

RFW 15

Ymateb gan : FareShare Cymru
Evidence from : FareShare Cymru

1 What is your vision for the future of food in Wales and what needs to be done to achieve it?

1.1 FareShare Cymru has a vision of a Wales where no good food is wasted.

1.2 We work to turn an environmental problem into a social solution. In an ideal Wales there would be no surplus food and there would be no organisations needing our food to feed people. But, until that time we will continue to take good quality surplus edible food from the food industry and redistribute it to organisations that help feed people in need.

2 Healthy, locally produced food that is accessible and affordable;

2.1 The role of the third sector in helping to address the availability and accessibility of food needs to be recognised. FareShare Cymru works with over 200 charities and community organisations across South Wales, including homeless hostels, luncheon clubs, a refugee centre, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre, children's holiday clubs and more. In 2016-17 we redistributed enough food to contribute to over 1.5 million meals to organisations that help feed people in need. We estimate that this food saved the third sector circa £500,000 which many of the organisations are able to divert back into their vital frontline services or enable them to continue to provide their food services.

2.2 We recognise that surplus food is only part of the solution, but the impact that FareShare Cymru and our community members have is important to recognise. Research by NatCen for FareShare UK illustrates the impact¹ by revealing that the majority of clients get their main meal at the community member. A key benefit of FareShare providing food to people through CFMs is that clients are able to have a more nutritious and balanced diet.

- 59% of CFM clients say they eat more fruit and vegetables since accessing the CFM.
- 53% of clients say their physical strength has increased since getting food at the CFM and 52% say that their energy levels have increased.
- In addition to these improvements in clients' physical health due to getting food from the CFM, there are also a number of beneficial psychological effects. 87% say that eating a meal at the service has a positive impact on how they feel and 92% say that being able to have a meal at the service helps them 'face the day ahead'.

- The organisations themselves are able to work with more people.

2.3 Food brings people together and for many of our members and their clients this is an incredibly important aspect of their work. Food may be the reason that someone comes into one of their centres, where they can then encourage them to seek support. Food provided by our community members has had a range of wider benefits for clients. 82% say it makes them feel part of a community and 29% say that what they enjoy most about eating at the community member is socialising.

2.4 A few quotes from our members also help to illustrate these points:

‘From the beginning, one of our concerns has been the poor food choices young people make – chips, curry sauce and high energy drinks! The partnership with FareShare is allowing us to develop a café run by young people for young people, with the help of a volunteer chef. We can not only improve their eating choices, but give them training in food handling and preparation and provide them with some basic cooking skills.’

‘(The food from FareShare) gives people more variety and is cost effective. With not a lot of money, we can cook people a healthy lunch.’

‘FareShare is absolutely amazing, without it we would have no budget to buy food due to our cuts. Providing food is essential, we give meals to people that often haven’t eaten for days.’

3 An innovative food industry sustaining high quality jobs

3.1 There is a need to consider training and skills development for the whole of the food industry, including the third sector organisations that operate in this area. We have a key role to play in engaging with people, often the long term unemployed, and offer work placements and volunteering opportunities as well as training. We can, should and do play a role in providing people with the necessary skills, experience and training to re-enter the workplace and this can be in various areas of the food industry.

3.2 At FareShare Cymru, for example, volunteers receive deliveries, sort food and log it, pick orders and make deliveries. We aim provide our volunteers with training which may include: forklift, food hygiene and so on. Our volunteers are key members of our team and are vital to what we do and we could not do what we do without them.

3.3 However, some funded training which would be useful to us and our volunteers to be able to access has historically not been available as they are not ‘employees’ but volunteers. If this training were available it could help to make the volunteers more work ready and be a way of up-skilling them ready to enter the food industry as a paid employee. In addition to this it is important to recognise the role of the third sector in providing both training and skills development.

4 Sustainably produced food with high environmental and animal welfare standards

4.1 Any future vision of food and drink in Wales should be based on the principles and goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations act and be in line with targets and goals laid out in other strategies. Interestingly there is no national indicator associated with the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act associated directly to food.

4.2 Sustainably produced food should mean that food waste is minimised. A future for food and drink in Wales should be developed in line with the waste hierarchy and the targets and ambitions laid out in the Welsh Governments waste strategy and supporting plans are included, including waste prevention.

4.2 Food and drink businesses need to be encouraged to ensure that they are implementing the waste hierarchy. Waste prevention saves resources and money which can be reinvested in the food business. There is a need to make it cost neutral for the food industry to divert suitable food for charitable redistribution rather than other forms of disposal, which may be subsidised. Included in this is the role of surplus food redistribution in ensuring that no good food is wasted. During 2016-17 FareShare Cymru redistributed over 460 tonnes of surplus food to organisations that help feed people in need. Our community food members used this food to provide over 1.1 million meals and saving the third sector essential finance that can be reinvested in their vital frontline services.

4.4 Reducing food waste has further environmental benefits. Ensuring that the maximum is made of the food produced reduces the need to produce more decreasing water use, fertilizer and pesticide use and decreasing transportation.

¹More than Meals

<http://www.fareshare.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/More-Than-Meals-Exec-Summary-FINAL.pdf>