



## Sustainable and Affordable Food for Liverpool City Region Recommendations for Change

## Acknowledgements

The VS6 Partnership would like to extend their gratitude to all organisations that supported this work, without whom this report would not be possible. In particular our place-based CVSs and food networks/alliances across the Liverpool City Region who were the primary source of information, intelligence, and data.

All data in this report was collected between May and July 2022.

## Authors

Sally Yeoman, Vice Chair VS6 and CEO Halton & St Helens VCA  
Laura Tilston, VS6 Research and Policy Officer

## Contact

For further information or to contact the VS6 Partnership regarding this work, please email Laura Tilston ([laura.tilston@vsnw.org.uk](mailto:laura.tilston@vsnw.org.uk)).

Commissioned by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority



**LIVERPOOL  
CITY REGION**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

**METROMAYOR**  
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

# Foreword

The VS6 Partnership are pleased to present this important report on how Liverpool City Region Combined Authority can move towards a City Region where everyone has access to sustainable, affordable, and healthy food. As families and households across the country are facing significant challenges compounded by the cost-of-living crisis, pushing people already experiencing food insecurity into further deprivation, we must come together as a City Region to address the root causes of food insecurity and explore opportunities for solutions. The food mapping within this report shows the extraordinary scale of support led by the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector, however this cannot be work that the sector undertakes alone. If we as a City Region are going to make food poverty history we will need to work together as business, civic, political, rural, enterprise, VCFSE, and other sector partners to invest time and resources in significant strategic planning and development.

The 11 recommendations in this report for the Combined Authority to consider provide the foundations for the development of a Liverpool City Region Sustainable and Affordable Food Strategy alongside our local authorities, health and social care partnerships, and the private sector. We look forward to working with the Combined Authority and Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram to continue this work and make access to sustainable and affordable food a reality.

**Rev Canon Dr Ellen Loudon**

**VS6 Independent Chair and Director of Social Justice & Canon Chancellor,  
Diocese of Liverpool**

# Foreword

As the Deputy Metro Mayor and Portfolio Lead for the Inclusive Economy and Third Sector Portfolio, I am delighted with the production of this timely report. It will be a key foundation for us in both developing a dedicated Food Poverty Reduction Strategy and in making sure that affordable and sustainable food becomes integrated into a systemic approach in how to tackle poverty across the Liverpool City Region (LCR).

The importance of this work was evident when it was commissioned earlier in 2022 - the huge increase in food insecurity over the last decade is a shameful indictment on our society - but it soon became clear that the cost-of-living crisis was only going to make this situation much worse. It is making life even more precarious for those at the bottom of the income scale, with the pay of those in the lowest earning percentiles failing to keep pace with inflation – the very people who have to spend the largest proportion of their incomes on energy, confronted with that dreadful choice between heating and eating.

This report however provides hope and seeds of optimism in how we can make changes for the better, both now and in the long term. The sheer scale of action and leadership from the voluntary sector which is evidenced here is to be commended and demonstrates the power of civic society. However, to meaningfully shift the dial, we need a fully collaborative and co-operative approach across the social, public, and private sectors and a clear plan for how best to co-ordinate our short-term efforts across LCR, whilst developing a longer-term approach to affordable and sustainable food. We have to get this right so that our residents do not face the indignity of having to go to a food bank to avoid hunger, and I look forward to working with partners in delivering on the report's recommendations."

**Councillor Janette Williamson**

**Deputy Metro Mayor and Leader of Wirral Council**

# Recommendations Summary

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority wants to create a City Region where good food is a right not a privilege, with everyone who lives and works here being able to eat healthily every day no matter who they are, what they do or where they live. To realise this we know we need a range of solutions, but key to achieving this is to; ensure all those in danger of going hungry or suffering malnutrition are able to access nutritious food while working to address the underlying causes of food poverty; raising awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet and giving people the skills, resources and support needed to feed themselves well; and changing people's food environment to ensure affordable healthy food is available and accessible to all. This series of recommendations are the start of that journey and will support City Region partners to plan to meet this ambition. Full recommendations with detailed actions can be found at the end of this report.

## SHORT TERM

1. Immediate funding, resources, and support for the VCFSE sector to respond to the cost of living crisis
2. Increase awareness and messaging of different models of community food support
3. Bring system partners together to support a whole-system sustainable and affordable food access conversation in LCR
4. Develop a Liverpool City Region Food Network
5. Develop a Sustainable & Affordable Food Strategy for the Liverpool City Region

## LONG TERM

6. Ensure policy and decision making reflects the right to food
7. Enhance and encourage local food production in Liverpool City Region and develop more local, sustainable food supply chains
8. Explore opportunities to develop an LCR Food Database
9. Identification of food deserts across LCR
10. Explore opportunities to align the employment and skills agenda with sustainable and affordable food
11. Expand the social economy's role in the provision of sustainable and affordable food

# Background

In 2020 the VS6 Partnership, in collaboration with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA), held an assembly event with organisations from the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector to begin to think about developing the vision for sustainable and affordable food access in the City Region. The event brought over 80 VCFSE organisations and leaders together to better understand the barriers to food access faced by those most at risk of severe food insecurity and to identify potential solutions to these challenges.

Following the assembly event, a report<sup>1</sup> was produced which contained six key strategic visions representing the experience and voice of the VCFSE sector and marking the beginning of a roadmap towards developing a City Region where everyone has access to sustainable, affordable, and healthy food. These key visions are to:

1. Increase the accessibility to food locally by improving the amount of affordable, healthy food available within communities and high streets.
2. Develop and build upon local food supply chains with local food sources and producers.
3. Develop and maintain partnerships with the private, public and VCFSE sector.
4. Understand the LCR community food economy and improve data sharing opportunities and processes.
5. Improve digital inclusion across the region and use technology to increase access to food.
6. Work with the VCFSE sector to develop innovative and community focused solutions for food insecurity.

These key visions were influential in Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram's 2021 manifesto for election, in which he committed to tackling food insecurity through the development of an LCR Sustainable & Affordable Food Strategy, building upon the 'Right to Food' campaign and bringing together leaders from the public, private and VCFSE sector.

<sup>1</sup> VS6 Sustainable and Affordable Assembly Report, VS6 Partnership (2020)

To inform the development of an LCR Sustainable & Affordable Food Strategy, and to move towards more sustainable models of addressing food insecurity, the VS6 Partnership have collaborated once again with the Combined Authority to engage further with the VCFSE sector to:

- Map organisations across the Liverpool City Region that are working to improve the offer of affordable and sustainable food
- Host a follow-up assembly to hear voices from the community food sector
- Identify opportunities for the Metro Mayor and Combined Authority to support the affordable and sustainable food agenda.

Since the development of the initial report, much has changed nationally and within the City Region. COVID-19 was a significant challenge that impacted on residents across LCR, often having disproportionate impacts on those already facing poverty, living in deprivation and people from marginalised communities. The impacts from the pandemic are still felt today in these communities which are now compounded even further as we move deeper into the cost of living crisis. Addressing food insecurity, whilst being one aspect of the wider determinants of inequalities, is fundamental to building resilient and healthy communities and tackling overall poverty and deprivation.

The current report, along with the visions from the 2020 report, is a culmination of the above objectives, taking into account both the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis, and providing the stepping stones for the Combined Authority and City Region partners to be drivers of change and begin the sustainable and affordable food revolution within Liverpool City Region.

# Introduction

## NATIONAL CONTEXT

Access to affordable, healthy, good food is a basic human right. It is vitally important for both physical and mental health, with healthy and nutritious food essential for children to concentrate at school and grow into healthy adults that thrive as much as possible in work and in life. Food is a celebration of culture and identity, bringing family, friends and communities together to build strong connections. Food is also joy, whether it be cooking a nice meal, growing home-grown vegetables, or the comfort of a warm meal on a cold day. Access to good food is often something that many of us can take for granted, however for many people in this country and the Liverpool City Region access to food is becoming much more challenging.

Food poverty and food insecurity are complex issues and intersect with many other socio-economic demographics and wider determinants of inequalities in society. Households that struggle to afford food often have low incomes, are more likely to be in receipt of Universal Credit, face job insecurity and live in more deprived areas of the country. These households are more likely to be living in persistent poverty, or on the precipice of absolute poverty, and may not only struggle to regularly access affordable food but may also find it difficult to heat their homes as well as being more likely to be in debt and be living in poor health<sup>2</sup>. The social determinants of poverty are a vicious cycle, with a household experiencing one aspect of poverty, such as low income, at risk of experiencing other aspects of poverty, such as food insecurity. We know that specific groups and communities are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, such as people with disabilities, non-white ethnic groups<sup>3</sup>, single parents and people living with poor physical and mental health<sup>4</sup>. These are the same groups that are most at risk of living in absolute poverty.

For those in receipt of Universal Credit, the Food Foundation found that nearly half of households experienced food insecurity<sup>5</sup>. The Trussell Trust similarly found in March 2022 that 56% of people in receipt of Universal Credit reported they were going without at least one of the essentials needed to keep warm, fed or clothed, with 33% being unable to afford adequate food<sup>6</sup>.

The Food Foundation also reported that out of over 10,000 UK adults surveyed in April 2022, 15.5% reported experiencing food insecurity in their household. Worryingly, they also found a sharp increase in the proportion of households with children experiencing food insecurity, with 2.6 million children (17.2%) living in households that do not have access to healthy and affordable food<sup>7</sup>.

Whilst food insecurity is not a new issue, it has become increasingly apparent over the last decade that more and more people are finding it increasingly difficult to be able to access and afford good food. The number of food banks opening over the time period of austerity has grown significantly. In 2011 the Trussell Trust had 148 food banks in its

2 Poverty in the UK: Statistics, House of Commons Library (2022)

3 Food Insecurity Tracking, The Food Foundation (2022)

4 State of Hunger: Building the evidence on poverty, destitution, and food insecurity in the UK, Trussell Trust (2021)

5 Food Insecurity Tracking, The Food Foundation (2022)

6 The True Cost of Living: The action needed to stem the rising tide of destitution, Trussell Trust (2022)

7 Food Insecurity Tracking, The Food Foundation (2022)

network<sup>8</sup> however in 2022 this has risen to over 1,400<sup>9</sup>, an incredible increase of 846% in just 11 years. This figure does not include the number of independent food banks, of which the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) has recorded 1,172 across the country<sup>10</sup>.

The accelerating cost of living crisis that the country is now facing, on the back of the COVID-19 pandemic, is having a significant impact on those already facing food poverty and is plunging others who have previously not struggled into food insecurity. Food bank usage between 2021/22 recorded by the Trussell Trust soared with 2.1 million emergency food parcels given out to people in crisis, an increase of 81% since 2016/17<sup>11</sup>. IFAN reported that since the start of 2022, 93% of food banks are experiencing increasing demand however at the same time 78% reported a drop in food and financial donations with half of these having to dip into financial reserves to pay for food<sup>12</sup>.

Similarly, in a survey of more than 1,200 charities and community groups, Fare Share reported that 75% of VCFSE organisations have seen an increase in demand for services over the past year, with 65% of organisations stating that this is due to increases in the cost of food and 52% due to rising energy bills<sup>13</sup>. Recently, the Institute of Health Equity published a report on fuel poverty in the UK and estimated that without effective interventions, 66% of UK households would be living in fuel poverty by January 2023 with significant impacts on health and wellbeing<sup>14</sup>.

With the cost of food in the UK having increased by 13.1% as of August 2022<sup>15</sup>, along with soaring energy costs, it is not difficult to see how more and more households are struggling to afford to meet basic needs such as food and fuel.

## LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

Food insecurity is a significant problem faced by many families across the Liverpool City Region (LCR). Four out of the 6 boroughs (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool and St Helens) are in the top 20% most deprived local authorities in England with Knowsley and Liverpool the second and third highest in the North West, respectively<sup>16</sup>. In terms of lower super output areas (LSOAs), LCR has almost half (47%) of the most deprived 20% LSOAs nationally<sup>17</sup>.

Liverpool City Region is also home to half of England's ten most deprived food deserts. Food deserts are defined as neighbourhoods between 5,000-15,000 people served by two or fewer supermarkets or convenience stores. Living in a food desert can mean that households do not have access to supermarkets within walking distance and instead rely on smaller stores that are more costly, have less choice and sell less fresh and healthy food products<sup>18</sup>. Similarly, in a 2022 study by the University of Liverpool on "20 minute cities", the concept that most basic needs should be met within a 20-minute round trip from home, researchers found that only 29% of the

8 The Trussell Trust Foodbank Network: Exploring the growth of foodbanks across the UK (2011)

9 "Food banks provide more than 2.1 million food parcels to people across the UK in past year, according to new figures released by the Trussell Trust" (2022)

10 Mapping the UK's Independent Food Banks, IFAN

11 End of Year Stats 2021-2022, Trussell Trust (2022)

12 Survey of members of the Independent Food Aid Network, IFAN (2022)

13 #RunningOnEmpty: Help the most vulnerable communities in the UK during the Cost of Living crisis, FareShare

14 Fuel Poverty, Cold Homes and Health Inequalities in the UK, Institute of Health Equity (2022)

15 United Kingdom Food Inflation, Trading Economics (2022), correct at the time of writing

16 Vulnerable Individuals and Groups Profile Liverpool City Region, Liverpool John Moores University (2021)

17 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019: A Liverpool Analysis, Liverpool City Council (2020)

18 Can everyone access affordable, nutritious food? A picture of Britain's most deprived food deserts, Kellogg's (2018)

population in LCR live within a 10 minute walk of a supermarket<sup>19</sup>.

The number of people in receipt of Universal Credit is considered very high in LCR, with the COVID-19 pandemic seeing a large increase in the number of claims. From January 2020 to January 2022 there has been an 80% increase in the number of people claiming Universal Credit, with high levels of claimants living in areas with high levels of deprivation. These areas also correlate with places in LCR that have high rates of fuel poverty. We know that low income, particularly for those on Universal Credit, is a key driver of food insecurity and with LCR communities facing unprecedented rising costs of living, it is pushing people to the very edge of what they can afford.

From the VS6 Sustainable and Affordable Food event held in 2020 with VCFSE organisations across the City Region, a number of community groups were identified as being most at risk of food insecurity. Low income families were considered high risk of food insecurity particularly as COVID-19 guidance and stay at home rules resulted in higher household bills and food costs. Migrant, refugee, and asylum seeker communities faced unique risks including language barriers that, in some cases, prevented them from accessing the necessary support services. Drivers of food insecurity were also identified such as digital exclusion, access to affordable transport, stigma of seeking support, and lack of knowledge on how to cook healthy, nutritious meals.

More locally, LCR boroughs are reporting significant challenges facing communities in the current cost of living crisis.

St Helens Food Bank has reported a 30% reduction in donations but 38% increase in support given to struggling households. The amount of people seeking support from their food bank service increased by 96% in February 2022 compared to the same time last year, with 40% more food bank vouchers being fulfilled. Other VCFSE services in St Helens have reported increases in people accessing their services and challenges facing communities across the borough. Reports of older people having to make decisions between purchasing food or heating their homes, people facing financial insecurity on zero hours contracts left extremely vulnerable to inflation, arrears increasing for tenants in social housing and local shops raising their prices impacting on people who are unable to get to cheaper supermarkets.

Sefton have also seen an overall increase in referrals across all service types, both VCFSE and statutory, with cost of living challenges disproportionately impacting those on low incomes. There is a concern in Sefton that people will be unable to afford transport costs to clinics and health appointments, potentially having a catastrophic impact on longer term physical and mental health. In communities that have already been adversely affected by COVID-19, including those with long COVID, they are extremely vulnerable to further stress in the system.

In Liverpool, food banks are facing unprecedented times with donations failing to meet demand from communities. St Andrews Community Network gave out more than 4490kg worth of food in May 2022, despite only receiving 2725kg in donations<sup>20</sup>. In July 2022 official estimates showed that 78% of Liverpool residents would fall into fuel poverty if the energy price cap were to rise to £3,000<sup>21</sup>. With the new Prime Minister's government freezing the energy price cap at £2,500 via the new Energy Price Guarantee, this may provide some relief to struggling households however this still represents an astronomical rise in energy costs overall, meaning that many households in the borough will remain extremely vulnerable and exposed to rising costs.

19 The 20-minute city: An equity analysis of Liverpool City Region, University of Liverpool (2022)

20 "Can we put the lights on?", Feeding Liverpool (2022)

21 "There's nothing else to give them': Liverpool food banks confront rising hunger", The Guardian (2022)

## MOVING TOWARDS ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE AND AFFORDABLE FOOD IN LCR

The research highlighted above alongside evidence provided by VCFSE services highlights how food insecurity is explicitly linked to poverty and emphasises how our food system is not working for those that are facing food insecurity. So how do we fix it?

The VCFSE sector historically has and currently is stepping up to support those who cannot afford to buy food through emergency food provision via food banks and food parcel delivery. New models of food support are emerging, such as food pantries and social supermarkets, that are filling the gaps between emergency food support and more commercial food outlets. We also know that there are opportunities to grow food more locally in the City Region, and that there are community groups already doing this. However, at the same time, despite the fantastic work of the VCFSE sector, it is only one part of the network of actors needed to create whole system change.

We need to develop a food system in Liverpool City Region that allows everybody to access healthy, nutritious, affordable food in a sustainable way. This report aims to understand more about the VCFSE community food sector in LCR, understand the challenges that services and communities are facing, identify opportunities for addressing these challenges and provide recommendations for the Combined Authority to develop an LCR Sustainable & Affordable Food Strategy.

# Mapping

One of the key visions from the 2020 sustainable and affordable food report was to better understand the size and scope of the community food economy across LCR to increase knowledge in terms of what is happening in this area of work and also to understand needs and gaps in services. Having a good foundation of what is happening across the City Region will allow us to identify opportunities for collaboration across sectors and support the generation of further insights to inform future working.

## METHOD

In order to best capture the size and scope of community food organisations across the City Region, VS6 were able to utilise the close connections it has with its CVS partners representing the VCFSE sector across the six LCR boroughs. Due to their place-based levels of working, the CVSs are well linked into VCFSE organisations in their respective boroughs, including community food organisations. A spreadsheet was developed and sent to CVSs to distribute to their networks to capture these community food organisations. Some boroughs have their own food network, such as Feeding Liverpool, with extensive place-based knowledge of local food organisations whereas other boroughs did not. Where established food networks existed, these were engaged.

Specifically, in the early stages of mapping we sought to capture the following categories of organisations:

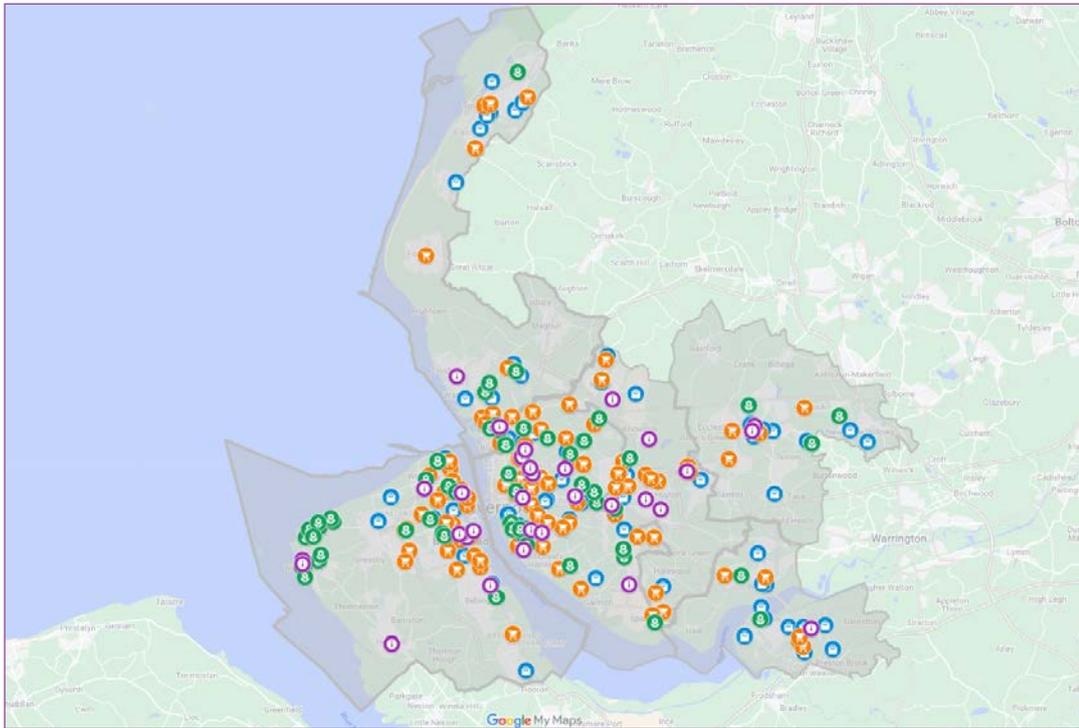
1. **Food Banks** – Traditional food banks that provide donated parcels of mostly non-perishable food and other essential items free of charge and often as a last emergency resort for people who are unable to purchase food.
2. **Food Pantries** – There has been a more recent emergence of food pantry or social supermarket models where community food organisations provide food and toiletries at a reduced price for purchase by beneficiaries.
3. **Community Growers** – Pieces of land farmed or gardened by local individuals, communities and/or organisations for the purposes of growing food that can be supplied at no or low cost to support people in food need. These can be small plots or larger fields. This category can include community gardens, church gardens, community farms, community orchards, gleaning networks, foraging networks etc.
4. **Other organisations** – This category includes other community organisations that do not fit directly into the other three categories but do support people with food related need. This could include food delivery organisations, homeless organisations, community cafes and more.

Additional work was undertaken to improve the mapping data including a survey which was distributed through VS6 partners to capture any outstanding organisations. Networks were also approached directly, such as the Liverpool Growers Network, to gather further insights into activity.

Following the period of data collection, Google Maps was used to input all of the intelligence and be accessed here.

## COMMUNITY FOOD MAPPING

The table below shows the total numbers of community food organisations across LCR that have been captured through this work. Almost 300 organisations mapped in total really does evidence the extent of the work that the VCFSE sector does to ensure that those living through food poverty and insecurity have access to food. It also shows the opportunities and possibilities to work with this vast network of organisations to develop a more sustainable and afford food model for the City Region.



Category	Map Icon	Total
Food Banks		81
Food Pantries		99
Community Growers		72
Other Organisations		32
<b>Total</b>		<b>284</b>

The above image is a screenshot from the Google Maps showing the mapping across the LCR (shaded in grey). The above table shows the associated icons with the category of organisation. Some of these icons overlap where there is a larger cluster of organisations located within close distance of one another. A list of all organisations can be found in the appendices.

Liverpool as a borough has the highest number of community food organisations with a third of all organisations based there, closely followed by Wirral with 31% of all mapped organisations. St Helens and Halton are the boroughs with the least amount of mapped provision, accounting for 7% and 6% respectively. Knowsley (10%) and Sefton (13%) have only slightly higher numbers, evidencing that a significantly higher proportion of organisations are concentrated in Liverpool and Wirral. However, the

spread of organisations between these two boroughs differs with Liverpool having a more evenly proportioned spread whereas Wirral's organisations are based in the East and North of the borough leaving a gap in provision in West Wirral. Additionally, we can see that although West Wirral has some provision in West Kirby, this is mostly community growers rather than food banks or food pantries indicating that access to emergency food support is more limited.

	Halton	Knowsley	Liverpool	Sefton	St Helens	Wirral
Food Banks	11	8	25	15	9	13
Food Pantries	5	12	35	12	4	31
Community Growers	2	2	22	8	3	35
Other Organisations	1	6	13	1	2	9
Total	19	28	95	36	18	88
%	7%	10%	33%	13%	6%	31%

The majority of mapped organisations are clustered around more central points across the footprint including bigger towns and Liverpool city centre. Many of these clusters also mirror the footprint of deprivation across the City Region, with the areas with the highest density of community food organisations commonly based in the top 10% of most deprived LSOAs in the country. This evidences the need for support with food access in our most deprived neighbourhoods, and our community food organisations responding to that need.

Another additional factor is that of public transport. Many of the towns with the highest proportion of community food organisations are located on major public transport routes making them more accessible for people not living in those particular towns. Places such as Liverpool City Centre, Birkenhead, Southport and Runcorn are major stops served by the Merseyrail and bus network which extend across the City Region however there are less well served areas which for some households might mean longer, less affordable journeys with multiple change overs.

Through an initial glance at the map, it is easy to identify some clear gaps within provision across the City Region across all categories such as West Wirral, Hightown and Maghull (Sefton), Rainford and Sutton Manor (St Helens), Halewood (Knowsley) and Daresbury (Halton). These gaps could be linked to the more rural areas of the City Region, for example West Wirral has more green space and rural areas than East Wirral, as evidenced by various Defra maps of LCR LEP rural areas<sup>22</sup>. In LCR only 2% of the population live in these rural areas<sup>23</sup>, therefore there is likely to be less demand for community food services. However, this does not mean that the need in rural areas does not exist with 2021 census data showing that in LCR over 30% of rural households fall under 1 or more dimensions of deprivation<sup>24</sup>. With the majority of community food organisations situated in and near to larger towns and the city, many

<sup>22</sup> Liverpool City Region LEP – Rural areas within Local Enterprise Partnerships, Defra (2017)

<sup>23</sup> Liverpool City Region LEP – Census 2021 Focus on Rural Areas, Defra (2012)

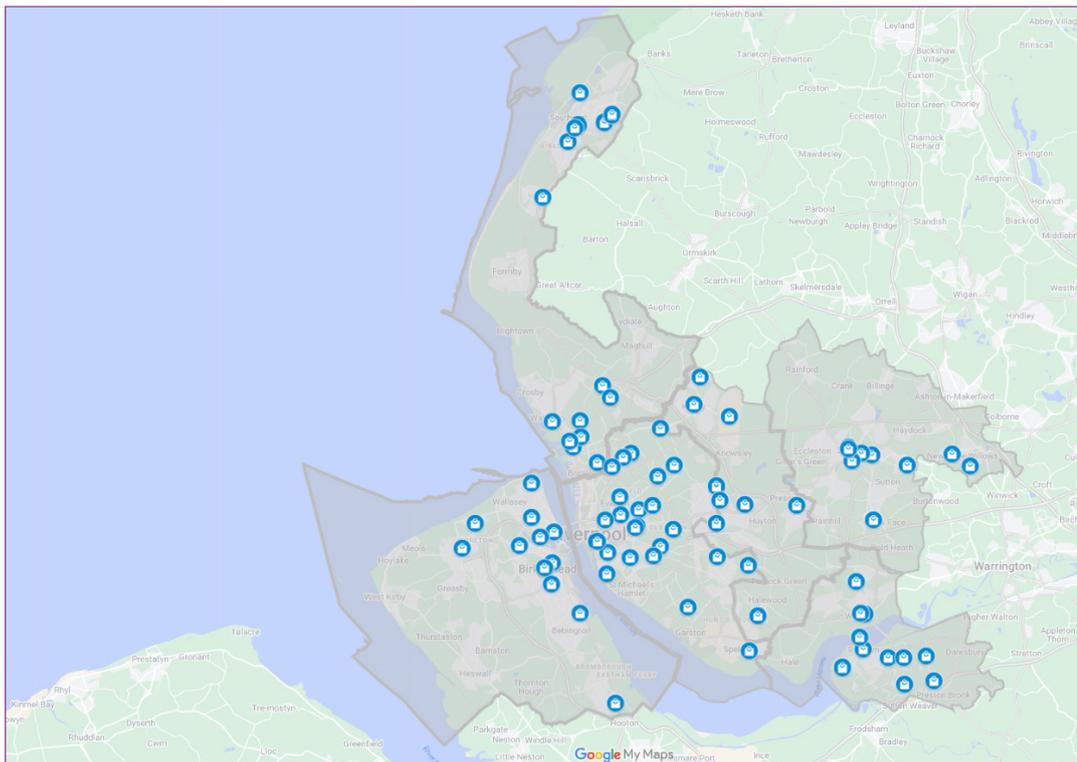
<sup>24</sup> Liverpool City Region LEP – Census 2021 Focus on Rural Areas, Defra (2012) The Census is independent of the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation. The four dimensions of deprivation from the Census are Employment, Education, Housing and Health & Disability.

of these rural households would need to travel to these destinations for support. This is especially difficult considering that there are known gaps in public transport in more rural areas<sup>25</sup>, making it harder to physically access community food organisations. Whilst some support services are able to be delivered digitally with the gradual shift to online access, emergency food support is one area that relies on face to face delivery.

As well as gaps in more rural areas, there is less community food provision in our more affluent neighbourhoods in the City Region. Areas such as Formby, Rainsford, Heswall and Tarbock Green have little to no provision mapped, again suggesting that there is little demand for community food organisations in those areas. However, this is not to say that there are not people living in food insecurity in those areas, with those that might require support needing to travel further afield.

## FOOD BANKS

In total there are 81 food banks recorded across the City Region, as detailed in the below table. The map above shows the locations of these food banks marked by the blue shopping bag icons. Also marked on the map are Trussell Trust distribution and warehouse centres, marked by the dark blue lorry icon. These are mapped to understand the distribution network that exists across the City Region in terms of emergency food supply.



The borough with the highest proportion of food banks is Liverpool (31%), followed by Sefton with 19%. The borough with the least number of food banks is Knowsley (8%) closely followed by St Helens (11%).

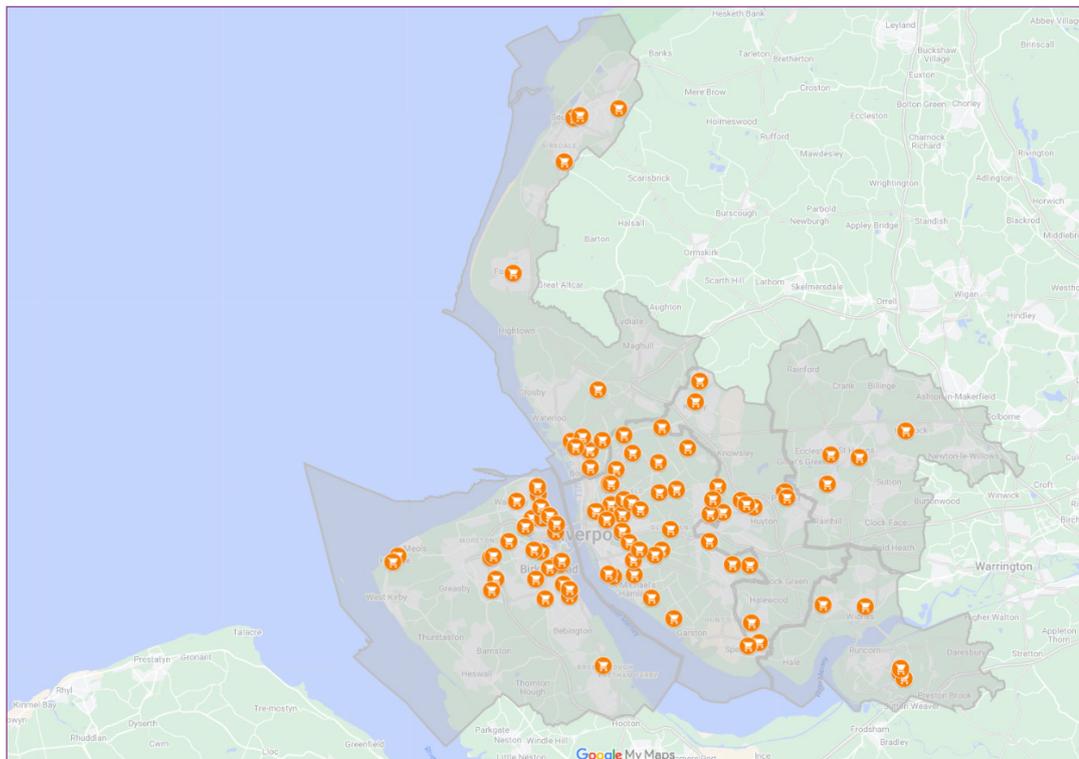
Comparable to the bigger picture described previously of all community food organisations, the distribution of food banks across the City Region is similar; clusters within town centres, more deprived neighbourhoods with fewer or no food banks located in less deprived areas.

Borough	No:	%
Halton	11	14%
Knowsley	8	10%
Liverpool	25	31%
Sefton	15	19%
St Helens	9	11%
Wirral	13	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	

## FOOD PANTRIES

There are 99 food pantries mapped across LCR, marked on the map by orange shopping trolley icons. As detailed previously, the food pantry category includes all organisations that operate with the same model such as social supermarkets and food unions. Food pantries offer a larger amount of food at a very low price point and also provide more choice for the service user, and generally are not a source of emergency food provision.

Again, the borough with the highest proportion of food pantries is Liverpool (35%) followed by Wirral (31%). St Helens and Halton have the lowest number of food pantries with 4% and 5% respectively. Knowsley and Sefton are joint third both with 12% of the proportion of food pantries.



Borough	No:	%
Halton	5	5%
Knowsley	12	12%
Liverpool	35	35%
Sefton	12	12%
St Helens	4	4%
Wirral	31	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	

It is interesting to note that Wirral has the second highest number of food pantries at 31, but only has 13 recorded food banks, a difference of 18. This could be that the population of Wirral are less in need of emergency food support, or that the model of delivery for community food support has gradually moved from emergency supply towards more sustainable models of food access with people less likely to need emergency support. This is the case in Knowsley where, despite being one of the most deprived areas in the country, there are more food pantries (12) than food banks (8) due to positive work happening locally to move towards sustainable food access.

On the flipside, there are more food banks in Halton and St Helens than there are food pantries, evidencing that perhaps emergency food supply is needed more at the current time in those boroughs.

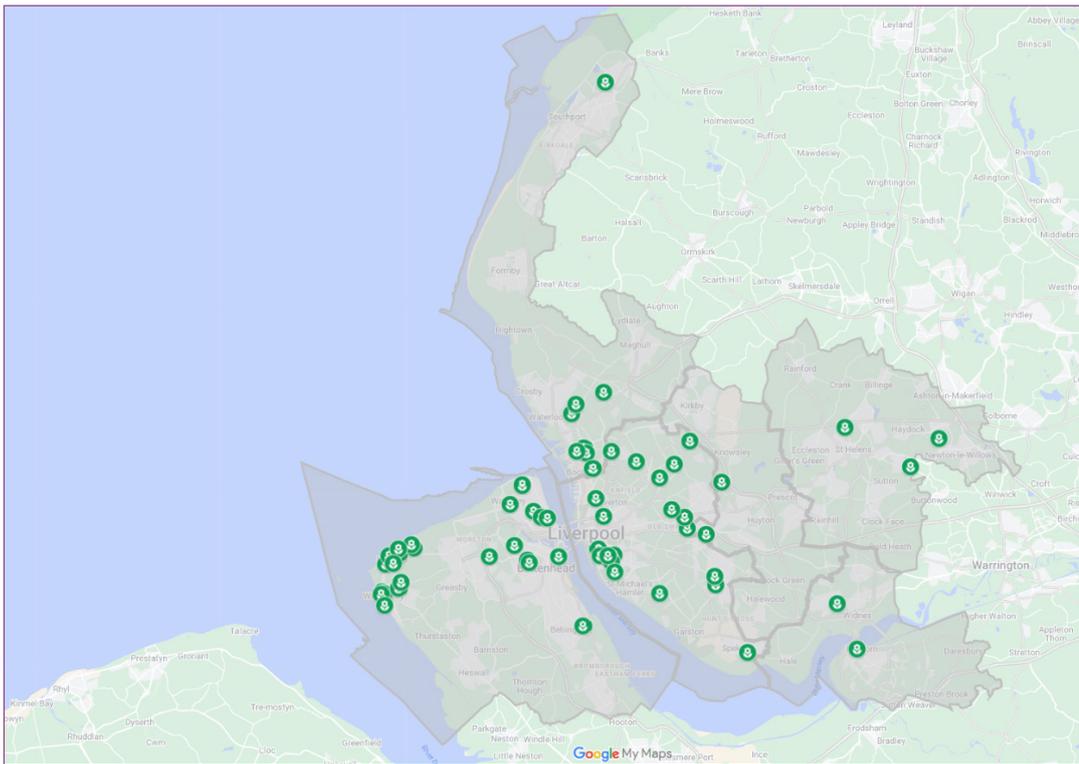
Generally, however, the number of food pantries across each borough is higher than food banks and are, again, located within our more deprived neighbourhoods and towns. There are some slight differences with one food pantry located within Formby, Sefton where there are no food banks and similarly in West Kirby, Wirral.

The food pantries mapped in Liverpool City Region are a mixture of local organisations and larger more national organisations and networks such as the Community Shop Group and Your Local Pantry.

## COMMUNITY GROWERS

Community growing organisations across the City Region are identified on the map with a green flower icon. This category includes any network, organisation, community group or individuals that produce food locally that is or can be distributed and donated to friends, neighbours, community organisations or wider. This can vary from small plots of land to larger community gardens and community farms. It has arguably been the most difficult category to map with the definition being so broad, and it is likely that many community growers are missing from this map such as those who grow in isolation and are not affiliated with a growing network or group.

Wirral has the highest number of community growing organisations, with 35 out of 72 based in the borough (49%). Liverpool has the second most community growers with 22 (31%). Community growers are less mapped and well known in our other boroughs with 8 recorded in Sefton, 3 in St Helens and 2 in Halton and Knowsley.



Borough	No:	%
Halton	2	3%
Knowsley	2	3%
Liverpool	22	31%
Sefton	8	11%
St Helens	3	4%
Wirral	35	49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	

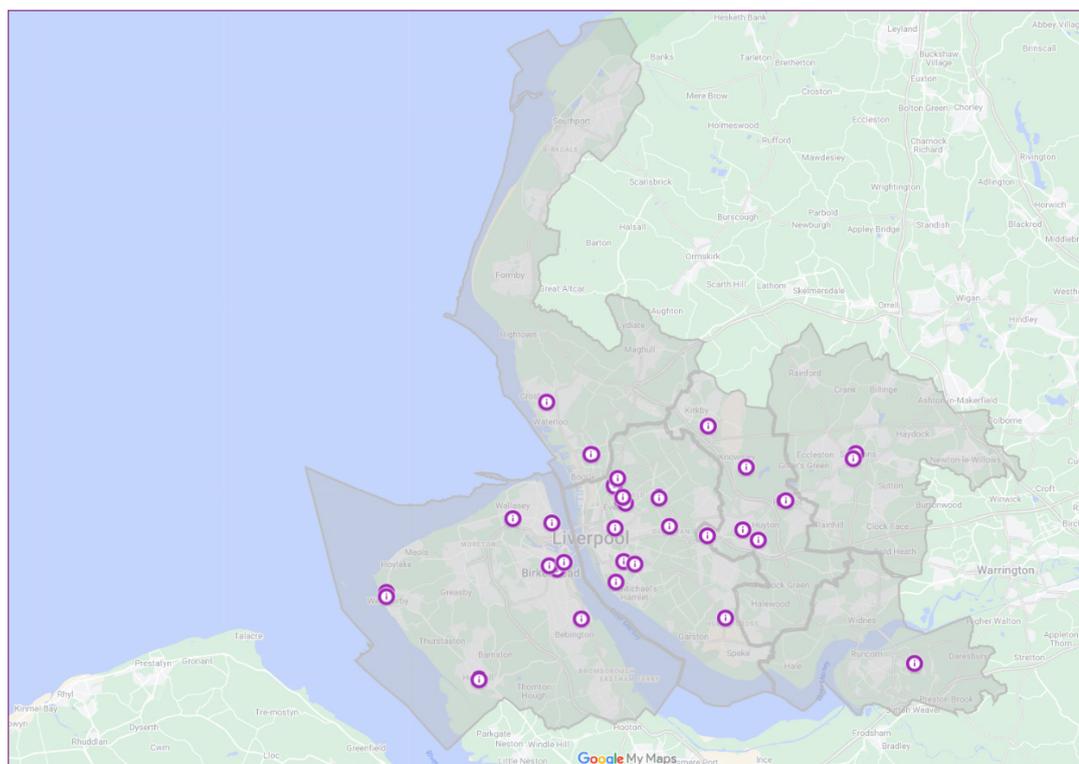
However, the mapping only shows a small part of the picture of community growers in Liverpool City Region. Many of the growers located in Wirral are affiliated with a local Incredible Edible network, in particular Incredible Edible West Kirby and Incredible Edible Hoylake. Many of the growing sites mapped are small pieces of land, even 2 or 3 planters located near buildings such as libraries and doctors’ surgeries. There are Incredible Edible networks based in St Helens and Knowsley, therefore there is likely to be more growers in these areas than are currently mapped.

There are other networks of growers including the Liverpool Growers Network which links growers across the City Region and Taking Root in Bootle linking together growers across South Sefton. With already established growing networks, it would be interesting to see how they could, or already do, work with our other community food organisations to distribute locally grown food – although this is only one piece of the puzzle.

Community growers across the region do not only grow food, they serve a variety of purposes for communities such as promoting community cohesion, education through teaching people how to grow food and plants, getting people involved in volunteering, and improving health and wellbeing.

## OTHER ORGANISATIONS

“Other organisations” encompasses a range of organisations that support people to access food but do not fall directly into the categories of food banks, food pantries or community growers. The variety of organisations that fell into this category was significant. A full list can be found in the appendices; however, some examples include community cafes, producing meals with surplus food, faith groups, food parcel delivery and “pay it forward” schemes.



Borough	No:	%
Halton	1	3%
Knowsley	6	19%
Liverpool	13	41%
Sefton	1	3%
St Helens	2	6%
Wirral	9	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	

The number of mapped “other organisations” is less than the other three categories, with 32 recorded in total. Liverpool has the highest number of these organisations with 13 (41%) in total, followed by Wirral (9), Knowsley (6), St Helens (2) and Halton and Sefton (1). There are likely to be more organisations across the City Region that support access to food in some way, however, may not recognise themselves as such, or it is a small part of a larger operation. Many of these organisations go beyond food provision only. This goes to show the innovation and adaptability of the VCFSE sector in the City Region to develop a variety of community based solutions to food challenges.

## MAPPING CONSIDERATIONS

This mapping of community food organisations across the Liverpool City Region really emphasises both the agility and responsiveness of the VCFSE sector to work to address the significant levels of need of people living with food insecurity. Whilst the number of organisations mapped is encouraging, it does not show the whole picture of the community food organisation landscape. There are many factors that should be considered prior to taking the mapping at face value. Some of these include:

### **Opening hours**

There are 81 food banks and 99 food pantries mapped across the City Region, however the opening times of these organisations can vary significantly. Many food banks are open one day a week between certain hours, therefore living near a food bank does not guarantee access to emergency food at all times.

### **Transport**

As mentioned previously, access to public transport is essential for those who need to access support particularly for those that live in more rural areas or those not on a main public transport network. Public transport can also be an expensive output for individuals and families that have limited expendable income, with this likely to be severely compounded by the cost of living crisis.

### **Donation consistency and stability**

Food banks and food pantries often rely on regular giving, whether that be from individuals or private sector organisations (e.g., supermarkets), to be able to provide food to those in need. The cost of living crisis has impacted on the amount of food and money that is donated to community food organisations, with donations decreasing as members of the public can no longer afford to give as much as they used to.

### **Supermarkets and other food shops**

The map currently does not detail the locations of supermarkets, smaller food stores or corner shops in the City Region, therefore at this stage it is difficult to identify where absolute food deserts exist. However, we can identify gaps for areas that have limited or no access to emergency or low cost food via community organisations.

### **Gaps in knowledge**

Whilst the mapping does identify areas where there are potential gaps in community food provision, this does not necessarily mean that these areas have no support at all. This may instead reflect on gaps in our own reach and knowledge. There may be hyper-local community and voluntary groups providing food support which are less well known, for example organisations providing food support in some capacity but not as their main activity.

# VCFSE Engagement Event

In June 2022 the VS6 Partnership hosted LCR's second Sustainable and Affordable Food Assembly with the VCFSE sector, following on from the first event in 2020. The event was co-chaired by Dr Ellen Loudon, VS6 Chair, and Dr Naomi Maynard of Feeding Liverpool. It was attended by over 60 representatives from VCFSE food organisations across the City Region and featured an assortment of guest speakers from the Combined Authority, Feeding Britain, Feeding Liverpool and Feedback Global.

The event also consisted of two interactive workshops designed to engage with attendees and understand more on how we can develop a City Region where everyone has access to sustainable and affordable food. These workshops were crucial to hearing the voice of the community food sector which has a unique understanding of the challenges communities and VCFSE groups are facing. The next section of this report will summarise the feedback from each workshop and the potential actions to take forward from this engagement exercise.

## Workshop 1 – What are the emerging challenges for sustainable and affordable food in Liverpool City Region in 2022 and beyond?

### What has changed?

- **The emergence of the food pantry model** – as an alternative to food banks and emergency food supply.
- **The spectrum of people accessing food support is broadening** – There is an increase in the number of working households using food bank and food pantry support.
- **COVID-19 community spirit has changed** – The pandemic saw communities come together to support the most vulnerable, however it was felt that this has reduced recently.
- **Working from home has reduced visibility in the community** – Organisations are less likely to know who is needing support.
- **Community food organisations becoming “one stop shops”** – and having to support people with issues beyond just food access e.g., mental health, financial support etc.
- **Cultural shift to food delivery through lockdown** – In some cases people may prefer food delivery than physically accessing services.

### What are the emerging challenges?

- **The cost of living crisis** – As costs increase but incomes remain stagnant, people's ability to afford food is vastly reduced.
- **Brexit** – and associated wholesale price increases and food shortages are passed onto consumers impacting people and food organisations.
- **Inflation** – People's income not going as far as it used to.
- **Fuel poverty** – People having to make the difficult choice of buying food or paying for energy bills.
- **Food bank and food pantry stigma** – This can prevent people from accessing the support they need out of shame or embarrassment, particularly for those that have never needed to access support previously.

- **Focus on cheap food** – As household budgets struggle, purchasing cheap food is prioritised over quality, freshness, or nutrition.
- **Food deserts** – Providing support for those living in food deserts where there is no or very limited access to affordable food.
- **Cookery skills and motivation** – Often the less well known foods are donated which can, in some cases, be unfamiliar e.g., fennel. Upskilling people's cooking skills and ability to cook healthy meals will be essential.
- **Supermarket food waste reduction strategies** – Along with the removal of fresh food counters, this is impacting on the amount of food donated by supermarkets as they reduce their food waste.
- **Short term funding** – It is recognised that short term funding is often unsustainable and developing longer-term models that can be agile and flexible towards crises is necessary.
- **Climate change** – The impact of climate change on food production is becoming more apparent every year, with crops failing and increasingly significant droughts.

### How is this impacting on local support and provision?

- **Pressure on food organisations to address the cost of living crisis** – There is an expectation that community food organisations will rise to meet the demands caused by the crisis, rather than policy changing to ensure people aren't ever in a position to need food banks.
- **Food pantries experiencing unstable levels of donations** – It was expressed that food pantries are less well known and understood models of support by the public and private sector.
- **Reduction in the levels of food being donated** – It was felt significantly that the amount of food donated to community food organisations has decreased, particularly as individuals struggle to afford to donate food.
- **Increase in the number and type of service users** – As donations are decreasing, demand is increasing significantly along with an increase in service users not previously requiring food support.
- **Charities facing higher costs** – The cost of living crisis is also hitting VCFSE organisations with higher energy bills.
- **Food transportation issues** – Food organisations face significant costs to collect, transport and distribute food to those in need which is compounded by the cost of living crisis.

## Workshop 2 – How do we work together to develop a sustainable and affordable City Region?

### Has the mapping captured the extent of Community Food Organisations?

- **Mapping is not as straightforward as it looks** – While it is great that there is a huge number of services for communities, the map cannot show the nuances of delivery.
- **Mapping may increase demand on groups** – If the map were to be made publicly available, there is a concern that it may increase demand on already struggling groups unless additional resources are provided.
- **Hard to reach and hard to find communities** – There are gaps in the mapping however there are limitations in terms of what it can tell us about supporting the hard to reach and hard to find communities.

- **Community support in rural areas is difficult to map** – Support within local communities is often provided in more rural areas, such as neighbours looking after one another, but this is difficult to map.
- **Difficult to map mobile support** – Some organisations mapped currently include mobile food pantries, however it is difficult to map where and when these mobile pantries visit certain areas. Similarly, volunteers may deliver food packages to people in less well connected areas, or for those with disabilities.
- **Future mapping brownfield sites and urban capacity for growing** – Places where community groups or individuals could grow food that are currently disused.

### How can we bring networks of food organisations together?

- **Community growing networks** – Established networks of growers across the City Region were felt to be good examples of how networks can come together, and potentially expanded.
- **Participate in bigger picture strategic work** – Community food organisation networks could provide the space needed for VCFSE organisations to get involved with regional strategic work by pulling together collective insights.
- **Source fresh, affordable food on a larger scale** – A network of organisations could have more ability to source food for communities on a larger scale than working in isolation, and have this food shared equitably.
- **Link services together better** – Networks would develop deeper understanding of the activities of different groups and projects, allowing more streamlined linking together of services and avoiding duplication.
- **Bring community food data together** – The sharing of data across networks would allow the identification of needs, gaps and demands on community food organisations and could be used to influence local policy and decision making, as well as applying for funding.
- **Hold regular events** – Regular events, such as the Sustainable and Affordable Food assembly, would bring community voices together which can be fed into local, regional and national groups.
- **Expand the Feeding Liverpool model** – Feeding Liverpool was felt to be best practice in terms of developing place based food networks, and there was a desire to see something similar rolled out in boroughs without established food networks.

### What role can the Combined Authority play to support this work?

- **Provide leadership without taking away local influence** – There were calls for the Combined Authority to support the capacity of the community food sector to participate in strategic work food but to also keep a focus at place.
- **Lobby central government** – Utilising Combined Authority leverage to advocate for the LCR community food sector at central government and influence national policy decision making.
- **Unlock corporate social responsibility** – Encourage private and public sector organisations to utilise their powers to enhance affordable and sustainable food access through corporate social responsibility models.
- **Support co-ordination with the private food sector** – Get the right people “in the room” to address food insecurity, bringing wholesalers and supermarkets together from across the region alongside public sector and VCFSE sector partners with a shared leadership approach.

- **Map land and building availability** – Better understand what land availability exists across the City Region, such as brownfield sites for growing or buildings for use by the VCFSE sector.
- **Increase employment opportunities and protect workers' rights** – Look at how affordable and sustainable food access can link with training and employment opportunities and ensure workers' rights are protected.
- **Funding for community food organisations** – Funding and/or lobbying for funding for community organisations to support people to access affordable and sustainable food.
- **Development of an LCR food supply database** – A digital database allowing community food organisations to help co-ordinate food distribution and reduce waste.
- **Support with marketing of community food models** – Raising awareness of food pantries could help clarify the food pantry model to those unfamiliar and help reimagine food pantries as places to be used and benefited from by everyone in the community.
- **Encourage local food production** – Developing a circular food economy in Liverpool City Region by encouraging local food production as much as possible.
- **Updated mapping of community food organisations** – The VCFSE sector saw the value in the mapping work, and further resource to keep the mapping updated and expanded to include non VCFSE organisations was recognised as being important strategically.

# Key Themes

## COST OF LIVING CHALLENGES

The cost of living crisis was one of the foremost concerns raised by attendees, and the spiralling impact this is having on communities is significant. With people's incomes no longer covering day to day living expenses as used to be the case, more and more people are finding themselves in food insecurity, fuelling demand for food banks and food pantries. Rising energy costs are putting some individuals and families into troubling circumstances where they are having to balance paying for food or gas and electricity.

As well as the crisis resulting in on increased demand on community food organisations, many groups are reporting a sharp decrease in donations due to the cost of living crisis as many people can no longer afford to donate. Supermarket waste reduction strategies, although important, are impacting on the amount of food donated from supermarkets to community groups. The cost of living crisis is also directly impacting community groups, with increases in the cost of energy eating into already tight budgets, compounded by the impacts of Brexit.

### LCR Food Networks

Event attendees spoke highly of the benefits of food networks, both locally and regionally. There were many potential benefits identified including the ability to share data and insights, source food in a more strategic and streamlined way, better link services together (not just food organisations but those that deal with linked themes e.g., financial advice), and to regularly engage and share the voices of the community food sector. Feeding Liverpool, who presented at the event, were identified as a great example of a local food network bringing together food organisations across the Liverpool borough to influence policy and decision making.

A City Region food network was recognised as being able to provide the much needed strategic capacity across the Liverpool City Region, bringing voices together at this level to influence wider policy making through the Combined Authority and Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership.

## COMBINED AUTHORITY SUPPORT

Event attendees were able to recognise several ways that the Combined Authority, within its remit, could support community food organisations and the sustainable and affordable food agenda in Liverpool City Region. Many suggestions were around the Combined Authority and its ability to provide strategic leadership through its civic and convening powers. Particularly, support around co-ordination and facilitating relationships with the community food sector and the private sector was thought to be valuable in terms of aligning needs and unlocking corporate social responsibility.

There were suggestions around further mapping of land and brownfield sites for community food use, particularly for community growing to increase the amount of food grown locally. The development of a Liverpool City Region food database was also raised, providing a platform to help co-ordinate frontline provision. Linking in affordable and sustainable food into other areas of work was also identified, such as climate change and employment and skills.

## A WIDER APPROACH

It is clear through the mapping exercise and the event feedback that the VCFSE sector in Liverpool City Region has responded significantly over the years to the increasing numbers of people requiring support with food poverty and food insecurity. Whilst this is highly commendable, with community food organisations stepping up to support those in need, the current model of food support is unsustainable. In order to truly ensure that all communities across Liverpool City Region have access to healthy, affordable, and sustainable food the problems cannot be addressed by the VCFSE sector alone. Nor can it be addressed solely by the Combined Authority. There needs to be wider strategic approach with all City Region partners, including the private sector, so everybody in Liverpool City Region has a right to healthy, sustainable, and affordable food.

# Recommendations

## SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM

We know that existing food insecurity challenges for communities across LCR are getting worse, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis. There is an urgent need to support the work on tackling food insecurity in the short term whilst the groundwork for developing sustainable and affordable food systems in LCR is developed. Acknowledging that the cost of living crisis is impacting on the added need for emergency food and challenges in the rising demand for food support we think the Combined Authority, working with partners, could consider the following actions in the short term:

### 1. Immediate funding, resources, and support for the VCFSE sector to respond to the cost of living crisis

Whilst we want to develop a sustainable and affordable food system in Liverpool City Region and be in a position where we no longer need to provide emergency food support, the challenges that communities are facing right now need urgent action to prevent people from falling further into poverty and destitution. The VCFSE sector in LCR is also struggling to meet the demand from communities, with reduced supplies and rising energy and food costs impacting on their ability to support those in need.

#### What is needed?

- Working with local authorities and VCFSE infrastructure organisations, seek to develop a cost of living grant funding programme, similar to the #LCRCares grants programme for the VCFSE sector to both:
  - Support people and households that are at risk of hunger and severe food and fuel insecurity.
  - Support the operational costs of VCFSE organisations providing support for those impacted by the cost of living crisis.

### 2. Increase awareness and messaging of different models of community food support

Food banks have played a significant role in supporting households living in food poverty with emergency food supply over the last few decades, however food banks are not designed to be long-term solutions for struggling families. The emerging food pantry model serves different system needs focusing on prevention, reducing pressure on household budgets, and improving access to fresh food at affordable prices. The mapping exercise has shown that there are significant numbers of food pantries across LCR however feedback from the VCFSE sector suggested that they are less well known and understood by communities. An awareness raising exercise across LCR on the types of support available would help encourage those that do not need emergency food but require support accessing affordable food via food pantries.

**What is needed?**

- Support with awareness raising for food pantries and social supermarkets to LCR residents as available for everyone to use as local alternatives to supermarkets to encourage local consumer spending. Such a campaign should be co-designed and co-led with LCR community food organisations through an LCR Food Network.
- Utilising LCR Combined Authority connections into the private sector to raise awareness of and encourage ways to donate to community food organisations across the diverse LCR food offer.
- Ensure that information around food support is culturally relevant and accessible for our diverse LCR communities.

### 3. Bring system partners together to support a whole-system sustainable and affordable food conversation in LCR

The VCFSE sector is leading the way in providing both emergency food support for those in crisis and moving towards more sustainable, community focused solutions however it cannot solve the problems associated with the cost of living crisis and food insecurity on its own. A whole-system conversation is needed to address these challenges and move this work forward. Right to food is everyone's business.

**What is needed?**

- Bring together leaders from the Combined Authority, local government, health and social care, private sector and the VCFSE sector in a single conversation to address cost of living and food access challenges.

### 4. Develop a Liverpool City Region Food Network

The Sustainable and Affordable Food event held by VS6 in June to help develop the recommendations within this report was well received by attendees, with the coming together of VCFSE food organisations supporting networking opportunities and insight sharing. Whilst some boroughs have place based food networks that link into their respective local authorities, an LCR Food Network can bring these voices together at a City Region level to feed into Combined Authority policy and decision making. It would also support the flow of information into places from an LCR level.

**What is needed?**

- Resource allocated to the development and ongoing operation of a Liverpool City Region Food Network.
- The Liverpool City Region Food Network should have clear links into the Combined Authority and other relevant LCR groups.
- Membership should include organisations beyond the VCFSE sector, with membership from both public and private sector partners to develop a strong whole systems partnership.

## 5. Develop a Sustainable & Affordable Food Strategy for the Liverpool City Region

As we respond to the cost of living crisis, we must also plan ahead to ensure that we can develop a City Region with communities that are resilient to further crises to be able to lift people out of food insecurity. Therefore, a Sustainable & Affordable Food Strategy for LCR should be developed with a whole systems approach to work towards a City Region where everyone has access to affordable, nutritious, and sustainable food.

### What is needed?

- The strategy should include stakeholders from across all sector partners including the public, private and VCFSE sector, LCR communities and people with lived experience of food insecurity.
- Identify a sustainable and affordable food lead from within LCR to help drive forward the development and implementation of the strategy.
- Alongside the sustainable and affordable food lead, appoint a Good Food Champion scheme for LCR to advocate for and provide advice on good food access, food-related skills development (e.g., cooking) and reducing food waste across the City Region.

## MEDIUM TO LONG-TERM

Whilst we respond to the cost of living crisis and the urgent need for supporting people to access food, we also need to plan for longer term change to develop a resilient LCR food system and resilient communities. Whilst much of the changes required depend upon national policy and decision making, there are areas of work that the Combined Authority and system partners can scope out and undertake to develop a City Region where everybody has access to sustainable and affordable food:

## 6. Ensure all policy and decision making reflects the right to food

The Combined Authority has a crucial role in designing and implementing policy for the City Region that impacts both how the public and private sector operate and how our communities live their lives. In its convening capacity and as a civic leader, the Combined Authority should advocate for policy and decision making that supports people to access affordable and sustainable food at a local, regional and national level so that every LCR resident has the right to good food, even at points of crisis.

### What is needed?

- The Combined Authority, working with partners, to use its leverage to lobby central government for changes in national policy that addresses the root causes of food poverty, such as welfare reform, as part of the commitment to the Right to Food campaign.
- Ensure that LCR policy and decision making across all devolved areas of work has the right to food embedded, ensuring that food access is considered when developing all policies and plans.

- Review possibilities for “double devolution” from the Combined Authority to LCR boroughs to support local policy, decision making and delivery.

## 7. Enhance and encourage local food production in Liverpool City Region and develop more local, sustainable food supply chains

The community food mapping exercise recorded over 70 growing sites, falling under numerous growing organisations and networks, that are used to produce food in and for communities across the City Region. Whilst community growing projects are unlikely to be able to grow food to feed all of the City Region’s households, they hold an important role at a local level in not only providing food, but volunteering opportunities, education and improving mental health and wellbeing. Growing and sourcing more local food can be the start of developing a more local, resilient food supply chain whilst enhancing community wealth building and reducing emissions.

### What is needed?

- Work with local authorities and the LCR Land Commission to review land assets across LCR that are currently unused and could be transformed into community gardens, allotments and urban farms for local growing initiatives run by community organisations.
- The Metro Mayor’s Community Environment Fund to be expanded to encourage local community growing and community food distribution to support growers to link into local food supply chains.
- Working with partners, understand opportunities to work closely with local agriculture in LCR to improve connections between farmers and local communities.
- Utilise connections with the private sector to work with food related organisations such as supermarkets, wholesalers and local restaurants to source locally grown food where possible to enhance local supply chains.

## 8. Explore opportunities to develop an LCR Food Database

Event feedback from community food organisations, in particular our food banks and food pantries, highlighted a need for support in co-ordinating frontline community food provision using technology to connect food providers together. A digital LCR Food Database has the potential to help organisations identify where food exists to be distributed, organisations that are low on food that could receive excess food for distribution and support joint working in terms of logistics and storage. This would also support data collection and insight gathering.

### What is needed?

- Work with partners from the public, private and VCFSE sectors to explore the need and opportunities for developing and piloting an LCR Food Database.
- Work with private sector partners to review opportunities for support with warehousing, food storage and the logistics of food supply for the VCFSE community food sector to feed into a database.

## 9. Identification of food deserts across LCR

The current map as part of this work shows the locations of community food organisations across the City Region and supports the identification of gaps in VCFSE delivery in this area. Whilst we can pinpoint areas that have seemingly little to no community food provision, the map does not identify areas in the City Region where households are living in food deserts. There needs to be a better understanding of where food deserts exist in LCR in order to work to ensure that households in these areas have access to sustainable and affordable food.

### What is needed?

- In addition to the community food mapping, a further exercise should take place to map the locations of non-VCFSE food services in order to identify locations of food deserts across LCR, this could include supermarkets and convenience stores.
- A review of transport infrastructure in the context of food access to identify communities across LCR that have limited public transport routes to source affordable food.

## 10. Explore opportunities to align the employment and skills agenda with sustainable and affordable food

Low income is a significant risk factor for households and individuals facing and living in food insecurity, and the Sustainable and Affordable assembly event highlighted gaps in knowledge for some people in terms of turning food into healthy, nutritional meals. Strengthening food related skills and employment across LCR also presents opportunities for building more resilient and local food supply chains in the future to ensure that households have access to good food even in times of crisis.

### What is needed?

- Ensure that the LCR Fair Employment Charter reflects the importance of a Real Living Wage in moving people out of poverty and food insecurity.
- Develop community wealth building initiatives with the VCFSE sector and communities to develop food related skills including cooking, nutritional knowledge and growing.
- Consider how to work with partners to develop and encourage routes into growing and farming for young people living in LCR, such as training, financial support, or land.

## 11. Expand the social economy's role in the provision of sustainable and affordable food

The mapping clearly shows the scale of the innovation, generosity, and swiftness of the VCFSE to mobilise in the face of food insecurity and related crises. The almost 300 community food organisations mapped across LCR evidences the absolute importance of place in creating food equity and the right to food. If we are to move away from charitable responses to food challenges, City Region partners should support the creation of circumstances to expand and grow co-operative and social models for food production and provision.

### **What is needed?**

- Link Combined Authority and local authority priorities around inclusive economy and community wealth building together with the food agenda to develop ways of enhancing the social economy's food offer.
- Consider how Kindred can support sustainable food start-ups, enterprises, and community food growers.
- Review opportunities to develop and expand food co-operative models that provide communities ownership over food provision and distribution, as well as supporting local agriculture and local small food businesses.

# Appendices

## List of mapped community food organisations

### A. FOOD BANKS

Organisation	Borough
St Martin's Church	Halton
St Berteline & St Christopher's C of E Church	Halton
Brook Chapel	Halton
Christ Church	Halton
Old Police Station	Halton
Bethesda Church	Halton
Crossing Point (Widnes Foodbank - Centre)	Halton
Transform Widnes St Paul's Church	Halton
St Mary's Church	Halton
Runcorn and District Foodbank (Warehouse)	Halton
Widnes Food Bank (Warehouse)	Halton
St George's C Of E Church	Knowsley
Poco Coffee Kirkby	Knowsley
Stockbridge Community Hub	Knowsley
Salvation Army Church	Knowsley
St Dominic R C Church	Knowsley
St Mary's Church	Knowsley
Saint Andrew's Church	Knowsley
Knowsley Foodbank (Warehouse)	Knowsley
Micah Liverpool	Liverpool
Felicity Food Bank	Liverpool
New Beginnings Improving Lives Foodbank	Liverpool
Liverpool Six Community Centre	Liverpool
Flowers Foodbank	Liverpool
Bridge Chapel Centre - South Liverpool foodbank	Liverpool
Noah's Ark Centre - South Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
Frontline Church - South Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool

Deeper Life Church - South Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
St. Mark's Church - South Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
St Gabriel's Church - South Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
Netherley Youth & Community Initiative - South Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
The Salvation Army - North Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
Walton Cornerstone Centre - North Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
St Christophers Church - North Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
Christchurch Anfield Breck - North Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
West Everton Community Council - North Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
Good Shepherd Church - North Liverpool foodbank	Liverpool
All Saints Stoneycroft - North Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
St Pauls Church - North Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
St John the Baptist Church - North Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
Kensington and Fairfield food bank - North Liverpool Foodbank	Liverpool
Merseyside Youth Association Foodbank	Liverpool
ASK Pantry	Liverpool
Page Moss Lane Baptist Church	Liverpool
The Trussell Trust Food Bank	Sefton
Canning Road Evangelical Church	Sefton
St Peter's Church	Sefton
Scarisbrick New Road Baptist Church	Sefton
Ainsdale Methodist Church	Sefton
Southport Salvation Army	Sefton
Lakeside Church	Sefton
L30 Community Centre	Sefton
Waterloo Town Hall (Warehouse)	Sefton
Litherland Youth and Community Centre	Sefton
St Oswald's Church Centre	Sefton
St Leonard's Youth and Community Centre	Sefton
Linacre Methodist Mission	Sefton
Christ Church Bootle	Sefton
Caradoc Mission Community Church	Sefton
Hope Centre	St Helens
The Mount Church	St Helens
St Johns The Baptist Church	St Helens

Newton Le Willows Family & Community Centre	St Helens
St Helens Baptist Church	St Helens
Wonderland Community Centre cic	St Helens
Derbyshire Hill Community Association	St Helens
Teardrops Supporting Your Community	St Helens
Saint Michael and All Angels	St Helens
Wirral Food Bank (Warehouse)	Wirral
Charles Thompson Mission	Wirral
Seacombe Children's Centre	Wirral
St James Church	Wirral
North Birkenhead Development Trust Ltd	Wirral
Christ Church Moreton	Wirral
St Marks Church	Wirral
Salvation Army Charity Shop	Wirral
St Chad Church	Wirral
St Alban's Church	Wirral
St Catherine's Church	Wirral
St Vincent's	Wirral
St David's URC Church	Wirral

## B. FOOD PANTRIES

Organisation	Borough
Community Shop Runcorn	Halton
The Queens Pantry	Halton
The Route	Halton
Palacefields Community Centre	Halton
Halton Royal British Legion	Halton
Maggie O'Neill Resource Centre	Knowsley
Torrington Drive Community Association	Knowsley
Centre 63	Knowsley
Hillside Neighbourhood Centre	Knowsley
Big Help Project - Dovecot Food Club	Knowsley
Friends of Eaton Street Park	Knowsley
Tower Hill Primary Care Centre	Knowsley
Trinity Anglican/Methodist Church	Knowsley

Big Help Food Club Stockbridge Village	Knowsley
St George's C Of E Church	Knowsley
Incredible Edible Knowsley	Knowsley
Al's Arc	Knowsley
Christ Church Norris Green Pantry	Liverpool
St. Georges Everton	Liverpool
St Andrew's Church Clubmoor	Liverpool
Liverpool Six Community Centre	Liverpool
HOPE Pantry - Our House Walton Community Hub	Liverpool
The Florrie Food Union	Liverpool
Walton Vale Community Shop	Liverpool
Community Shop Kirkdale	Liverpool
Kensington Fields Pantry	Liverpool
The Joseph Lappin Centre	Liverpool
Foodbanks Mobile Pantry: St Marys Millennium Centre	Liverpool
Fans Supporting Foodbanks Mobile Pantry: Netherley Youth and Community Initiative	Liverpool
St Aidan's Pantry	Liverpool
Christ Church	Liverpool
Love Wavertree Food Club	Liverpool
The Flowers Food Pantry	Liverpool
Dingle Pantry	Liverpool
Fans Supporting Foodbanks Mobile Pantry: Faz Fed	Liverpool
L15 Food Hub	Liverpool
Foodbanks Mobile Pantry: The Greenhouse Project	Liverpool
St Marys Grassendale Food Pantry	Liverpool
Foodbanks Mobile Pantry: Vauxhall Food Pantry	Liverpool
Bliss Market at Liverpool Lighthouse	Liverpool
St Anne's "Nugent" Pantry	Liverpool
St. Dunstan's Church Community Market	Liverpool
West Everton Pantry	Liverpool
EITC Blue Base Community Pantry	Liverpool
Croxteth Community Family Matters Food Pantry	Liverpool
Dovecot Community Food Partnership Food Pantry	Liverpool
SLH The Marketplace	Liverpool

Holy Trinity Pantry	Liverpool
The Drive Food Club	Liverpool
Lee Valley Millennium Centre Social Supermarket	Liverpool
Everyone's Aigburth	Liverpool
New Beginnings Improving Lives Community Shop	Liverpool
Holy Trinity Church	Sefton
Grace Centre & Church Office	Sefton
Liverpool Road	Sefton
Bishop David Sheppard C of E School	Sefton
Community Grocery Netherton	Sefton
Sefton Community Pantry	Sefton
The Indy Pantry	Sefton
Ykids Pantry	Sefton
Caradoc Mission Community Church	Sefton
Linacre Methodist Mission	Sefton
St Leonards	Sefton
Southport Soup Kitchen	Sefton
St. Matthew's Church	St Helens
St Mark's Haydock	St Helens
St Luke's Church	St Helens
St Helens Parish Church	St Helens
Community Shop Beechwood	Wirral
Wake Up Wallasey	Wirral
Number Seven	Wirral
Inspire Community Cafe	Wirral
The Bedford St Luke's	Wirral
Community Spirit Wirral	Wirral
Community Spirit Wirral 2	Wirral
Little Centre Beechwood	Wirral
The Core Project Bidston Rise	Wirral
Shaftesbury Youth Club	Wirral
NEO Community	Wirral
Involve Northwest	Wirral
Quirky Cafe	Wirral

Egremont Corner social supermarket	Wirral
St Barnabas Church	Wirral
Nightingales Cafe	Wirral
Christ the King Birkenhead Priory Parish	Wirral
Birkenhead Salvation Army	Wirral
Claremount Methodist Church	Wirral
Green Community Shop&Centre Prenton	Wirral
St Peter's R C Church	Wirral
New Brighton Baptist Church	Wirral
Liscard Primary School	Wirral
Egremont Community Centre	Wirral
Poulton Saint Luke's Church	Wirral
Saint Luke's Methodist Church	Wirral
Building Bridges Wirral	Wirral
Hoole Road Hub	Wirral
Seacombe Children's Centre	Wirral
Charlottes Brightside	Wirral
Make It Happen Birkenhead	Wirral

## C. COMMUNITY GROWERS

Organisation	Borough
Old Town Bloom Community Garden	Halton
Wonky Garden - Ditton Community Centre	Halton
Incredible Edible	Knowsley
Meadow Park Community Orchard	Knowsley
Grapes Community Food Garden	Liverpool
Broadgreen Hospital Community Garden	Liverpool
Hope Community Garden	Liverpool
Walton Community Garden	Liverpool
Friends of Springfield Park	Liverpool
Friends of Norris Green Park	Liverpool
GROW Speke	Liverpool
Roots in the City	Liverpool
Croxteth Community Garden	Liverpool
Woolton Micro-Farm	Liverpool

The Rotunda Community Garden	Liverpool
Farm Urban	Liverpool
Squash - Grapes Community Food Garden	Liverpool
Squash Kitchen Garden	Liverpool
Toxteth Seed Library	Liverpool
Toxteth Town Hall Community Garden	Liverpool
La Salle Hotel School and Kitchen Garden CIC	Liverpool
Everton Community Garden	Liverpool
Rice Lane City Farm	Liverpool
Growing Sudley CIC	Liverpool
Bower Road Garden	Liverpool
The Secret Garden	Liverpool
North Park Community Garden	Sefton
Taking Root in Bootle	Sefton
We Grow It	Sefton
Litherland Allotments	Sefton
Netherton Community Garden	Sefton
Community Garden at The Brunny	Sefton
Ford Lane Community Garden	Sefton
Friends of South Park	Sefton
Sexton Avenue Community Allotment Garden	St Helens
Cabbage Hall Community Allotment	St Helens
Friends of Lyme & Wood (Incredible Edible Newton-le-Willows)	St Helens
Incredible Edible - Manor Road	Wirral
Incredible Edible - Elm Grove	Wirral
Incredible Edible - Melrose Hall	Wirral
Incredible Edible - Proctor Road	Wirral
Incredible Edible - Shaw Street	Wirral
Incredible Edible - Market St	Wirral
Incredible Edible - Sandringham Avenue	Wirral
Incredible Edible - Meols Train Station	Wirral
Incredible Edible - Saint Luke's Methodist Church	Wirral
Incredible Edible - First Church of Christ Scientist Hoylake	Wirral
Incredible Edible - Grove Park	Wirral
Incredible Edible - Meols Park	Wirral
Incredible Edible - Queens Park	Wirral

Incredible Edible - Carr Lane	Wirral
Make Hamilton Garden	Wirral
Village Community Garden	Wirral
Port Sunlight Community Allotment	Wirral
Bee Wirral C I C	Wirral
Grosvenor Community Garden	Wirral
Serpentine Community Garden	Wirral
Falkland Road Organic Gardens	Wirral
The Green Hub	Wirral
Earth Moves Cooperative Limited	Wirral
Incredible Edible West Kirby	Wirral
West Kirby Library - Incredible Edible	Wirral
Marine Lake Medical Practice - Incredible Edible	Wirral
West Kirby Concourse - Incredible Edible	Wirral
West Kirby Swimming Pool - Incredible Edible	Wirral
West Kirby Train Station - Incredible Edible	Wirral
Sandlea Gardens - Incredible Edible	Wirral
Coronation Gardens - Incredible Edible	Wirral
Grange Community Park - Incredible Edible	Wirral
Gilroy Nature Park - Incredible Edible	Wirral
Edward Kemp Community Gardens and Growing Area	Wirral
Grow Wellbeing CIC Community Garden	Wirral

## D. OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Organisation	Borough
CHI Community Cafe	Halton
First Step	Knowsley
Flourish And Succeed	Knowsley
Home Start Knowsley	Knowsley
Southdene Community Centre	Knowsley
Swanside Community Centre	Knowsley
Alchemic Kitchen	Knowsley
FoodCycle Liverpool Dingle	Liverpool
FoodCycle Liverpool Old Swan	Liverpool
FoodCycle Bootle	Liverpool
The Whitechapel Centre	Liverpool

Pal Multicultural Centre	Liverpool
Liverpool Arabic Centre	Liverpool
Liverpool Muslim Outreach Society	Liverpool
Scouse in the House	Liverpool
The Liverpool Lighthouse	Liverpool
BayTree Cookery Academy CIC	Liverpool
Everton In The Community Hub	Liverpool
Red Neighbours	Liverpool
Walton Youth & Community Project	Liverpool
Plan Bee Community Coffee Shop	St Helens
Momo's Cafe	St Helens
Fans Supporting Foodbanks - Marine FC	Sefton
Heswall Farmers Market	Wirral
Birkenhead Market	Wirral
Wirral Farmers Market	Wirral
Wallasey Farmers Market	Wirral
West Kirby Farmers' Market	Wirral
Transition Town West Kirby	Wirral
Wirral Homeless CIC	Wirral
Wirral Environmental Network	Wirral
Hope for the Hungry	Wirral

# VS6 – Working together to build a stronger Liverpool City Region

**VS6 is a partnership of support organisations working with the 8,600 voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) groups operating across our Liverpool City Region**

## VCFSE IN LIVERPOOL CITY REGION

- Over 8,600 VCFSE groups supporting communities across the City Region including 5,500 community groups
- 24,000 plus FTE employees working in the sector
- £918m GVA contribution to the City Region
- 180,000 volunteers contributing over 500,000 hours per week<sup>26</sup>

## WHAT DO WE DO?

VS6 work together to champion the vital role our sector does and could play in the future of the City Region, while seeking to shape local policy and implementation for the benefit of our communities.

## HOW DO WE DO THIS?

VCFSE support organisations have collectively engaged with public and private sector partners on a City Region level since 2004. In 2015, we formally launched the VS6 partnership in order to provide a voice, platform and action model for VCFSE participation.

We're focused on driving positive change by connecting the VCFSE sector with our developing city region. Together, we have links to 8,600 organisations across the six boroughs, and aim to support these groups – many integral to our communities –

to collectively influence decision making:

- Offering solutions to some of the mosts to transforming health and well-being
- Providing a single point of contact for the city's VCFSE sector

## CONTACT

**Laura Tilston,**  
**VS6 Research and Policy Officer**  
E: [laura.tilston@vsnw.org.uk](mailto:laura.tilston@vsnw.org.uk)  
W: [www.vs6partnership.org.uk](http://www.vs6partnership.org.uk)  
T: @vs6news