reductions, benefit, all their housing or whatever reductions are taken out of the

Universal Credit and debts they're owing, whether it's service charge, is taken out of that, so in the end, they're left with almost nothing..."

iii. The 'newly vulnerable'

There is a notable growth in newly vulnerable residents, to a great extent as a result of the pandemic as well as change in personal circumstances.

Research participants were extremely concerned about the growth of newly vulnerable people, at risk of poverty / food insecurity. Newly vulnerable individuals who had previously been relatively financially secure had a strong a sense of trauma and loss of dignity. This included existing Barnet residents, who had recently lost employment due to the pandemic, and others who were new to the Borough. The growth in numbers of refugees in LBB was strongly noted, as well as others who were new to the UK and struggling to settle during the pandemic. In addition, food insecurity was said to be triggered by life changes, and particularly for young people turning 18 years and moving out of care, or family homes.

"... it's really hard for the refugees in the borough as well. Some of them have come from very affluent backgrounds and for them to come out now and have absolutely nothing and rely on food banks or any avenues where they can have access to food, it's a real shock and it's really hard for [them]"

"There's lots of different areas around Barnet where there's quite high deprivation. In particular, [...] it's MSOA 1 [i.e. small area category], it's really, really poor and how they've got to those circumstances and situations, some of is a continuation, the life cycle, another thing is hugely due to Covid and thirdly, circumstances, they're pushed out of an affluent area and come into a borough where they've got no choice and this is where they're having to survive. It's changed, from what Barnet used to be, to where it is now. I think there are so many different areas of high levels, that's it's difficult to pinpoint."

"... we have such a mixture of young people, those that may be very academic, very high achieving, very wealthy backgrounds, that they wouldn't be thinking about those that are struggling and not having food, but they're actually saying, 'how can we make sure that those young people are getting access without being embarrassed?' So, it is out there, it's trying to figure out how to... you can't say just one area or one school that's only affected, you have got those that are across the board and I think, with Covid, even people who had very good jobs, financially, if they've lost their work, it's putting them in situations they'd never been in before."

iv. Associated psychosocial processes

CSOs define food security holistically, not simply as a nutritional challenge but a matter of mental health and wellbeing. As such, food insecurity is bound up with and exacerbated by three interlocking issues, which are complex personal problems, deep seated feeling of stigma, and isolation from local communities.

Food insecurity is known to impact on physical and mental health, and focus group participants reported that it is affecting local people very significantly particular where there are new vulnerabilities. Social embarrassment, and feelings of shame or anxiety, are intensely experienced especially by the newly vulnerable. Poor mental health or cognitive functioning is said to be further compounded by poor diet. Further, issues such as family breakdown associated with 'multiple deprivation' can fuel chaotic or poor eating habits. Likewise, social embarrassment can cause people to hide their problems, and discourage them from taking up crisis services.

> *… "some of them were embarrassed, especially if they had good jobs before the pandemic or were in a better financial state, they all of a sudden became very overwhelmed and they were used to one way of life and in a very sudden way, everything changed."*

As a result, the social dimensions of food quality matter greatly. The quality of provision depends fundamentally on nutritious food, but regular uptake can be supported by a sense of dignity (or reduced by a sense of indignity). For instance, research participants discussed the importance of culturally specific food, such as Romanian soup and the importance of faith-based dietary requirements. The provision of such foods can reinforce a sense of belonging, improve cross-cultural outreach/messaging from foodbanks, and positively impact on healthy eating.

> *"… also, I guess, being a Romanian, I think our traditional soup is missing, so probably they're asking for that as well because they have started like that, but I think it's important to keep within the culture as well.*
>
> *"we ourselves try our hardest to make sure they don't feel as though it's a hand out as such and put things in normal, regular shopping bags, clean bags, so it's giving back that dignity, so if anyone's going to catch them on the high street or walking out, then nobody can really tell that they've actually accessed a food bank, as such."*
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> *"it's predominantly older people, predominantly people who've been really isolated, have no family members and it's a very diverse, ethnic-wise, it's a very diverse group and they've all turned up today because they know that they're all getting together, socialising, they'll get a bit of food and it's the food, so we heated food up in the oven and it's that thing of being able to sit together, it just makes such a difference."*

2. Current activities to support people

Data on this topic centred on reporting recent CSO activities for food security in LBB today, and explaining effectiveness and capability. Themes that emerged are: the contribution made by CSOs; the range of support functions; pandemic responses; and what enables local capacities.

i. Contribution of CSOs: It is clear that residents experiencing food insecurity rely very much on support from CSOs, both for their immediate nutritional needs and for associated wellbeing issues.

ii. Pandemic responses: During the pandemic, there has been an enormous local effort. This expanded CSOs food security activities rapidly, and CSOs are still evolving and adapting to change.

iii. Spectrum of support activities: Efforts extend beyond emergency support and food provision, including seeking to improve local food supply, and triaging between local services.

iv. What enables local operations: Reflecting on their capacities, CSOs highlight the LBB's critical role in enabling these, and a wider collaborative effort to avoid a 'quick fix' approach to food security urban food systems for the longer-term.

Box 3: key themes under 'current food security measures'

i. Contribution of CSOs

Participants in the research are extremely active 'direct providers' for food security in Barnet. Their CSOs supply support free of charge to the local community where there is demand. In the research events, people reflected on the nature of local activities, general efficacy, and resources behind this contribution. They reported how their activities have proliferated and diversified, enabled by support from LBB. Their efforts are directly targeted at local need. The response of the local community as a whole is considered a real success story, although there are concerns about the longevity of operations.

Figure 2: Barnet public leaflet (Food Hub, Dec 2021)

ii. Pandemic responses

Some providers had not previously been involved in food security; however, they had taken on new food-related activities in the past two years. Their service users had become more insecure and needed extra help with food. These were responsive efforts from CSOs and often with project-based support from LBB.

"I work directly with families and individuals and we've been supporting quite a few through the pandemic around food issues and delivering either parcels or giving out vouchers where we've got grants to support people."

"I think and for me, that was a big learning curve because we don't directly deliver services, we did that purely as a response to Covid, it was something we took on directly and it was a massive learning curve for us in terms of how you store the food, how you respond, all sorts of things, it's quite a complex operation, so my hat goes off to everybody around the table who's doing it on a regular basis"

"...a lot of it is about someone just suffering from mild depression. It's something that can be remedied very easily in a community setting and part and parcel of that is when I started talking to some of the service users - and a lot of them were adults with disabilities, we did find that they didn't have enough food and so, at that point in time, I looked for the nearest food bank which was [name] and then our charity became an accredited provider of vouchers to the food bank..."

iii. Spectrum of support functions

It is clear that residents experiencing food insecurity rely very much on diverse types of support from CSOs, both for their immediate nutritional needs and for associated wellbeing issues. In addition, the activities of CSOs reinforce local social capital.

Focus group discussions highlighted the range and the purposes of the CSO operations directed at supporting people experiencing food insecurity, and how they have grown during the past two years. The work of CSOs around food security goes way beyond nutritional support, around the sourcing and supply of food to local people. It includes broader support for people including social and community activities, and importantly also the management tasks and financial activities needed to sustain support operations. These can be summarised as a type of spectrum of functions, from delivering help at the sharpest edge of immediate nutritional need, through support for wider wellbeing and empowerment for personal development, to enactment of change of the wider system.

– *Providing food*

Creating and delivering food packages was often described as tailored to the specific needs of users, according to circumstance. This included emergency deliveries, as

well as items of cultural importance, allergen free products, or food that was practicable in other ways. It is an enormously complex endeavour in many ways, including health and safety, which was intensified during the pandemic.

"It wasn't just people in need, it was also lots of vulnerable people, people who couldn't get out and who were totally overwhelmed with the whole pandemic and were in a big need for help and food, but wouldn't leave, so we delivered hot meals to their doors."

"Since the pandemic has… the stuff has changed, we have re-opened our community centre that we have weekly meals in that people can come when they need, also company, but at the same time, we're still delivering food packages to people who can't afford food in a very discreet way, so it helps them in a modest way, that they're not embarrassed etc.."

"…running a food bank is a big logistic… I mean, you've got Covid, but it's still a big, logistical issue around the health and safety I think and around things like having DBS's [criminal records checking] and people socially isolating … you have a duty of care, as soon as that food comes into you and that needs to be taken very seriously."

– *Promoting wellbeing*

Much work relates to broader wellbeing, due to the issue of nutrition bridging into other areas of severe personal need, and the opportunity provided by the trust built through food security activities to reach the most vulnerable individuals. As noted above under topic 1, domestic violence and poor health are bound up with household poverty, therefore dealing with nutrition is integral to prevention and recovery. When considering the multiple interlocking issues faced by many people experiencing food insecurity, offering food in some cases was a reactive first response to avoid further crisis. In the longer-term, this helps build local networks for longer term community-based support, for example where after personal crises people volunteer or donate. This is presented as a form of conspicuous food-based care. Food itself is seen as a form of psychological support or at very least a demonstration of care for individuals' wellbeing, but providing food is also a route into accessing or being made aware of other types of support. It is also a way into more general 'social prescribing' providing, e.g. access to sporting and social activities, basic supplies such as nappies, or general advice on household finances.

"from my food bank, we fund quite a few different, unique initiatives. We've just run a pilot scheme for residents, free of charge, to have access to keep fit and football classes and that really helps from a mental health point of view, but I'm looking to,

hopefully, fingers crossed, get a bit of funding, so I can roll that out to a much wider audience, different age groups."

"So, people walk into us, anyone can walk into us and we'll help them with whatever support they need, basically, support with scanning something, uploading the Universal Credit, food bank voucher, employment, training or just social integration."

"... trying to get them access to food banks or getting them grants, that we sometimes have access to a grant that gives us some money and we try and give it towards... and then go shopping with them and try to get them some food, so we do kind of like a bit of catch all approach because DV [domestic violence], it impacts so many aspects of a young woman's life, it's not just about getting out of the relationship, but everything that comes after that..."

"Some of the other families really struggled with having their loved ones at home because they were at day centres. Some of these families, the adult has got multiple disabilities and they're not getting support and some of them are a lot older, so they're more elderly and they were struggling, really struggling, so it was keeping that emotional support as well as anything we could do to help otherwise, but even that emotional support was really important to them"

– *Providing social spaces*

There is great pride in providing food-related social spaces. The functions of (e.g.) food storage and supply were combined with activities to make community connections, so local people were in a space that was sociable. Kitchens for preparing warm food were important in this regard, as meals would be consumed immediately on or near the premises. This could promote community building as part of tackling food insecurity (see theme 1iv). The social space around warm food placed emphasis on users' dignity and social connection. The food hub for storing, processing, and collection of foods for distribution across the borough was also a means to building links, as was the educational activities and camps for students outside of school time that participant's organisations provided.

"we first started our project, we were thinking about friendly meetings around the table, around the hot meal and this we have started..."

"We do a lot of community courses. We do health and well-being projects and one of them is getting someone like [name], who works in the borough, to teach healthy cooking and then eat together in a social setting, so it's a range of working groups."

– *Developing skills*

As described by the focus groups participants, this mainly involves direct advice where useful for those experiencing food insecurity in a new situation where they may benefit from coping techniques. For example, advice via recipe cards/meal kits, advice on food preparation and storage, and much of this is focused on residents' health, maximising food and enabling healthy eating. However, it is also related to reducing waste and systemic issues, such as advising businesses and council officers in terms of the value of this type of activity.

"We also run Zoom cook-along sessions, remotely, for those residents who don't want to come out or can't, due to different reasons. We also run workshops in schools about healthy eating, about waste and plastic and food waste and the climate issue, we do online videos, recipe meal kits…"

"…it's time consuming, but those that we know who are struggling, we spend time with them and advise them, 'look, this is what you can do with these vegetables, this is how you can maximise it, washing it down, putting it into freezer bags and then freezing it, taking it out when you need to, putting it as part of a healthy meal,'…"

The skills development function was an important mechanism for preventing a dependency culture around support provision. Research participants related it to the overall goal of addressing the 'root cause' of food insecurity. It was often linked with ambivalence around providing vouchers long-term, or taking on roles such as shopping that could de-skill/de-socialise individuals.

"…this sounds really ruthless, we are reluctant and we do say to the resident, 'we're not going to give you endless food vouchers' because we're trying to get to the root cause of it and work with them on addressing the root cause, so there isn't that spiral…"

"….it was a way of empowering people to say, 'look, you can cook this meal with your children, with your partner, on your own, but you've cooked this meal from scratch using these fresh ingredients, really healthy and you've got a meal that can last you for a few days' and I would echo the fact that it is about education and empowering people, rather than just handing them out stuff without them not having the knowledge to know what to do with it and often, it might get wasted because they would take stuff and go, 'I actually don't know what to do with this. What do I do with an aubergine, what do I do with lentils?'"

"We did do online shopping and got deliveries for them as well and it's time consuming for us and obviously, there's lots of other work

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for them to do and giving a voucher means they can go when they're able and buy what they wanted to, rather than us going shopping and getting what we thought they'd want."

– *Improving local food chains*

In light of concerns as to the systemic difficulties in food supply, there are activities directly intended to help address food insecurity that included using all available food, and preventing waste. There are activities to 'rescue' and reuse discarded foods, as well as food growing, gleaning, and picking.

"just helping us to sort through old boxes of fruit and veg and throwing stuff on the compost that needs to be composted and making sure that the good stuff gets rescued"

"I've worked with a community group that actually helped to reduce food waste by picking fruit from people's gardens and so they picked about 490 kilos of fruit from people's back gardens, which went into the [ward name] Food Bank and other places in the borough, to provide people with some fresh fruit …"

The local food hub is seen as enormously helpful in this regard, as it provides a central point or clearing house to reduce waste.

"The Barnet Food Hub has had a lot of gleaning, we had a lot of onions recently, but that food would all go to waste if there isn't a joined-up approach to food in our borough."

"what the food hub is, it all goes into the central hub and then it gets distributed out and what they also do is, if they find that there are some food banks that get an excess delivery of an item, instead of that being wasted, then there is a mechanism in place to get it either distributed out or back to the food hub to go back out again."

– *Triage & network building*

There was a lot of support activities surrounding liaison with others, and their contribution to the wider networks of the area. For example, some organisations had only recently taken on food bank functions, and found they needed to signpost people to other agencies. Other bigger organisations found themselves providing a safety net function as they could engage with larger numbers of people and help to identify areas of need and highlight them to others. Using multi-agency links across the borough CSOs are able to target support, and reinforce social capital in the local area.

> *"We do work with the local social prescriber who comes to some of our activities and it's the triage approach, it's literally what we can do, we'll do ourselves. If we can't, we will find out how and where and referral and appointments."*

> *"Where we might not work directly with them, we'd mainly signpost families to where they could go to get food or a hot meal."*

> *"I think, fundamentally, what's a big issue for all the food banks across the boroughs is, in particular around Barnet, is space. When you're starting off or wherever you are in that cycle, we need access to fridges, we need space for storage etc., and we don't have any of that and you've really got to fight, not physically, but you've really got to do your homework to find a place where you can have access or someone can donate things like that and if you don't have those links, it's very hard…"*

iv. What enables local operations

Human and material resources and managerial activities of their organisations were key. Views on the sustainability of their operations suggest there are real concerns over resourcing, and the implications are considered in the next section (under topic 3).

– *Knowledge of the local community*

It is vital to have information on the nature of food security needs, and how to support people. The detail of what foods were needed, and how they would be supplied is a matter of understanding local communities personally and anticipating behaviours.

> *"We had very much an open door because you know who the people are that really need the food and you can tell just by the way they approach it and the way they approach you, that they really need it…"*

> *"So first of all, we work out who the food is being delivered to. If it's a single, old lady on her own or if it's a family with young children, so that's a number one, to find out who it's being delivered to and what they need. Someone who's got to make the children's sandwiches is going to need more bread that someone who's just one person on their own, so that's the first thing is to find out who are the benefactors of the food packages. There's no point saying, 'we think that rice is a great staple for you,' if none of their children are going to eat rice, so it's very much speaking to them and building up relationships to giving them what they're going to eat and they're going to have healthy diets and healthy staples."*

– Community volunteers

Volunteers are the mainstay of foodbanks and other direct support to communities, and many are motivated by the societal value that they have and wider awareness of this value (see volunteer management below, and theme 3i 'team retention'). This often goes beyond helping others, and is about being part of a community, i.e. some also connect to CSOs in order to be supported themselves.

"when they asked for help, back in December, they were with the Corona virus, isolated, the whole family and really bad and now, actually, she's our volunteer, she does delivery now"

"it's a very symbiotic kind of relationship with our volunteers which I think keeps the interest up as well because they can get some things out of it as well as we get from them."

"It's resource sharing, energy is a resource as much as food and money and everything else, it's important to have ways of getting people to talk to each other. I think when you say there is lots of pride, many of us are independent and want to prove how independent we are and it's important to allow people to get together and to feel like they're helping someone by being there and you get the truth out of them while we're peeling spuds and things. You need that, you need that as a community. I think, it helps."

– Volunteer management

Volunteer management is essential. Given the very personal interactions involved in working with people, the role is distinct from less hands-on functions such as working with food, and requires much greater emotional labour. In all instances, volunteers need encouragement and recognition of their input. This is vital not just to boost morale but as a management strategy. In addition, partly due to the less formalised arrangements, it takes substantial time to coordinate their input.

"I think working at food banks is eye opening and it's bloody hard, as well and it's almost a bit too eye opening, whereas we're kind of a nice level of eye opening where you're like, 'oh, food waste, that's really bad' and then they go home and they can feel good about what they're accomplishing with us."

"I think, when you're dealing with volunteers, you get a really mixed bag of people as well, so some people need something from the organisation or project, so they get involved. Other people have knowledge, but no time. Other people have lots of time and maybe spread themselves too thin, they do too many things. It's a really mixed bag when you're dealing with volunteers"

– *Local networks*

Networks are essential to know and help people within a local community group, and wider local connections are essential to support people beyond the CSO's own community of interest/faith group. Networks are also key for CSOs to find the resources and information they need, and to share food/reduce waste, and again the food hub was often given special mention.

"what we do have in Barnet is the amazing Barnet Food Hub which really does give a fantastic and I really have to give a big shout out to what they do because compared to other boroughs, the quality of the food that they distribute is phenomenal, absolutely phenomenal."

"It's resource sharing, energy is a resource as much as food and money and everything else, it's important to have ways of getting people to talk to each other."

"Where there is a need of food, there are other needs as well, so we are just asking them what other support they need and like this, we refer, signpost, guide them, give them information and we're trying to do that in our language as well, to translate. I think that's very important. Lack of language, it's very important."

"I was supporting somebody like you, somebody totally from not my faith and from our faith group, I know we supported 700 people. Just like you were saying, telephone calls and if they need any help/support, so you know, it's how the faith groups are supporting each other, which nobody knows about it actually, they don't hear about all this support."

Often, networking for resources is a complex activity, and resources are not evenly distributed across small and larger organisations, i.e. people who might help are not always available or accessible to CSOs across the whole of the borough. This is seen for instance in relation to logistical help from people with vans, where some people had solid support agreements but others were struggling.

"we've partnered up with a volunteering organisation called Volunteers on Wheels who are a group of legends with vans and they just deliver or they can provide their services to charities who need things moving from A to B"

"It is a concern, for us, on delivery. I think it would be helpful to have a van because we can find a driver, but it's hard to find a driver with a car, to use the car, so we thought that, for us, it would be helpful to have a minivan or something,"

– Local supermarkets & small businesses

Local donors have been stepping up, particularly in the pandemic where there was a sense that everyone was 'in it together'. Less visible but still importantly, donations needed careful management, which was an associated task.

> *"They would get together, they would cook and it was a restaurant that made their kitchen available, so this meant that a restaurant that was losing finance from not being able to keep themselves open, was allowing their kitchen to be used by multi-faith groups to cook, package and share food which still would have used electricity, water and all the resources"*

> *"yes, we do get donations from local supermarkets and things like that, they will give us vouchers to go round and pick up food and things, so they've been helpful in that way, but it wasn't something we've gone in and developed, we were more there in crisis, we've got this money, let's go and get the food or give them vouchers."*

> *"I think one of my staff members said there's an assumption that we can take food donations, we can't because we don't distribute, but it's being able to, the borough, manage the food donations going to the organisations who can manage them because there are plenty out there, but it's making sure the food goes to the right places, the people who need... organisations that need this."*

– Funding streams

Voluntary organisations often have limited staffing capacity and relies on an element of 'core funding' whether from established organisational revenues streams (e.g. regular associational donors, faith group collections) or a periodical grant from a larger or statutory body (e.g. LBB or national charity funding). In all cases, the numbers of core staff and level of funding was described as 'minimal' and the bulk of the financial support came from project grants or ad hoc fund raising. It was mainly used for immediate projects, and not for planning ahead (see theme 3i 'precarious resourcing'). The project grants mentioned were mainly LBB funding opportunities, and larger macro 'safety net' projects.

> *"we're only four staff, of which one's a caretaker and one's a receptionist, so there's a limit to what you can do, so it's more about working with others, if you don't have that specialism or skill, so you'd need support from others, but it all revolves around fund raising, sadly."*

> *"Fundraising, well, what charity isn't doing fundraising at the moment because there's very little money..."*

> *"I gave up a room to house the food bank. Now, I've a fiduciary responsibility to the charity and that room is worth £15,000 a year in rental income, so the food bank has to make that money. There's also a paid member of staff that runs it as well as volunteers, I've got to [pay] their wages, the upkeep of the building, all of these things add up."*

– *Space for operations*

Venues from which to operate are critical not just for food banks but all CSOs. These can be rooms or buildings, which are used as hubs for distribution and food storage / preparation spaces. Importantly too, when they are regular or well-established, they act as known locations that are social / safe spaces for vulnerable local people and those who have emergencies/chaotic lives.

> *"there are people out there wanting to support, but there is the lack of location and everything to be in place"*

> *"We have got community centres that have the opportunity or the ability [for] either storage or kitchen facilities, but they're not being utilised and that, to me, is one of the aspects where the council can actually do something."*

3. Aspirations for the future

Data on this topic emerged from reflections on where CSO operations and resourcing were fragile, evaluations of the wider context in which they were working, with particular attention to the local food system and the support of LBB. Themes that emerged are: precarious resourcing; wider value of voluntary sector; core funding and LBB communications; and reducing waste in the urban food system.

i. <u>Precarious resourcing:</u> CSO resources are precarious, and their operations rely heavily on partnerships and goodwill. CSOs welcome financial support, but struggle with the project-based model. By contrast a service-based model has define role and funds. Without core funding, and with reliance on project-based income, the long-term operations are unstable.

ii. <u>Wider value of voluntary sector:</u> The approach to addressing food insecurity during crises is heavily reliant on the voluntary sector. CSO staff/volunteers are overstretched and at full capacity, but the nature of the burden on the voluntary sector was thought to *not* be taken into account in a systemic way, particularly how it relates to wider services in the borough.

iii. <u>Core funding & LBB communications:</u> In practical terms, communication channels with LBB could be boosted and more core funding would very valuable. Where there is core funding and smooth communications with LBB it saves CSO time and helps avoid common operational challenges.

iv. <u>Avoidable waste in urban systems:</u> There is avoidable wastage in the system. CSO have a great appetite for a more holistic approach focused on sustainable production and higher quality food. The voluntary sector is working with local businesses and public services, and those collaborations should be better acknowledged and accounted for.

Box 4: key themes under 'aspirations for the future'

... working together for food security ...

i. Precarious resourcing

CSO offer is fragile because, particularly amongst smaller CSOs and newer operations that are growing, resourcing is: mainly ad hoc; supported by hard won relationships; and sustained by relatively precarious funding streams. This precarious resourcing is a matter of great concern to CSOs given the nature of the challenge of food security in Barnet (as reported in topic 1) and the reliance on the CSO contribution (see topic 2).

While research participants are strongly motivated and have many positive comments about the collaborative efforts in recent years, they all strongly stated that the voluntary sector taking on the issue of food security was precarious. This relates to the nature of the activities (see topic 2). Focus group participants repeatedly stated that their operations were not well understood by others outside their organisations. This reinforces the importance of thinking about the future and what might be important for CSOs.

"…we've been living with miracles…"

"I must echo what [name]'s saying, I think the relationship seems to be really improved. I was very, very wary of Inclusion Barnet and the others and I'm not at all now and I think they do a fine job and they've proven that, over and over again, to have integrity and to have the sector's best interests at heart, rather than self-interest which is what I first encountered, but that's changed…"

"[CSOs] still need funding, so people see the voluntary sector as a free resource, but actually, they're not for profit businesses. We can still be sued, we still need insurance, we still need all of those things and that's the stuff that we have to justify and then they say, 'we don't see your presence, you're not advertising yourself, you're not telling us your impact,' well, a lot of these people are working at 11 o'clock at night, trying to just do what they're doing, some of them, it's a second job, so do you know what I mean, the stretch is real and I don't think they understand that we're not like a council or a public health [organisation]"

"in terms of the financial funding and stuff like that, that one's definitely quite precarious and [name], my manager, does a great job of securing all of those and given me a job for the next year, so that's always very nice, but in terms of other resources, I think we rely a lot on other professionals, especially professionals that work within the council, so like social workers with Barnet or even mental health professionals or early help or anything like that that already work within there."

In short, people told the UCL team that the pandemic collective action was a great step forward, but the approach needs to be carefully thought out for the longer term. At the sharpest edge of local need, foodbanks continue to rely on charity and donations. This makes it extremely hard to have resilience in CSO operations, not only due to the nature of management functions needed (as discussed in the previous section), but also given the scale of the problem.

> *"I want to slowly move away from that Covid response identity because our need is going to be there and has been there long before Covid and it will be there long after"*

> *"I see food banks as getting their food largely through community donations, so they'll put out donation calls on social media or whatever and they'll have donations days where people do a big push, locally.*

> *"...support agencies weren't going in, so there is a big issue around staffing in Barnet and I don't anticipate it getting good any time soon."*

– *Cost of living crisis*

Cost of living crisis was known to be looming. This terminology is common in national policy debates, and the issue was given prominence within the focus groups.

> *"I think we're going to have real problems in the New Year with the fuel hike and that's going to be an impact, potentially, 'do I keep my house warm or do I feed my children?' and I think that's going to be a massive problem for us, going forward and it's interlinked with food, so if we're going to have snow and ice in February, you're trying to wrap up your children, it's absolutely freezing in your house and then, just to feed them and I do think that's going to really hit home"*

– *Team retention*

Focus group participants reported great difficulties in maintaining the voluntary staffing. This was discussed in relation to morale, motivation, and the need to provide support, which could also be a drain on already stretched capacities. The value and contribution that volunteers offer can go unrecognised outside of the voluntary and community sector, yet provide a vital component in wider local services (see theme 2iii 'triage and network building').

> *"other organisations have struggled with volunteers, we've been really lucky"*

ii. Core funding and LBB communications

– *Communications*

Existing LBB relationships are essential, but the model of working together seems to not always fit the responsive mode of working that is characteristic of CSOs. Communications are key and a repeated wish list item was a single point of contact or hot line phone number within LBB to help with informational needs.

"…you can't get through on the phone to anyone, you can't and when you don't have the credit on your phone and you're phoning and hanging on, it's a nightmare…"

"as a charity, if I wanted to get 100 per cent rent free or whatever, I was told who to go to, backwards and forwards, but it took me six months to get hold of that document. It's a standard document, it should have been on the website, but it's so hard to…"

"Barnet has got Re and Capita which makes layers of management and it's virtually impossible to know who to speak to. …

– *Informational issues*

The flow of information on services and users was said to be critical but problematic. There were difficulties with information flows, some of which related to GDPR requirements. At the same time, the nature of their work (see topic 2) meant that preserving relationships was paramount, and thus took priority over data gathering (i.e. where it might risk undermining trust with vulnerable individuals). At the same time, participants said information very important to demonstrate the value of the work and the close connection to communities, and that they had benefitted from the demonstration of support in recent years.

"the council should actually have a database of all the community groups that we have any interaction with and so any time a staff member of the council goes to visit a community group, it should be logged, so at least somebody that picks it up knows, okay, they're already dealing with so and so and so, so I'll just ask, internally, as opposed to bother the community group for more information than they would normally have to provide."

"Not seeing the priority, not seeing the urgency, not seeing the free value they're getting out of a service that they're not paying for that, yet, is providing to this vulnerable community who are Barnet Council residents. That's a frustration."

"I think the relationship seems to be really improved. I was very, very wary of [name of an LBB working group] and the others and I'm not at all now and I think they do a fine job and they've proven

> *that, over and over again, to have integrity and to have the [third/voluntary] sector's best interests at heart…"*

> *"what might be a problem, that at least I've faced, is that being a volunteer and bridging the gap between people who have health issues requires consent, an informed consent, but there is a great limitation with volunteering organisations, as I have experienced it."*

> *"Data protection, GDPR, it's very hard to actually say, 'give me a list of vulnerable people to help.' So we end up having to set up word of mouth… it's a very inefficient way to work and at times, it's very frustrating to know that you're reaching the right people, for all sorts of different things."*

– *Core funding*

Participants reported that they spent a lot of time on grant efforts, and that this was a waste of their limited capacities that impacted particularly on small businesses. They also stated that they were being disadvantaged by larger 'actors' locally. They said they needed core support for the basics and (in the project-based model) including grant efforts.

> *"we then changed our focus to be much more hyper local, so we could impact directly on our community, fund raise directly in our community because we felt that we were being drowned out by some larger players that were… not monopolising, that's not fair, but could attract funding much easier than we could… that's been one of the fundamental challenges, is ensuring that I can support the charity through grant donations because there's no profitability in it."*

> *"yeah, bidding and funding. We work, we work a lot, but, [there is] not time for that."*

> *"…[I have little time for extra activities] because we're physically doing stuff, we're physically handing food out, pre-packing it, going to collect, dealing with the donations. I don't have time to work out what partnership buzz word means something this year [for a grant application]…"*

> *"Whenever we hear of any of Barnet's different grants that they're doing, we apply. Barnet Young Funders have been very helpful with their newsletters and saying what's available and have been exceptionally helpful, but there's a lot of organisations in Barnet who are applying, so you can try and try and try, sometimes you're lucky, sometimes they're oversubscribed"*

iii. Wider value of voluntary sector
– Unfair distribution of burden

This was seen as enormous and unfair where it is substitute for statutory services, papering over the cracks of waste in the system, including wastage of large corporate food retailers. Pressure to deliver services and support to the most vulnerable people was experienced across the voluntary and community sector, especially against a backdrop of increased demand and overstretched resources. The distribution of service provision was seen as disproportionate, especially in relation the loss of statutory services that left a gap to be filled by voluntary / community provision.

"Why are the voluntary and community sector expected to continue doing everything they do, off their own backs? The majority of us work stupid hours for nothing, we do it off our own backs because that's the nature of our work and our care, but you've got commissioned organisations out there who aren't delivering… if the mental health and the dependency issues were dealt with… people can't move on without those support services, they can't manage their money, they can't talk to other people, they can't get off the negative traits and until those things are tackled…"

"The [CSOs] are the ones who are delivering what, in effect, is lacking in statutory service provision"

"The link workers here only really kicked off this year. Prior to that, they were coming directly from the doctors. With the link workers, they're referring them to our walk-in groups, our art for well-being groups, so health and social isolation which is fine, but we're there, …so they've employed this person who's also got a manager who reports to a central person managed by [national charity]…"

"we rely on corporate responsibility, supermarkets giving us food, giving us surplus… just a little side note on that, I don't really think it's corporate responsibility, I think it's corporate dumping,"

"this is the problem with the surplus chain, things just get passed on and passed on and passed on and everyone's like, 'oh yeah, we've rescued this food, we've given it to this organisation,' but actually, that organisation's just thrown it in the bin, so you're just passing the buck of waste responsibility."

iv. Avoidable waste in urban systems

The final, but no less important theme, was about sustainability in the urban system and how it was being undermined by the prevalence of wasted food. Participants were urging that there should be much more attention paid to the 'local system'. The LBB boundaries were not specifically cited, but (in addition to points above on skills, retailers) participants stated strongly that food insecurity was fuelled by the practices of demand and supply that they had witnessed locally. In particular, they noted that there were local assets that could be support capacities.

– *Uses of local assets*

Some wastage related to the used of urban space, i.e. local buildings and garden spaces that were underused and might be used food security activities (see topic 2). At the same time, the geographies of provision, complexities of logistics, and the impacts of Covid meant there were no easy solutions.

"I think a lot of food banks struggle with space because as space opened up, the churches and community centres needed their space back, when it was closed, they could use it. They have to pack things away, so it's a difficulty about keeping and storing food if it doesn't go that day. The space is needed, so space is a really big challenge for some volunteers because when everyone was furloughed, everyone wanted to help."

"It's that balance of people understanding that once they've got their building, if they manage to get their building through this process, you've still got all the overheads, you've still got at least £25,000 minimum of utility costs, water costs, all those costs on top and that's core funding, that's what we, in the voluntary sector, would class as core funding support. If a building's sitting empty, don't waste it because we're giving value back to the residents of Barnet who need that help, but in turn, give us additional funding to sustain that service, so they don't go into hospital, they don't go to the doctors, they're not homeless, that kind of service"

APPENDIX: Implications for the FSAP

For the purposes of this report, UCL reviewed the Food Secure Barnet: Action Plan 2019-2021 in light of the findings from the research, the table below records the comparison of findings shown above with relevant policy lines.

While much policy continues to be extremely relevant, comments from research participants indicate that waste in the system and psychosocial elements of food waste might be built up within the current policy direction.

Food Secure Barnet: Action Plan 2019-2021	Focus Group Findings	Example quotes (& topics/sections to refer to)
Key elements in the Action Plan	*CSO perspectives on these*	
'Healthy Weight' - The policy focus was the goal of maintaining Healthy Weight, - Weight also central to definition of food security	Unhealthy weight was described as observable, and a strong indicator of food insecurity the need for intervention.	"...she really is in need because the children and herself, they're looking since I've seen, they are looking really skinny, they've lost weight and the children, they are suffering, we can see and she really needed support..."
Needs were scoped out with regard to: 1) the importance of food security in relation to both mental and physical health, & 2) the impacts of food security over an individual's life course.	Research participants' approach to understanding 'needs' were diverse, but appear rooted in a shared definition of food security that is centred on holistic wellbeing, and psychosocial needs of individuals. This places more emphasis on social capital and systems in the local place.	"...a lot of them are still teenagers that are either in care or in families, but we do have a bit of the older ones and financial abuse is definitely a big one and a lot of people don't speak about the fact that a way of abuses is also controlling your partner's food and what they can or can't eat..."

Food Secure Barnet: Action Plan 2019-2021	Focus Group Findings	Example quotes (& topics/sections to refer to)
Key findings - Previous research	*New Insights - Highlighted in FGs*	
"Nationally, people with disabilities (both physical and learning disabilities), those on low incomes, 16-25 year olds who are vulnerably housed or care leavers, new migrants and isolated older adults are most at risk of food insecurity." (p.4)	These groups were seen as particularly vulnerable, in focus group discussions. However, there are critical new groups at risk of food insecurity, as a result of the disruption to people's lives during the present pandemic (esp. job losses, illness, and increased caring duties)	"Obviously, we see young people that are all over the spectrum in terms of their access to food security." "In my opinion, obviously, with the pandemic, the effect that it had on families. Some people lost their jobs, so they lost their livelihood and a lot of my families, if they're not working as well are also on very low income because usually, one of the main carers would be staying at home to look after the children generally because they have a disability, so they're on low incomes anyway, so that has an impact."
"In Barnet, the areas most at risk of food insecurity are West Hendon, Colindale, Burnt Oak and Underhill wards." (p.4)	These areas were noted in discussion, and associated with specific communities. However, the geography of food security is seen differently by CSOs. There were strong concerns of hidden and new pockets of poverty (e.g. low residual income in areas with high property/land values, new groups at risk).	"We send a lot of food down to Burnt Oak and Colindale and the Graham Park area and there's huge demand there for halal. I think, from those food banks, there's huge need within the Muslim community at food banks, I think that's what I notice most." "probably in places like Mill Hill, people may be in a worse off food situation because of the rents, so you're only

Food Secure Barnet: Action Plan 2019-2021	Focus Group Findings	Example quotes (& topics/sections to refer to)
		getting a capped amount of help with your rent through the welfare system and actually, rent in Mill Hill might be double to what it is in Colindale, maybe not quite, I've gone extreme and you would still get the same amount of support, so that leaves even less for food and energy, so it's probably, increasingly, the more wealthier areas are going to see things happening"
"Nearly 1 in 3 residents who responded to the Healthy Weight Survey felt they could not afford to prioritise the nutritious content of food over cost and 10% had cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money to buy more food." (p.4)	...need to review quantitative data more closely....	See 2ii 'Informational; Issues'
"Food aid providers have proven themselves to be innovative, community-oriented and professional. However, they need support from the Council to address the challenges of keeping their own operations going day-to-day and preventing clients from becoming long term recipients of food aid." (p.4)	This objective resonates well with the findings.\n\nSupport from LBB has been essential during the pandemic and of enormous value to enabling operations (esp. the food hub).\n\nThe long-term objectives of the CSOs are oriented towards self-empowerment of individuals. The dominant view was	"what we do have in Barnet is the amazing Barnet Food Hub which really does give a fantastic and I really have to give a big shout out to what they do because compared to other boroughs, the quality of the food that they distribute is phenomenal, absolutely phenomenal."\n\nSee 2ii, Developing skills

Food Secure Barnet: Action Plan 2019-2021	Focus Group Findings	Example quotes (& topics/sections to refer to)
	that local people, even those in crisis, do not wish to be reliant. However, the processes of securing project funding are seen as a major drain on CSO capacities, and privilege larger organisations. In addition, there were repeated requests for a direct line for LBB communications.	See 3iii, Core funding
"There is strong demand for more data on the nature and scale of food insecurity, with interest from frontline staff in being more engaged in identifying and monitoring food insecurity trends." (p.5)	There was strong agreement about the utility of information, and the need to record actions. However, there were also strong statements about how the processes of dealing with individuals (particularly those immediate crisis) impinges on trend data collection.	See 3ii, Informational issues See also, 2iv knowledge of the local community, and throughout
"Food waste was consistently identified as a concern food aid providers. Considering food insecurity and food waste in tandem will require partnerships with food retailers. Existing efforts, while laudable, we described as piecemeal, and lacking wider systemic and logistical support." (p.5)	This concern was echoed throughout the focus group discussions. Relationships with local organisations (including retailers, LBB, and CSOs) are seen as key. The food hub is a strong resource within the local network. Research participants reported difficulties with storage capacity (fridges & furniture), and transport facilities (vans).	See 2iv., Local networks

Food Secure Barnet: Action Plan 2019-2021	Focus Group Findings	Example quotes (& topics/sections to refer to)
Aims & objectives	**Relevance within FGs**	
Aim 1: Tacking the causes Policy on integration Continually reviewing policy context Food & Budgeting skills Budget cooking training	Integrating food security is vital and CSOs are currently carrying the load in terms of triage. Generally, training and education for local people are seen as important for a long-term strategy. Education around coping strategies is seen as critical to those in crisis. Longer-term, as part of uplifting the local system, the curricula would ideally include, including on growing and production of food, digital skills (for ordering food), as well as topics of quality, value, and preparation of foods. CSOs also expressed a desire to share their own learning on supporting diverse communities, and developing community networks.	See 2iii, Developing skills, Improving local food chains, and throughout
Aim 2: Minimise health impacts Supporting the vulnerable Embed Food security in Social Prescribing 365 days a year Maximise uptake of meals / vouchers	Strong agreement on need for cross-council working. Partnership working will be important for the future. Some services are leaning heavily on CSOs, and question about fairness of resourcing, and volunteer morale.	See 3ii, Wider value, Avoidable waste in urban systems, and throughout See 2iii, Developing skills, Improving local food chains, Triage & network building, and throughout

Food Secure Barnet: Action Plan 2019-2021	Focus Group Findings	Example quotes (& topics/sections to refer to)
	Children and mothers especially in situations of DV rely on CSOs. Emphasis on the need to avoid shopping for people, and stigmatisation being a major barrier.	See 1ii, and throughout
Aim 3: Working with food aid orgs	There are many different types of activities and organisations that may be relevant to the long-term goals beyond crisis management.	See 2iii, and throughout See also 3ii, Wider value, Avoidable waste in urban systems, and throughout