



THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS IN BRITAIN

Food poverty, Food waste and Austerity Retail

Research Report | 2018

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SUMMARY

Despite being the fifth richest country in the world, food poverty in Britain has increased over the last decade.

It has been generally acknowledged that stagnant wage levels, rising food prices, fuel and housing costs have led to worsening income inequalities and food insecurity. This became especially evident from 2010, with the coalition government's extensive welfare reforms of 2013 exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. Food banks have emerged to provide emergency food but food rights advocates argue that in allowing these to proliferate, the State has abandoned its duty to protect the human 'right to food'. This is because food bank users have no exercisable 'right to food' and the food that is supplied to them is often nutritionally inadequate. Moreover, they access food as 'receivers', rather than shoppers, and in a consumerist society this can be seen as a form of social exclusion. In recent years, there has also been intense media and political attention on the amount of food that goes to waste in Britain. The paradox of food waste amidst food poverty in a developed country such as Britain has attracted much public concern.

Within this context **'social supermarkets'** (SSMs), which have been operating in many European countries since the 1980s, have started to emerge in Britain in the last five years. SSMs primarily sell 'food surplus' (and some non-food consumables) that is not considered sellable in mainstream supermarkets for various reasons, such as mislabelling, damaged packaging, excess stock, food deemed aesthetically unacceptable (e.g. blemished fruit and vegetables); and, those near or past their 'sell by' or 'best before' date. Prices are heavily discounted, often symbolic, and the target consumers are those on low-incomes. Social support in various forms (for e.g. skills development, training, debt advice, cooking classes) is also provided. SSMs therefore illustrate a particular type of response to food

poverty and food waste challenges. They are gradually becoming a part of the British urban foodscape and integral to the food practices of those in low-income households in some places. However, unlike the case of charitable initiatives (such as food banks) which have received much academic attention, SSMs have received very little attention by comparison.

This report presents the results of the first systematic investigation into SSMs in Britain. We situate SSMs in the wider context of what we describe as **'austerity retail'** – an umbrella term proposed here to include initiatives with a retail approach that addresses people most affected by austerity. This pilot study focusing on SSMs – of which this report is the outcome – was undertaken through a project titled 'The Emergence of Austerity Retail in Britain: Examining Alternatives to the Food Bank'. It was funded by a British Academy-Leverhulme Small Research Grant and it was carried out between November 2016 and December 2017. Our study was exploratory in nature and we adopted a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews, site-visits, desk-based research, and document and website analyses.





We identified seven initiatives (each with several branches or franchises) in Britain¹ which provide the evidence base for the study. Our research has generated the following key insights:

- 1 There is a growing number of SSMs in Britain since 2013. These are located particularly in areas lying within the 10-20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK. Each of the seven initiatives included in our study has further plans for expansion.
- 2 We suggest a typology of key actors who are involved in the setting up of SSMs in Britain: redistributors (i.e. commercial companies whose main activity is trading surplus food); local organisations with a stake in meeting community needs (such as housing associations); community groups; and sole traders/entrepreneurs. This influences the ways in which SSMs are organised in terms of how they mobilise the resources they depend upon and also how they operate and whom they target.
- 3 The SSMs are a diverse group of initiatives. The key variables include: source of food surplus; type of access provided; pricing strategy; type of food made available; composition of workforce; nature of social support programmes/services offered; and financial strategy.

4 They are all social enterprises with multiple goals:

- an economic goal – to sell or provide access to low cost food and enabling members/customers to save money;
- a social goal – to support users/members through a formalised support programme (such as skills development, training) or informally support 'reconnecting' with food, building relationships and breaking barriers between people;
- an environmental goal – to reduce food waste through facilitating the redistribution of food surplus.

However, there is a degree of variation among the initiatives in the importance placed on each type of goal.

- 5 They distinguish themselves from food banks in three ways: by offering a choice of food; by providing access to low cost food in a retail-like environment; and, providing social support to users/members. This is considered by them as providing more dignity than food banks to those who are food insecure while helping ease the pressure on family budgets.

1. Community Shop in London, Storehouse Pantry in Bolton, Your Local Pantry in Stockport, Neo Community Social Supermarket in Birkenhead, Affordable Foods in Newquay, Nifties in Dover and Sharehouse in Leeds.

SUMMARY

- 6 In most cases, food surplus is described as a 'catalyst' to provide a broad scale, local response for building individual and community resilience. Issues around preventing food surplus generation along the food supply chain and the need for wider socio-economic structural changes to move people out of poverty are however not addressed explicitly.**
- 7 There is a lack of systematic impact assessment of the SSMs. The quality and quantity of evidence for outcomes varies significantly between the initiatives.**
- 8 SSMs are themselves vulnerable to a number of risks and challenges, such as those arising from the complexity of food surplus supply links, the increasing competition for food surplus and its unpredictable nature, heavy reliance on volunteers in some, financial viability, food safety legislation and regulatory standards. These raise questions about sustainability and the positive outcomes the SSMs expect to achieve.**

Our research suggests that SSMs are emerging to fill a 'gap' in the wider context of "austerity Britain", where food poverty/food insecurity is increasing, there is significant redrawing of the welfare state and there is so much political and public attention on redistribution of food surplus generated in the food system. There is an ethical appeal to 'not let anybody go hungry'. At the local level and in the short term, they are a step beyond food banks and help in mitigating the effects of poverty and social vulnerability. The reach and the impact of SSMs on the increasing numbers of people turning to them for food therefore cannot be underestimated.

However, there are tensions and contradictions in the 'normalising' of SSMs and we identify a hazard of masking the problems to which such initiatives are emerging as a response in the first place. Whereas the vision is to reduce

food waste, the SSM model relies on a regular and a sustainable supply of food surplus which undercuts the prevention of food waste as a priority. The social mission is to support people out of food poverty, but the SSM model works closely within a market system and a food industry which itself has been critiqued for creating greater inequalities (through low-wage work for instance). Also, the ability of the SSM model to provide healthy nutritious food is variable and often limited. In many cases, enabling the easy availability of 'cheap' food (especially when it is highly processed and nutrient-deficient) and the impact on already existing health inequalities in vulnerable communities is not being questioned.

Without undermining the passion and commitment which underlies the mission of SSMs to 'do something' about the social challenges facing us today, and in light of the research outcomes of this pilot study, we argue that there is need for a holistic approach to alleviating food poverty which enables key stakeholders – private, public and the third sector – to:

- 1 understand the food system within which SSMs operate, especially linking both ends of the system (consumers and food producers) and question the role played by various intermediaries within the food system (production, storage, transport, processing, distribution, consumption, waste) in whether they are reducing or reproducing vulnerabilities;**
- 2 reflect on the opportunities and constraints of a bottom up approach to food poverty and to food waste, of which the rise of SSMs is a good illustration; and**
- 3 take a coordinated approach so that everybody has access to a healthy diet and there is a progressive realisation of the *right to food and nutrition for all*.**

Given the lack of empirical research on existing SSMs in Britain, and new initiatives in the pipeline which are attracting considerable attention from local and national public sector food advisory bodies, policymakers, the private sector, and the media, our research project is timely and relevant to critically understanding such initiatives. Our findings offer an important starting point for future research and debate on the implications and impacts of SSMs in the longer term as an intervention to counter Britain's vulnerability to hunger.

We identify four avenues for further research:

- 1 The demographics of SSM users/members and the ways in which SSMs impact on their experience of poverty.
- 2 Assessing/evaluating impact of SSMs in relation to their goals. This research would also dig deeper into the system of beliefs and the political and ethical sensibilities of each initiative, and the ways in which they shape objectives, strategies and organisational aspects.
- 3 Exploring the SSM model in relation to health, nutrition and food capabilities and to identify options if food models could be more empowering than the current SSM model.
- 4 Exploring the food surplus supply chain with the aim to devising strategies that tackle the roots of food waste; and also related to this, explore the structural inequalities of the retail sector in ways that would benefit food producers and other food insecure and vulnerable populations across the food chain.

Building on our research results we have three points to propose for further critical debate:

- 1 There are many existing types of SSMs, which are different in many ways. These types are only some of the possible options. We believe it is important that these options are carefully considered, thought-through, and even potentially expanded. How could options like the location, the business model, and the accessibility be considered in a way that fits better the social context, the local needs, and long-term visions for the initiative?
- 2 In thinking about the options, it is critical to consider the food that is made available. Where does it come from? What type of food is it? Thinking about this aspect is important because through this it is possible to challenge the food system that has become deeply problematic when it comes to delivering social justice, health and nutrition, and sustainability. Can we set up social enterprises that build on these principles instead? What can we do in terms of resourcing food that is seasonal, has shorter food miles, higher nutritional value, and produced by paying fair prices to the farmers?
- 3 What about thinking beyond a consumption-based approach to solving the problem of food poverty? Are there opportunities to generate employment within these initiatives? Could there be links to be explored between the local food growers and the food outlets in the city, to employ some of the customers around creating locally sourced and healthy ready meals? Could SSMs become an opportunity to rethink or explore the role of community enterprises in building food knowledge, increasing food access, and raising nutritional standards?

We welcome your feedback.



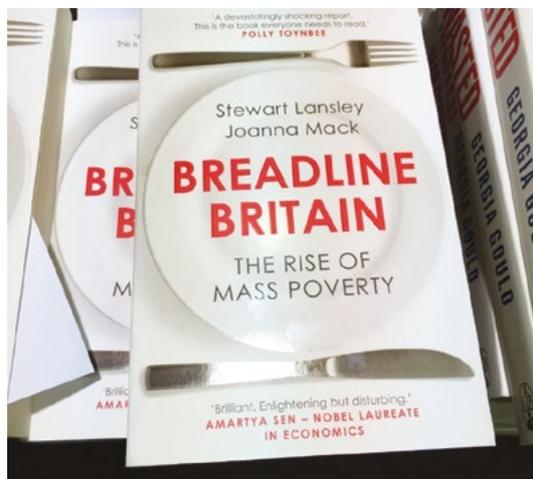
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research context

Food poverty and household food insecurity have been on the rise in Britain (Joseph Rowntree, 2017; The Food Foundation, 2016b; Oxfam, 2013). Based on UN estimates, in the UK as many as 8.4 million people are food insecure, 5.6% of people aged 15 or over reported that they were struggling to get enough food to eat, and a further 4.5% reported that, at least once during the year, they went a full day without anything to eat (The Food Foundation, 2016a). Studies suggest that recent austerity measures have worsened income inequalities and food poverty (Loopstra and Lalor, 2017; Dowler and Lambie-Mumford, 2015; FEC, 2014) with a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups. A recent study suggests that, even amongst the employed, stagnant wages are forcing one in eight workers to skip meals to make ends meet, giving rise to a 'hungry working class' (Syal, 2017).

In the last decade, charitable initiatives delivering emergency food provision, such as **food banks**, have grown in numbers exponentially. While the Trussell Trust, an anti-poverty charity, operates a network of over 420 foodbanks across the UK, a recent mapping project undertaken by the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) revealed that there are hundreds more 'hidden food banks', run by grassroots organisations, taking the total to over 2000 across Britain (Bulman, 2017). According to the latest report from the Trussell Trust², the number of people accessing their services had risen by 7% compared to the previous year. Furthermore, research by Oxfam and the Trussell Trust also shows that 50–60% of people accessing food banks are in 'chronic' food poverty, when an inability to afford food is a long-term problem rather than one triggered by a one-off crisis. Food banks are under pressure because of a growing number of people who are turning to them (Revesz, 2017; Marsh, 2017).

Critics have argued that in allowing food banks to proliferate, the State has failed to protect the human 'right to food' (Lambie-Mumford, 2017; Dowler and Lambie-Mumford, 2015). Users of emergency food provision cannot exercise their 'right to food' and the food that is provided is often nutritionally inadequate. They access food as passive 'receivers' and they are unable to make the same choices that most others are able to make; which, in a consumerist society, could be construed as a form of social exclusion. Within this context, there is increasing attention on alternatives which might offer a more dignified choice to people in food poverty.



At the same time, in recent years, there has been intense media and political attention on the amount of **food that goes to waste** in Britain. This waste is generated at various points in the food supply chain by producers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers. It is estimated that around 10 million tonnes of food is wasted post farm-gate in the UK every year (WRAP, 2017). Although 70% of the food waste is estimated to be generated at the household level, what is striking is that around 51% of the waste generated in the manufacturing sector is considered 'avoidable' (WRAP, 2017: Appendix 1).

2. Report 'Early Warnings: Universal Credit and Foodbanks', published in April 2017.

There is increasing policy attention on this source of food waste. The Food and Drink Material Hierarchy³ recommends prevention of food waste as their most desired outcome, followed by its redistribution for human consumption (if still safe and edible), and then for animal feed, followed by anaerobic digestion, with the last option that of food waste being sent to landfill.

Food surplus, which ultimately becomes food waste if not used, is understood as food originally intended for sale in the mainstream market which has become 'unsellable'. The reasons for this 'unsellability' include: damaged or old packaging; discontinuation of a product; errors in labelling (such as spelling errors or mis-advertised weight); excess stock from a supply error, a sudden change in customer demand (as a result of change in weather) or stock left over from a marketing strategy (e.g. promotional offers, roadshows); those deemed aesthetically unacceptable (e.g. blemished fruit and vegetables); and, those near or past their 'sell by' or 'best before' date. In short, all this food is edible but not considered 'sellable' in mainstream retail market.

Depending on the type of food and sometimes in response to financial incentives, the usual market practices for disposing food surplus have included: sending it to landfill, using it as animal feed, using it for composting, or sending it to anaerobic digestion plants to be converted to renewable energy. For example, through the 'green energy' incentive, food producers benefit from sending the surplus for generating energy. On the other hand, in the case of landfill tax, producers are required to pay a tax according to the volume of waste generated, which is intended to act as a disincentive.

Some of the surplus is also donated by the food industry directly to food banks (as part of corporate social responsibility) and food banks hand it out to the people in need.⁴ Some food surplus, especially those generated at the



higher end of the supply chain, at the level of manufacturers, processors and wholesalers, is donated to or purchased by 'redistributors' – which are of three types. One type is commercial businesses, such as *Company Shop*⁵ – which repackages and sells the surplus at heavily discounted prices to employees of the food industry itself, the emergency services or the NHS. The second type is national charities like *FareShare*⁶, which in turn redistributes it to other charities/initiatives where the food is cooked into meals and served to those in need. The third type is online businesses, such as *Approved Food*⁷ – which sell the surplus online to smaller wholesalers and retailers, who in turn sell to people directly at low prices.

The latest evidence from WRAP⁸ shows that the volume of food surplus derived from the manufacturing and retail sectors and redistributed via charitable and commercial routes had increased to 710,000 tonnes in 2016 from 47,000 tonnes in 2015; it is estimated this could increase fourfold by 2025 (WRAP, 2016). However, the redistribution of food surplus, which is generally undertaken on a voluntary basis in the UK, is not considered the preferred choice by the food industry because of costs in staff time, training, storage, transportation, and food safety risks (Demos, 2015).

Since 2013, new initiatives alternative to charities and to profit-maximising private enterprises have emerged in Britain. Among these are '**social supermarkets**' (SSMs). The general understanding is that they acquire food surplus from the food industry and sell it at heavily discounted prices to low-income consumers. They also provide social support programmes to their users/members. They are, uniformly, social enterprises.

3. See glossary.

4. 90% of supplies to food banks however come from the public (The Trussell Trust).

5. Company Shop is the largest redistributor in the UK (<https://www.companyshop.co.uk/>)

6. <http://fareshare.org.uk/>

7. <https://www.approvedfood.co.uk/>

8. See glossary.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.2 Research aim and objectives

In contrast to charitable and emergency food provision in the UK which has received considerable attention in academic literature (see for example, Lambie-Mumford, 2017; Loopstra et al., 2015; Garthwaite et al., 2015; Dowler and Lambie-Mumford, 2014), so far there has been no systematic attention paid to SSMs. We have situated SSMs within our broader research interest in **'austerity retail'** – an umbrella term we are proposing here to describe various retail initiatives targeted at those most affected by austerity, and which focus on food sales. We consider the **'social supermarket'**, which is the focus of this pilot study, to be a form of austerity retail.

The current public discourse on SSMs has been dominated by the ethical appeal of 'not letting anybody go hungry, when there is so much food going to waste' and using food surplus to feed the hungry. However, an uncritical stance leading to the institutionalisation of such a response runs the risk of masking the problems to which such initiatives are emerging as a response, and also limiting the search for more optimal solutions. It is imperative that we critically engage with this new phenomenon by situating it within the

wider socio-economic-political context so that we have a better understanding of the nature of such a response in terms of its underlying vision, the objectives, the key actors, the practices, and outcomes for food poverty and food waste reduction in Britain.

The aim of the study was to undertake the first systematic investigation of the social supermarket (SSM) phenomenon in Britain and identify areas for further research. It had three main objectives:

- **To explore the rise of the SSM model of austerity retail in Britain;**
- **To examine the nature of the SSM response in relation to food poverty and food waste;**
- **To identify avenues for future research.**

1.3 Our approach

Since our study was exploratory in nature, we adopted a qualitative approach to enable us to understand the nature of SSM in detail. It involved semi-structured interviews, site-visits, desk-based research, and document and website analyses. The research was carried out between November 2016 and December 2017.

The first phase of our research consisted of an extensive literature search to identify existing studies and reports on SSMs in Britain and beyond. We came across very few academic studies (e.g. Schneider et al., 2015; Demos, 2015) and those in the mainland European context made limited reference to Britain. In the second phase, we carried out a systematic web search for enterprises/initiatives in Britain that self-described or were reported in the media or in grey literature (documents, reports) as 'social supermarkets' and other possible variants of the term.⁹ This was followed by a web search for community food enterprises that fit into the criteria for a social supermarket but did not describe themselves as such.



Storehouse Pantry (Bolton)



Nifties (Dover)



Nifties (Dover)

We identified seven 'parent' (or main) initiatives, each having one or more branches or franchisees across different locations in Britain. These became the empirical case studies for our research. We conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with key people engaged with the initiatives – our respondents were either the founders or holders of a key managerial role. Additional interviews were held with two key stakeholders, and one with a community food initiative working on 'alternative' principles of local food sourcing to give us some insight into a different retail approach.¹⁰

The aim was to get the perspectives of the SSMs on how they describe their own initiatives, the motivation, the vision, an overview of their operation, the issues and challenges they face, and their future plans. We also asked them to discuss their initiative in the wider socio-economic-political context in Britain.

We conducted ten interviews – each lasting between 1-2 hours. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed using NVivo to identify common themes. We carried out site-visits to all but one of the initiatives, when they were open to consumers, and we were given a full tour of their premises which provided us with observational data and the opportunity to take photographs to complement the interviews.

During the course of the project, the initiatives that participated in our study expressed a willingness to learn about each other and to explore opportunities for networking and identifying best practices. Other key stakeholders whom we interviewed, plus policy makers and researchers with whom we had

informal conversations, expressed a similar interest in learning about the different initiatives and exploring opportunities for developing a more coordinated approach to food poverty. We integrated this aspect into our project in two ways. First we held a **workshop** at the end of the project period which brought together the research participants and key stakeholders, including other researchers working in the area of food poverty and food waste. This generated useful insights for our research and facilitated a sharing of experiences between the different stakeholders. Secondly, we set up a **project website** (www.austerityretail.com) intended to provide a forum for relationship building among the initiatives and other stakeholders. It is hoped that this website will provide a platform which will facilitate mutual learning and also collectively help in identifying research priorities.

1.4 Report Structure

The remaining part of this report is structured as follows: in section 2 we unpack the key features of the social supermarket as a retail and social enterprise model, and track its emergence in Britain, presenting the different types we have encountered in our research. In section 3 we discuss the findings of the empirical part of our research under three key themes – provision of food, beyond food (or social support), and reduction in food waste. Section 4 illustrates the risks and challenges to the SSM model from the perspective of each initiative. In the concluding section, we examine tensions and contradictions in the SSM model in light of the research results and a critical analysis of international literature, and suggest avenues for further research.

9. Such as community supermarkets, community stores, social stores, etc.

10. Two key stakeholders (FareShare West Midlands; Feeding Britain) and food retail initiative ('hiSbe') in Brighton. We contacted another key stakeholder, WRAP, but could not interview them. Nonetheless, we drew on their reports available on their website.

2.0 EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS (SSMs) IN BRITAIN

2.1 The SSM Model

Although SSMs have emerged only recently in Britain, according to Holweg and Lienbacher (2016) SSMs have been operating in many mainland European countries, emerging first in France in the late 1980s. They are known differently in different countries, such as solidarity stores; social markets (Sozialmärkte) as in Germany (Schneider et al., 2015); social stores (épiceries sociales) as in France; 'last minute markets' as in Italy (Holweg and Lienbacher, 2011). They sell food (and non-food consumables) not sellable in mainstream supermarkets because of mislabelling, damage or being deemed excess stock. The goods sold are referred to as 'surplus', and they are sold to low-income households at heavily discounted prices. In addition to retail offerings, they also offer social support to their customers, accessed by those on low-income; thus, described as "part discount grocer, part social service agency" (Graslie, 2013). A simplified representation of the SSM model is illustrated in Figure 2.1. It shows the two main elements - redistribution of food surplus (that is, the flow of food surplus which may arise along any part of the food supply chain to the SSM); and the consumption of food surplus together with provision of social

support by the SSM directed at consumers. The illustration also shows the generation of food waste along the food supply and SSM chain as well as at the consumption end.

Since the economic downturn in 2008, the SSM model has spread across the continent. It is estimated that in total there are now more than 1,000 stores in Europe, notably in France, Austria, Belgium, Spain, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Italy, Romania and Switzerland (Schneider et al., 2015, Holweg and Lienbacher 2011). In Austria, for example, the largest chain of such supermarkets is SOMA, with 33 branches, supporting 40,000 members; in France, the ANDES network, comprising of around 500 stores, supports 120,000 to 140,000 members per year (Schneider et al., 2015).

In the mainland European context, the SSM has been welcomed as a "social innovation" meeting "unfulfilled social needs" with "triple benefits" – social, environmental and economic (Schneider et al., 2015: 4; Holweg and Lienbacher, 2016, 2011; Holweg et al., 2010). It is seen as a solution-focused approach to the social problems of food poverty and food waste, that is, using food surplus to meet the social needs of those who need help the most. SSMs have thus been described as a 'win-win-win' solution

Figure 2.1: Simplified representation of SSM model



– for the manufacturers and retailers to divert surplus to customers who can save on their grocery bills; for the environment as less food ends up in landfills; and for the state/society as it reduces welfare costs (Graslie, 2013). Across the continent, the majority of SSMs are run by non-profit organisations; a few are private limited companies which run on non-profit basis (Holweg and Lienbacher, 2011).

There is no one single definition of a SSM, but from the different definitions offered in literature based on country studies in Europe, we have identified a set of common key features (see Box 2.1).

Box 2.1

SSMs in Europe – common features

- Food surplus received as donations from food industry partners (in very few cases, some of the food is purchased but a very small proportion)
- Food surplus sold to consumers at symbolic prices
- Consumers from low-income groups
- Controlled-access
- Social support (café area, training, personal development, cooking classes, etc.)
- Non-profit business model

In our literature search on studies from outside Europe, we did not come across any reference to the term 'social supermarket' as used in the European context. A handful of media reports (Clark, 2014) suggest that the concept is being 'imported' from Europe into the US and Asia, but there is no clear picture of whether and in which forms social supermarkets have emerged there. What seems clear is that SSMs are close to 'salvage grocery stores'¹¹ which have existed in the US since at least the 1960s. (Pyke, 2014; Arumugam, 2012). as far as sourcing and selling food surplus is concerned, but these are private and commercial enterprises with no social support programmes.

11. See glossary.

12. <http://www.neocommunitycafe.org.uk/>

13. <http://dontwastethetaste.co.uk/>



2.2 SSMs in Britain

Britain's pilot social supermarket store was launched in December 2013, in Goldthorpe, a former mining town in south Yorkshire, called *Community Shop*. It is described as the first SSM in the UK (*Community Shop* website; Smithers, 2013; Coccozza, 2013). *Community Shop* is a sister company of *Company Shop* which is Britain's largest commercial redistributor of surplus food and goods. Since 2013, *Company Shop* has opened *Community Shops* in West Norwood (London), Athersley (Barnsley) and Grimsby (North East Lincolnshire).

In the last five years, other initiatives describing themselves as SSMs have opened: *Neo Community Social Supermarket* in Birkenhead (Wirral)¹² which started operating in 2016; and, *Nifties* in Dover (Kent)¹³, described as the first SSM in Dover which was launched in June 2016.

A preliminary analysis of the features of these three self-described SSMs, derived primarily from their website content, revealed that they are not only different from each other, but also from those in the mainland European context, in two important ways:

- **they source food surplus in a different way:** they purchase food surplus at a reduced cost (either directly from suppliers or by paying a membership/subscription fee for receiving surplus from redistributors). This is in contrast to SSMs in mainland Europe which receive free donations of surplus from industry partners in the food supply chain. The purchase of items is considered as going against their principle to only sell what is available as surplus products (Holweg et al., 2010; Holweg and Leinbacher, 2016).

2.0 EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS (SSMs) IN BRITAIN



Storehouse Pantry (Bolton)

- **they provide access in a different way:** they do not operate with an exclusively controlled access as in the case of most SSMs in mainland Europe,¹⁴ instead, two of them are open to everyone.

It is clear that what is understood as a SSM can vary across organisations and countries. This was corroborated by further desk research wherein we identified four other retail initiatives in Britain that have features of the SSM model even though they do not describe themselves as such. These are *Storehouse Pantry* in Bolton, *Your Local Pantry* in Stockport, *Affordable Foods* in Cornwall and *Sharehouse* in Leeds.

Combining the features of these seven initiatives found in Britain, we describe the SSM model in Britain with features as described in Box 2.2.

The seven initiatives which illustrate the SSM model and are included in our study are briefly introduced in Table 2.1.

Box 2.2 The SSM model in Britain

- Food surplus is purchased or received as donations or intercepted or as a mix of these
- Access to food is controlled or open
- Food surplus is sold at symbolic prices (although some of it may be available for free, but not all of it)
- Formalised or informal social support (kitchen/café area, skills training, personal development, cooking classes, etc.) is provided
- The business model is non-profit with a social mission (so excludes low price/discount supermarkets/retailers, e.g. ALDI, LIDL, easyFoodstore, and also online discounters)
- The SSM does not include those selling only non-food items or prepared meals/hot food using food surplus (e.g. Cafes, Meals on Wheels)



Community Shop (London)

14. However, this may be changing. *WeFood* in Denmark described as the first food waste supermarket in Denmark, which opened in February 2016, has open access. It was opened by a charity. It receives donations from food industry partners. It depends on volunteers (See Payton, 2016a).

Table 2.1: Social Supermarkets in our study

NAME OF INITIATIVE	LOCATION (FIRST LAUNCHED IN)	OTHER LOCATIONS/ FRANCHISES (UP TO OCT 2017)	MEDIA HEADLINES
Community Shop (CS)	Goldthorpe (Dec 2013)	West Norwood, Athersley, Grimsby	"first social supermarket in the UK"
Storehouse Pantry (SP)	Johnson Fold Estate, Bolton (Oct 2015)	New Bury UCAN Centre, Farnworth, Bolton	
Your Local Pantry (YLP) (Stockport Homes Group)	Penny Lane, Stockport (Aug 2013)	Brinnington, Mottram Street; Bridgehall (Stockport)	"community food clubs"
Nifties (NF)	Dover (April 2016)	Ramsgate (Dover)	"first social supermarket in Dover" "10p shop"
Affordable Foods (AF)	Newquay (Cornwall) (June 2015)	Franchises – St. Austell, Truro, Bodmin, Bude, Holsworthy, Stoke-on-Trent, Leicester	"25p shop"
Neo Community Social Supermarket (NC)	Birkenhead (Wirral) (2016)		
Sharehouse (SH) (part of Real Junk Food Project)	Pudsey (Leeds) (Sept 2016)	Sheffield, Birmingham	"first food waste supermarket"

As we can see from Table 2.1, except for *Neo Community SSM*, the other initiatives have opened stores or franchises in different locations. We look at their growth and locations next.

2.3 SSM Growth

Between 2013, when the first SSM was launched in Goldthorpe, and 2017, when we undertook our survey of SSMs in Britain, SSMs have grown in number and across Britain geographically, see Figure 2.2.

The SSMs are located in areas lying within the 10-20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK (according to the Indices of Deprivation 2015)¹⁵ - areas with limited access to mainstream shops, limited access to fresh fruit and vegetables, multiple health issues, a high proportion of people on benefits or in low paid work.

At the time of writing this report, each of the seven 'parent' initiatives in our study has further plans for expansion. Up to five *Community Shops* are planned to open in the Liverpool region before 2020. *Your Local Pantry* is planning to open its fifth store. It has helped

housing associations set up 20-25 similar pantry initiatives across Manchester. It has plans to develop a social franchise to open pantries nationally, in partnership with Church Action on Poverty. *Affordable Foods* also has more franchises in the pipeline and *Sharehouse* has further plans for expansion. There will be three new SSMs soon in Birkenhead, Coventry, Cheshire West and Chester.¹⁶

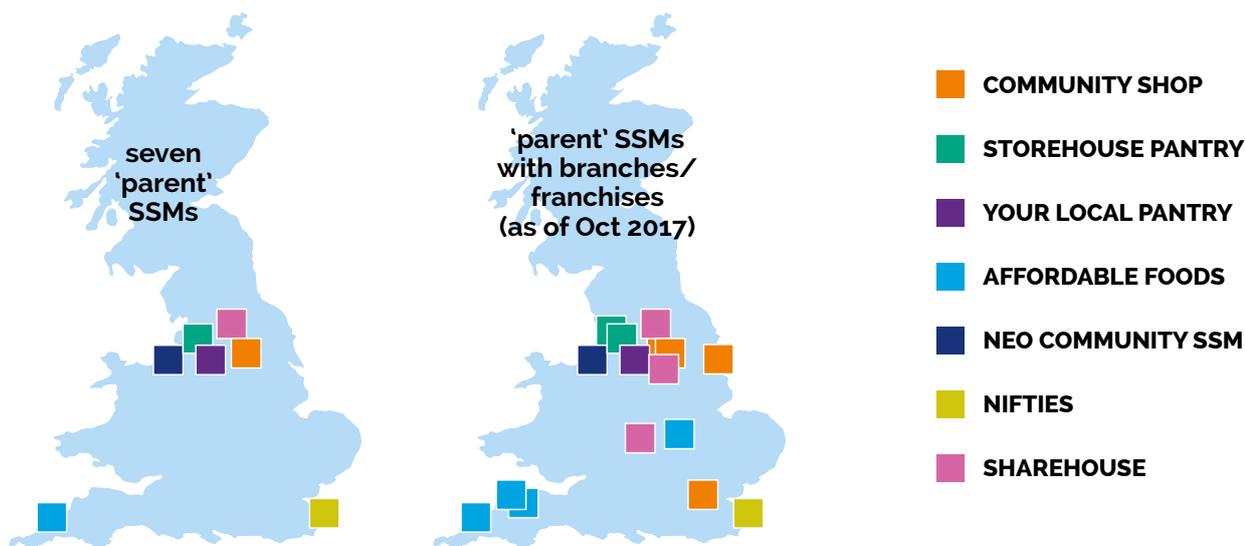
Media reports (e.g. Kelsey, 2016) describe plans for the first SSM in Wales to be set up in a former chapel in Abertillery as part of the Abertillery Town Centre Regeneration Programme involving a partnership between the Coalfields Regeneration Trust Wales (CRT Wales) and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. Its operational structure draws on the '*Community Shop*' type of SSM. However, there has been no report on the progress made. BethPH (2015) describes a pilot "pop up social supermarket" in Leytonstone (London) which was a joint enterprise between the Best Before Project and Forest Recycling Project. It was set up in a disused police station for two months and food surplus from supermarkets like Tesco, M&S

15. <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/indices-of-deprivation>

16. <https://www.feedingbritain.org/citizens-supermarkets>

2.0 EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS (SSMs) IN BRITAIN

Figure 2.2: Social Supermarkets in Britain (2013 – 2017)



and Sainsbury's was sold for a small donation decided by the customer. It was run on the basis of 'pay-as-you feel' and it was open to everyone, on similar principles as *Sharehouse* in our study. SSMs are also set to open in February 2018 in Northern Ireland, with community organisations operating 5 stores in Londonderry, Belfast, Coleraine, Lisburn and Strabane.¹⁷

One justification for the increasing number of SSMs, as described by one of the initiatives in our study, is "a growing market on both sides", that is, more food surplus is available for redistribution and more people are looking to save money on food. This was also expressed by the other SSMs (to some extent) especially in terms of the shifts taking place in the wider socio-economic-political context – particularly economic austerity and welfare reforms on the one hand, and increasing policy and public attention on redistributing existing food surplus to the hungry on the other.

The impact of **economic austerity measures** since 2010, and the coalition government's

intensified **welfare reforms** of 2013, leading to more and more people living in food poverty or being pushed to the edge of it, has been clearly illustrated by a spate of recent studies (JRF, 2017; Loopstra et al., 2015; Oxfam, 2013). For many, stagnating wage levels, the rise of exploitative employment, the freezing of welfare benefits rates and rises in the costs of essential items such as energy and food, have effectively led to a 'cost-of-living crisis'. A Defra¹⁸ study in 2013 found that food had become over 20% less affordable for those living in the lowest income decile in the UK compared to 2003 (Defra, 2014). A survey by Shelter (2013), the national housing charity, found people had to cut back on food in order to meet their housing costs. Even within the mainstream food market, reports suggest that the market sales by supermarket discounters like ALDI and LIDL have increased relative to the top 5 supermarkets in the UK (Butler, 2017b). 'Affordability' has thus become increasingly important to making food choices and more and more people are seeking ways to save money on food.

17. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-foyle-west-42719144>

18. Defra is the UK government's Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

On the 'supply' side, redistribution of food surplus is actively supported by a coordinated **food waste policy**, extending across EU boundaries through local 'zero waste' commitments. It is driven by the **EU Waste Framework Directive**¹⁹ which prioritises redistribution of edible food surplus after prevention. The UK government supports voluntary initiatives, rather than a regulatory approach, to deliver food waste reductions. Such voluntary initiatives in the UK are coordinated primarily by WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) supported by funding from Defra, the devolved administrations and the EU. The **Courtauld Commitments** (CC2025), for example, are aimed at doubling the amount of surplus food redistributed by the manufacturing and retail sectors in the UK by 2020 against a 2015 baseline.²⁰ At the time of writing, WRAP has also launched a 'Food Waste Reduction Fund' to support the redistribution of quality surplus food to people in need throughout England.²¹

The **All Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger**,²² in its successive reports, has also endorsed actions to redistribute food surplus to fight food poverty and the key role that social supermarkets can play in improving access to affordable food while delivering wide-ranging support to those in need (APPG, 2014, 2015). This has been carried forward by **Feeding Britain**²³ as one of their strategic priorities while, simultaneously,

facilitating various local pilot projects intent on eliminating hunger in Britain.

It is within this wider context of austerity conditions (welfare reforms, budget cuts, rising food prices, rising food poverty), and a supportive food waste policy towards food surplus redistribution, that SSMs are emerging in Britain as a form of response to food poverty and food waste challenges that go beyond emergency provision.

2.4 SSMs as Social Enterprises (SEs)

The SSMs in our study described themselves as social enterprises (SEs). SEs are commonly understood as organisations driven by a social mission, utilising business skills to create profits that are re-invested into achieving their social goals. There is considerable evidence from across countries and across different sectors that SEs emerge to address social challenges and fill a 'gap' not addressed by the market or the State (GEM, 2017; Vickers, 2010). In the UK, SEs operate in almost every industry from health and social care to renewable energy, from retail to recycling, from employment to sport, from housing to education (Allinson et al., 2011). The stated vision and mission(s) of each of the initiatives in our study, shown in Table 2.2, provide key insights into the nature of their enterprise.



Neo Community Social Supermarket (Birkenhead)



Neo Community Social Supermarket (Birkenhead)

19. <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/>

20. Courtauld 2025 currently has over 120 signatories which represent more than 93% of the grocery market, but many manufacturers are not signatories. [See glossary]

21. <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/surplus-food-redistribution-wrap%E2%80%99s-work>

22. See glossary.

23. Feeding Britain is an independent charity, established by members of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger, in Oct 2015, to implement the recommendations set out in successive APPG reports. See glossary.

2.0 EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS (SSMs) IN BRITAIN

Table 2.2: Vision and mission(s) of SSMs in the study

NAME OF INITIATIVE	MANIFESTO	VISION	MISSION(S)
Community Shop (CS)	'more than just food' 'be the best version of you'	"to build more confident individuals and communities through food"	use food to build communities with the will and skills to succeed support individuals to drive positive change in their communities collaborate with partners to achieve the best results together
Storehouse Pantry (SP)	'food is our common ground'	"to reach all those communities, all those particular geographic locations where there are profound issues of poverty, isolation and deprivation"	provide access to food and a range of support services
Your Local Pantry (YLP)		"to help local residents save money on their food bills; to provide volunteering and training opportunities" (website)	provide access to food and a range of support services
Neo Community Social Supermarket (NC)		to tackle food waste, food poverty and social isolation	provide access to food on pay-as-you-feel basis use food to build communities
Sharehouse (SH) (part of The Real Junk Food Project, TRFJP)	'feed bellies, not bins' (TRFJP)	to fight food waste; to enable social integration	provide access to food surplus on pay-as-you-feel basis divert edible food from going to landfill engage disadvantaged people as volunteers
Nifties (NF)	'don't waste the taste'	"to tackle food poverty and reduce the inexcusable amounts of food waste in the UK" (Facebook)	sell low cost food and help customers save money on food bills
Affordable Foods (AF)		to stop food waste and support local community	sell low cost food and help customers save money on food bills



Your Local Pantry (Stockport)

The manifesto and vision of each of the initiatives describe a focus on creating 'social value' from surplus food with the intent of addressing the challenges of food poverty and food waste. Their mission(s) state the different ways in which they seek to translate their vision into practice. These include:

- using food to build communities with the will and skills to succeed
- supporting individuals to drive positive change in their communities
- collaborating with partners to achieve the best results together
- providing access to food
- providing support services
- providing low cost food
- diverting edible food from going to landfill
- engaging disadvantaged people as volunteers

These reveal multiple goals, which is characteristic of social enterprises. Three types of goals can be distinguished:

- **an economic goal** – to sell or provide access to low cost food and enabling members/customers to save money
- **a social goal** - to support members/users address some of the underlying issues through formalised support programmes or informal support, building relationships and reconnecting with food
- **an environmental goal** – to reduce food waste through facilitating the 'redistribution of food surplus'

These three goals are typical of SSMs, and as described earlier (section 2.1), these are interconnected and intrinsic to the SSM model. However, as we will see, there is a degree of variation among the initiatives in the importance placed on each type of goal. Furthermore, the ethos, the broader links to the food industry, and the will to adapt to the needs of the local community shapes the different forms that SSMs take.

2.5 Typology of key actors

Each initiative in our study described its goals in relation to how it was founded and the underlying motivation behind it. This conforms to literature which suggests that social enterprises come into being, expand or scale down, as a direct response to the aspirations and reactions of the actors involved within the contexts they are in and their beliefs and motivations (Seanor and Meaton, 2008).

We suggest a typology of key actors who are involved in the setting up of SSMs in Britain. They can be broadly grouped under four types:

- **redistributors, or commercial companies whose main activity is trading surplus food**
- **local organisations with a stake in meeting community needs**
- **community groups**
- **sole traders/entrepreneurs**

Table 2.3 shows how these key actors have been operating and in which social supermarket they have a key role.

2.0 EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS (SSMs) IN BRITAIN

Table 2.3: Key actors and SSMs in the study

KEY ACTORS	APPROACH TO STARTING SSM	SSMs IN BRITAIN
Redistributor	predominantly planned and supported by redistributor	Community Shop
Local organisations	planned and delivered by multiple local organisations (social landlords, churches, charities)	Storehouse Pantry Your Local Pantry
Community groups	planned and delivered by local community members	Neo Community Social Supermarket Sharehouse
Trader/Entrepreneur	planned and delivered by individual	Affordable Foods Nifties

Redistributor as key actor

The *Community Shop* started as an initiative backed by Company Shop, the largest redistributor in the UK. It was Company Shop's well established infrastructure and experience in redistribution of food surplus, built on long-term partnerships with the food industry, that led to the setting up of *Community Shop* as a social enterprise at the local level. Company Shop purchases food surplus from the food industry at a nominal cost, and organises its storage and distribution to different *Community Shop* stores. In other words, the initiative operates on a 'hub and spoke model' with the Company Shop as the 'hub' and the *Community Shops* as the 'spokes'.

As stated on its website,

... we (Company Shop) work hard with retailers, brands, producers, manufacturers and growers to stop good going to waste, and make redistribution simple.... Our model of redistribution provides significant benefits for customers, clients, and the environment.

It describes itself as following a structured approach with the primary aim of providing a redistribution solution, enabling surpluses to be

managed and prevented from going to waste; and, a channelling of the income generated into specific social outcomes.

In this approach, the SSM is predominantly planned and delivered by the redistributor – in terms of the business model, accessibility, identifying location, the beneficiaries, food pricing, and other key variables (described later in section 3.0).

Local organisations as key actor

The two pantries²⁴ (*Storehouse Pantry* and *Your Local Pantry*) reflect an approach built on partnership between multiple agencies with a stake in the locality – aligning their aims and objectives to address socio-economic needs in their local community. *Storehouse Pantry* in Bolton was launched in 2015. It is a partnership between Urban Outreach²⁵ driven by its person-centred approach to support the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in Bolton; St Peter's Church Halliwell, with its aim of reaching out into the community; and Bolton at Home, a Registered Social Landlord (RSL)²⁶ with the intention of providing support to their vulnerable tenants. Their shared aim is to make

24. Note that in the US, 'food pantry' refers to where people come to pick up food parcels; 'food pantry' gets its stock from a centralised 'food bank', so pantry in the US context is part of an emergency food system (see Poppendieck, 1998); in Canada, 'food pantry' and 'food bank' are used interchangeably (see Riches, 1997).

25. Urban Outreach is a Christian charity based in Bolton.

a difference in their local neighbourhood through improving people's lives, using food surplus as a local catalyst. In describing their work, *Storehouse Pantry* stated:

...it's not a hand out, but it is an arm around the shoulder. So, to some people, we talk about poverty, but we also talk about emotional distress, emotional...the emotive issues that affect people... and there is a crossover, because mental health has an impact on poverty, and mental health has an impact on our sense of wellbeing, our ability to thrive in life and to have the skills to thrive in life. So, we're trying to cover far more than just address the raw need for food or for a particular support to help with debt. It's a broader support. (SP)

Similarly, *Your Local Pantry* in Stockport is an initiative of Stockport Homes Group, also a RSL who manage the housing stock owned by Stockport Council. The aim was to support the increasing numbers of its tenants who were struggling in the aftermath of the welfare reforms in 2013 and in a way that "provided dignity and choice" and made them different from food banks.

SSMs as illustrated by these two pantries are primarily planned and delivered by local organisations - the RSLs, churches, charities - identifying the location (focusing on strategic factors such as "priority neighbourhoods"), and deciding on membership criteria, and operational structure. Each is managed by a multi-agency/multi-stakeholder board (which includes also volunteers and members) to oversee and coordinate the operation of the pantries in its area. In this approach, therefore, SSM is planned and delivered by a partnership between multiple local organisations with a stake in the local community.

Community groups as key actor

Neo Community Social Supermarket reflects an approach built on community mobilisation. This SSM was established as a direct result of co-operation between community members/workers drawing on the experience of earlier community projects around providing food, and a history of working with local communities and their needs.

...it's about building a community. So, the emphasis is on food and making sure no one is hungry in the community, but also about knowing each other... We are not there to solve crisis like a food bank would... It's to stop people getting to that crisis point... The people tell us what they want and we make it happen. And they make it happen with us, so it's not that we go okay, and we'll go and do it all. (NC)

In the case of *Sharehouse*, it is a spin-off from the Real Junk Food Project.²⁷ It started as part of an environmental campaign and mobilisation of community around the vision of challenging food waste.

In this approach, the SSM is planned and delivered by local members in a community working together toward achieving some kind of change, social and/or environmental.

Trader/Entrepreneur as key actor

Affordable Foods in Newquay (Cornwall) and *Nifties* in Dover (Kent) are self-entrepreneurial initiatives, launched by the founders to earn a livelihood. In both cases, given their prior personal experience of using food banks and the 'stigma' attached to it, the entrepreneurs described their motivation also in terms of helping the local community have access to low cost food in a retail-like environment which was "more dignified" than going to food banks. They also described their aim to help 'regenerate' local economy and take pressure off food banks.

... I've got the opportunity, not only to feed families ... I've now got the opportunity to help local businesses in an area that's struggling, to save them money, which means in the long run, that helps jobs, the money raised from that goes back into this to go even further. (NF)

...I wanted to take the pressure off the food banks and I also wanted to set up a business which would not only benefit myself but the whole community, and that's when it all started. (AF)

In this approach, the SSM is entirely planned and delivered by the founders who are social entrepreneurs. It takes the form of single-stakeholder enterprises.

26. See glossary.

27. A global network of Pay As You Feel "concept" - which includes cafes, outside catering, events, and Fuel For School programmes, which divert surplus edible food destined for waste and make it into meals for human consumption (<http://therealjunkfoodproject.org/>)

3.0 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SSMs IN BRITAIN

From an organisational perspective, we found there are differences between the SSMs in our study in terms of how they operate and how they mobilise the resources they depend upon in relation to key variables such as:

- source of food surplus
- how it provides access to the food and to whom
- its pricing strategy
- type of food
- workforce
- social support programmes/services
- finances

The findings are presented in Table 3.1 below.

These findings show that there are similarities across the SSMs but also significant differences

in the way they operate. More importantly, they also suggest how these features shape the outcomes and impacts of these initiatives. In understanding these different modus operandi, we structured our findings under three key dimensions as described below. These illustrate the three interconnected ways in which the SSM model impacts on food poverty and food waste:

- Provision of food
- Beyond food...
- Reducing food waste

3.1 Provision of food

The provision of low cost food surplus lies at the core of the SSM model. There are different aspects to this unifying characteristic across the initiatives, which we examine next.

Table 3.1: Key variables for SSMs in Britain

DRIVEN BY	REDISTRIBUTOR	LOCAL ORGANISATION(S)	COMMUNITY GROUPS	TRADER/ ENTREPRENEUR
SSM	Community Shop	Storehouse Pantry, Your Local Pantry	Neo Community SSM, Sharehouse	Affordable Foods, Nifties
Source of food surplus	primarily from Company Shop	diverse sources (primarily from FareShare, donations, farmers, allotments) + bulk-buying of missing essential items from local market	diverse sources (from FareShare, donations, farmers, allotments)	diverse sources (from FareShare, wholesalers, retailers)
Access to food	controlled access		open to all	
Prices	discounted	included in membership subscription	pay-as-you-feel	discounted
Type of Food	ranges from limited products (no meat/dairy/frozen) to a wide range (including fresh produce)			
Workforce	paid staff only	a mix of paid staff and volunteers		self-employed
Social programmes	a range of support programmes – on-site; off-site			no direct/explicit social programmes
Finances	self-sustaining and a mix of income streams – grants, fund-raising			

3.1.1 Sourcing of food surplus

The SSMs in our study source food surplus from a range of suppliers, ranging from being primarily dependent on one food redistributor to an eclectic mix of various sources. Understanding where the food comes from is very important because the type and nature of the food supply impacts greatly on other aspects of the social supermarket. For example, it may put restrictions on geographical location, membership, price and/or the range of available food. The choice of food supplier and the contractual conditions agreed between the supplier and the SSM (i.e. purchase versus donation or interception, profit margin, exclusivity of contract, and so on) are also an indicator of the ethical stance towards the food system. We highlight below an overview of the different types of food sourcing.

The *Community Shop* sources its stock primarily from its sister company, *Company Shop*, which is the largest commercial redistributor of surplus food and goods in the UK. *Company Shop* has four centres, located in regions with a dense food manufacturing and processing sector. It purchases food surplus from food industry partners for a nominal payment (usually 10% of recommended retail price). It then redistributes the surplus to its *Community Shops* at different locations using the hub-and-spoke model described earlier (section 2.5). The *Community Shops* also source some food surplus as donations directly from retailers, but this is generally a small fraction. Their primary source is the stock acquired from *Company Shop*, which is then sold in the SSM with a mark-up. It is estimated that on average food obtained from manufacturers for ten pence in the pound is sold for 30 pence in the pound. The profits are reinvested in running social programmes. Given the extensive number of manufacturers and retailers who trade with *Company Shop*, the *Community Shop* is able to stock a wide range of goods (including non-food) in a consistent manner – something not easily achieved by the other SSMs.

FareShare,²⁸ another redistributor, but which operates as a charity, is a primary source of food surplus for all but one of the other six initiatives



in our study. It operates from 20 regional centres across the UK and redistributes food surplus to over 6,700 charities and community groups across the country, amongst which are SSMs. Although there is a degree of variation in how FareShare operates in the different locations, the SSMs in our study pay an annual subscription fee to FareShare in order to receive food surplus from them. They are also required to meet FareShare's guidelines around defacing/removing barcodes on the products (so they could not be resold) and on storage and handling of food. Given its level of operation at the national level and its partnerships with over 500 food companies, from suppliers and manufacturers to retailers, FareShare is able to source a huge amount of food surplus. However, this is estimated to be only 5% of the surplus available in the supply chain.

In addition to the redistributors, other sources of food surplus which SSMs tap into include local supermarkets and wholesalers. In recent years, more and more supermarkets and retailers have also started donating their surplus to SSMs, under their 'zero food waste to landfill' commitments. In the case of *Storehouse Pantry*, for example, in addition to food from FareShare, it obtains surplus directly from local retailers. The food collected by the pantry is stored in a central warehouse, sorted and then distributed to the pantry stores in the different locations. In addition to collecting directly from stores through relationships built over time, apps like FareShare FoodCloud²⁹ are also used, as by *Your Local Pantry*, to collect from local stores.

The wide range of sources of food surplus is particularly evident in the trader-driven type of SSMs. *Affordable Foods* purchase surplus from large distribution centres and warehouses from all over the country, and also most recently from overseas suppliers, as described below:

28. See glossary.

29. See glossary.

3.0 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SSMs IN BRITAIN

...the suppliers are just coming flooding in. They're now contacting me, whereas before I was writing letters, emails and phone calls, and now I've got people even from Europe trying to supply me, asking to work for me, which is really good. (AF)

Although construed as a positive development from the SSM's perspective of ensuring a steady source of food surplus, the entry of overseas suppliers of food surplus to SSMs in Britain also raises questions about the extent and nature of this emerging global food surplus market and its ramifications.

To a limited extent, as in the case of the pantries and *Neo Community Social Supermarket*, some surplus is also obtained from local farmers and from local allotments.

...there's a local Rotary Club in Stockport, for example, which runs allotments and they do donate their surplus produce to us, so in the summer months we are able to get quite a lot of extra fruit and veg from them, which is good for us because it means that we don't have to buy in as much as we would perhaps from the markets because we are able to get it from allotment holders. (YLP)

In the case of *Nifties*, it sources fruits and vegetables occasionally from a local gleaning network.

...if supermarkets reject fruit and vegetables and farmers have got loads of fruit and vegetables which they want nothing to do with, these guys (from the gleaning network) will come in, in their droves as volunteers, harvest all of the goods and donate it to charities, to schools, for free. We work with them to redistribute for free, all of the fruit. Two weeks ago, we had loads of pears off them from Canterbury, and I literally put them in boxes out the front, saying 'free, please help yourself', Half hour, they were gone. We got rid of 200 kilos of pears in half an hour. (NF)

In the case of *Sharehouse*, its stock is mainly derived from donations and interceptions of food surplus from a wide range of sources including supermarkets, restaurants, wholesalers, food banks, allotments, and food photographers. It collects food surplus at times from as many as 80 different sources (including households) a day. Unlike the other SSMs in our study, it does not purchase any surplus.



3.1.2 Type of access

The type and frequency of access to SSMs also vary across the initiatives. The differences are in the existence or absence of a membership restriction, the number of days in which the supermarkets are open, their visibility to/ approachability from the public, the number of visits that the users can make to the premises and the amount that they can take on a daily or weekly basis. However, the fundamental difference across the initiatives is whether access is controlled or open. From this initial exploratory research, this difference seems to be dependent on a number of different reasons:

- **views on how and why cheap food should be provided** (i.e. as a temporary service, with the privilege of low prices, but subject to commitment to a personal development programme);
- **expectations on how the users could use the products** (i.e. selling them in the black market versus personal use);
- **expectation that users will revert to using mainstream retail outlets within a certain timeframe;**
- **knowledge of /expectation about the availability of certain goods in the supply chain and the desire to maintain availability for all the users** (preventing scarcity of certain food in high demand, etc.).

Controlled access, often described as a targeted response, is the approach adopted by the *Community Shop* and the pantries.

In *Community Shop*, access is controlled through membership which is based on certain criteria: (a) people living in a specific local postcode area chosen in line with the government indices of deprivation (b) people living in a household that receives some form of Government income support and (c) those who are motivated to make positive changes in their lives, and want to sign up to their 'Success Plan' which involves individually tailored professional and personal development programmes (*Community Shop* website). The membership runs initially for 6 months and undergoes periodic reviews. Membership, according to the SSM, is intended

to give the users a feeling of ownership. *Community Shop* is open five days of the week throughout the day "to keep it as close to a mainstream supermarket". However, they have certain restrictions on the amount that can be purchased at one time by a member:

...the only limit we put on people is any 6 of 1 identical item per day, so if you wanted to buy 8 jars of Heinz pasta sauce, you could buy 6 one day and 2 the next and the reason we do that is just to protect the food from a) ending up on the black market and b) to make sure there's enough to go round for everybody. (CS)

In both the pantries, access is also controlled. In this case, it is through a membership fee of £2.50 for once a week visit. They are kept open once/ twice a week for a certain number of hours.

In *Your Local Pantry*, membership is open to the tenants of 'Stockport Homes Group', a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) which launched the initiative. It is also open to non-tenants who live within a specific postcode (in "priority neighbourhoods" according to the government's indices of multiple deprivation) and/or have been referred by a partner agency and meet certain criteria of need. The membership generally ranges from 6 weeks to 6 months and periodic reviews are held, but membership could be potentially indefinite as the pantry describes itself as a community initiative, and not a response to crises.

...the membership is indefinite really, so it's until somebody decides that they either don't need to use the project any more, or their circumstances change; we do tend to find there's a bit of a natural turnover really in terms of members because it might be that people have gone into employment, or, something else has changed for them but we don't, we don't apply a time limit to it because like I say, it's a community initiative, rather than a crisis thing. (YLP)

Similarly, in *Storehouse Pantry* the membership is open to tenants of 'Bolton at Home', also a RSL. The membership is based on "light touch criteria" around whether or not prospective members are struggling with energy bills or rental payments, or multiple debts or any kind of financial issue that they need help with. As described by the SSM:

3.0 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SSMs IN BRITAIN

...we don't ask too many details because we don't want to kind of create a stigma around it; I think that's one of the things that we really like to kind of separate ourselves away from things like food banks, that it's not a crisis provision, it's here for people who need a little bit of extra help to manage their finances and we also ask those questions around criteria because we want to know if we can help people. (YLP)

With the membership therefore, there is an expectation that where the pantry offers additional support (for example, skills, training, etc.), the members will engage with the service providers. *Your Local Pantry* explained that if the members did not visit the pantry for 3 weeks, they were contacted and if they didn't need the membership, it was offered to somebody else. Both the pantries described a regular turnover of memberships.

Access to food is controlled in the pantries through the use of color-coded categories depending on the demand and to ensure a fair distribution. During each visit, a member/user can only take a certain number of goods from each of the different categories. As described below:

...they would get a red item which would be the most expensive, so they get 1 of them, 2 blues, 3 greens and 4 yellows, so everything's labelled and colour coded, so they kind of get to do their own shopping within those limits... basically to make sure people don't go away with ten boxes of cereal or, you know... to make sure everybody gets a fair share. (YLP)

The membership fee is described by the pantries as important for treating the people as customers so that they could expect a service from them, "without any strings attached" (SP) and that it was as much for their benefit as it was towards covering some of the pantry's costs. There was the understanding that "If someone's life is so chaotic, they can't scabble together £2.50, that's an indicator that they need far more help than just the food we'll provide" (SP).

Providing access to SSMs through membership is also described as taking a "community" approach, and which distinguishes them from food banks:

...each pantry location, they are geographically based, because they are community pantries. So, we draw a line on a map and we say this is the community in which this pantry will serve... we allocate a certain number of memberships for agency referrals into that pantry. So, they might live outside the pantry geography... but the balance has always to be geographic, because we want... because it's the community that makes it work. (SP)

The other four initiatives in our study have **open access**. They have a different approach. The choice of maintaining the premises open to everyone is described as being 'inclusive'. They also expressed an uneasiness over selecting and excluding people from food access on the basis of geographical or socio-economic conditions which also necessitates looking into people's personal conditions or life choices. As *Sharehouse* described:



...we do not feed poor people, we do not feed hungry people, we do not feed vulnerable, needy, low income, homeless. We feed human beings and everybody should have access to the food. (SH)

Neo Community SSM, which shares a similar approach as *Sharehouse*, is open to the community three days a week, but it also describes itself as “open every day” to those who find themselves in a crisis situation and where “nobody is turned away”.

...it isn't about... what postcode? what qualification? what career you've got. It's about... everyone is a human being. (NC)

The open access SSMs therefore have no restrictions of a membership. The trader-led SSMs in particular offer a more retail-like environment like mainstream convenience stores, open throughout the week or most days and with longer opening hours. However, open access has also meant a different approach to the 'social' nature of intervention by the SSM. The social support services or programmes offered are more informal or unstructured (as we see later in section 3.2.1) in comparison to the controlled access SSMs.

3.1.3 Reach

The SSMs, as described earlier (section 2.3) are located in disadvantaged areas in the top 10-20% of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation in the UK and their increasing number suggests that their reach has been expanding in the last four years.

In the case of *Community Shop*, each of its four stores started with a membership of 500, which has since then, by October 2017, increased to 750 in each. *Storehouse Pantry* reported an average number of 60-70 members in each of its two locations. *Your Local Pantry* started with 100 members which has since then increased to 150 in each of its four stores. The 'reach' of the pantries extends to 'priority neighbourhoods' including tenants of the RSL and non-tenants. As described below:

...we're open to anybody that lives within a defined catchment area basically, so it's not just for our tenants; it would be for anybody that lives within that neighbourhood because I think we're keen that we don't segregate people to an extent, you know. We don't want people to think it's just a Stockport Homes' initiative. It is a community initiative, so it's for anybody that lives within that community. (YLP)



In the case of open access SSMs, like *Neo Community SSM*, *Sharehouse*, *Affordable Foods* and *Nifties*, there are no actual figures on the number of users/customers they have had since they started. There is a lack of consistent statistics about usage and reach in terms of how they have evolved over the years and also how their use changes across different months of the year. As a counter-point, they stated that keeping track of the users/customers, that is, how often they come and why, could be construed as an intrusion of privacy. This is in addition to the practical difficulties they encountered in keeping track of the number of people who frequent a retail-like environment.

Nonetheless, in SSMs like *Affordable Foods* and *Nifties*, the expansion in the number of stores/franchises in different locations, and their successful operation, suggests the increasing reach of this type of SSMs into communities across Britain.

In general, the demographics of the members/users show a variation across the SSMs. For instance, *Community Shop*'s members (in the London store) are predominantly women, and the reason they ascribed to this is that it is women who are generally the food shoppers in households. In the pantries, the groups they reached out to varied depending on the catchment area. As described by *Your Local Pantry*:

3.0 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SSMs IN BRITAIN



Your Local Pantry (Stockport)

...it varies by neighbourhood, so, for example, we've got one site, the first site up at Lancashire Hill, it tends to be older residents ... probably they make up a lot of the proportion of people that use it (pantry). And then we have got another one that's based on quite a large estate and that tends to be families...large families that are, you know, perhaps struggling or reliant on benefits. So, it varies site by site depending on where we are located but we do tend to have, for example, quite a high proportion of members who state... declare themselves to have disabilities and health issues. So, that's something that is quite predominant and which is why we are quite keen that we get as much fresh fruit and vegetables as possible into those areas. (YLP)

In the SSMs with open access, the users come from all groups - women, single parents and families with young children, the elderly, former food bank users, and even people holding jobs but on very low wages. As *Affordable Foods* noted, it is reaching out to people whom it had not anticipated at the beginning:

...I expected just to have one little shop and I expected it to be mainly for the homeless people and the travellers and I was surprised that it is families that need it more than anybody, families that work yet they still can't afford to pay supermarket prices. (AF)

In contrast to users described as vulnerable and food insecure, *Sharehouse* described some of its users as "eco-conscious":

...it's not about whether they are poor, they just come here first because they don't want to go to supermarkets and they want to support the project and they don't want food to go to waste. (SH)

This, as *Sharehouse*, emphasised reflects its approach to challenging and reducing food waste *per se* and which is not limited to redirecting food surplus only to those from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

Across the different initiatives, we find that since 2013 when the first SSM was launched in Britain, the membership of controlled type-SSMs has increased, the number of stores has increased, and an increasing number of users/customers are also turning to open-access SSMs. The 'pressure on household budgets' and 'rising food prices' are described as driving the need for 'affordable' food.

3.1.4 Type of food available

The range, volume and quality of food surplus provided by the SSMs in our study show a wide variation. The reasons are primarily ascribed to the nature of food surplus available from the suppliers, the SSM's infrastructure and capacity to store a range of food (such as fresh, chilled, or frozen), and to some extent - as reported by one of the pantries in our study - their attempt to match the food with the needs of the members.

In *Community Shop* which acquires its stock of food surplus from Company Shop (see section 3.1.1), the products are drawn from a wide range of manufacturers, processors, and distributors, including those considered as high quality brands (e.g. Waitrose, M&S, Innocent, Nestlé, etc.). They include meat, cheese, and dairy products, and also organic products from the leading brands, which are considered costly and generally unaffordable in the mainstream supermarkets. The food available is described as 'high quality' as it comprises of surplus arising at the earlier part of the food supply chain, closest to the production end.

The pantries also provide a wide range of food surplus, including fresh fruit and vegetables, much of this obtained from FareShare, local retailers and local allotments. As *Storehouse Pantry* describes:

...we have an absolute abundance of fruit and vegetables, probably a disproportionate amount of fruit, vegetables and bread as there is to tinned products. That's because, that's what we get... (SP)

On those occasions when they do not receive enough fresh produce from their suppliers/donors, they purchase fruits and vegetables to supplement their stock.

...we also use some of the members' subscriptions to purchase fruit and veg from the local market ... that's just to make sure that we've always got a staple supply of the essentials really; you know, apples and oranges and potatoes and things like that, just to make sure everybody gets a balanced diet. (YLP)

On the other hand, the trader-driven SSMs stock a much higher proportion of non-perishables, tinned/processed/long-life food:

...I sell surplus food and short-dated food (either near or just passed its 'best before' date, close to sell-by date) – ranging from tinned foods, to crisps, sweets, dried foods, fresh meat and dairy products; also pet food, toiletries, household essentials...pretty much whatever I can get my hands on; it changes every week. (AF)

Overall, we found the trader-driven SSMs providing much less fresh produce in comparison to the other SSMs and the reason ascribed is the lack of adequate storage facilities and the easy perishability of fresh produce. In *Sharehouse*, where space and facilities are available, their stock includes “everything” that could be possibly intercepted and as long as they are safe for human consumption, they are made available to the public.

...we are basically the bottom feeders. We will accept anything because we feel like if we can give it a chance we will do. And we won't be determined by a date or necessarily it being surplus or accidental damage. (SH)

The type of food provided by at the SSMs therefore varies not only in terms of quality and

quantity between the different initiatives from week to week but also seasonally. During Christmas, for example, *Neo Community SSM* describes usually being inundated with carrots, parsnips, potatoes, and turkeys because the supermarkets order stock in excess to deal with the Christmas demand. Or, when allotment growers have a seasonal glut of vegetables/fruits, they often barter their surplus produce with other products from the SSM.

The SSMs are necessarily dependent on what is available as food surplus in the food supply chain. As described by one of the pantries:

...it changes every week; what we are tending to find is that there is a lot of fresh and frozen goods because those are the things that are short date. So, we do tend to find that's the majority of our supply and it would be things for the fridge and the freezer. We don't get so much in the way of things like cans and ambient because those don't tend to go out of date - they don't tend to have any issues, but yeah, I mean, it really does vary but in terms of what we collect from a store level, it does tend to be things like bread, kind of salad materials, and fresh produce that's short dated. (YLP)

We found that the unpredictability of food supply and reliance on food surplus that is available fundamentally determines the type of food SSMs provide to their users/members. There is a degree of variation between the SSMs and this depends on key factors such as who the suppliers are, the number of sources of supply, infrastructural facilities and also their scale of operation. The potential and constraints inherent in the type of food provided by SSMs, which is central to the SSM model, and the tensions arising from relying on the food industry are discussed later (section 5.1).

3.1.5 Food Pricing

As described earlier (section 2.1), the provision of low cost food is fundamental to the SSM model. The SSMs in our study achieve this in a number of ways. The prices are heavily discounted, on average 70% off retail price as in the *Community Shop*. In the pantries, the price of food is covered by the membership subscription fee. For £2.50, the members are allowed to choose up to 10 items of food per weekly visit. This is estimated to be worth around £12.50 at retail value (*Your Local Pantry* flier), which means on average the prices are discounted to 80%.

3.0 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SSMs IN BRITAIN

The community-led SSMs, *Neo Community SSM* and *Sharehouse*, follow a 'pay-as-you-feel' approach.

...they can take what they want, leave what they want and they pay whatever they feel. (SH)

The users/customers are invited to pay in money, time or skills. The underlying principle is that of "inclusivity". In the case of *Sharehouse*, the fact that they receive the food as donations or that they intercept the food makes it possible that the food is not priced. However, there is a general restriction in place in terms of two bags of food per person on grounds of fairness. At its Sheffield location, *Sharehouse* operates in a slightly different way - in one part of the store, food is offered on a pay-as-you-feel basis and users are allowed to take as much as they need, and in another part, volunteers serve the more limited items at a cost of £1 for a basket.

The SSMs in our study also describe giving away some food items for free. As one of the pantries put it:

...well, we might find that we have been donated a surplus of bread from somebody like Marks & Spencer and of course that's got quite a short date on it, so we might give that away as well. So, the ten items are the core of what they get but there's always free vegetables and some other things to go alongside that. (YLP)

The trader-driven SSMs, *Affordable Foods* and *Nifties*, do not necessarily stock fresh produce. But they receive at times donations of vegetables/fruits from a local retailer or allotment grower or from the local gleaning network. This is either in very small amounts or a lot of it (as in a seasonal glut) and since they can remain unsold and get wasted, the SSMs prefer to give them away for free.

...if I get fresh fruit and veg...which is free... I just give that out for free. I don't charge for fresh fruit and veg. (AF)

For other food surplus that they sell, in both *Nifties* and *Affordable Foods*, the average price is heavily discounted. In *Nifties*, some items are priced as low as 10p. In *Affordable Foods*, it is similar, with prices up to 50% less than normal supermarket prices.



...I try to keep my prices as low as possible. Obviously, I need to still make profit, but it's a very little profit. As long as I can cover my overheads, buy new stock and pay myself a reasonable wage, then I try and keep the prices as low as possible. (AF)

From the SSM perspective, the 'affordability' of low cost food is critical to their operation as this ensures that the users/members buy from them. The SSMs pointed out that this enables their members/customers to **save money**. This in turn helps them to meet other requirements, which include top-up purchases of other items (food and non-food) in the mainstream supermarkets which they do not find in the SSM, as well as to meet other non-food expenses. As described by the SSMs:

... if they (customers) pay supermarket prices, they haven't got any money spare to do any other activities as a family. I do get the homeless people, I do work with the travellers. You also get a lot of wealthy people that come in and at the end of the day, everybody needs to save money, so that's the whole idea. (AF)

...because of the nature of surplus...every day we don't necessarily have milk and eggs but our members know that they can come here, buy food, save money and then go to another store to buy the essentials with the money they have saved. (CS)

Another observation made by all the SSMs is that they offer **choice and dignity** to people in food poverty in a more socially acceptable way and this distinguishes them from food banks. They do not treat members/customers as 'victims' of poverty – rather, they are given a choice through the retail/shopping experience. There are no handouts. The membership fee for getting access to the pantries is described as a mechanism to achieve this:

...I know there is a small amount of money that changes hands, and there's a reason for that. So, they pay a £2.50 subscription and the reasons for that, are to really, by and large, to provide a degree of respect and dignity... It hardly goes anywhere to cover the costs... it's more of a principle thing. (SP)

This principle is also described by the pantries in relation to members making their own choice about the food they eat:

...It's not... we're not making sensible eating decisions on behalf of the members. We are simply drawing in that which we can source for nothing or very low costs and offering it up. They're making their choices. (SP)

...the big thing with us... is that people have choice about what they take, because, you know, they probably don't want some of the things that the food bank might give them. I think the thing with the food bank, you are given, you know, a bag of food, don't you, whereas with our shops, they come in, they browse, they choose what they want... (YLP)

Your Local Pantry described the principle of choice also in terms of whether the people wanted to become a member or not. It described membership as the mechanism by which the members could hold the pantry accountable if it did not meet their expectations:

...people have choice, you know, they choose to become a member, they choose what food they want to take, they're able to give us feedback,

they hold us accountable because, you know, they are paying us a membership, they are a customer. It's not a hand out... it's something that they are a part of and I think that's the dignity thing as well that people just view us as a community initiative, you know. There's no kind of stigma in going into a pantry, it's just part of their community. (YLP)

3.2 Beyond food ...

As described earlier (section 2.1), the SSM model adopts a business-like approach to creating social value from food surplus. It is not about food provision during crises, instead the intention is to address longer term food insecurity. As described by *Storehouse Pantry*:

...food itself, although not the solution to poverty, is a good catalyst for addressing many of the layers of issues that affect people in poverty. (SP)

The different ways in which SSMs described how they go beyond food provision to address wider social needs include the following:

- Providing access to support that helps addressing some of the underlying problems – (i.e. developing individual resilience)
- Reconnecting with food and building skills – (i.e. cooking/growing food)
- Building relationships – (i.e. empowering individuals and communities)
- Volunteering – (i.e. building confidence, competences and employability)



3.0 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SSMs IN BRITAIN

3.2.1 Access to support

The social support provided by SSMs is either formalised and structured or informally organised. Differences exist in whether the support programme is a condition of membership or not.

Community Shop works with local community organisations to offer bespoke support to its members, as well as a 'personal development programme' adapted to the needs of each member:

...this personal development programme ... has different component parts which allowed people to move through it as they needed to reach the level of success that they had defined for themselves. (CS)

The programme includes sessions around life planning, self-confidence, positive thinking, and building relationships in the community. Additionally, the members are offered specialised support depending on what they want to achieve and their personal vision of success. The programme, 'Work Works', provides support to those who want to go back into work; a programme called, 'ABC' (Any job, Better job, Career) is offered to those who

want to have a career plan and is tailored to individual's requirements. This includes sessions on developing competencies ranging from CV writing and interview skills to building self-confidence. For those who want to start their own business, customised support is available. General support is also provided on money matters including, for example, how to deal with utility bills. There is a dedicated space, called the Community Hub, where these sessions are held:

...Community Hub is where people come together as a community, and both individually and together make the future brighter and become the best versions of themselves, so that when they do transition out of membership, life is much better and they're able to move into the life that they always envisioned for themselves... (CS)

The training sessions are delivered in-house or by local community organisations on-site. In addition, the *Community Shop* described a peer-mentoring programme where those members who are interested in working with them are given training to become mentors and support new members.

The *Storehouse Pantry* has a less formalised approach. They hold a 'market place' alongside the pantry, where members are given the opportunity to discuss, with invited local community-based organisations, their broader needs or issues. Members are offered "wraparound soft support" on various issues such as indebtedness, overcoming addiction, gaining employment skills, parenting, cooking, health and social care.

...we have agencies who come in, have conversations with folk about debt, about all sorts of issues that they may confront. ... There are different agencies each week. The same agency won't come necessarily every week, and those are opportunities for the members to sit down and have chats about their broader needs or issues... (SP)



Through the emphasis on broader support, there is a recognition of the links between poverty and wellbeing, both physical and mental.

In *Your Local Pantry*, access to support services is mainly provided by Stockport Homes itself with different advice centres co-located within the same building where the pantry is housed. For example, in their Brinnington pantry, an employment advice centre, Credit Union, drop-in advice surgeries and general advice services, are open to the members at the same time as the pantry's opening hours.

...if they are ...struggling with their energy bills, we've got an energy advice service here and similarly, we've got a money advice service, housing advice. So, we know that if somebody says to us, well actually you know, I really am having problems with a certain area, then we can actually signpost them as well. (YLP)

In *Neo Community SSM*, the support provided is informal in nature. Those who seek specialised advice/support are signposted to relevant local community-based organisations.

Affordable Foods and *Nifties*, run by individual entrepreneurs, do not offer social support programmes. They described the social value they create in terms of providing a space for customers "to chat" and/or "to be listened to". If their customers ask for support, they generally signpost them to local agencies who are able to offer specialist help on specific problems.

3.2.2 Reconnecting with food and building skills – cooking and growing food

Another important way in which SSMs in our study described how they create social value is through helping people reconnect and change their attitude towards food. This is achieved through the organisation of convivial activities which involve sharing and eating food together as well as learning about cooking and growing vegetables and fruits.

The 'Community Kitchen' in *Community Shop*, is described as offering a "social eating space, in which people come together and build very strong relationships around food." In addition to



offering hot meals (made from unsold food in the store) daily at very low prices to members, various activities such as 'cook club', 'kids cook club', 'melting pot', and 'feast days' are organised. In every store, they have a chef and food mentor in the kitchen to oversee these activities. Particularly in the case of involving children in the cooking, *Community Shop* described it as follows:

...we want children to understand how much fun cooking is. So, children are able to come in after school and just fling food around with the chef and make something and then sit together and eat together and they do that with their carers as well and that's great fun. (CS)

Their programme 'melting pot' is aimed at bringing diverse groups of people together into creating a community meal and sharing the meal.

...by the end of it they all feel like they are represented and that menu represents them as a group; and then they cook that meal and they serve it free of charge to the rest of the community; and they tell their food stories whilst they're serving it. (CS)

They hold 'feast days' described as celebratory events - the idea behind them is to connect people and help break down barriers, so that the members feel connected, develop a sense of pride, and feel confident:

...every few months we get together, we celebrate either via a sit down meal or a festival or a pop up market or anything else and we just have fun together... we make a bit of space and a bit of time to just have fun together around food. (CS)

3.0 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SSMs IN BRITAIN

The shared community space is used for learning different skills (including hands-on cooking).

In the case of *Your Local Pantry*, they work closely with a local social enterprise called Startpoint, which runs cooking demonstrations and cookery classes for their members. This, as they described, was particularly helpful during seasonal gluts of vegetables/fruits or when they had food surplus consisting of unusual vegetables that their members hadn't used before and might not know how to cook. The cooking demonstrations by Startpoint served to show the use of such vegetables and inspire members to use them in their own cooking.



...a perfect example is we had quite a large amount of halloumi cheese... but, you know, a lot of people they didn't know how to cook it. They didn't know what to do with it. So, Startpoint kind of came in. They cooked a lot of it, showed people, you know, what you can do with it, what it tastes like and just encouraged people to try it and now it's something that, you know, does get used. (YLP)

Similarly, in *Storehouse Pantry*, cooking demonstrations are held showing members how to cook simple and nutritious meals and these are delivered by 'Friends of Fun Food' - a project by Urban Outreach aimed at inspiring people across all age groups to create, cook and eat affordable food. The pantry had realised that by simply providing food, and fresh vegetables in particular, there was no guarantee that the members would choose vegetables in their 'basket' of food or feel confident about using them for cooking at home. When asparagus was in season, for example, and the pantry received an abundant amount as surplus, the cooking demonstrations showed members how to use it to make nutritious meals. The sharing of cooking recipes between members, drawing on their respective cultural backgrounds and experiences, also took place which provided the scope for members to help each other directly to "reconnect" with food rather than just depending on agencies outside of the community:

...knowledge is being shared and that confidence is being derived from member to member in a member to member situation. So, it is more empowering, it is more dynamic. There's a good sense of community. It is a community within a community at the pantry and that's the sense that we want to create and the agenda. It's not about agencies providing their services. (SP)

Another aspect of reconnecting with food is driven by the availability of **community growing spaces**. *Community Shop* has growing space in almost all of its stores where members can grow food – whether in the form of allotments, in barrels, or in big window boxes.

...we try and grow in each of our stores and all that food moves into our Community Kitchen and it's very... it's peer on peer, so it's people teaching one another to grow and harvest and it just creates a safe and therapeutic space for people to spend time in that, around food. (CS)

Most of the produce from the community growing spaces is used in their 'Community Kitchens' and members are also allowed to take the produce home if they so wished, thus providing much more to the members in addition to a therapeutic and sharing space.

Such community growing spaces for members/users are however limited to *Community Shop*. In the case of *Neo Community SSM*, there exists a link with allotment growers in the community who are also users of their SSM, but a tenuous one:

...we don't personally grow food, we link with a lot of the allotments, so we use a lot of their produce and that comes into the social supermarket. ... Quite a few of the people from the allotments use the social supermarket so it's their way of giving back as well. (NC)

3.2.3 Building relationships – empowering individuals and communities

The SSMs in our study reported various ways in which they support building relationships between individuals (community building), as well as community empowerment to bring about positive changes in people's lives. This is achieved by providing a 'social space' where interactions take place between members, or between members and volunteers, or between members and peer-mentors, which address issues like social isolation and foster relationships.

In each of their stores, *Community Shop* has around 60 people trained as peer mentors – most of them former members. This peer-mentoring programme is described as 'empowering communities through building relationships':

...they're our legacy because when Community Shop closes one day, you know, all of our Community Shops – we do aspire of course to close them because we aspire for the community to no longer need us – when we manage to succeed in doing that, then we are able to say, although Community Shop's closed, there's still 300 or 500 people in this local community trained as peer mentors, trained to support one another, trained to build this community up. (CS)

In the pantries, they described the informality of relationships between members and volunteers as essential to community building. *Storehouse Pantry* also described its success in drawing in people from the local community and rejuvenating the church (within which it is based) and the community in the process, not so much on religious grounds than as a place for meeting up for food and socialisation.



Storehouse Pantry (Bolton)

...it has drawn in people... it has certainly succeeded from the church's perspective in terms of being very practical, hands on, helping people, and through that, building those relationships with the community and with people in this area, that they wouldn't have been able to build without the attraction of the magnet of the food. (SP)

Your Local Pantry also emphasised the "unexpected" community impact from their work:

...when we initially set up, the impact we wanted to have was financial, you know, we wanted people to be able to save money and to be able to use that money elsewhere, so we've been able to demonstrate that. But I think the biggest thing that we've noted, really, is the community impact, that people feel less isolated. They feel more part of their community, you know, they're more able to talk to their neighbours, they can seek advice locally...I think that's been the biggest impact really... just creating those community hubs and making people feel less isolated. (YLP)

3.0 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SSMs IN BRITAIN



Neo Community SSM described its role in terms of building a strong community that is ready to take on challenges.

...whilst we don't want to continue to be trying to solve the food poverty issue... because there shouldn't be food poverty in this country ... it's also using that conduit to build a community, so that when the magic wand that will fix food poverty happens, communities are ready to fight anyway; and, be a support network and take on the next battle... Yeah, because there's always going to be some battle, and with strong communities, any battle isn't much of a problem...(NC)

The SSMs in our study consider it important to build relationships with local organisations who provide the support services for their users/ members and thus enabling and empowering them to move out of poverty. They emphasised that external organisations in their turn also find the partnership with SSMs particularly important as the organisations are able to reach out to more people with specific needs. SSMs provide them with the physical and social space, and the opportunity to be more effective.

...the agencies are saying – “We are engaging with so many people that we wouldn't have engaged with if we would have done it our own way, using our own badge, using our own labels and our own colours.” So, that is what makes it a success for the agencies that are getting involved. (SP)

In the individual trader-driven SSMs – *Affordable Foods* and *Nifties* - they did not have 'community spaces' on-site. Nonetheless, they described their stores as providing a meeting place for their customers, who feel less isolated because of the personal attention they get there, and who also engage in the sharing of experiences, including sharing of cooking recipes.

3.2.4 Volunteering/ Job creation

SSMs who have volunteers put great emphasis on the role volunteers play in building 'community'. Volunteering is seen as a way to give something back to the community, to make a difference to the people around them, an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge, or even a way to meet new people.

Your *Local Pantry* describes itself on its website as “community food stores run by volunteers for the benefit of their local communities”. Its volunteers mainly come from the local community, among whom many are tenants from Stockport Homes. Across its four pantries, there are thirty volunteers – although the number fluctuates – managing a range of work from organising the deliveries, administrative support duties to signposting members to social support agencies.

...our volunteers ...are, you know, quite well briefed in terms of giving advice themselves. So, they know about relevant local services, they know how to help somebody who is having a problem. (YLP)

Volunteers also come from Stockport Homes and other organisations under a corporate volunteering policy where the staff are given the opportunity to give four hours each month to the initiative. There are also volunteers from Stockport Council.

In a similar way, *Storehouse Pantry* uses volunteers from the church, and employees of Bolton at Home through their ‘Give and Gain’ scheme which allows staff to dedicate five full working days a year to help the voluntary sector. The pantry members also volunteer.

...all the stakeholders in the community and agencies, are all involved in doing something practical to help in a volunteering capacity. (SP)

Neo Community SSM is also driven mainly by volunteers from the local community, with most of them also users of the SSM. In line with its ‘pay-as-you-feel’ principle and as a community-led initiative, everyone in the community is invited to get involved in whatever capacity they can.

...they want to be part of the community development sort of thing. They think they’re doing something good for the community ... It’s that new approach that everyone’s welcome and that they sort of mould it to how they want it to, how they want it to be and how they want to help. They are not being told how they should help, or how they should get involved. (NC)

This is also seen in *Sharehouse*. It has up to 20 - 30 volunteers a day. This includes some from disadvantaged groups (e.g. those with disabilities, or with learning difficulties) and also those on

community service, being given the opportunity to reintegrate through the volunteering. Informal conversations with some of the volunteers during our visit revealed that they feel a sense of ownership, and are proud to do their bit in “reducing food waste” and “feeding the hungry”. Also, since *Sharehouse* runs on a pay-as-you feel basis, those that do their shopping there are invited to give their time and whatever skills they have in return.

...everybody is welcome to come and get involved. And because it is pay-as-you feel, we allow everybody to give something in return if they wish. And it works. (SH)

Community Shop, in contrast to the other SSMs in our study have a different approach to volunteering and job creation. They do not recruit volunteers, excluding also the use of their members in any voluntary capacity:

...We don’t allow any of our members to volunteer in staff positions because we don’t think that the way to build individuals and communities up to the best versions of themselves is to provide free labour. (CS)

Instead, they employ paid staff to run their shops, including a chef for the kitchen, mentoring staff and store supervisors, and they are paid at least a Living Wage. They allow members who have received training as ‘peer mentors’ to work as mentors to the newer members, which supports job creation. The pantries mentioned their success in enabling their volunteers to develop work-related skills which led a few of them to move on to paid work elsewhere.

The trader-led SSMs in our study use volunteers when needed and when available. Occasionally, they also rely on family support when needed.

I wouldn’t have been able to do it without their (family) support. But I do try and manage everything as much as I can by myself. (AF)



3.0 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SSMs IN BRITAIN

3.3 Reducing food waste

Alongside the social aim of food provision, SSMs describe an 'environmental' benefit in terms of minimising impact on the environment by saving food from ending up in landfills* -and thereby implicitly contributing to a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions. The different ways in which SSMs in our study described their 'environmental' outcome is as follows.

3.3.1 Raising food waste awareness

The SSMs described their key role in raising public awareness about food surplus and food waste. *Storehouse Pantry*, for example, described their approach to redistributing food surplus as a way of "stretching and extending the life of food":

...we will still put on our shelves tinned products after the 'best before', and we have produced very recently a document which says, this is our standards. So, for these products – we will keep them on the shelves for this much longer. Then, when it reaches this period, we will take the product, put it on checkout if there is still any of it left, and after free checkout, if it's still not gone, then it will be thrown. But there's another project we call the junkyard café. Sometimes we give food to them and they will cook with it. So, we are really stretching and extending the life of food... (SP)

Sharehouse in particular, with its focus on "fighting food waste" described its work as entirely about raising awareness about food waste through showing that food surplus is fit for consumption by all. They describe their initiative as a way to induce social behavioural change towards reducing food waste as a direct and moderate community-based action.

...we're stopping 15 tonnes a week from going to waste just in this Sharehouse, let alone in the

cafes ...the whole aim is to effectively educate people about food ... and then put ourselves out of business as quickly as possible. So ten, fifteen years maximum, and then no longer we need to be dependent on food waste as a source... (SH)

A similar view is held by the individual trader-led SSMs. As *Nifties* put it:

I'm tackling food waste head on, but also I'm trying to change societal views on it as well. (NF)

3.3.2 Re-using food waste

The SSMs described their own generation of food waste as the minimum as they used different methods to re-use the food surplus left unsold. Those that have on-site kitchens/cafés (such as *Community Shop*, *Neo Community SSM*) or an off-site Café (like *Sharehouse*) use whatever is left unsold and still edible/safe to make affordable meals. Others, like *Storehouse Pantry* donate the unsold food surplus to 'junkyard café' projects. Whatever is still left over is put into anaerobic digestion bins for converting into compost, or used as animal feed. What cannot be reused is used for bio-energy generation. As described by *Neo Community SSM*:

...we had intercepted 67 tonnes of food in three years. We had wasted 2.2 tonnes of that, but we haven't wasted it to go to landfill again; we had wasted it into compost, we had wasted it to the donkeys, the pigs. We had reused every last bit of it. So, we have saved it from landfill. And if there is something we can't reuse, it goes into our ReFood bin, which then goes onto making bio-energy. (NC)

The trader-driven SSMs also described donating unsold stock to soup kitchens and charities to support their local community.

...that's always been a thing of mine to make sure that I benefit, and so do all the local organisations who are feeding the homeless and people like that. (NF)

If only to a small extent, the SSMs bear some costs in disposing food surplus that cannot be used/donated.

3.4 Measuring social outcomes and impacts

SSMs reported different ways in which they assess their performance: these range from simple feedback and output measures to a form of social auditing (SA) and social return on investment (SROI). The quality and quantity of their evidence varies.

Those SSMs which use an operational and output based approach include measures such as:

- tonnes of surplus food collected
- tonnes of fruit and vegetables sold/redistributed
- number of people supported through training/different skills
- no. of volunteers who have contributed their time to the initiative
- no. of volunteers who have gone on to find full-time employment
- no. of households who have benefited

The social auditing approach as used by *Community Shop* aims to capture their social, environmental and economic impacts. Their impact reporting process articulates their output and outcome targets, based on a 'theory of change' which defines their long-term goals and then maps backward to identify necessary preconditions. As described by the SSM:

In order to give clarity to the aspirations of Community Shop, we have used the theory developed through our three year experience, our member insight and outcomes of our Success Plan analysis. Our approach has been to develop SO THAT Chains. SO THAT chains help to connect strategies to the ultimate goal through a series of logical, sequential changes. Creating chains for each strategy allows for effective articulation and communication of expected changes resulting from each strategy,



and how the strategies together contribute to ultimate goals. In developing an outcome map, however, it is important to note that multiple strategies are also likely to lead to common intermediate outcomes on the pathway to ultimate goals. (CS)³⁰

They use online surveys, focus groups, and feedback from members and stakeholders. In describing their impact in their latest report, *Community Shop* stated:

...more than 90% of people feel more positive about the future after joining us, more than 90% of people feel more confident in being able to achieve the life they want after joining us. So, we have statistics around that and then we go all the way to the environmental statistics of how much food we have saved and what impact that's had on the planet. So, all of those statistics are available to download online to show you a little bit about how that model is working. (CS)

Your Local Pantry uses the HACT³¹ software which is quite widely used across the housing association sector to calculate social return on investment (SROI). This allows for financial values to be estimated for the important impacts identified by the stakeholders that do not have market values, such as improvements in people's health and finances.

...we record some of the more kind of output type things, you know, around how many members, how many visits, how much money they might have saved but yeah we also do something a little bit more in depth around that social value and what impact there's been on the community. (YLP)

30. <https://www.companysshop.co.uk/media/2563/community-shop-impact-report-digital.pdf>

31. HACT stands for Housing Associations' Charitable Trust (London, UK) (<http://www.hact.org.uk/evidencing-impact>)

3.0 KEY DIMENSIONS OF SSMs IN BRITAIN

They use quarterly member surveys with a sample of their members, collect general output/outcome data, and document feedback they receive on their website or in 'comments boxes' kept in their stores.

Storehouse Pantry also described using specialised software where membership information is stored, so they can see how many times members have been using the pantry and how long they have been a member. This enables them to manage the food provision at city wide level as food banks in Bolton are also using the same software.

The community groups-driven SSMs, *Neo Community SSM* and *Sharehouse* generally found the process of data collection and evidence gathering time consuming, and demanding skills and resources which they did not have. They expressed the complexities of effectively measuring social impact, as well as the operational difficulties of undertaking such measurement within the day to day realities of running their enterprises. However, they reported collecting case studies documenting the stories, views and perceptions of their users, and other basic information about where the users come from.

...we are not about tracking every last bit of work we do. We know who and where people have gone. The only thing we ask is postcode and how many people are in a family. Even if we don't work with someone intensely, the other organisations keep track ... and say it's a success... (NC)

...social impact it has, which we know it does have; we have saved people's lives. People tell us this all the time, we've got letters and cards upstairs of people saying to us that we've saved their lives and we've helped them. (SH)

As *Sharehouse* primarily focuses on reducing food waste, it keeps records of the amount of food surplus collected on a daily basis, including

their source and type, rather than the people who use their SSM.

...we don't measure our social impact because we don't care who we feed. We just want to feed everybody. So, because we don't have any social impact evaluation on what we are trying to do, we have to have some form of data... I know how much in gram, per item of food we have intercepted. So if you said to me now, how many potatoes have you intercepted since day one... I can tell you specifically what that number is. (SH)

The data *Sharehouse* collects about the users includes some basic info, such as the number of people who come to the SSM, the amount of time they spend there and also where they travel from:

...that's all we get, so nothing invasive whatsoever. We will never ever be invasive and try to make people feel that there's any kind of prejudice in terms of them having access to that food. (SH)

The reason for collecting the data on where the users travel from, according to *Sharehouse*, is to assess if there is a demand big enough in other areas for setting up an initiative like theirs, but – as they emphasised – the 'need' that they are addressing is not from a poverty perspective:

...so instead of looking at the poverty side of things... that is, if a group of people are coming from this area so often, then they must need something over there, but you don't have to be poor, they don't have to be stigmatised. It's just that there's a need for it. And it could just be people that are coming, for example, that take all the mouldy bits of fruit and vegetables to compost it or to feed it to livestock – that's what it could be. But there's a need for it, but not necessarily a social need. (SH)

In describing how they informally assess their impact, the SSMs in our study mentioned

the key role of social media. They use social media not only to communicate with their users/members about availability of particular products or arrival of new stock, but they also receive personal feedback from them. As *Affordable Foods* put it:

...it's really taken off. I've had a lot of positive feedback; people come in often and thank me for helping them get through difficult times – which is very rewarding... I get reviews on Facebook all the time. People constantly are giving me positive feedback. I think out of the whole two years, I've only got one negative review on Facebook ... I'd like to think that I've made the community a lot better. (AF)

3.5 Key findings

The provision of food, individual and community benefits beyond food, and reducing food waste are the three key characteristic goals of SSMs which emerged from our thematic analysis of interviews. SSMs in our study described a multiple-goal structure although with some degree of variation in the importance placed on each type of goal. The *Community Shop*, the pantries and *Neo Community SSM* described their outcomes more in terms of serving the community (social benefits), the trader-driven SSMs in terms of economic benefits (saving customers money) and *Sharehouse* more in environmental terms (fighting food waste).

SSMs are fundamentally reliant on what is available in terms of food surplus. Their dependency on effective relationships and partnerships to source surplus in adequate quantities and at the lowest cost possible is critical to their operation. Surplus food is then offered for direct sale or within a membership fee to gain access, at heavily discounted prices or on pay-as-you-feel basis. In the controlled access type, the 'members' are targeted - identifying those who need most support, and also with a focus on strategic factors such as "priority neighbourhoods" according to the government's indices of multiple deprivation. In the open access type, SSMs are more retail-like and have less to do with the identified needs of any particular group.

SSMs describe in varying ways and to different degrees the extent and nature of their impact in terms of 'social' benefits from their enterprise. What is common to all is that they distinguish themselves from food banks mainly in two ways – as providing a dignified alternative to those in chronic poverty; and, as enabling the users/members to exercise their choice when acquiring food. In general, they describe their enterprises as underpinned by a 'social value' model, where food is not simply seen as providing sustenance, but as a 'catalyst' to provide a broad scale, local response which leads to building individual and community resilience. In addition to importance placed on one-to-one support in some, there is an emphasis on 'reconnecting' with food, building relationships and breaking barriers between people. They describe a community-focus such as through the sharing of social eating, learning and development spaces, and the aim to build resilient groups of people who feel valued through their relationships with each other.

SSMs portray their work as vital in terms of mitigating the effects of poverty and social vulnerability. For the controlled access SSMs, the one-to-one support programmes, and the provision of training and skills development aimed at individual empowerment and resilience, draw upon an assets-based approach. There is no specific intention however to connect this individual empowerment to wider structural socio-economic changes. This leaves SSMs open to being critiqued for obscuring structural drivers of inequality and responsibility of institutions, including the State as well as leaving the issues of power imbalance that exist within the economy, and the food system more specifically, unchallenged.³² When drawn to express their views on this aspect, the SSMs stated their awareness of the wider structural socio-economic drivers impacting on food poverty, and envisaged a time when SSMs and food banks would not be needed, but equally described the necessity of short-term initiatives like theirs in the immediate context of food poverty and food waste concerns.

The major risks and challenges faced by SSMs are highlighted next.

32. See Caraher and Furey 2017 in the context of surplus food redistribution and emergency food provision.

4.0 RISKS AND CHALLENGES

In this section of our report, we present the main risks and challenges from the perspective of SSMs drawing on our thematic analysis of interview data. These included a number of tangible issues that they experienced in their day-to-day running:

- Dependence on effective relationships
- Logistics and distribution
- Unreliability of food surplus supply
- Purchase of food surplus
- Volunteers
- Financial challenges
- Legislation and regulatory standards

4.1 Dependence on effective relationships

Although the SSMs in our study have fundamentally different relationships with a varied range of suppliers of food surplus, in most cases establishing and sustaining such relationships – with the food industry (redistributors, manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers along the food supply chain) – came across as a key challenge in ensuring provision of food.

...the (food) waste is a big issue... there's a mountain of waste. In an ideal world, we would have access, because we know that it's just the tip of the iceberg that we have access to. But actually, breaking through all the barriers with individual suppliers, is a massive endeavour. (SP)

Issues of trust, cooperation and reliability are seen as critical when working with multiple stakeholders. This was also evident in the case of providing wraparound services, especially when delivered by external agencies. The need for effective partnerships across different levels is seen as important to SSMs. As expressed by one of the SSMs in our study:



...I think we would always benefit from a more effective alignment of agencies, food suppliers, growers and all working collaboratively. (SP)

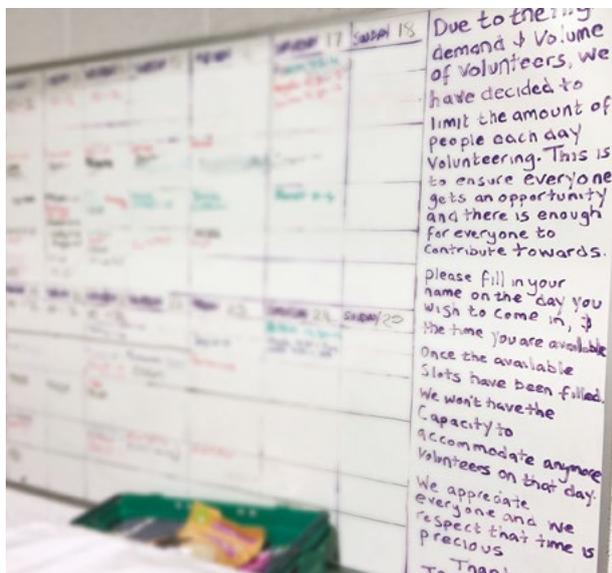
4.2 Logistics and distribution

A related challenge in the area of sourcing food surplus is logistics and distribution - operations required to coordinate activities (such as transportation, storage, etc.) and processes in the supply chain while dealing with a diverse number of sources. SSMs described their need for the supplies to reach them within a short time, as some of it only has a short shelf life left (i.e. very close to the expiration dates) or has clearly passed the 'best-before' dates. This requires timely information sharing between SSMs and the sources. It also requires arrangements for collection through adequate transport (with freezer facilities, e.g. for frozen and chilled products), enough storage space and storage infrastructure (i.e. shelving), and having enough volunteers (in those SSMs which depend on them).

...it is quite labour intensive in terms of collecting from all the ...stores ...so it is a lot of time spent contacting suppliers, picking things up, coordinating pickups, coordinating deliveries, so I think that's the biggest challenge - it is around stock. (YLP)

However, in the case of SSMs which sourced primarily from a redistributor, as for example *Community Shop* which gets its stock from Company Shop, this is less of a challenge, as the supply to *Community Shop* is backed by existing and tested infrastructure and organisational logistics of Company Shop.

The advantages of 'easier' logistics and distribution when sourcing food from a redistributor are also stated by other SSMs in influencing their decision to subscribe to FareShare for a major portion of their stock. On the other hand, the view was also expressed that the presence of an intermediary leads to 'organisational' food waste, as local manufacturers and big food distribution centres then choose to send surplus to regional centres of FareShare for redistribution instead of giving away the surplus locally. This also has an impact on the cost factor of food obtained by SSMs, in turn influencing the pricing and demand for those food items. The inherent tensions in the commodification of food surplus and the complexity of food surplus supply chains are described later (section 5.1).



In addition to logistics and distribution challenges, the community-groups driven and trader-driven SSMs emphasised the risks that arise from not having sufficient information about the quantity and quality of products until the very last moment while at the same time being expected to purchase the stock blindly and up-front.

4.3 Unreliability of food surplus supply

The SSM model is completely dependent on food surplus except for a small amount of fresh produce which is donated by food growers. Primarily, SSMs provide what they have been given or what they have intercepted. The unreliability of food surplus supply (the unpredictability of volume and nature of products) on one hand and control over its stock in order to meet demand is a challenge, especially for the SSMs which source stock from diverse sources. Except for *Community Shop*, which relies on Company Shop's long-term partnerships with retailers and manufacturers, the supply of food fluctuates with what the sources are able to provide. As described by the SSMs:

...the model's reliant on what's available in terms of surplus... you can't always keep all your members happy and ...we can't guarantee certain things, I mean, sometimes, you know, you'll have lots of stock one week and then the next week it will be completely different, so I think it's, yeah, we are very much kind of at the mercy of that really. ...We only get so much stock from FareShare and our other suppliers, so we have to be quite obviously careful about that balancing act and making sure we've got enough food (YLP)

...the major challenge has always been finding the right supplies, no matter what. It's always been the uphill battle. But we're slowly overcoming that as we get more and more established. (NF)

...it changes all the time. So, I could have a product in one week, and then not have it again for a few months. I can never guarantee the same line of stock over and over again. (AF)

4.0 RISKS AND CHALLENGES

Uncertainty over supply combined with a limited ability to store healthier perishable foods such as fruits and vegetables also meant that often only small amounts of such food is made available. At other times, there is too much of a surplus of one item, which was most often bread in many of the SSMs.

...at the moment, there's so much bread being donated to charities that charities are collapsing because they can't deal with the amount of food that's being given to them. Because it's just a way of shoving responsibilities away from the source and giving it to the third sector to deal with. (SH)

Also, with an increasing number of SSMs, and the possibility of competition with charities and private retailers seeking cheap produce, there is an increased chance of SSMs in Britain failing to receive the produce themselves. In European countries, as in Austria, competition over stock has, in recent years, led to some SSMs closing down as they could not provide a minimum amount of regular produce in their stores (Holweg et al., 2010).



Sharehouse (Leeds)

4.4 Purchase of food surplus

As observed earlier, SSMs in Britain, in contrast to those in mainland Europe, purchase food surplus from the food industry (except in the case of *Sharehouse*, which intercepts food surplus from varied sources). The 'monetary transaction' involved in acquiring stock of food surplus by the SSMs is found to be problematic by some of them in two ways. Firstly, it is seen as an "additional cost" which is not always justifiable especially when the food is being "rescued" from being sent to landfill; and secondly, that it adds another layer of complexity to their operation which makes their enterprise vulnerable to competition in the food surplus "market". As described by the SSMs:

...each year it's 7.2 million tonnes of food and drink that gets wasted into landfill, all of which is perfectly edible. However, I still have to pay for it, even though it would be going to landfill.

...we have to fundraise to buy food that someone else is throwing away. There is also the transportation. So, it's not... there's not a good carbon footprint to this at all.

On the other hand, SSMs also described that purchasing food surplus is a "forced necessity" as it is the only way they could be sure of having a reliable and dependable supply of food, instead of having to depend on the vagaries of donations. This link between SSMs and the food industry however exposes inherent tensions which are described later (section 5.1).

4.5 Volunteers

The challenges over availability and coordination of volunteers are particularly faced by SSMs who rely on volunteers to carry out the range of activities involved. The problems rise to the fore at certain times of the year (for example, during summer holidays); and also they arise in those cases where a lack of expertise and/



Your Local Pantry (Stockport)

or experience of the recruits means factoring in extra time and resources by the SSMs for giving volunteers the skills and training required.

...other than stock, that's probably the other biggest challenge... you know, recruiting and retaining volunteers, responding to their needs, so it's an ongoing thing that we do ...I think that's what we'd say to anybody's that's running this kind of project is that you do need that dedicated kind of resource that's coordinating those volunteers and supporting them. (YLP)

...yesterday I had two volunteers helping out. I haven't got any today, so it's swings and roundabouts. It's not predictable. That's the problem. With volunteers, you can't expect them just to come down because you say so. They have got to come down because they want to. (NF)

In the pantries, the management of volunteers including coordinating the volunteers and supporting them is considered key to the running of their kind of project. The reliance on a consistent engagement of volunteers is a known challenge of the social economy.

4.6 Financial challenges

The SSM business model aims to be self-sustaining in nature. SSMs in our study

generate income primarily through sale of food or from membership fees to cover the cost of personnel, rent, operating cost as well as the services provided, although they may receive funding from private and public sources as well. Each SSM has its own strategy on how to meet its costs. The operating costs in *Community Shop* are met by *Company Shop*, and the initial set up capital costs at the different locations are arranged locally in partnership with local entities. In the pantries, the membership fees cover some of the costs. The community groups-driven SSMs depend on fundraising, and the trader-driven SSMs on their personal finances and financial support from different sources.

Rent and/or infrastructure are considered as the major costs in the running of the SSMs. As *Storehouse Pantry* described:

...the biggest inhibitor for growth of this model is the cost... the infrastructure costs. So, you go downstairs, you will see the pantry. It is a physical pantry. So, there are costs involved in obviously setting it up and running it that aren't going to ever be met by the £2.50 membership. (SP)

4.0 RISKS AND CHALLENGES

To a large extent, their costs are met by Bolton at Home, and through fundraising at the church. In *Your Local Pantry*, however, rent is less of an issue as it is housed in property managed by the RSL itself. The trader-driven SSMs face particular challenges in this respect. *Nifties* in Dover was initially located on the high street within a shopping complex but had to move out after a year to another location because of increases in rental expenses. *Affordable Foods* is located in a warehouse which, the founder described as being able to afford because of a discounted rent offered to her by the local Council. Both *Affordable Foods* and *Sharehouse* operate from warehouses (i.e. bespoke retail spaces in Business Parks) in locations where they could negotiate an affordable rent. The second important running expense is related to paying staff members to oversee the operations, as described by one of the pantries.

We found an underlying tension over generating enough income from trading to be self-sufficient and the need to rely on other sources of funding (such as fundraising, grants and donations). Some explicitly acknowledged the importance of building a revenue stream and being financially secure. They undertake additional commercial activities, (i.e. second hand clothes sales, catering and community food events, cafe, and so on) to generate income as illustrated by the community-groups driven SSMs. The picture is not clear however as to what extent the revenue streams from these activities are kept separate or whether they feed into each other.

...many, many times we have been on the verge of going under and a little input of support – financially, physically – you know, especially through volunteers have been absolutely incredible for us... has allowed us to grow and create some sort of sustainable infrastructure. (SH)

Some receive additional funding from grants/donations and local authority funding. Most of the SSMs are aware that public support and



connections to public authorities are essential to their mission and for scaling up in the long run. The extent of such connections varies between the SSMs, from a level of formal support received from the local food policy board (as in the case of *Community Shop* in London), to informal support from local political figures (as in *Neo Community SSM*) to the more independent pantries in our study.

Although the financial challenges are considered a major constraint, none of the SSMs consider the sale of food at prices with very little mark-up to be itself a limiting factor. Nonetheless, when the costs of running the operation become difficult to meet, they described the lack of financial stability of the business as a major threat to the sustainability of the enterprise.

4.7 Legislation and regulatory standards

The SSMs in our study mentioned a number of “grey areas” within food laws and regulations which they described as driving “edible” food into becoming ‘food waste’. They described mainstream supermarkets as being generally risk averse when it comes to donating food surplus because of current health and safety legislation which places the responsibility for the food with the supermarket. This makes it easier for them to send the surplus to be sent to landfill instead. As described by SSMs:

...there's lots and lots of things that I think can be done to obviously prevent a lot of this (food waste that is generated) from happening. I think the main one is the expiry date... a discussion around best before dates... or even a change in legislation. (SH)

...if you get the supermarkets to be more responsible with how they label things, for example, to not scaremonger people into throwing it away... I'm convinced that they're doing that – the whole sell-by date thing for economic purposes. They want people to throw it away so that they'll go back to the shop and buy another. (NF)

Under current regulations, nearly all food must carry a 'best before' label and there is a general perception among the SSMs in our study that the misinterpretation of food date labelling is leading to edible food being wasted at every stage of the food distribution chain. Some of them described the challenges they faced in approaching food wholesalers and retailers and encouraging them not to throw away food approaching or past its 'best before' date. On the other hand, scandals around food safety (such as that involving horsemeat in 2013) have raised questions about food chain control, food fraud and mislabelling. Relaxation of the labelling schemes could lead to less transparency, increase in fraudulent packaging and labelling practices. Therefore, maintaining a balance between fighting food waste and food safety remains an important issue.

This is especially more so in the case of SSMs because of the nature of food surplus per se which poses unique challenges. These arise from the varying levels of risk due to the distances and means through which food needs to be transported from source to the SSM. However, SSMs emphasised that they are required to take the same precautions regarding storage, refrigeration and food handling as any conventional grocery store and they invest in this:

...we have got ...industrial fridges and freezers - that's probably the most important things that we can get... (YLP)

The vulnerability of SSMs to the risks and challenges described in this section – ranging from dependence on effective relationships with multiple stakeholders, logistics of surplus redistribution in complex supply chains, increasing competition over food surplus and its unpredictable nature, dependence on support of volunteers (in those who depend on them), financial constraints, legislation and regulatory standards – raises questions about their sustainability and the positive outcomes they expect to achieve.

We discuss a number of critical points as well as tensions and contradictions which emerge from our research in the next section.



5.0 LOOKING FORWARD...

Our exploratory research has generated useful insights into an emergent phenomenon which is changing the urban foodscape in Britain. We summarise the key findings as follows:

- There is a growing number of SSMs particularly in the most deprived areas across Britain; and they are social enterprises.
- We suggest a typology of key actors involved in setting up SSMs in Britain: redistributors, local organisations, community groups, and sole traders.
- SSMs are organised differently in response to local needs, access to surplus, beliefs and values of the founders, and socio-geographical contexts.
- They aim to move away from the charity model of the food bank (i.e. handing over food parcels) by offering a choice of food and by providing access to low cost food in a retail-like environment.
- In most cases, food surplus is described as a 'catalyst' to provide a broad scale, local response for building individual and community resilience.
- Given the complexity of food surplus supply links, the increasing competition for food surplus and its unpredictable nature, heavy reliance on volunteers in some, financial constraints, legislation and regulatory standards, SSMs are themselves vulnerable to a number of risks and challenges. This raises questions about their sustainability and the outcomes they expect to achieve.





Beyond these findings, our research has identified a number of critical points that need further exploration. In this section of the report we first highlight the main tensions and contradictions which emerged from empirical and desk research (section 5.1), and then proceed to discuss how these inform a research agenda for the future (section 5.2).

5.1 Tensions and contradictions

In times of growing food poverty and vulnerability, and increased political and public attention to reducing food waste, SSMs are gaining traction. The sense of powerlessness of local government administrations towards the alarming rates of food deprivation, which affect as much as one child in five in some areas of the UK, makes SSM appear as a relatively easy solution subject to finding the appropriate sources of funding and capacities to run SSMs. The issue perceived is not so much the risk of having too many SSMs, but the inability to having enough of them to cover all the geographical areas in most urgent need.

While having access to SSMs might provide a degree of choice and dignity to the food insecure in the short term, helping them to save money, gain skills and confidence, there are inherent tensions and contradictions in the 'normalising' of SSMs as a response to chronic food poverty and reducing food waste. We identify a hazard of masking the problems to which such initiatives are emerging as a response and also existing health and nutrition inequalities being overlooked. While the diversion of food surplus to people in need may appear as a perfect solution from an efficiency point of view (from a supply management and retailing perspective) and from a corporate social responsibility (CSR) angle, there are important issues described below, which require in-depth understanding, careful consideration, and a longer-term holistic approach.

5.1.1 Dignity, dependency and long-term use of SSMs

SSMs with controlled access (through membership) have a targeted approach directed at people who need the help most. However, studies in the context of food banks have shown that when 'membership' is means-tested, there is a degree of embarrassment or stigma attached to participation (see Lambie-Mumford, 2014). Membership is also critiqued as leading to the creation of a two-tier society – while including some, it also excludes others who may not fit into the membership criteria, but equally experience lack of means to access food. This is particularly evident and ethically difficult when the ultimate access to membership is based on a geographical location. How do the members and non-members perceive this controlled access? How are geographically drawn boundaries perceived? Are they contested?

SSMs with controlled access described a regular turnover of members following periodic reviews. The periodic reviews are seen as essential to keep track of their members and support their move back to mainstream food shopping. For SSMs with open access, they described having customers who bought food from them on a regular basis. While on the one hand this suggests SSMs are 'successful' in reaching out to people, on the other hand, it may point to creating dependency. Studies on food bank users, and on community kitchens, have shown that persistent access to food support can create dependency among users (Loopstra and Tarasuk, 2012; Engler-Stringer and Bernenbaum, 2007). Therefore, questions arise as to what extent this could be happening also in the case of SSMs and whether it is related to age/gender/health disabilities. Furthermore, how do controlled access SSMs, especially those with a fixed membership-expiration-date deal with cultural or socio-demographic determinants of long-term entitlement to access? Do they adapt their offer or strategy when they encounter these issues, and if so, how?

5.0 LOOKING FORWARD...

5.1.2 Uneasy dualism

The SSM model stocks a limited assortment of products. Even if there is a bigger range of choice among some when compared to others, overall choice is constrained in terms of quality, quantity, and food diversity, driven by the unpredictable nature of food surplus itself. The redirection of this 'surplus' (not considered 'fit' by mainstream market standards) to those who are struggling to afford food is subject to an 'uneasy dualism' that food scholars have described as arising between 'quality food' for higher income consumers and 'other food' consumed by others (Holt-Gimenez and Shattuck, 2011; Goodman and Goodman, 2007).

Although we found a clear presumption that SSMs enable customers to save money, thus enabling them to buy other essential and non-surplus food items from mainstream supermarkets, it would be important to know to what extent this is happening. Is the easy availability of significantly discounted food, especially tinned, processed or ready foods, and the lack of fresh produce in many cases, making it harder for some members/customers to choose healthier options? This raises a further question whether SSMs are not only serving to reproduce the dualism of good-food-to-wealthy and other-food-to-the-poor, but also disabling healthy food practices.

5.1.3 Health and nutrition

In a country challenged by obesity, malnutrition and other diet-related ill-health, the importance of healthy and nutritious food for all is becoming increasingly evident. The latest evidence from the Global Burden of Disease Project shows that diet is the single biggest risk factor contributing to death and disability in England and, combined with high BMI, can be attributed to more than 20% of all Disability Adjusted Life Years (a combined measure of death and disability)



(Newton, et al., 2015). The National Diet and Nutrition Survey reports significant differences exist in nutrient intake between the poorest 20% and richest 20% of the population. The poorest people tend to eat less fish, fruit and vegetables, and more sugar (The Food Foundation, 2016b: 8).

While some SSMs may strive to offer nutritious food, they still remain dependent on an erratic supply. They are surplus food-centric – stocking the surplus/excess from the manufacturers, processors, supermarkets and larger stores. This includes also food which are deemed 'not so good' in nutritional terms (e.g. fizzy drinks, food with high sugar and fat content). The latest 'Food & You Survey Wave 4' by the Food Standards Agency also shows that when cheaper alternatives are made available, consumers are responding through changes in their buying or eating arrangements, including buying items on 'special offer' more and also in quantities exceeding need (FSA 2016). So, while SSMs offer affordability which is a vital aspect of food provision, there is a difference between making 'good' food affordable for everyone and selling 'not so good' food at low prices. The ability of SSM model to provide healthy and nutritious food is variable and often limited. So, within the context of health inequalities that already exist within communities, the impact of easy availability of 'cheap' food (especially when it is highly processed and nutrient-deficient) on household diets and consumption patterns and the long run implications for public health are being overlooked.

5.1.4 'Surplus' food and the food system

Another problematic issue related to the SSM model is the provenance of food. The bulk of food sold in SSMs is 'surplus' food. 'Surplus' food is rather simplistically defined as different from food waste, and this blurs a number of issues that we consider are fundamental to a fuller understanding of the food system, and to the future of SSMs.

SSMs emphasise the edibility of the food surplus as no different from mainstream supermarket standards. This reflects a discourse of food 'surplus' positioned as substantially different to food 'waste' and suggesting an inevitability about it (as reflected in the argument that 'there will always be food surplus because the market is unpredictable'), rather than being food which is being 'rejected' by market standards (see Lambie-Mumford, 2017). The redistribution of food surplus is thus delinked from waste prevention and there is no questioning of the consumerist mainstream culture and over-production by the food industry. However, if we look closer at the working of the food system, we

start to understand that surplus is not contingent, but structural.

Critics argue that the existence of surplus is to a large extent determined by stocking choices: supermarkets have created the expectation that customers can find a wide choice of perishable and non-perishable goods almost 24/7. This freedom has widely enlarged food choices for customers but also reduced the predictability of their purchases. Surplus is therefore expected and its costs (i.e. the costs of buying, storing, refrigerating, moving and disposing of food that does not lead to profit) are factored into the final selling prices of the goods on sale as a whole. Not only regular customers pay the price of that surplus (or waste), but the environmental costs of producing and transporting this surplus (or waste) are also a social burden. Recent legislation that pushes retailers and supermarkets to reduce waste involves new operations and choices which also have costs (storing, sorting, diverting). To what extent is this cost-efficient? Do they improve or enable more wasteful choices? This ultimately raises the question of how ethical it is to tackle food poverty with surplus food at the cost of impoverished farmers and seasonal workers.



5.0 LOOKING FORWARD...

Another issue more clearly linked with the future of SSMs is the number of changes in the trajectory of food from standard, to surplus, to waste. We know that it is legislation and standards, the nature of contracts between producers/farmers and mainstream supermarkets, and aesthetic standards set by supermarkets among other factors which determine the point at which food becomes surplus or waste. This point is not fixed, but it changes alongside changes in supply chain management and technological innovations. Furthermore, some mainstream supermarkets are trialling the sale of their own food surplus at highly discounted prices (Cullen, 2017) in addition to their practice of marking-down prices of products at the end of the day. Some have launched their own range of 'wonky vegetables', and 'misfits'. Some mainstream supermarkets are also increasingly using in-house food surplus to prepare foods for their deli section, salad bars, and take-out meals. New entrepreneurial ventures are also emerging which convert the surplus nutritious fruits and vegetables into new products packaged for resale or as an input to be used by the food service industry.

The uncertainty of food surplus availability, or the progressively declining availability of already meagre fresh and high quality foods will therefore pose questions and choices for SSMs in the not so distant future. We believe that the changes ahead in food surplus supply, as well as considerations of health, nutrition and social justice so far not critically discussed in SSM model need to be addressed. The underlying tensions and contradictions in SSM model reveal the need to strategize around food choice and food sourcing and explore the opportunity of drawing new solidarities between food producers and the urban poor who appear to be at the extremes of a food system stretched to unsustainable levels.

We would argue that there is need for a holistic approach to alleviating food poverty which

enables key stakeholders – private, public and the third sector – to

- **understand the food system within which social supermarkets operate, especially linking both ends of the system (vulnerable consumers and vulnerable food producers) and question the role played by various intermediaries within the food system (production, storage, transport, processing, distribution, consumption, waste) in reducing or reproducing vulnerabilities;**
- **reflect on the opportunities and constraints of a bottom up approach to food poverty, of which the rise of the social supermarket is a good illustration; and**
- **take a coordinated approach so that everybody has access to a healthy diet and there is a progressive realisation of the *right to food and nutrition* for all.**

5.2 Directions for research

Given the lack of empirical research on existing SSMs in Britain, our study was exploratory in nature and we adopted a qualitative approach and an organisational focus. The aim was to gain an understanding of these initiatives which are changing the food landscape – and to some extent the food system – by addressing social and environmental concerns at one time. Our findings offer an important starting point for future research and debate on the implications and impacts of SSMs in the longer term as an intervention to counter Britain's vulnerability to hunger. We identify four avenues for further research.

In light of the questions raised in the previous section, the first avenue for further research is related to the investigation of the demographics of SSM users, their life trajectory, and the ways in which SSMs impact their experience of poverty. This is especially important at a point



in time when a large number of SSMs are in the pipeline, the number of food insecure households and individuals is increasing, the full rolling out of a more restrictive welfare benefits system is yet to happen (Universal Credit), a hard Brexit scenario suggesting a forthcoming spike in food prices is being mooted and increasing policy attention is being given to finding solutions to food poverty in Britain.

Linked to the above, a second strand of research could be more generally focused on assessing/evaluating impact of SSMs in relation to their goals. The SSMs in our study demonstrate different ways in which they assess their own performance which range from simple feedback and output measures to a form of social auditing (SA) and social return on investment (SROI). The quality and quantity of their evidence however varies significantly. There is little systematic assessment of impact, although this is hardly surprising given that SSMs are three to four years old and there is no standard framework for evaluating the outcomes – social and environmental. Nonetheless, it is vital to assess the extent to which they bring about change. This research would also dig deeper into the system of beliefs and the political and ethical sensibilities of each initiative, and the ways in which they shape objectives, strategies and organisational aspects. This would for example entail exploring ways in which the stance towards food poverty and the structural inequalities of the food system are formulated (or not), how those are incorporated into organisational strategies, and how it is mobilised (e.g. through openly political

campaigns, positioning and public debate).

The third avenue for research could be focused on exploring the SSM model in relation to health, nutrition and food capabilities. This strand of research would explore to what extent SSMs can evolve towards models that produce more 'social value' by, for example:

- **retaining and boosting users' food knowledge while they are using SSMs;**
- **reducing health inequalities and ensuring 'nutritional security' for vulnerable households;**
- **exploring the existence, reasons, intensity, modalities and demographics of users' dependency on food surplus and identify whether food models can be more empowering than the current SSM model;**
- **supporting the integration of users into local, community-run food systems which include food growing, food production, meals preparation and commercialisation.**

Finally, a fourth avenue for research would explore the intricacies, trajectories, journeys and economies of food surplus before they reach the SSMs, exploring in more depth the functional relationship between the retail sector, manufacturers and SSMs. This strand would look to devising strategies that tackle the roots of food waste; and also related to this, the structural inequalities of the retail sector in ways that would benefit food producers and other food insecure and vulnerable populations across the food chain.

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GLOSSARY

APPG (All-Party Parliamentary Group) on Hunger and Food Poverty

It was established in October 2013 to investigate the root causes behind hunger, food poverty and the huge increase in demand for food banks across Britain. The group renamed itself the APPG on Hunger in 2015. Their Report in December 2014 – 'Feeding Britain: A strategy for zero hunger in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland' – recommended the development of **Social Supermarkets** and local authorities to identify areas of the country in which social supermarkets could "feasibly make a real and positive difference to people's living standards, and where feasible, to help the Local Authorities in these areas roll out this model" (p.20). Their consecutive Report in 2015, 'A route map to ending hunger as we know it in the United Kingdom: Feeding Britain in 2015-16' stated their position as follows:

A next phase in Britain's fightback against hunger must encourage the growth and evolution of social supermarkets. Here we have an accessible source of affordable food that also comes with so much more in the way of practical and emotional support, and which has the potential to catch families before they descend into a crisis situation that necessitates help from a food bank (p. 106)

Courtauld 2025

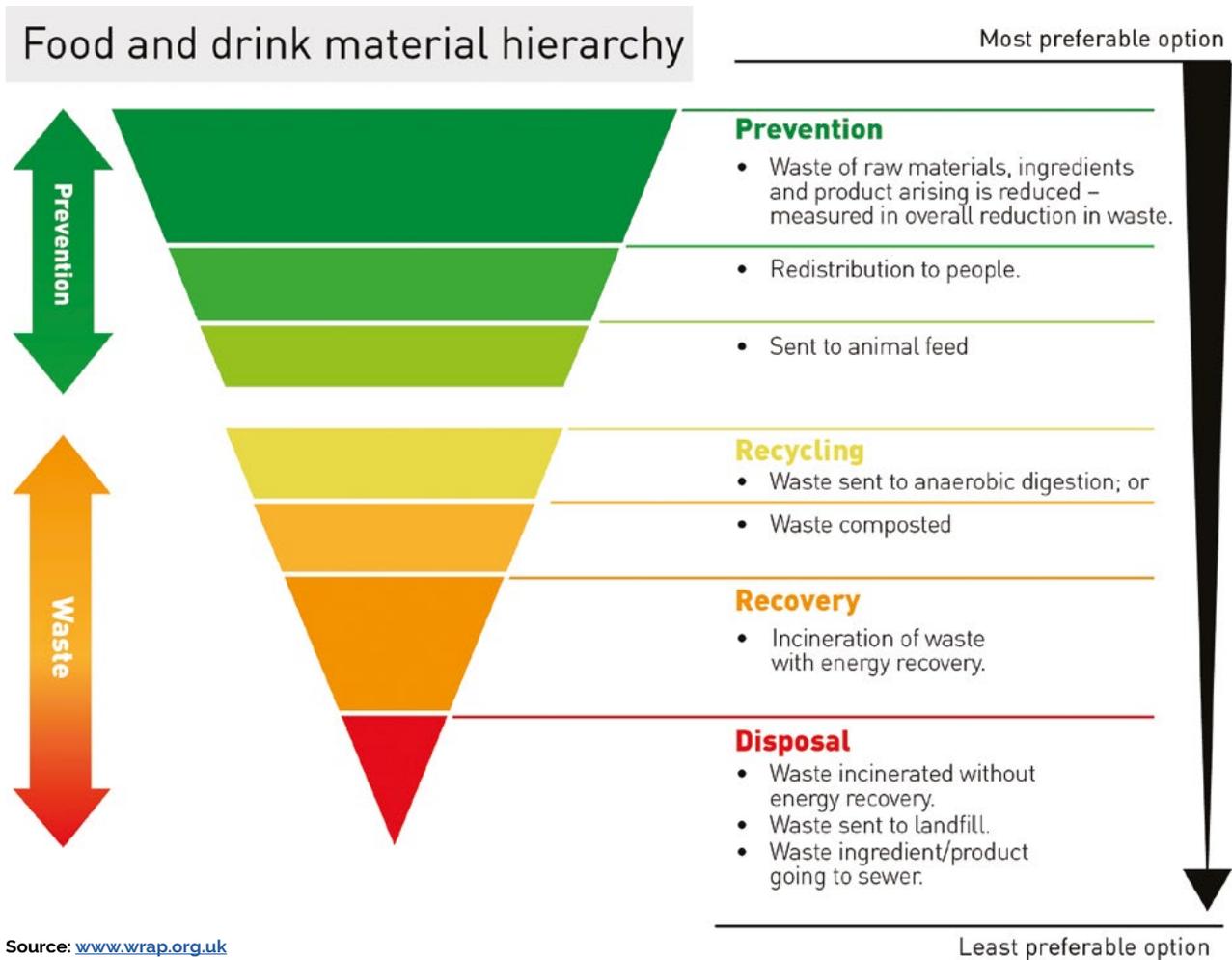
It is a voluntary agreement that aims for a 20% reduction in food and drink waste arising in the UK by 2025 in accordance with UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3. It currently has over 120 signatories, including retailers representing 95% of the UK grocery market, just under 50 manufacturers and trade associations, many of the main redistribution organisations including Company Shop, FareShare, His Church, Neighbourly, Olivo and The Real Junk Food Project, and local authorities covering around 40% of the population of England (<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/courtauld-commitment-2025>)

FareShare

It is UK's largest charity whose manifesto is "fighting hunger and food waste". The FareShare network consists of 20 Regional Centres spread across the UK – three of them (in London, West Midlands and Merseyside) are managed directly by FareShare and the others are run by third-party independent charities. FareShare provides the network with central support in a number of areas, for example sourcing food, transporting food, PR and communications, fundraising and operational support. FareShare also provides a service, known as FareShare FoodCloud, aimed at reducing store level food waste. As of 2017, FareShare redistributes food surplus to 6,723 frontline charities and community groups, which include homeless hostels, childrens' breakfast clubs, lunch clubs for older people, domestic violence refuges and community cafés, who are referred to as Community Food Members (CFMs). Community Food Associates (CFAs) refer to the charities and community groups that receive food through FareShare FoodCloud; these organisations are connected with their local supermarket and collect the surplus food directly from the store. (Source: <http://fareshare.org.uk/>)

Feeding Britain

It is an independent charity established in 2015 by a group of cross-party MPs and peers (All Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger) concerned about rising levels of hunger in the UK. Feeding Britain works in practical ways to combat hunger in towns, cities and counties around the UK, through its local Feeding Britain pilots. These are coalitions of local organisations – charities, community groups, local authorities, social enterprises and others – who come together to take joint action to help eliminate hunger and its root causes in their communities (<https://www.feedingbritain.org/>).



Food and Drink Material Hierarchy/ Waste hierarchy

The food and drink material hierarchy is a 'waste hierarchy' adapted by WRAP specifically aimed at food businesses. It sets out steps for dealing with food waste from the point of view of minimising the impact on the environment. As illustrated, the most preferable option is to prevent raw materials, ingredients and products from becoming waste in the first place. If surplus cannot be prevented, then redistribution for human consumption is the next option, followed by sending waste still left to be used as animal feed. Recycling (by sending it to anaerobic digestion, followed by composting);

recovery (through the incineration of waste with energy recovery); and disposal (through waste incineration without energy recovery; followed by sending to landfill; followed by sending to sewers) are in declining order of preferred options. (Source: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/why-take-action-legalpolicy-case>)

FSA

(Food Standards Agency) – It is an independent UK Government department, with the aim "to use our expertise and influence so that people can trust that the food they buy and eat is safe and honest." (<https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/about-the-fsa>)

GLOSSARY

The Food Foundation

It is an independent think tank that tackles the growing challenges facing the UK's food system on behalf of the UK public. They provide clear analyses of the problems caused by the food system and the role of policy and practice in addressing these. They develop and articulate food policies that support and guide the UK public to make choices that improve their health and well-being and they also inform and generate demand for new and better public and private sector policy and practice.



Registered Social Landlord (RSL)

This is the new general name for not-for-profit housing providers approved and regulated by UK Government through the Homes & Communities Agency. The vast majority of Registered Social Landlords are also known as housing associations. Housing associations are independent, not-for-profit organisations that provide homes for people in housing need. They are now the UK's major providers of new homes for rent. Many also run shared ownership schemes to help people who cannot afford to buy their own homes outright. Over recent years, a number of local authorities have transferred all or part of their housing stock, including their sheltered housing, to RSLs. (Source: <http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-registered-social-landlord.aspx>)

Salvage grocery stores

They are also referred to as "bent n' dent" stores, "scratch n' dent" stores, grocery surplus stores, discount grocery stores; and have existed in the US since the 1960s. As of 2014 there is an estimated number of 500 such stores in the US and they are found in every state (Chaifetz, 2014, Tuttle, 2009). They sell only salvaged items and do not deal with donated food. They operate with a specific licence from Department of Public Health and purchase stock from other grocery stores who want to get the items off their shelves, or directly from food manufacturers.

WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme)

It was set up in the UK in 2000 as a not-for-profit company to promote sustainable waste management. It became a registered charity in 2014. It works with an international network of partners, including governments, businesses, local authorities, trade associations and charities. It is the main organisation working on food waste prevention in the UK (<http://www.wrap.org.uk/food-waste-reduction>).



Storehouse Pantry (Bolton)



Affordable Foods (Newquay)



Nifties (Dover)



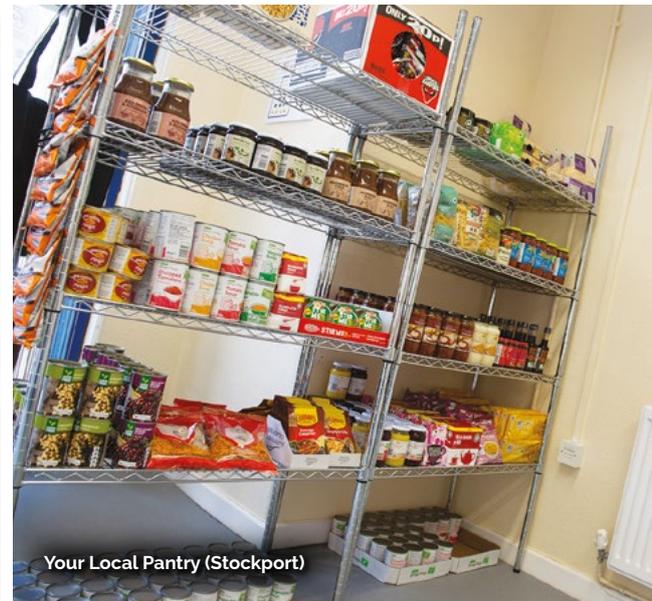
Community Shop (London)



Neo Community Social Supermarket (Birkenhead)



Sharehouse (Leeds)



Your Local Pantry (Stockport)



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