



Food, Farming
& Countryside
Commission

The Food Conversation

Wave Three

Findings report from deliberations in
South London and Cornwall

Hopkins Van Mil

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TPXimpact



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Executive Summary

This programme of deliberation was commissioned by the Food, Farming & Countryside Commission (FFCC) as phase two of a programme of deliberation that initially began in May 2023. It was co-designed and delivered by FFCC working with Hopkins Van Mil (HVM) and TPXImpact. HVM are the authors of this report.

The deliberative process for The Food Conversation was initially launched with a proof of concept phase in two locations: Birmingham and Cambridgeshire. In March 2024 this was followed by a lightening deliberation with 30 participants.

The Food Conversation is a methodologically robust process based on Citizens' Jury or public dialogue type deliberation. Taking place in ten locations around the UK, grouped into four dialogue waves, each wave involves between 60 and 90 citizens who are broadly representative of their location and invited to take part through a postcode lottery by Sortition Foundation. A total of 300 citizens will have been involved in this element of The Food Conversation by the end of 2024.

Citizens involved spend over twenty hours together across four online workshops and two in-person sessions. They hear from specialist presenters about food system challenges and potential solutions. These are then discussed and reflected on before each location produces their view of what should change, how it should change, and who is responsible for that change.

The process enables those involved to reflect on the policy actions already proposed by actors in the system, and through previous deliberative processes. It draws on a chicken wrap as a discussion framing device, and four key themes on which participants heard a range of specialists present:

- Justice and power
- Food, farming and land use including climate, nature and biodiversity
- Food environments, child nutrition and public procurement
- Food system policy making and governance.

The focus of this report are the deliberations which took place in South London and Cornwall between 25th June to 13th July. A full report of findings from all the waves will be produced in early 2025.

There is a strong call in Cornwall and South London for **urgent and significant change in the food system**. Universally participants express concern that the current system is unhealthy, unfair and complex. Instead, they want to see policies that deliver a system that is sustainable, healthy and fair.

Participants built up over four workshops online and two in-person sessions to create, 'Manifestos for change in the food system'. The key themes that emerge these are that participants want to see:

- **Sustainable farming and animal welfare** to be a focus for policy action including financial incentives, and to make the sector more appealing to younger generations.
- **Local community action** including not-for-profit local food hubs that connect communities to local farmers and give the public more direct access to local, sustainable, healthy, and *affordable* food.

- Participants prioritise actions which **protect and enhance the environment**. They are particularly interested in criminalising environmental damage and polluter pays policies.
- There is very strong support in both locations for policies which deliver **higher food standards in public institutions**, from early years setting onwards.
- The manifestos demonstrate how seriously the participants take the ubiquitous nature of unhealthy food, including UPFs. They call for ethical food marketing regulation, that bans or restricts the promotion and advertising of unhealthy foods and instead promotes healthy, sustainable produce.
- Across both locations participants want to see direct measures to **reduce food inequalities**, calling for universal free school meals. In contrast there is less support for indirect measures such as Universal Basic Income (UBI).

Overall participants want to see improvements to governance and strong leadership to take food system change forward.

When asked about their connections to the food system some participants share that they feel very little direct connection. They feel removed from how food is grown and produced and disconnected from the natural environment from where it comes.

Many other participants do feel connections to the food system through:

- **Buying and selling food** – from independent food retailers through to large supermarkets
- **Growing food** – in Cornwall in particular participants share family connections they have to both farming and fishing, and in both locations, through connections to their gardens and allotments
- **Cooking, eating and sharing food** – some participants feel their greatest connection to the food system comes from the role that food plays in bringing families and friends together. Others share their enthusiasm for experimenting and being creative in the kitchen.

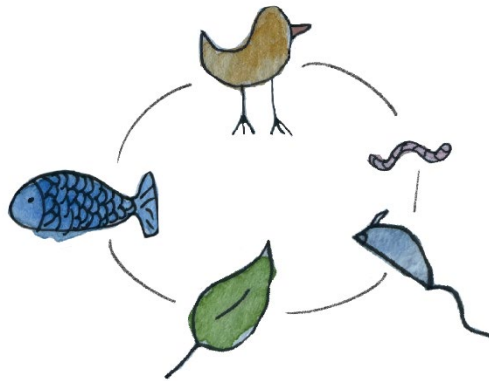
System power plays: how power plays out in the food system was an area of interest to participants. They associate money with power and believe that a dangerous amount of power lies in the hands of food businesses and corporations. They describe the power as ‘dangerous’ because it prioritises profit over fairness and sustainability in their eyes. In both locations there is a strong belief that government holds considerable power and could regulate and legislate to mitigate against current imbalances within the system. There is, however, scepticism that government will ever pivot away from the corporate influence that infuses food policy making.

Key challenges participants see in the food system are:

- Animal welfare linked to the damage industrial farming and fishing is doing to our natural environment, including species loss
- Health problems caused by the prioritisation of unhealthy foods in the system which is perceived as ‘normal’, linked to a rise in obesity and a food waste crisis
- The price of healthy foods – which are out of the reach of many household budgets.

We see that some participants are convinced that taxing food companies would cause harm to the consumer. They feel it is unlikely to have a big enough impact on the companies involved, nor encourage them to produce food in a different way.

As such over a quarter of participants didn't want to see the introduction of a windfall tax for example. Others were not confident that the Government would in fact use the funds raised from a windfall tax to fund better food provision for lower income households. If they had assurances that funds raised through taxation would be used to address social inequalities and improve the food system for everyone they would be more convinced of the merit of this policy proposal as a route to the changes they want to see.



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Food Conversation deliberation was commissioned by the [Food, Farming and Countryside Commission \(FFCC\)](#) in May 2023. It was designed and facilitated by [Hopkins Van Mil \(HVM\)](#) and [TPXimpact](#) working in a co-production process with FFCC. This report has been authored by HVM as the summary of the findings in South London and Cornwall. This report is the third in a series of summary reports being produced in waves to inform important policy discussions since the General Election on 4th July and the first 100 days of the new government falling within 2024. A final summary report for the full process will be published in early 2025.

1.2 Programme objectives

Participants were told as part of their deliberations that food system change is essential for making progress on human and planetary health, but such progress has been slowed by prevailing narratives and assumptions about food which seek to maintain the status quo. Society needs to move away from assumptions such as, 'people want cheap food', 'no-one wants a nanny state' and 'it's up to consumers to change their buying habits' to unlock new possibilities. Yet citizens are increasingly aware of the problems in the food system and understand that if we fix food, we can improve the nation's health and save the planet. The programme objectives established by FFCC and its partners are to understand public views across the UK to inform this new narrative around the food system.

The Food Conversation is drawing in people representative of their location to:

- Understand public views on the current challenges within the food system and opportunities for change
- Identify priority policies and actions to help improve the food system
- Explore participants' personal stories - shining a light on people's views of and connections to the food system.

This process adds depth from around the UK to early communications on the public's attitude to action on food. The programme has been run in two phases. An early proof of concept phase ran in two locations, Birmingham and Cambridgeshire in summer 2023. Phase two was launched with a Lightning Deliberation involving 30 people from across the UK in March 2024. This phase now continues with four waves of public dialogue in ten UK locations and three hundred people. The first wave ran in East Kent, Northumberland and West Yorkshire and was completed in May 2024. The second wave was held in Wales, ending in May 2024, and the third took place in South London and Cornwall and is the focus of this report. The waves conclude with deliberations in The Lothians, Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, Orkney and Shetland in Scotland and with participants in Northern Ireland.

1.3 What is a public deliberation?

Public deliberation is a process during which members of the public interact with evidence from academics, scientists, stakeholders and policy makers to consider issues relevant to future decisions.

The process enables and supports constructive conversations amongst diverse citizens on topics which are often complex or controversial. Not only does it provide an in-depth insight into public opinion, it also offers a window into understanding people's reasoning. HVM works within and promotes Sciencewise principles and quality framework¹. The HVM team has extensive experience in designing, delivering public dialogue and reporting on the outcomes.

Public dialogue was chosen as the format to ensure that participants are given time and a level playing field to discuss the policy actions and issues that matter to individuals, to communities and to society. Public dialogue is:

- **Informed:** evidence is provided on the topic shared by experts in the field
- **Two-way:** participants, policy makers and experts all give something to and take something away from the process
- **Facilitated:** the process is carefully structured to ensure that participants receive the right amount and detail of information, a diverse range of views are heard and taken into account, and the discussion is not dominated by particular individuals or issues
- **Deliberative:** participants develop their views on an issue through conversation with other participants, policy makers and experts.

1.4 Recruitment

Participants were recruited to the dialogue using sortition. Locations for the second wave of The Food Conversation are set out in Figure 1. This report focuses on the findings from both groups in Cornwall and South London.



Figure 1: Citizens in South London and Cornwall took part in The Food Conversation. They met in-person for the final workshops in either Croydon or Penzance.

¹ www.sciencewise.org

A stratified sampling method enables the formation of a 'mini-public' representative of the community in which the dialogue is based. The process was managed by the Sortition Foundation² working to a recruitment specification (see Appendix 2) devised by the dialogue partners. The process had three stages:

Stage 1

The Sortition Foundation randomly selected 1,800 addresses from South London and Cornwall (just under 300 addresses for every one of the needed up to 60 citizens recruited). Each of these addresses received a letter in the post inviting adult members of the household to register their interest in taking part in the conversation. Previous experience indicated that people who live in more deprived areas³ tend to be less likely to respond to invitations of this kind, hence the random selection was weighted as follows: 80% of the addresses were chosen from the whole of each of the areas and 20% of the addresses were chosen specifically from more deprived areas (Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 1-3).

Stage 2

As part of the sign-up procedure, all potential participants were required to share some basic information about themselves including address, date of birth, gender, ethnicity and information about their educational attainment. We also asked if they describe themselves as having a disability, if the household contains children, and how they would vote if there was a general election tomorrow.

Stage 3

This information was then used as input into a "sortition algorithm". This is a process of randomly selecting the 27 confirmed participants in both South London and Cornwall from the pool of 150 people who registered. This is done in such a way as to create a representative sample (e.g., the age profile of participants in The Food Conversation is broadly similar to the age profile of the population of the areas as a whole). In this case the Sortition Foundation did this twice - once for each area. Details of the specific algorithm used, including information about the fairness of the algorithm, can be found [here](#).

In addition to the information about gender, age, ethnicity, disability, household composition and political leaning mentioned above, we also used the address of each respondent to hit three further targets:

- **Constituencies:** over-indexing for those living in the following marginal constituencies – South London: Beckenham and Penge, Croydon South, Streatham and Croydon North; Cornwall: Camborne and Redruth, Truro and Falmouth.
- **Urban/ rural:** using government statistics to classify all addresses as lying in an urban or rural area and our sortition algorithm ensured that we had representative numbers from each in the assembly.
- **IMD:** using a postcode IMD lookup to show what IMD score each address given by registrants falls into so that we can make sure that each is proportionally represented.

² <https://www.sortitionfoundation.org/>

³ Using the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government [Indices of Deprivation](#) (2019)

At the end of the process the Sortition Foundation contacted each of the selected participants to make sure they were still interested in taking part, replaced any who had changed their mind or had something come up (using the algorithm). The details of the final confirmed citizens were then handed to TPXimpact who supported participants through The Food Conversation journey.

1.5 Methodology

In the proof of concept phase in 2023 HVM conducted a rapid topic review, based on work done by FFCC, to map the landscape of existing public attitudes and dialogue research on food systems. The results of the topic review were discussed in a design workshop. As a result, the dialogue was designed around four main topic areas enabling the deliberative process design to be framed around understanding of what participants in previous deliberative process had called for.

Within those topics, policy actions were summarised and shared with participants (see Appendix 3 for the full policy action summary) as a sample of the policy actions that have already been proposed. The dialogue was therefore framed to encourage participants to review policy actions already suggested by a range of organisations, consider what they found interesting or appealing about these actions and what they found difficult or challenging. Each workshop explored what participants think about government intervention, where power lies in the system and the principles that underlie thinking on the food system and the need for change. A chicken wrap was used throughout the process as a window into the food system, as a window into the topic and a device to illustrate its complexity.

Dialogue process

Figure 2 sets out the main topics within which policy actions were discussed, and the dialogue framework.

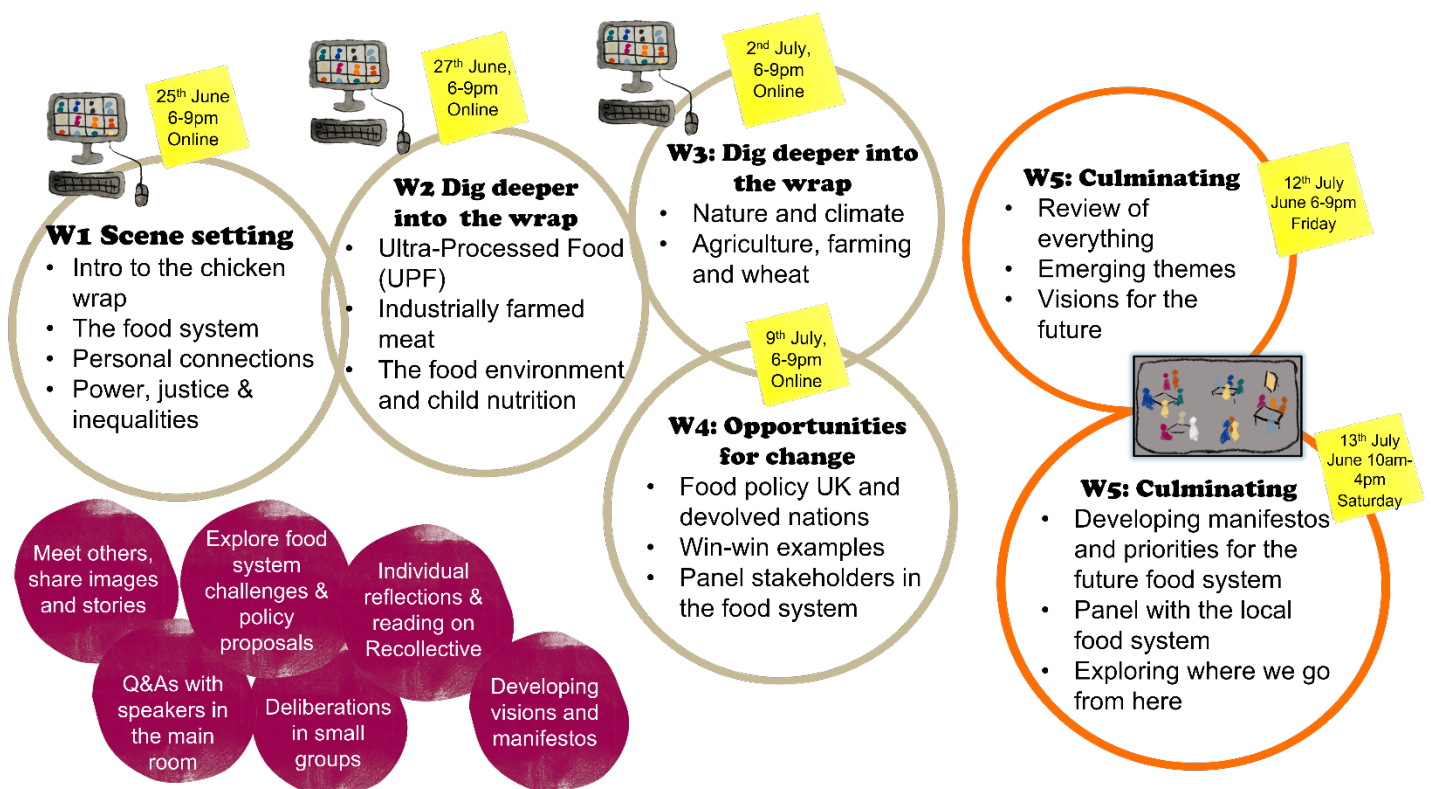


Figure 2: The dialogue process and framing

The dialogue was designed around five workshops. Four workshops held online for three hours on week-day evenings over a two-week period. The final workshop was held in-person in Penzance (for the Cornwall group) and Croydon (for the South London group) from Friday 12th to Saturday 13th July (see Figure 2). Each online workshop included specialist presentations (see Appendix 4) which contextualised the topic and framed the issues. In small groups the policy actions were reviewed and discussed. The final workshop was a culminating process in which participants focused on their visions of the future and manifestos for change based on reviewing the policy actions discussed during the online workshops.

Participants were supported throughout by the facilitation and support teams, a participant handbook, tech support sessions with individuals and in small groups, and other support to ensure they could take part in the dialogue. Participants that needed them were loaned pcs, web cams, headphones or Wi-Fi hot spots to ensure they were not excluded from the process due to a lack of equipment.

Interpreting and extrapolating findings

Public deliberations - whether dialogues, Citizens' Juries or Assemblies - are a well-respected, robust approach for engaging the public with complex policy issues in a meaningful and informed way. As with any research method, it is important to consider what the approach means for interpreting or extrapolating findings.

Findings are reported thematically, following the key themes that emerged through the analysis process. Deliberation is a qualitative methodology. We have used qualitative research methods to review what participants told us, specifically grounded theory where the findings come from a thorough reading of the transcripts. Transcripts were created from each of the deliberative methods used. We collated what was said into key themes and used those themes to draw out meaning from the discussions. We chose this approach to ensure the findings are rooted in what participants said, rather than looking for confirmation of preconceived ideas. The transcripts used were anonymised so that no one can be traced back to the comments that are included in this report.

Qualitative research reports, including this one, do not report on the number of times something was said, but rather the strength of feeling expressed. As such HVM uses the following quantifiers in the report:

- 'Many' or 'most' when it is clear that all or almost all participants share a similar view
- 'Some' when less participants shared a similar view
- 'A few' when a small number of participants shared a similar view

Bullet points are used to summarise key points made. These mostly reflect areas of agreement and where points were made by many participants across many of the locations. Points of disagreement are described. However, it should be noted that a great deal of commonality, unity and agreement on what matters about our food has been found through this process.

Anonymised quotations are used to highlight points made by a number of participants and to underline points made by a range of people. They also highlight points of particular significance to participants.

Reading this report

When reading this report you will find:

Images shared by participants to illustrate the question ‘What connects you to the food system?’. The images in Chapter 2 are from the drawings created by participants and flip charts by facilitators to illustrate participants’ visions of the future and manifestos for change.

“Quotes set out like this. Quotes are used throughout the report to illustrate points, not replace narrative. These are provided verbatim in participants’ own words, we remove filler words, but do not make changes to spelling or grammar so as not to distort the participants’ meaning”. Participant, South London, workshop 1

Summary findings

Presented at the beginning of each chapter in text boxes with a coloured frame like this one. They set out the main findings to be discovered in the chapter.

This report is illustrated with:

- Participant images from each location
- Participant notes and drawings made during the in-person workshops
- Facilitator flip chart notes
- Original illustrations on themes prompted by the participant deliberations from [Lydia Hopkins Design](#).



2. What matters? What do we want from our food?

Summary findings

This section focuses on the manifestos for change drawn up in the final in-person workshop. There is a strong call in Cornwall and South London for urgent and significant change in the food system. Universally participants express concern that the current system is unhealthy, unfair and complex. Instead, they want to see policies that deliver a system that is sustainable, healthy and fair.

Participants highlight a range of urgent and important actions to achieve this improved food system, which they prioritised through a dot exercise.

Key themes in their manifestos for the food system include:

- **Sustainable farming and animal welfare.** Participants call for a suite of measures that support the transition to sustainable farming, including financial incentives, and make the sector more appealing to younger generations. In Cornwall, participants call for urgent action to improve animal welfare.
- **Local community food systems.** Many participants want government to support the introduction of not-for-profit local food hubs, that connect communities to local farmers and give the public access to local, sustainable, healthy and affordable food, while educating them on food matters.
- **Environmental protection and food waste.** Participants call for actions that protect the environment. They propose criminalising environmental destruction and polluter pays policies. In addition, they recommend actions to tackle organisational food waste and the prevalence of food packaging.
- **Education, awareness and food labelling.** Participants call for the education of all ages, starting by embedding food matters into the curriculum. There is also strong support for compulsory eco and health labelling, that supports consumers to make informed food choices.
- **Improving institutional food standards.** There is strong support for higher food standards in public institutions, including in early years settings.
- **Tackling UPFs and food marketing.** Participants call for ethical food marketing regulation, that bans or restricts the promotion and advertising of unhealthy food (i.e., UPFs) and promotes healthy, sustainable produce.
- **Food business practices and regulations.** South London participants call for a cap on food business and supermarket profits, with excess profits redistributed to farmers, workers and others to address inequalities in the system. They also want to see mandatory sustainability reporting.
- **Affordability and accessibility.** Many participants support direct measures to address food inequalities (e.g. free school meals for all, healthy food vouchers). In contrast, there is less support for indirect measures (e.g., Universal Basic Income).
- **Strategy, leadership and governance.** Participants in both South London and Cornwall suggest a range of ways to improve planning and governance, such as the introduction of a food minister and a national food plan.

2.1 Manifestos for change

Participants' deliberations culminated in the development of manifestos for the food system, which set out problems that need tackling, the desired future state of the food system, and the necessary actions to create a better food system. We have placed these at the beginning of this report to prioritise participant views on change.

Problems with the food system.

When participants were asked to think of three words that describe the food system as it is, their responses focused on concerns. Commonly used words in Cornwall and South London included “unhealthy”, “unfair”, “complex”, and “expensive” as illustrated in the word cloud below (Figure 3).

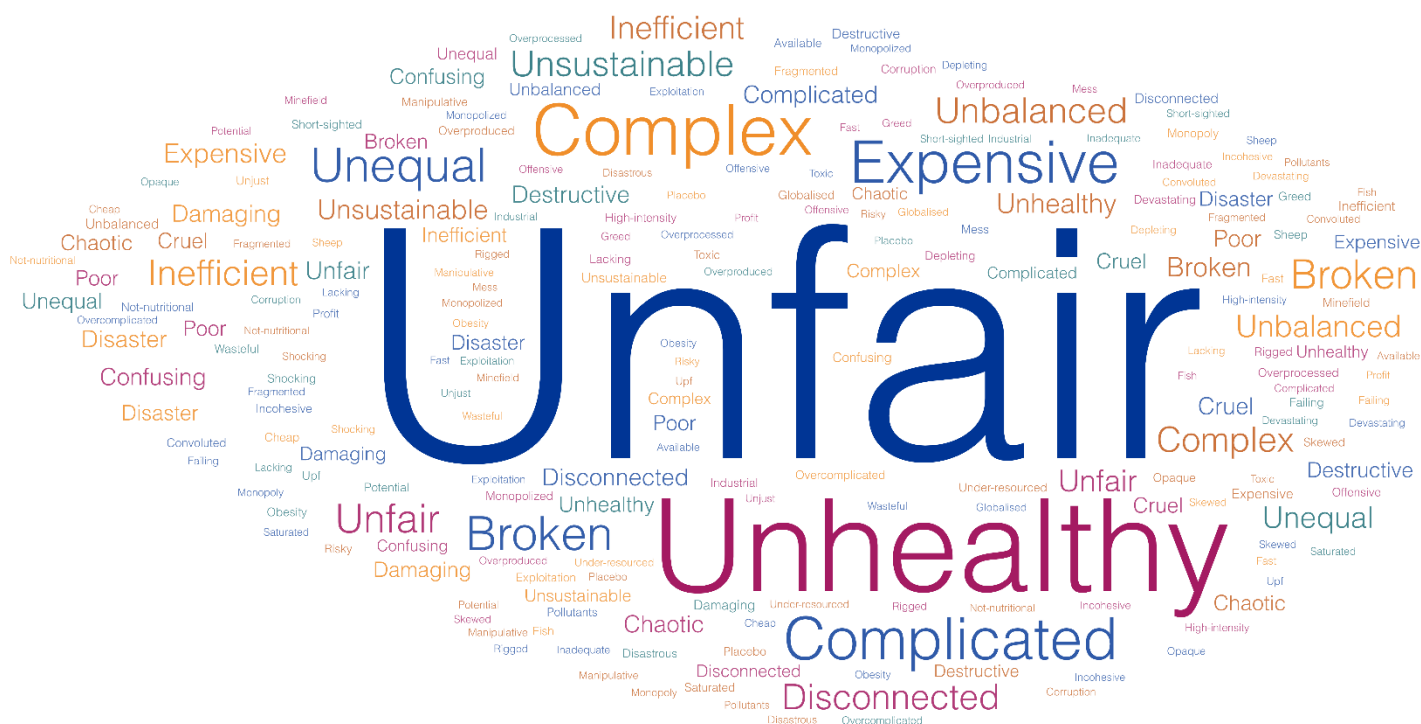


Figure 3: Describing the food system as it is

As participants developed their manifestos, they shared their views on key problems within the food system that require action. Here is a summary of the concerns included in the Cornwall and South London manifestos:

Affordability and accessibility. Participants are concerned about the challenges people face accessing good healthy, sustainable and affordable food, which is worsened by food poverty, housing costs, and the cost-of-living crisis.

Corporate power. Concerns about companies dominating the food system, prioritising profits and shareholder returns over people, often at the expense of small producers. One participant describes it as “Capitalism on steroids”.

Prevalence of unhealthy foods. Concerns about the dominance and marketing of unhealthy foods, especially UPFs, and their impact on health. Also, the price discrepancy between healthy foods, such as organic produce, and unhealthy options, such as UPFs, which makes healthy options inaccessible for many.

People lack knowledge and time. Concern there is a lack of understanding about where food comes from and the health consequences of our food choices. Also, the pace of life leaves little time for cooking, leading to poor eating habits.

Waste and packaging. Excessive food waste and too much packaging, particularly plastic packaging, are major environmental concerns.

Environment. Concern that unsustainable farming practices damage the environment, including soil degradation, water pollution and climate change.

Concern about farmers. Concern that farmers, particularly smaller scale, are not getting a fair deal for their produce, and that farming is no longer appealing to the younger generation, resulting in an ageing population.

Lack of leadership and planning. Concern about a lack of government leadership, complex governance structures, and a lack of long-term planning. In addition, participants worry about corporate influence on decision-making.

Land use. Concern about inefficient land use, excessive private land ownership, and a lack of community land ownership.

Imports. Concern about a reliance on food imports, which are often cheaper than local producers.

When describing the food system they want to see, they use words like “sustainable”, “healthy”, “fair” and “affordable” as illustrated in the word cloud below (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Describing the food system as it should be

In their manifestos participants in Cornwall and South London set out their aspirations for the food system, which are summarised below.

Accessibility and affordability. Healthy, fresh and sustainable food is accessible and enjoyed by everyone, regardless of budget. The focus is on local produce and food that has not been imported.

Local focus. Fresh locally sourced sustainable produce is readily available. Local people relate to the farming sector. Both urban and rural settings are supporting sustainable food production. Land has been redistributed, so that communities and young people have more space to produce food locally.

Eating and living well. Eating well is a joyful experience for everyone, with people feeling healthy and energised. People eat less processed foods. They have a good work-life balance, so there is time to buy and cook good food. Living sustainably is part of popular culture. The environment supports living well.

Sustainable, less intensive farming. There is financial and technical support, and a viable business model, for the farming sector to transition from intensive practices to more sustainable farming, including improved animal husbandry.

Environmental recovery. Sustainable farming and food production practices mean nature, wildlife species, land and waterways are protected and restored.

Rebalancing the supply chain. Farmers are getting a fairer deal for their produce and are highly valued members of society. The farming sector is more attractive to younger people. Large food businesses and supermarkets are transparent, environmentally conscious, and treat the supply chain fairly.

Educated and re-enthused society. Adults, children and young people are involved in food growing and production, and are inspired to eat and prepare healthy and sustainable food. There is better understanding, awareness and motivation. Education has a profound impact on children.

Leadership and planning. Tackling the food system and related issues, such as climate change, is a top priority for the Government. There is a cross-party, long strategy action plan. Government policy making is more efficient.

Sustainable and secure food system. The food system is healthy, secure for future generations, and sustainable food is produced in the quality and quantity we need, while creating space for nature and tackling climate.

Less waste. There is less food waste, and less packaging is used, and plastics have been eliminated.

Healthy food environment. The food environment is healthier. Foods are clearly labelled, ingredients are regulated, food marketing and promotion is focused on healthy foods, rather than the aggressive marketing of UPFs.

The groups in Cornwall gave their manifestos the following titles:

- Chanjow boos (the phrase 'change food' in Cornish)
- The fair food Cornish contract
- Thought 4 food
- Feed the future for health

The groups in South London gave their manifestos the following titles:

- People's food manifesto

- Food solutions
- Sustainable healthy food for all
- The actions / solutions needed to change the food system

Central to participants' manifestos were the actions they called for to create a better food system. After actions were developed by small groups, participants prioritised them using a dot exercise. Participants placed dots on actions that they felt were most 'urgent' and 'important'. The purpose was to provide a mechanism to gauge which actions participants find more pressing and important. It was not treated as a formal vote. See Appendix 1 for the full results of the prioritisation exercise.

These actions are summarised under the following themes:

- Sustainable farming and animal welfare
- Environmental protection and waste reduction
- Local community food systems
- Education, awareness and food labelling
- Institutional food standards
- Tackling UPFs and food marketing
- Food businesses practices and regulations
- Strategy, leadership and governance
- Affordability and accessibility
- Sustainable farming and animal welfare

Participants in both Cornwall and South London call for a suite of measures that **support the farming sector to transition to sustainable, regenerative farming practices**. In addition, they argue that farming needs to be made more appealing to young people.

Measures proposed to support this transition include:

- **Transition budget.** Set a guaranteed agricultural budget to give stability to the farming sector to transition to sustainable farming.
- **Financial and technical support.** Provide farmers with subsidies and technical support for sustainable farming and innovation. One group suggested reintroducing heritage crops that are suited to the land (Cornwall).
- **Training and education.** Make agricultural education and training free or affordable for young people, to reduce financial barrier to entering the sector.
- **Imports.** Introduce regulation to ensure food imports meet the same sustainability and animal welfare standards as the UK.
- **Regulation.** Participants in South London specifically call for regulation to enforce more sustainable, nature friendly farming practices.

A key concern for many participants in Cornwall is **animal welfare**. They call for urgent action to improve animal welfare through taxing the revenue of industrial farming and applying the same standards to imports.

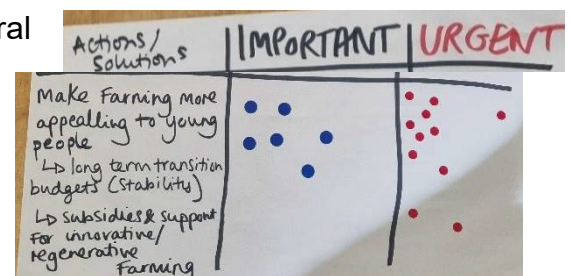


Figure 5: Dot exercise, Cornwall

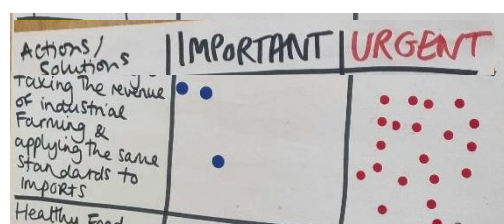


Figure 6: Dot exercise, Cornwall

In Cornwall, there was also some support for the introduction of a **land use framework** to help maximise the use of land for sustainable farming and to minimise imports. One group recommended considering food production in urban areas and the introduction of green infrastructure.

Environmental protection and waste reduction

Environmental protection measures.

Participants call for the introduction of laws, regulations and policies that protect the environment from the negative impacts of food production and intensive farming.

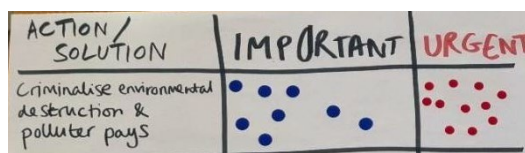


Figure 7: Dot exercise, Cornwall

This was a high priority in Cornwall, with criminalising environmental destruction and polluter pays policies highlighted as both urgent and important.

Polluter pays policies. There was support for polluter pays policies, such as fining food companies that pollute the environment. One group in Cornwall called for transparency and public awareness of companies that have been fined, alongside funding to better understand pollutants.

Criminalise environmental destruction (ecocide). In Cornwall, criminalising environmental destruction was considered one of the most important actions. The group that proposed it, commented that this is not a new concept and should be straightforward to adopt in the UK. This is a policy proposal that received a high level of support in the 'do it, test it, debate it' in the online exercise (see Figure 8).

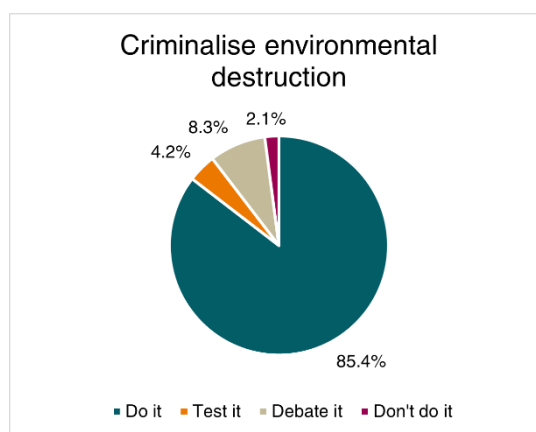


Figure 8: Criminalise environmental destruction. Make it a crime to severely damage or destroy ecosystems (ecocide).

Food waste and packaging. Food waste was also an area of concern, although it was not prioritised in the dot exercise. However, a range of measures were recommended:

- Cap wastage on the hospitality sector, public institutions (e.g., hospitals and schools) and corporations (South London)
- Make it easier for organisations to share food that would otherwise go to waste i.e., by reforming policies that prevent food sharing (South London)
- Fund organisations like Olio that support the redistribution of food that hasn't been sold or served (South London)
- Make it a requirement for organisations to compost food that can't be redistributed, rather than sending it to landfill (South London)

Also, introducing measures to force supermarkets and food companies to reduce packaging and make it fully recyclable and compostable was seen as both urgent and important by participants in Cornwall.

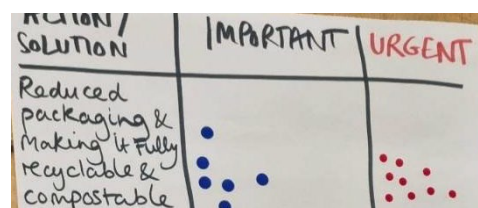


Figure 9: Dot exercise, Cornwall

Local community food system

In both South London and Cornwall, there is strong support for strengthening the local food system through **not-for-profit food hubs**, which is a policy proposal that received support in the 'do it, test it, debate it' exercise (Figure 10).

Participants argue that local food hubs will improve connections between local people and local farmers; support community cohesion through the provision of local, sustainable, healthy and affordable food; and enable farmers to get a fairer price for their produce.

Some also see local food hubs as an opportunity to **raise awareness and educate** the public on matters relating to the food system. They therefore call them 'local food hubs plus'.

Participants want to see local food hubs being championed by government and receiving financial support e.g., ring fenced central government funds, incentives such as tax breaks and reduced rent.

In addition to local food hubs, other measures were proposed to connect communities with the food system. Some participants want to see action taken to support **community food production**. Suggestions for achieving this range from offering grants for community food projects to increasing **community owned land for farming**, including providing new young farmers with access to land.

Education, awareness and food labelling

Participants recommend a range of measures to improve knowledge and understanding of the food system, and healthy and sustainable food at different levels, starting at school. In South London, this was one of the most important actions identified by participants.

School curriculum

Participants call for the topic of the food system, including food production, health and nutrition, and cooking, to be embedded in the curriculum. They want it to be covered at different educational stages, starting at nursery school. They argue that all children should leave school meeting an agreed level of understanding of the food system and how to eat healthily and sustainably.

Specific suggestions for children to gain direct experience of food production were made e.g., **twinning schools with local farms** and school allotments. The group that proposed the twinning model recommend that central government leads on the development and piloting of the scheme, with local government supporting its

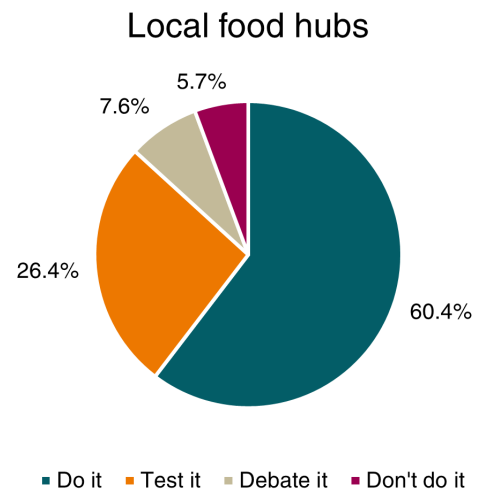


Figure 10: Local food hubs. Invest in systems to get food from producers to people without so many steps in between.

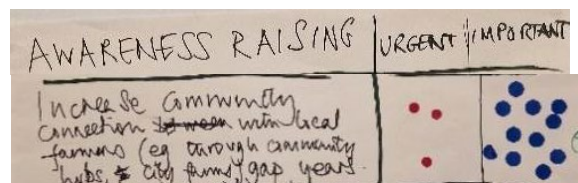


Figure 11: Dot exercise, South London

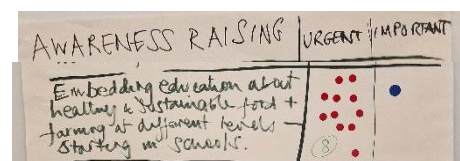


Figure 12: Dot exercise, South London

implementation. Another suggestion is for NGOs and community groups to visit local schools, so children learn about food system issues directly from those involved.

Young adult gap year. In South London, one group recommended the introduction of a compulsory 'food, farming, nature and the environment gap year' for all 18-year-olds. They argue this would result in engaged citizens and an entire generation that understands the food system and related issues, such as nature conversation.

Societal education and awareness campaign

Participants recommend a range of other ways to raise awareness and understanding about the food system across society beyond schools.

- **Health focus.** Medical practitioners and researchers working with the government to educate the public in the relationship between food and health.
- **National awareness campaign.** A national level awareness raising campaign to trigger change in the system, which should include social media.
- **Community workshops.** Workshops where adults and children come together to learn about the food system and grow and produce food together.
- **Online webinars.** Free online webinars for all ages to learn about the food system, and food nutrition.
- **Promote local food.** As part of the awareness raising campaign, promote local food hubs and destigmatise food banks.

Many participants argue that education is urgently needed if the food system is to change. It should be sustained over the long-term to ensure its effectiveness.

Eco and health labelling scheme

In both South London and Cornwall, many participants support the introduction of **simple, clear labelling schemes** that help consumers to make informed choices about the environmental and health impacts of different foods and can quickly spot foods which are healthy and sustainable. Recommendations included making it a compulsory, national level, traffic light system with an agreed standard. One group in South London recommended a government task force to develop and enforce the scheme. In Cornwall, it was recommended that a food commissioner is responsible for the scheme.

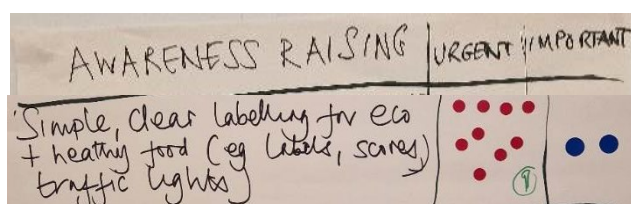


Figure 14: Dot exercise, South London

The Law as We See it !

Dean's Law is so easy,
Just follow a three colour code,
Your life will be more healthy,
Travelling along this clear road.

Red for unhealthy,
Amber a little less so,
Green for completely healthy.
Go, go, go !

It's a mandatory thing,
No organisations can fail,
Dean's Law is a must,
Dean's Law is 'The Grail ...'

Dean Andrew Jeffery

Figure 13: Participant poem about food labelling, South London

In addition, in Cornwall participants specifically call for **warning labels on harmful food products**. They recommend a public awareness campaign to support the introduction of the scheme.

Improving institutional food standards

In both South London and Cornwall, there is strong support for the introduction of **higher standards for food served in public institutions**, such as hospitals and schools, so that it is 'nutritionally complete' and meets sustainability standards. In South London, one group recommended the introduction of a food menu.

In Cornwall, the dot exercise highlighted food standards in **early years settings** as an area of particular concern, with action in this area seen as both urgent and important. They argue for stricter standards that include banning UPFs from early years settings. They argue that children are the future, and if diets are improved from an early age, it will improve health and reduce the impact on the NHS.

In Cornwall, there was also support for proactively **engaging farmers in institutional food contracts**, such as the NHS.

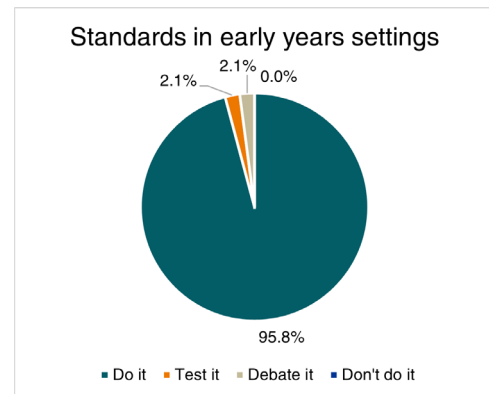


Figure 15: Set requirements for nutritious food and drinks in early years settings.

Tackling UPFs and food marketing

Participants call for ethical food marketing regulation, that restricts the marketing of unhealthy food and promotes healthy, sustainable produce.

In Cornwall, participants prioritised **restricting the promotion and advertising of unhealthy food, particularly UPFs** in the dot exercise. They argue that equal attention must be given to the promotion and marketing of healthy foods.

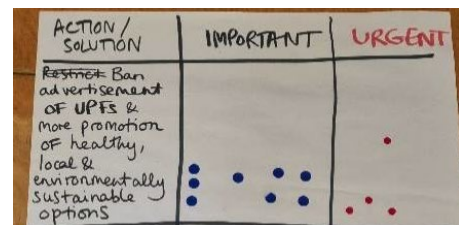


Figure 16: Dot exercise, Cornwall

Some were particularly keen for attention to be paid to food consumed during pregnancy and in infancy, and the regulation of **baby food advertising**. They called for the Government and the NHS to work together on this important area.

In South London, one group called for a **comprehensive and ethical food marketing policy**, that is implemented by the Advertising Standards Authority under the direction of the Government. They argue that social media must be addressed as part of this policy, given its prevalence in society.

In Cornwall, some participants also prioritised investment for **research into alternative dietary proteins that do not contain UPFs**.

Food business practices and regulation

In both South London and Cornwall, participants propose a range of policy measures to drive ethical food business practices and rebalance the supply chain.

Profit cap on food companies. Many participants in South London support the

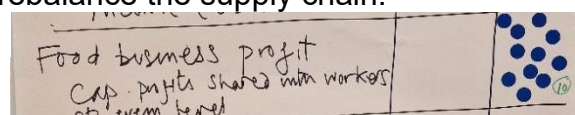


Figure 17: Dot exercise, South London

introduction of a profit cap on food businesses and supermarkets. The group that suggested this policy proposes a maximum allowable profit for these companies as a percentage, with excess profits being redistributed to farmers, workers, and low-income families. They argue that such a measure would help to address inequalities in the food system.

Another recommendation is bringing in **mandatory reporting** to improve transparency on areas such as sustainability, environmental impact, and fair trade across the supply chain (e.g., worker salaries, fair deal for farmers).

Strategy, leadership and governance

Participants in both South London and Cornwall recommend several ways to improve food system leadership, strategy, and governance structure. Typically, these did not receive significant levels of support in the dot exercise. Suggestions include:

- **National food strategy.** In South London, one group recommended the development of a national food production policy and legislation that has cross-party support and is long-term. They argue it should be developed with input from stakeholders across the food system.
- **Food Minister.** In both South London and Cornwall, groups recommended the creation of a food minister who looks at everything to do with the food chain. In addition, one group recommended having food policy leads for each UK nation who also feed into the food minister (South London).
- **Governance structures.** A few groups suggested ways to improve co-ordination such as having an umbrella group and food commissioner to co-ordinate policies between different government departments (Cornwall).
- **Transition budget.** In Cornwall, participants support a guaranteed agricultural budget that helps farmers to transition to sustainable farming. One group recommends re-allocating budgets from other programmes (e.g., welfare) to the **agricultural transition budget**.
- **Restrictions on lobbying.** Prevent undue influence of food companies over politicians by introducing restrictions on donations, preventing politicians becoming directors or advisers to food companies, and requiring more transparency about politicians' connections with food corporations.

Accessibility and affordability

Ensuring healthy and sustainable food is affordable and accessible to all was a concern to participants in both South London and Cornwall. A range of measures were proposed by groups when developing their manifestos, which included both direct and indirect measures. These actions were not prioritised by many participants in the dot exercise at the final workshop. However, in the 'do it, test it, debate it, don't do it' exercise that was completed online prior to the final workshop, participants were more likely to support direct measures (e.g., free school meals, healthy food vouchers) than indirect measures (e.g. Universal Basic Income).

The follow direct measures were proposed by individual groups when developing their manifestos:

- Caps on product prices for basic, healthy food products (South London)
- Improve healthy food vouchers so they are more accessible, and ideally available to everyone (Cornwall)

- Free school meals for all, helping to instil healthy habits from an early age and support a healthy future for all in society. (Cornwall)

The following indirect measures were proposed by individual groups when developing their manifestos.

- Introduce Universal Basic Income, so that everyone has a basic amount of money, and no one lives in poverty or faces the stigma of universal credit (South London)
- Introduce a rent cap and a council house building programme so that those on low incomes can also afford healthy food (South London).

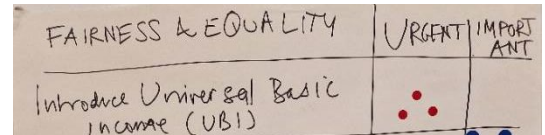


Figure 18: Dot exercise, South London

3. Connections to the food system

Summary findings

Prior to the first workshop, participants were asked to review the [Nourish Food System Map](#) (Nourish: 2020) and upload an image of where they feel most connected to the food system in relation to it. They went on to discuss their images at the first workshop. In this section, we share some of those images and explore their discussions.

Buying and selling food

Many participants prefer buying food from local, independent retailers such as farm shops and markets. They like how this supports their local community economically and socially. A few participants shared experiences of feeling most connected to the food system when selling their own produce locally. However, in reality supermarkets are often cheaper and more convenient places to buy food. As a result, many participants do buy the majority of their food from large supermarket chains and for some this is where they feel the strongest connection to the food system.

Growing food

Several participants from Cornwall shared their experiences living in farming or fishing communities. They feel most connected to the food system when they see this food production taking place around them, but are concerned about how things have changed in recent years resulting in their communities becoming increasingly deprived. They worry about how this is disconnecting the younger residents from the food that they eat and the knock-on impacts this could have on their relationship with the food system. In both South London and Cornwall, and in both rural and urban areas, participants feel a strong connection to the food system when growing produce in allotments and gardens and foraging. They particularly enjoy the physical and mental benefits of growing and eating homegrown food.

Cooking, eating and sharing food

Several participants shared photographs of their kitchen. For many, this was because of the role food plays in bringing the family together. Whether this is through cooking or eating together, food strengthens all important social and emotional bonds between loved ones. Other participants shared their enthusiasm for experimenting in the kitchen and how it is a space where they can freely exercise their creativity and self-expression. For others, cooking is a way of connecting with and celebrating their cultural heritage.

3.1 Buying and selling food

In both South London and Cornwall, participants spoke about feeling a strong connection to the food system when buying locally produced food or from local markets, compared to buying from larger supermarket chains. Some like to shop in this way because for them it constitutes an act of giving back the local community. Others feel like they can enjoy their food more when they can be confident that it has been produced locally and sustainably.



Participant image, South London



Participant image, Cornwall

“It is a photo of my local market where I can buy produce from local farmers and feel like I contribute to the local community”. Recollective

“Where I feel most connected to the food system is at the Tregew Food Barn, more specifically the Homage to the Bovine stand. During the pandemic (they) began selling the meat of the retired dairy cows direct to consumer. My partner found out about this through social media when they first began by selling packages of various cuts in a box, which at the time of the pandemic we had to go and collect from the farm itself. We would often be stopped before parking by their cows crossing over the road to the next field. So this is really one of the only raw products and certainly the only raw meat product where I have actually been to the source.” Recollective

Some participants reflected on how buying food from smaller, local vendors is also a social experience. They enjoy visiting local markets with friends and family, and also enjoy interacting with the vendors themselves.



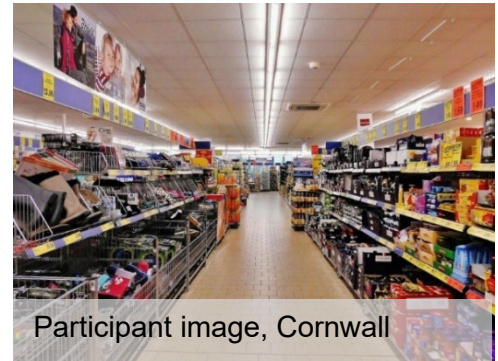
Participant images, South London

“This is a photo of me and my friends, taken in a peach orchard in the 'Fruit Loop' which is a winding loop road off of the Columbia River Gorge in Oregon next to the border of Washington in the US. The loop contains over 30 local farms, with most being open to the public. This agricultural area is about an hour from where I grew up so lots of this local produce is sold in local grocery stores and farmers markets alongside selling from the farm itself. Since I am from a rich agricultural area, I am used to eating seasonally both within my community and at home.” Recollective

Participants shared that buying locally produced food is not an option for everyone. Some described their situation where a combination of the cost-of-living crisis and time pressures has forced them to buy more food from large supermarkets than they would like.

“Especially down here in Cornwall, we have a lot of farm shops and that, which I've tried to shop in before and tried to support the farmers and that, but I find it so much more expensive that now we just tend to go to supermarkets.”
Cornwall

On the other hand, some participants are quite happy shopping in larger supermarkets. Supermarket convenience suits their lifestyles and provides them with a wide range of products to choose from, which they appreciate. For some participants, visiting the supermarket is the only time when they feel any sort of connection to the wider food system.



Participant image, Cornwall

Alongside this consumer perspective, some participants shared their experiences of producing and selling food, ranging from poultry farming to running a small-scale condiment business. They spoke candidly about how these experiences have opened their eyes to the realities and complexities of the wider food system. This includes navigating food waste, seasonality and profitability.



Participant image, South London

“I operate a small industry making pickles and sauces. I decided to go ahead with my daughter to do that because a lot of friends and family were requesting sauces and pickles. I had to go and do a food course in terms of hygiene and the rest of it before I started bottling it and shipping it out to all members of the public. I think about sourcing the products seasonally, and obviously am focused on quality. It has been eye opening.”
South London

“I used to have a chicken farm and produce chicken on a small scale, and turkeys. The reason I took this photo was that I was working on a doughnut stand. I actually earned more in three days at a festival than I earned in a whole year of running a chicken farm. I just found it really eye-opening that doughnuts are more popular. For me, it was just a massive eye-opener, that we try and do organic and free range. There was no way that I could actually make the profits that I made by making doughnuts.” Cornwall



Participant image, Cornwall

3.2 Growing food

In Cornwall, several participants live in either farming or fishing communities. They reflected on feeling the strongest connection to the food system when observing this food production take place around them.



Participant image, Cornwall

“I live in a rural farming community. These cows are in the field opposite my home. They represent the hard work that my neighbours undertake on a daily basis to provide food for the country's table.” Recollective

This connection is even stronger when they are able to eat the food produced in their local area, but often the reality is that they are priced-out of buying it. One participant is particularly concerned that many young people in their small fishing community have

never tasted locally caught seafood, and that as a result they will grow up feeling totally disconnected from the food system.

In both Cornwall and South London, several participants like to supplement their shop-bought food with produce grown in their own garden, allotment or family farm. Many feel the strongest connection to the food system when growing their own food.

Participants from across South London shared their experiences of growing their own food in an urban area. A few shared photographs of prized produce grown in urban allotments.



Participant image, South London

“I only have a small allotment but grow as much fresh fruit and vegetables as possible. These are produced without chemicals and taste delicious.” Recollective

Another participant from South London, an urban garden designer, reflected on a recent increased demand for designs that incorporate facilities for growing fruit and vegetables.

“This is what I do for a living (Gardening), and this is a picture from one of mine in East Dulwich. I get asked

more and more about small scale about designs incorporating organic food growing including vegetables and fruit, including making use of old orchard remnants in back gardens like this one (plum/apple and pear).” South London



Participant image, South London

This participant from South London connects to the food system through urban foraging. They are passionate about educating others about the kinds of foods that can be found growing wildly in more built-up areas.

"I'm a forager and I have been for over 40 years. I spend a lot of time in nature leading groups of people to teach about wild edible, the four Fs, really, fruit, fungi, foliage and flowers...I'm leading walks at the moment in Mottingham in South London and have received a grant to do that."
South London



This participant reflected on how foraging has been hugely beneficial for their mental wellbeing. This is a reason cited by several other participants when sharing motivations for growing their own fruit and vegetables. It creates precious time for stillness and connection with nature amidst faced-paced lives dominated by technology. One participant reflected on how cultivating a vegetable patch with their brother during the COVID-19 lockdown "saved" their mental wellbeing.



"This is a photo of some of the vegetables and fruits grown in my parents' garden in 2020. I had returned to live at my parents' home during the COVID lockdowns. I remember right at the start of lockdown my brother and I collected some seeds from the supermarket veg we had bought and tried to grow them. During that summer I was much more involved in growing and harvesting food than I normally am, and it was hugely rewarding during an uncertain time." Recollective

As well as mental well-being, participants cite health benefits and money saving as reasons for growing their own fruit and vegetables. Several are reassured by the fact that home-grown produce will be free from harsh chemicals. Others simply prefer the taste of home-grown and the flavours they add to meals.



"My reason for choosing this is because, I cook with various herbs and I really enjoy the aspect of selecting organic ingredients and adding these to enhance the dishes I prepare." Recollective

3.3 Cooking, sharing and eating food

Many participants in both South London and Cornwall feel most connected to the food system whilst in the kitchen. For some, this is the kitchen of the family home, where meals are prepared for loved ones and all important social bonds are strengthened.



Participant image, South London

“This is my kitchen. I cook here, I eat here, I socialise here. It’s messy because it is used so much.” Recollective



Participant image, Cornwall

“Kitchen space is where food is made into meals that are wholesome and nutritious. It becomes the heart of the home and the hub for the family.” Cornwall

Several participants shared photos that captured special moments of bonding with their children whilst cooking together in the kitchen.



Participant image, Cornwall

“I love cooking and preparing food and I think it’s important that people (especially children) understand where food comes from and how it’s prepared. Once a week I try to make sure it’s my step-son’s job to make dinner. Here he is making pesto, which is one of his favourites.” Cornwall



Participant image, South London

Other participants reflected on how their kitchens are spaces where they can channel creative energy, experimenting with ingredients and creating centrepieces for important life events.

“My daughter’s wedding cake. I feel there is a connection between creating something that people will enjoy, and I suppose it is also an expression of my love and appreciation for everyone.” Recollective

One participant reflected on time spent increasing their recipe repertoire on a local cooking course, and how they have enjoyed using their new skillset to cook delicious and nutritious meals for family and friends at home.



Participant image, Cornwall

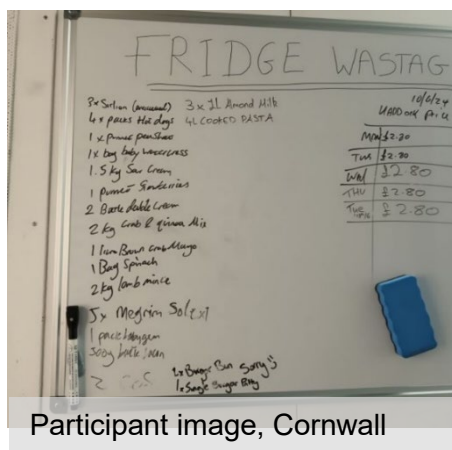


Participant images, Cornwall



“I’ve been attending the Food Preparation Cookery Classes at Cambourne College, night school, Saturdays, that sort of thing. It’s a fascinating insight into the world of how food is sourced, prepared and delivered to the consumer.” Recollective

Another participant shared a different perspective, based on their experience working in a hotel restaurant kitchen. This is where they feel most connected to the food system, at the intersection of dilemmas including food waste, supply and demand and locally sources ingredients.



Participant image, Cornwall

“As a store person at a restaurant/hotel, I feel I am near the end of the food system when partaking in quality control with deliveries. Deciding whether the food is acceptable, whether it has gone “off”, how certain foods should be stored in order to make it last for longer etc, is where I feel the most connected to food.” Recollective

Some participants feel the strongest connection to the food system not when cooking, but at the point of sharing the food they have prepared with others. Several shared photographs that represented the important role sharing food played in celebrating their cultural traditions.



Participant image, South London

"This is a dish I made as part of celebratory food for Chinese New Year 2022. The dish comprised of fresh vegetables, fruits and fish vigorously tossed before consumption. It has both healthy and cultural ties to food for me."
Recollective

"Sharing food is the centre of my day. I love cooking my Mexican food and showing people how much variety of dishes you can have with the same four ingredients. It makes me feel closer to home." South London

Many participants feel that sharing food and celebration go hand in hand, whether this is celebrating big life events, cultural traditions or simply time together as a family. Very few see food as simply sustenance, and instead a powerful vessel for connection with others, the natural environment and economic system.



Participant image, Cornwall

"Celebrations, Family, Sharing and Memories."
Recollective



4. Food system challenges

Summary findings

Power plays

Participants are concerned by how power is currently distributed between players in the food system. They associate money with power and believe that a dangerous amount of power lies in the hands of food businesses and corporations which they expect will always prioritise profit over fairness and sustainability. In Cornwall, participants are particularly concerned about how little power farmers and fishermen have and how this leaves them vulnerable to manipulation by supermarkets. They are worried about how this power imbalance will affect the future of food production in Cornwall's farming and fishing communities.

Participants across both South London and Cornwall believe the government holds considerable power and could regulate and legislate to mitigate against current imbalances in the system. However, participants are sceptical that the government will take positive steps towards fixing our food system because of the power large food businesses and multi-national corporations hold over politicians. Many are also sceptical that people in society have any real power when it comes to fixing the food system, primarily because of the tight grip these wealthy companies have on all of its different dimensions.

Food system problems and challenges

Participants in Croydon and Cornwall say that they are 'terrified' that **UPFs** have become a core part of many people's diets. They describe feeling manipulated, confused and powerless because of how the marketing strategies used by food businesses have made UPFs so available and appealing, especially to children. They are frustrated at how convenient and cheap UPFs are replacing locally produced, nutritionally dense foods because they feel this is having a negative impact on local food retailers *and* putting pressure on the NHS.

Other serious concerns for the future of our food raised by participants include:

- The impact corporate greed and our dietary preferences are having on **animal welfare**
- The damage industrial farming and fishing is doing to our **natural environment**, including causing a decline in British wildlife and species loss
- That **eating more than we need** to has been accepted as the norm, and that in the UK today there is a culture of eating larger volumes of lower quality food. This is causing health problems and what participants describe as an 'embarrassing' **food waste problem**
- The **price of healthy food** is forcing people to work overtime so they can afford to eat well, but working long hours leaves them vulnerable to defaulting to fast food, ready meals and other convenience offers
- They fear that **the government** does not see fixing the broken food system as a priority issue and are too often the 'puppets' of big food businesses

4.1 Power plays: an uneven distribution of power

Participants are very concerned about how power is unequally distributed between different players in the food system: farmers, food businesses, governments, supermarkets and people in society.

Corporate greed

Many are worried about how much power is held by a handful of profit-driven multi-national corporations, such as Unilever. Participants are frustrated that these companies are not more transparent about the extent of their influence. They feel 'tricked' into funding corporate greed through their purchases, and feel that if more people knew about the monopoly of a few large corporations, they might re-evaluate their buying habits.



"I was absolutely surprised that Unilever, I didn't know that they do food as well. I knew them from medicinal products and things. I didn't know they were part of the food system. Then I'm like, "Of course, they are, it's all part of the money thing." Unilever, Kingfisher, and other big companies like that, they've got an omnipresence, a ghostly omnipresence. If you look at their adverts, they're very lavish, well made, and well, they make billions." South London

Because of the extent of their influence, and the sheer amount of money they are making from the food system, many participants feel that these corporations are to a large extent responsible for fixing key issues including obesity and food poverty. However, many are concerned that this same power, money and influence makes it easy for them to avoid the worst consequences and thus make genuine changes in the long term.

Participants correlate money with power. Several reflected on how they have felt their power as consumers decreasing with the intensification of the cost-of-living crisis. They are frustrated that supermarkets seem to have profited during this crisis whilst households are struggling to feed themselves. Many feel despondent as these large corporations, including supermarkets, invest more and more of these profits into marketing designed to manipulate consumer habits.

"The sugar industry is multi-billion dollar stuff. Alcohol industry is multi-billion amount stuff. It's very sad that we cannot make our own decisions even governmentally, we cannot make our own decisions. We can vote for someone, but the decision is not in our hands. I want everything to be better for sure, but things feel that no matter how worried or concerned we are about it, we cannot just change it." Cornwall

"Unfortunately, I think what I've learned so far is the big corporates that make the big money are the ones that are the issue. We're just playing the game and they just gone a bit too weird about that. Ultimately, I do my best, but it's a bit bleak." South London

Participants in both locations also saw power in how food businesses market their products. They shared that they feel manipulated by "calculating" food marketing companies that trick "us" into buying unhealthy food in an unsustainable way. They

are particularly appalled at the tactics used to target children and teenagers. This includes using social media platforms such as TikTok and popular television characters to sell unhealthy products.

“Many influencers do not promote healthy wellbeing. They get paid very well by these large companies to promote what they promote on their social platforms. It’s all very well that TFL have banned the promotion of junk food, but children are not looking at the marketing on trains.” South London

They are shocked at how little regulation and restriction there appears to be when it comes to business using influencers to market unhealthy food, and drink. Examples include paying influencers to drink high energy drinks. They are concerned about the future of social media marketing in the context of AI.

Supermarkets and farmers

Participants in Cornwall are particularly unhappy with how much power supermarkets hold over farmers, and how too often this results in farmers receiving an unfair price for their produce. They criticised the unreasonable demands dictated by supermarkets to farmers as well as the unreasonable price points at which they purchase. They reflected that whilst supermarkets have the power to “control the seasons” farmers are vulnerable to the unpredictability of weather as a result of climate change.



“I think the supermarkets, they’re the ones with the power. They choose when the seasons are. There was a big thing recently about it’s not the actual seasons that choose when you harvest blueberries, it’s the supermarkets. If the supermarkets turn round to the suppliers and the farmers and say, “No, blueberry season is over.” Those farmers then have to plough all of those blueberries back into the field because it’s the supermarket that decided that’s not a viable thing to put on our shelves anymore.” Cornwall

Many feel that efforts should be focused towards empowering the farming community. Some believe that the UK should follow precedents set by other European countries.

“Well, I’ve done a lot of food shopping in Germany in the past. What strikes me about Germany, is the councils or local governments are very strong on supporting local farmers. I saw a dairy farm last year in Germany on a tour. One farm made yogurt and ice cream. What struck me was they cut out so much of the middleman. All the local supermarkets were organic and they were only allowed to buy local produce because that’s what the local law is. I thought that was a model that worked really well because it’s supporting the community in so many ways.” South London

Participants are concerned that often individual farmers are immediately disadvantaged when negotiating with vast corporations.

“Because they’re individually negotiating with the food business of sorts. They haven’t really got a conglomeration of people representing them to negotiate better prices. An individual farmer would have to just go to the big boys and

say, "Look, this is what I've got," and get the best price, but they haven't got the negotiating power because they haven't got the quantity." Cornwall

Government and the individual

Participants have mixed views on how much power people in society have when it comes to fixing the food system. Some feel despondent that the small changes they are realistically able to make, such as buying less plastic packaging and composting food waste, seem inconsequential compared to the damage done by corporate food businesses.

"My children and I, we have these discussions all the time. We even tried doing food composting and many different things. But when it pertains to the actual complex system and how things are done, it is all about the money. I don't feel like we have a say, honestly." South London

Others feel strongly that people in society do have immense power because of their ability to vote and thus influence the government.

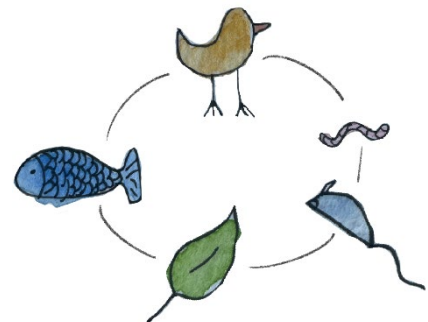
"We are the masters of government, so it's for us to vote for who we want to vote to do the job. Also, we vote with our feet, so if we have the information to choose, then we can choose and we can vote with our feet." Cornwall

Some also feel that people in society can derive power from their ability to choose (to an extent) what food they eat and where they buy it from. Others disagree because they feel marketing has manipulated us to the extent that none of our choices are really ours.

4.2 Concerns about the food system

Impact on climate, nature and biodiversity

Participants in both locations care deeply about tackling climate change and preventing species loss. Many describe feeling, 'distracted' that the food system has contributed to a recent decline in British wildlife.



"In our day, we used to get a lettuce, and you might find a caterpillar in it or something. These days, you find no insects on it, all of our insects are disappearing, our bees are disappearing, so the birds are disappearing. We are affecting nature...and I think this is going to be detrimental to our future" South London

Several participants are particularly concerned about how reliant UK food production is on chemical fertilisers and pesticides and how these are damaging ecosystems.

"I can remember going past farms and you could smell the manure. Now all you can smell is chemicals. We are poisoning everything, really. The flora, the animals, they are all disappearing. You don't see hedgehogs; you don't see rabbits anymore." South London

Others, particularly in Cornwall, say they are appalled at the impact of industrial farming on UK waterways.

“The farming industry that are close to rivers, I don't agree with the fertilization because they're destroying the rivers. There's so much blue algae. The levels in the water are much worse than they were 30, 40 years ago. We know the agricultural problem there is, but that's due to government demand of quantity, it continues” Cornwall

In Cornwall, participants also commented on how overfishing, driven by consumer greed and desire for choice, is wrecking aquatic ecosystems and causing the demise of once-thriving fishing communities.

“We used to have some very big fishing ports in England, and I came from one of them. And now they are non-fishing ports because they overfished everything. The dramatic effect of overfishing is quite stark”. Cornwall

Back on land, some participants expressed concern that unsustainable farming practices are affecting soil health. They worry about the devastating impact this could have on the UK's ability to produce high-quality crops, feed the population and support the economy through exports.

“I read a book a long time ago by Graham Harvey called We Want Real Food. He talked about soil nutrition in quite a lot of detail. I think one of the things, if you grow organic food on depleted soil, you are not going to get a good crop. I suppose one thing we need to think about is how good is the quality of our soil now? What can we do to improve it to ensure there are nutrients to then go into the food.” South London

Participants are worried that if UK food production levels decrease due to soil health (and other factors), we will be forced to import more and thus increase our carbon footprint. Many want to avoid buying foods with lots of air miles, but currently find it near impossible to decipher the true environmental impact of products. They call for more transparency so that consumers are able to make informed decisions, especially when navigating complex trade-offs such as nutritional value and environmental impact.

“A lot of people will grab a (bottled) smoothie because they see ‘oh it contains a coconut, great’. But the emissions from just that one product, they are probably crazy” South London

Similarly, participants are frustrated at how vegan and vegetarian meat replacements are marketed as more sustainable alternatives to actual meat despite their production still having a considerable environmental impact. They were disappointed to hear about how many of these meat substitutes contain palm oil and industrially farmed soy, when they feel that this is rarely made clear to consumers who truly believe they are making the right choice by not buying meat.

“I think one of the things that stood out for me was obviously meat consumption does have an environmental impact. Then on the flip side of it, you've got all these products they're pushing for replacement of meats. They're all or pretty much all ultra-processed and a lot of them have a really bad carbon footprint because they are imported and use industrially farmed ingredients”. Cornwall

Participants are concerned that the food system is damaging Britain's natural environment. They do think that the UK government needs to do more to tackle industrial pollution and deliberately misleading/ opaque marketing that covers up

the true environmental impact of food items. However, many see climate change as a global issue that can only be successfully tackled by large-scale, international action and co-operation. They want to see a global approach to food system issues but are sceptical of this being achieved.

“They have all these big summits they go to. No one agrees on anything. They pull out of agreements, they don’t do anything. We are talking about the UK, but if we are going to do it and nobody else is, or bigger countries aren’t prepared to, are we not just paddling upstream?” South London

The prevalence of UPFs

The prevalence and popularity of unhealthy foods, including UPFs, is seen by participants as a huge problem within the current food system. It is a familiar issue for many participants, who often drew on direct experience alongside the information presented in workshops to express their concerns about healthy eating. Some participants spoke about a long history of monitoring their diet and food ingredients, for instance due to having a long-term health condition such as diabetes. Some people were motivated to join the Food Conversation because of concern about UPFs and the overall impact of diet on health.



“I got involved with this having seen the letter because I've been an insulin-dependent diabetic for nearly 40 years. I've been a major reader of food labels to work out how much refined sugar, how much fat, how much carbohydrate I'd be eating. I've noticed over the years that more and more chemicals are appearing on the list of the labels. Having come across the ultra-processed food concept and its connection with poor health and other things, I really wanted to get involved with this.” Cornwall

Others agreed that learning about the prevalence of UPFs was an important aspect of taking part in the Food Conversation. The information presented on this topic prompted them to think about the food they consume in more detail than they had done before. Some participants were surprised about the extent to which UPFs contribute to contemporary diets. Occasionally, this information contradicted participants’ previous understanding that they consume little-to-no UPFs.

“The thing that I found most interesting was about the ultra-processed foods. I don't consume UPFs. I cook from scratch as much as I can, but then I do consume UPFs because I don't read all the labels. I do buy some things like I might buy a cooking sauce jar, not often, but I might do, or I might go to a shop when I'm out and about and buy a sandwich. I'm probably not anywhere near the 60% average in the UK, but it's something I probably need to think about a little bit more.” South London

There is also concern about UPFs being addictive. This is suggested as one of the main reasons for high levels of consumption, alongside convenience and affordability. Some participants find the prevalence of UPFs ‘scary’ or ‘frightening’, particularly in the context of trying to protect their children from eating them. The normalisation of UPFs causes some to worry about children being at risk of becoming less able to execute healthy food choices as they grow up.

“I was just really scared because I am vaguely aware of ultra-processed food and I like to keep healthy and my family healthy, but I find it absolutely impossible to keep my teenager and young teens healthy and away from ultra-processed foods.” Cornwall

There is general sense that one of the consequences of the current food system is a lack of clarity about what constitutes healthy, sustainable food choices. Some participants were surprised to hear that meat alternatives can often be considered UPFs. They wondered about the impact this has on the healthiness of vegetarian and vegan diets.

“I was very surprised when it came up with the Quorn. One of the talks, they talked about Quorn as an ultra-processed food. There's my good friends up the line who became vegetarians, they love Quorn. I'm wondering if they've ever looked closely at the label. They think they're doing the right thing. They became vegetarians because of the animal husbandry. They didn't agree with that. It seems to me the consumer can't do right for doing wrong really.” Cornwall

Several participants said the consumption of UPFs and unhealthy foods should not be seen in isolation from other factors. They cautioned that it is not simply a question of people needing more awareness. Diets are described as being shaped, and indeed limited, by the wider environment and people's lifestyles. This leads some to suggest the challenges this poses for people's health are more to do with how the food system works than they are to do with individuals.

“It's just the environment that is facilitating this consumption of ultra-processed food. It just brings you to think about how maybe it's the environment rather than food in isolation. It's a whole lot of things that bring you to, 'okay, this is convenient'. I'm going to go and get ultra-processed food instead of that healthy meal that I could possibly make at home if I had a few more hours.” South London

Problematic food environments

In the context of increasingly busy lives, participants are concerned about how convenient unhealthy foods are. From fast food outlets at train stations, vending machines in leisure centres or supermarkets near schools, participants feel like food companies are taking advantage of how time-poor many of us are today.



There was particular concern amongst urban-dwelling participants about how city centres are becoming increasingly saturated with fast-food outlets, at the expense of the availability of fresh and healthy options. They are surprised that town planning regulations do not automatically prevent this.

“In terms of allowing businesses to open up and who selects those businesses, who gives them that option? Who can minimize this...so that they are not so accessible and over the top” South London

These participants are also concerned about how detached they feel from food production, because they live in the city. One participant compared their experience of living in Gloucestershire and then London.

“I used to live in Gloucestershire, and I moved to London when my kids were little. I love it, but I have noticed a real difference in connection or interest in where food comes from, between Stroud and London. I think possibly because you are simply not exposed to farms” South London

This is not to say that all participants living in rural areas feel a strong sense of connection to the food system. Some describe their surrounding countryside as a barren ‘food desert’.

“You cannot actually get from your farmhouse in the middle of nowhere to a town that has decent stuff. You may have it growing all the way around you, but you can’t actually access it.” Cornwall

Several participants expressed particular concern about the impact these food environments are having on young people. In urban areas, they are worried that deliberate decisions are being made by profit-driven companies to infiltrate environments including schools and leisure centres with unhealthy food. They are very uncomfortable with the idea that someone is profiting from setting their children up for a lifetime of unhealthy eating habits. Participants living in rural farming and fishing communities worry about an exodus of younger residents who can’t enjoy local produce due to price and availability and how this could impact local industries in the future.

“Our daughter was brought up a vegetarian from birth and I hoped that she would never go to a McDonalds. Of course, the minute she became a student she ended up there. They will put all of those McDonalds and stuff right on the doorstep of hungry students’ accommodation. Food businesses will go where they think they will make money, and if there are lots of \$ coming out, then they think, ‘brilliant’.” South London

Affordability

In a linked issue, participants are concerned that working long hours impacts our food choices. This is linked to a concern that many people today need to work overtime, or have two or more jobs, so they can afford to feed their families. They see this as a vicious circle that will be difficult to break.



“Sometimes you might be a bit better off that month. You might have done some overtime or whatever and you think, yes – I’ll do something healthy, or for a week we can eat healthier. Then when the money starts running out again, or a big bill has come in, and you think to yourself, “right ok I need to pay that big bill before I go putting the money on food”. Unfortunately, this week or these next couple of weeks we are going to have to eat a lot more UPFs.” South London

They are concerned that many people are faced with choosing between eating well and heating their houses. They are concerned that UPFs are often the cheapest option and therefore the first choice for those struggling financially. Some are

perplexed as to how we have got a stage where highly processed products are cheaper than unprocessed products.

"I don't see how ultra-processed chicken nuggets are cheaper than actual bits of chicken. I don't understand how ultra-processed something using 20 different chemicals to extend its shelf life makes it cheaper than buying a bit of chicken." Cornwall

Participants are angry at how large food corporations make enormous profits whilst so many cannot afford to eat well.

Animal welfare

Animal welfare was raised as an important concern by some participants in both South London and Cornwall. These participants are worried about the living conditions of farmed animals, referring to "poor chickens" with short lifespans and limited space to move around in. Current standards were described as 'sad', 'scary' and 'horrendous' by these participants.



When raised as an issue, animal welfare was frequently associated with higher costs for consumers. Although this was a concern, it also made sense to some participants who felt that it should be seen as a positive if higher costs lead to improved animal welfare, and eating better quality meat but less often.

"Being an animal lover, would improving the welfare of farm animals - I'm assuming by doing that would make meat more expensive, but is that one way of having less meat available but having higher welfare standards." Cornwall

However, one participant argued that it would not be sufficient to raise animal welfare standards in the UK unless the same expectations are applied to all imported meat products also. They share a concern that without setting equal standards, consumers would still choose to buy cheaper, imported meat at the expense of more expensive, homegrown produce.

"You make British chickens more expensive, British pork more expensive, the chickens and pigs are happy but we're then importing them from countries which do not have our standards, so overall, you're not improving a lot of farm animals, you're just penalising our farmers." Cornwall

Another participant, who was saddened by the current state of the trade-off between animal welfare standards and costs, nevertheless worried about the impact of addressing this. They felt that a lot of people simply wouldn't be able to afford to eat meat if the costs of rearing animals in better conditions were transferred onto the consumer. They could not see how this particular challenge could be overcome.

"It is quite sad, really, the situation that the world has got into, that we have to put chickens through the trauma that they must have to live so that we can eat cheaply. I'm not quite sure, really, how we can get out of that scenario, because, as you say with cost of things that there are a lot of people wouldn't be able to afford to pay more to have a naturally-produced chicken." South London

Food waste

Food waste was also raised as a structural concern by a few participants. These participants linked waste with other aspects of the food system, such as the low cost, widespread variety and availability of food.

Both farmland and supermarkets were highlighted as specific sites at which food waste occurs on a large scale. In the case of farmland, there is concern that labour shortages are leading to crops being left unharvested and ploughed back into the ground.



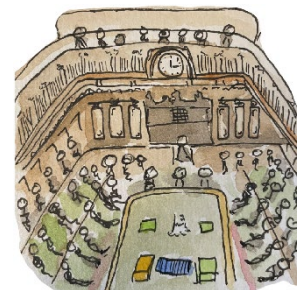
“There is a lot of waste because they haven’t had people in to pick it, so perfectly edible food gets ploughed back into the ground because there are no people there to go and collect it, those things” Cornwall

With supermarkets, it is suggested that fresh produce frequently goes to waste having been ordered in excessive quantities. There is an expectation that the system needs to adapt to reduce wastage significantly, particularly for products such as chicken, which are felt to be consumed in consistent and predictable quantities.

Leadership and governance

Underlying all of the participant concerns explored above is a feeling of frustration and disappointment towards the government’s handling of food system issues.

They feel betrayed by a government who they believe to be a “puppet” of big food industry.



“One thing that really did stand out to me, which wasn’t really even part of it, was the food companies, these four giants really or their subsidiaries or whatever you call that, they do have enormous lobbying power. They’re actually telling governments whether or not they’re going to do these things. Whatever happens in the election, whatever they tell us, these unelected bodies, they’re going to just keep doing that, aren’t they? I guess this huge question to me is how are we going to circumvent that? No matter what we decide here, how are we still going to make it happen?” Cornwall

Several found Dr Kelly Parson’s (a speaker in workshop 4) analogy comparing the policy making system to a rubbish bin worrying. They are sceptical that the UK government’s “messy” and “chaotic” policy making infrastructure could result in effective food system policy making. Some are particularly concerned about the significant number of different players involved in food system policy making.

“I’ve left all of these meetings with the idea that something needs to be done to improve the quality of food and everything else and that the obvious way to do it would be for government to step in and produce policies. Then you realise there are 16 different departments, and the idea of getting one department to agree is going to be difficult enough but coordinating 16, I think would be quite a challenge” Cornwall

All four of the Wave 3 online workshops were held in the fortnight leading up to the 2024 General Election. Participants had mixed feelings about how a change of government could affect the food system. The majority were concerned about how a

change in staff, ideology and priorities might undo any progress made by the Conservative Party.

“The problem is, when governments lose office, things change and it takes a while to bring that back again” Cornwall

“The thing is, this will lead to a rapid change of ministers that can lead to change in policies and create huge uncertainty for other players in the system” South London

They were disappointed to see that neither Conservative nor Labour Party manifestos directly addressed our food system issues. Several felt strongly that it should have been acknowledged as a priority issue, alongside the state of the NHS and cost-of-living crisis. There was some disbelief amongst participants that both parties appeared ignorant of the great extent to which the food system is exacerbating NHS and cost-of-living problems.

“We have the two major players and their manifestos barely touch on any food related issue. It is just not a big part, so it is almost like it is not important to them” Cornwall

Overall, very few participants spoke with optimism about government attitudes towards the food system. They call for radical change in how food policy is made and implemented by the government, but do not believe this can be solved overnight by a change in the governing party.

5. Visions and solutions for the food system

Summary findings

In this chapter we explore participants' views on what a better food future looks like - and the policy actions they feel are important to deliver it. In the first part of the chapter we set out participants' visions for the future, thinking ahead to 2030 where the food system is working as they would like it to work. This future system works holistically. It focuses on:

- **Community approaches** to growing and selling food.
- **Working with nature** to improve biodiversity, ensure waterways are clean and our air is clean, and people are able to interact with, and feel connected to, nature and the environment.
- **UPFs** no longer exist because society has recognised that they do not contribute to the healthy, fair and well governed system they wish to see.
- **The system is fair** with healthy and nutritious food being available and affordable to everyone in society.
- In their visions for the future participants are **hopeful** that change is possible and will bring substantial benefits to **communities, the planet and future generations**.

The policy actions which participants are particularly drawn to are those which encourage a transition to the food system they wish to see. There is **very strong support for government intervention** across the board. Citizens in South London and Cornwall find policies which **improve child nutrition** such as setting standards in early years settings and school food standards as the most appealing route to improving the nation's health. **Awareness raising programmes** are also attractive to participants. They believe that many of the policies put forward for review will be opposed by people if they do not understand the importance of healthy food and where our food comes from.

A high priority is put on **creating a fairer system for farmers and citizens**. In relation to farming participants highlight those policies which **support farmers to transition to more sustainable methods** including an advisory service, a dedicated transition budget, and incentives to switch to regenerative farming methods. **Subsidies and incentives** are seen as positive ways forward with producer payments seen as a good policy to support farming to pivot away from intensive methods. Changes to the **welfare state and benefits system** are seen positively by many participants. A caution raised by some is that these should be targeted at those that need it most and monitored against abuse. Fairness is embodied for participants in policies such as **local food hubs** and a **regulatory framework to ensure fair dealing**.

Much more caution is expressed for taxation. Many participants are convinced that taxing food companies would cause harm to the consumer. They feel it is unlikely to have a big enough impact on the companies involved, nor encourage them to produce food in a different way.

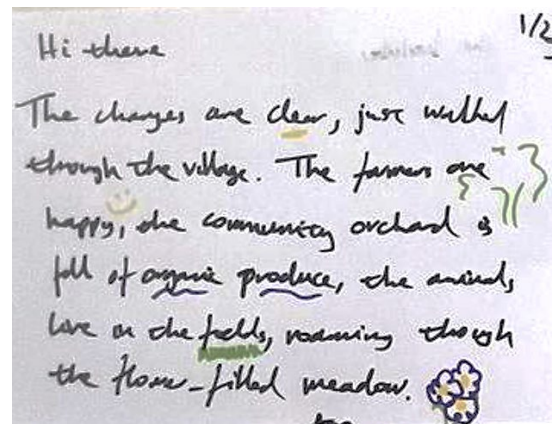
Participants were asked to imagine the food system in 2030. They were told that the food system is now delivering what they want for food and asked to write a postcard back to themselves in 2024 sharing what is better about this system.

5.1 A focus on community

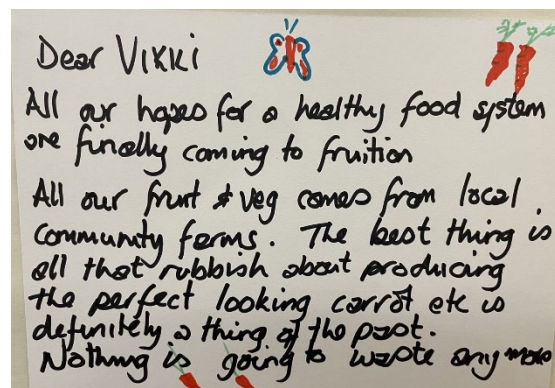
A spotlight was shone on *community* through the visions for the future produced in Cornwall and South London. This is described in facilities and services designed, run and managed by the community and/ or supported by local government:

- Orchards
- Gardens
- Shops with local produce
- Local food boxes
- Allotments and growing schemes

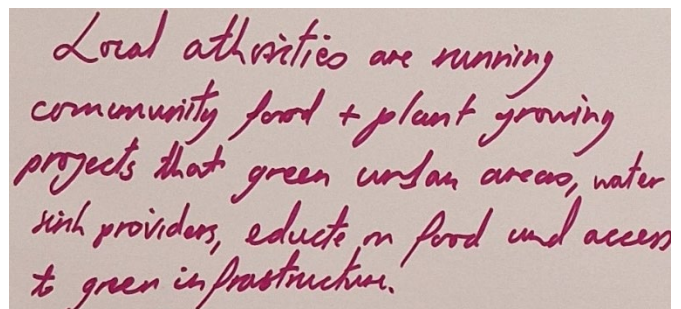
In these visions the food produced from these sources is healthy, available to the community and affordable, including to those on the lowest incomes.



Participant 2030 vision, Cornwall



Participant 2030 vision, South London

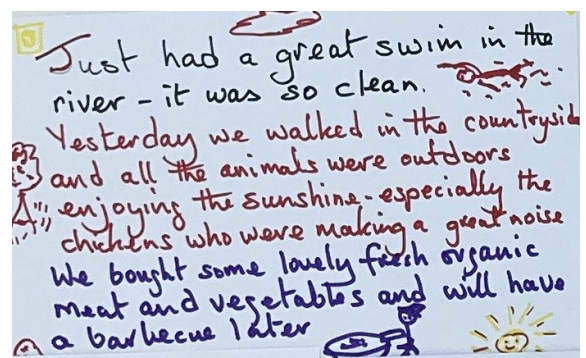


Participant 2030 vision, South London

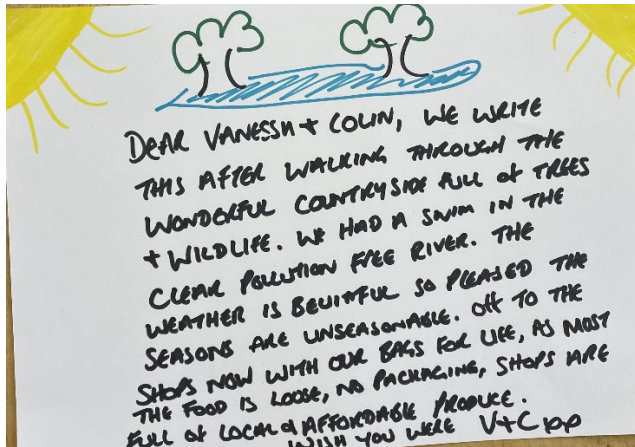
Participants imagine that independent, family run, food shops and business are thriving, with the dominance of large food corporations diminished, because the needs of local communities are at the centre of the food system.

5.2 Working with nature

In many of the visions, particularly in Cornwall, participants emphasised their desire for a food system which works with nature, employs regenerative farming techniques and prioritises biodiversity. They speak about being outdoors and enjoying nature as an integral part of this rejuvenated natural environment. A focus on clean rivers is evident in the visions from both locations.



Participant 2030 vision, South London



Participant 2030 vision, Cornwall

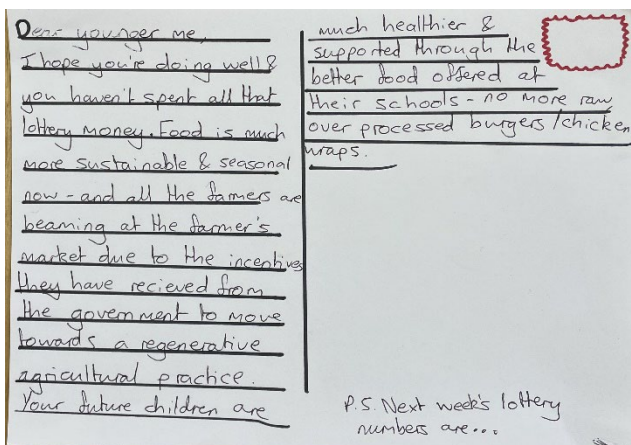
The fact that our food is produced as part of a complex system is evident from these visions, many of which do not single out a specific aspect for their focus. They speak to the interconnectedness of, for example:

- Regenerative farming and nutritious healthy school meals
- Locally produced food and food waste reduction
- Sustainable farming and addressing climate change and greenhouse gas emissions
- Regenerative farming and biodiversity
- Universal Basic Income (UBI) and food affordability
- Healthy food and less strain on the NHS.

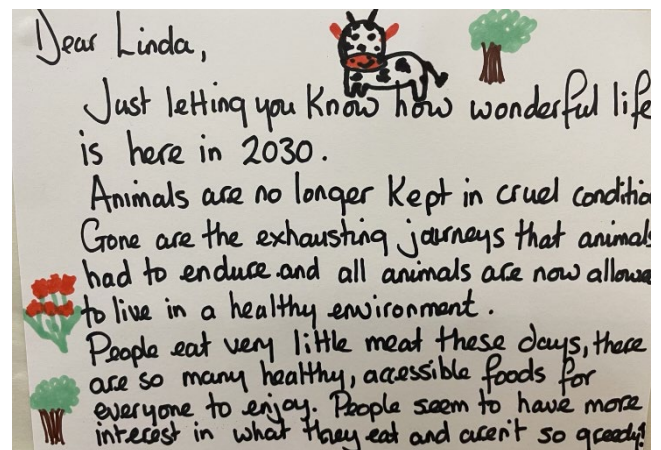


I had lovely day today, I went to Belvedere woods and sat under the lovely trees there. After that I went to Rattery and watched the lowland sheep gambling under the solar panels. Later I saw Amanda who had been butterfly spotted and had seen several green hairbreaks she was very happy.

Participant 2030 vision, Cornwall



Participant 2030 vision, Cornwall



Participant 2030 vision, Cornwall

5.3 Removing UPFs from our diet

Some participants shared the expectation that UPFs would be, “banned” by 2030.

Those that focused on UPFs in their visions also frequently included in their statements points about fairness and equality through the system:

- Food availability – making sure healthy food is accessible to everyone in society
- Food affordability – making sure this nutritious diet is possible on low incomes
- Food labelling being clear about what the ingredients in foods are and what that means for people’s health
- People having power, because they have knowledge and the food environment has improved so much that they can make healthy food choices.

Dear Rosie
 You'd never believe it. U.P.F.s have been banned and all children now have the nutritious food they need to grow and thrive. Pollution the land and sea has been outlawed and has almost disappeared! So many young people are choosing to have careers in farming – now that we're adopting more eco-friendly practices. People are actively engaged in food and care about animal welfare. Actually it's amazing to see how many people now only eat meat on occasions and the land now produces much more plant-food. Cool! I wish I had thought that the Chagwood Bread method would have gone too – Real bread for everyone. No more space

Participant 2030 vision, South London

All food packaging should be colour coded.
 1. All children 0-18 Free healthy School meal.
 2. Red unhealthy
 Amber Slightly less
 Green Healthy
 3. Everyone is Educated and they understand they have the power in their £'s

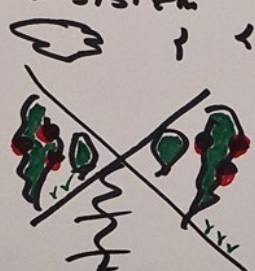
Participant 2030 vision, South London

5.4 Emphasising hope for the future

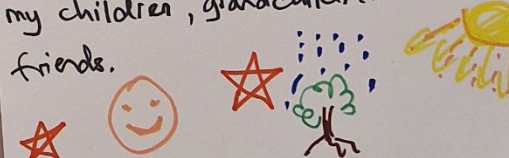
The common thread in many visions is hope. Hope that the Food Conversation has ‘worked’, the system has improved and it embeds fairness, justice and sustainability. This 2030 system has a focus on what works for families, communities, for nature and for the future of our planet.

Hi Maria,
 1. IT'S WONDERFUL NOW. EVERYTHING IS CLEAN, HEALTHY & ACCESSIBLE, MARIA THE FOOD IS ABSOLUTELY GORGEOUS, PLENTIFUL AND FREE (VERY CHEAP). DO NOT WORRY NO MUCH ABOUT LIFE (FOOD, THE FUTURE OF FOOD). JUST DO YOUR PART! IT WILL BE WELL 10+ m.

HOW THINGS ARE IN 2030
 - FOOD FREE FOR ALL
 2. - TRANSPARENCY WITH ALL STANDARDS, POLICIES.
 - FAIRER TREATMENT OF PLAYERS IN THE FOOD SYSTEM



Hi from 2030,
 Things are going well in the food system. This is a huge RELIEF in my old age as there is HOPE for my children, grandchildren and their friends.



Participant 2030 vision, South London

5.5 Reactions to policy proposals

In workshops one to three participants reviewed a set of 38 policy proposals (see Appendix 3). These, together with reactions to expert presentations (see Appendix 4), formed the foundations of their discussions. Each policy is drawn from those explored and proposed through independent review by NGOs, such as the National Food Strategy, at local authority level and supported by academic research. After each workshop we asked participants to conduct a 'Do it, test it, debate it, don't do it' activity for each set of policies on:

- A fair deal for consumers and producers
- Food environments, UPFs, child nutrition, public procurement and industrial meat production
- Nature, climate and the food system
- A just and sustainable agricultural transition

From these activities, from discussion over time throughout the workshops, through the creation of manifestos and voting on priority actions for a changed food system we have a clear idea of how participants in Wave 3 feel about food system policies. These reactions are set out in the rest of this chapter.

Setting standards and addressing UPFs

The policy proposals that were most attractive to citizens in the dialogue in Cornwall and South London are focused on **setting standards**: in early years settings (figure 20) and for school food (figure 21). These two policy proposals had over 90% of participants strongly supporting them, with only one person saying that school food standards shouldn't be pursued.

Standards in early years settings

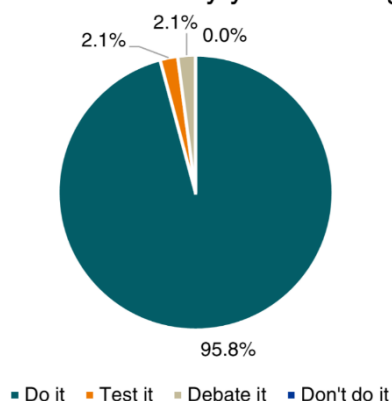


Figure 19: Set requirements for nutritious food and drinks in early years settings, such as nurseries and day-care centres.

School food standards

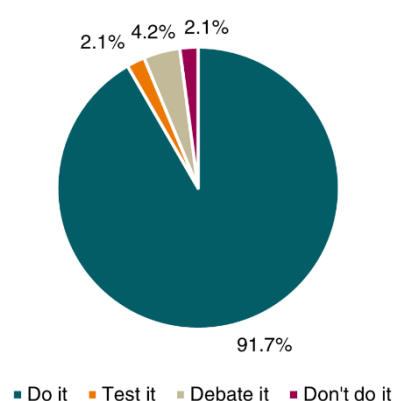


Figure 20: Strengthen school food standards by requiring more fruits and vegetables at every school meal and snack and restrict the use of UPFs.

The following interaction between participants demonstrates that participants feel these proposals offer variety and choice, but within a framework of high quality food. They feel this offers the best chance to children and sets good foundations for their future health. They are also supportive of the standards being 'national' so that the benefits are distributed across society.

Participant 3: *I think really that with regard to the children in the schools, they should possibly get a nutritionist to devise a set menu that every school should reflect on and have as their standard meals each week. If there's a great variety of three different choices a day, but keep out the pizzas and all the UPFs and all the things that they shouldn't be eating, and just have those set menus. Surely, if the children are hungry, they'll eat it.*

Participant 4: *I like that. We have a national curriculum, so we'll have a national menu.*

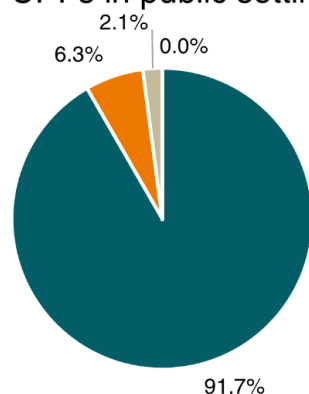
Participant 5: *That's a good idea.*

Participant 3: *With enough variety, why shouldn't it work?*

Participant 4: *Choice is the key thing there, isn't it?* South London

A similar level of very strong support with no opposition comes for, 'UPFs in public settings' with, again, over 90% of participants strongly supporting this policy (Figure 22).

UPFs in public settings



■ Do it ■ Test it ■ Debate it ■ Don't do it

Figure 21: UPFs in public settings. Restrict the use of UPF in public settings like schools and hospitals by introducing stronger standards for what food they can buy and serve.

For many the emphatic support for these proposals comes from a desire to do better for children's health and nutrition and improve the health of the nation. They are concerned that more often than not the food offered in these settings is ultra-processed, and they firmly believe this should change.

"The UPFs in public settings, that's a definite yes. You can't have the only access to food in a hospital being ultra-processed food. That's a definite, that's got to happen. You can't have it." Cornwall

A concern was expressed by many that food companies are too dominant in this space, and allowing them to operate without restriction is causing harm to the most vulnerable in society.

"I think that (food companies are) just preying on a vulnerable population who doesn't really have the knowledge to make other choices and don't have the means to make other choices. If they eat UPFs when they're kids, then they won't learn better." South London

Awareness raising

Awareness raising and communication measures such as adding information on how to reduce UPFs in diets to national guidance and programmes which would improve children's knowledge of the food system were also welcomed by participants. Figure 22 shows that over 77% of participants felt this would be a valuable policy to act on. The same percentage also felt that a programme for children (Figure 23) to enable them to prepare and taste healthy foods would promote understanding of and interest in healthy food.

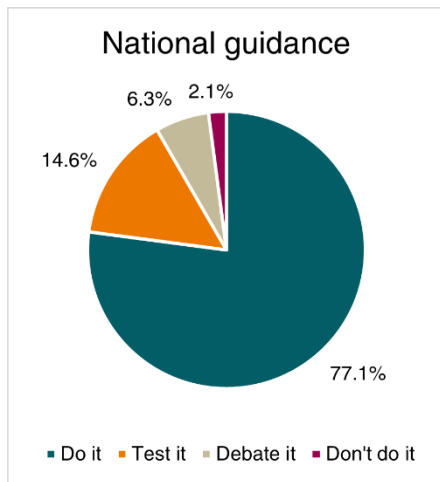


Figure 22: National guidance. Add information on reducing UPF to official nutrition guidance. Similar guidance already exists in Canada, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, and Uruguay.

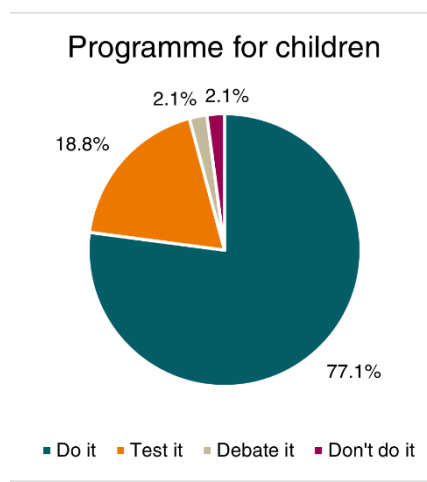


Figure 23: Programme for children. Launch a new programme for children to taste and prepare healthy foods.

“I love the idea of demonstrating to kids. The school I went to, I loved how they taught foraging and creating recipes from things you see just on your walks. I think that'd be a really good thing to teach children because even if you have no money, you can still go out and pick nettles and make soup.”
Cornwall

For many support for these policy actions is due to the belief that they are foundations for long-term change. By providing guidance and raising awareness from children upwards, changes to the food system will be normalised and embraced across society.

“I'm looking at and looking at and thinking, "Yes, we need to do all of these things," but in order for those things to work, we need to get children on board with it and it needs to come from them. If they are really enthusiastic about the idea of experiencing healthy food and they understand why that's great and start to see that as normal, they'll reprogramme their parents.” South London

Making healthy food more accessible

Participants in both locations showed, through their voting choices, that they are broadly in favour of solutions that:

- Make the links in the food system chain shorter with fewer steps between farm and fork
- Make healthy food more accessible by ensuring that provision is made for good value and lower cost healthy foods.

Many supported not-for-profit local food hubs, healthy start vouchers, and free school meals (Figures 24-26).

When discussing initiatives to lower the price of food, some participants said that initiatives such as local food hubs could only work at a local level, with communities

initiating and running the Hub, perhaps with local authority support to use unused shops on the High Street.

“I'd love the idea of local fruit hubs, but how many hubs would you need when you've got no shops on the high street because the rents from the business rates are too high? Actually, that could work because there aren't any shops left. I'd love that to be our idea. I just don't see it working with government backing. That has to be a local thing. That has to be something the community does for themselves.” Cornwall

Others like the idea because it is a visible expression on the high street of an improved food system which prioritises fairness and equality.

“I'm quite drawn to local food hubs because I think that's an easy visual, physical thing that we can all understand and see. If a high street had a local food hub, you would know what it was doing and why it was there.” Cornwall

Measures which support families with young children to provide them with healthy, nutritious food and meals are welcomed by over 65% of participants across the two dialogue areas. They believe that targeted support for those who need it most in society is a valuable intervention.

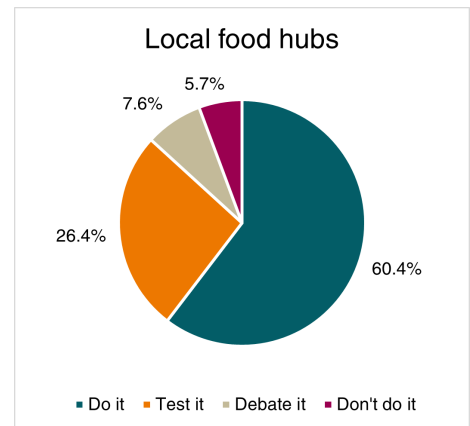


Figure 24: Invest in systems to get food from producers to people without so many steps in between.

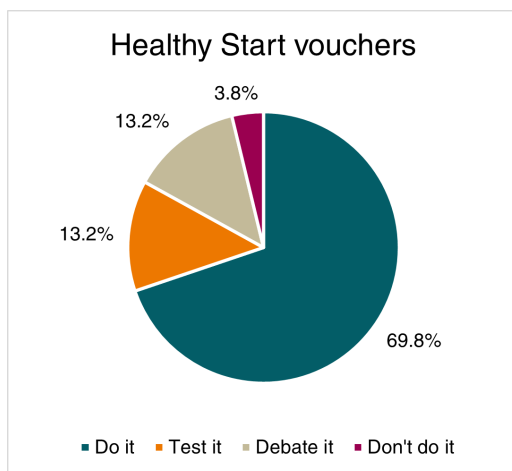


Figure 25: Extend the value and eligibility for Healthy Start vouchers (vouchers used on fruit, veg, milk and infant formula) so more families who need them can access them.

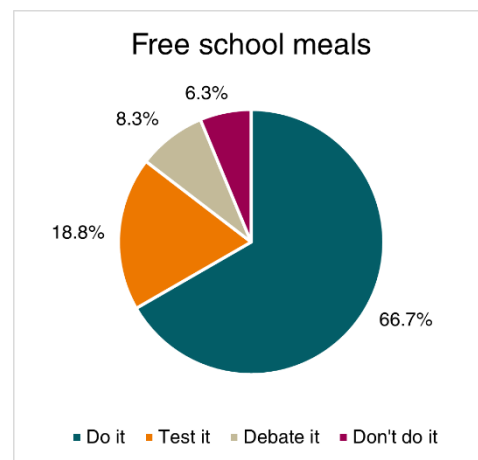


Figure 26: Free school meals. Provide free school meals to all children.

However, not everyone agrees with the proposal. Those who said it needs further testing, to be debated, or do not think the policy should be taken further have a range of reasons for voting in this way. For example, the policy is ‘patronising’ because it assumes that people cannot be trusted to receive additional money and spend it on healthy food, and so can only supported by means of vouchers:

“I really think it's patronising. I just think the system of providing people with a voucher, as though they're too incapable of deciding what to spend their small amount of money on, I really don't think we need to go down that route.

I think most parents- I live in a council flat and I was a single mum for 10 years living on a single income, the majority of the families that I saw and I was around did not spend their hard small amount of income on awful things. They wanted to do right by their children.” South London

A few participants felt that a system of universal school meals was not a good use of public funds, because there are some families who would receive it who could afford to pay for school meals. Others said it was less stigmatising if everyone received this benefit and supported the measure. It also guaranteed that every school child gets at least one good, warm nutritious meal a day, with no barriers to accepting it.

“There is the social aspect of universal free school meals. Not only interconnected peer social relationships with the students themselves, but also taking away the barriers for applying to school meals so there are no monetary barriers or even just the process that it takes to apply for school meals, taking that away, or any shame that may accompany having to apply for school meals.

Just having that easily accessible, I think, will help so many families who may need it, but aren't able to or don't want to access it as well.” Cornwall

Support for farmers

There is strong support expressed in South London and Cornwall for farmers. Participants told us they believe farmers should be treated more fairly by supermarkets and food companies. Many of the small groups want government to support the sector to transition to regenerative farming. They were drawn to various solutions including financial incentives, a transition budget and independent advice.

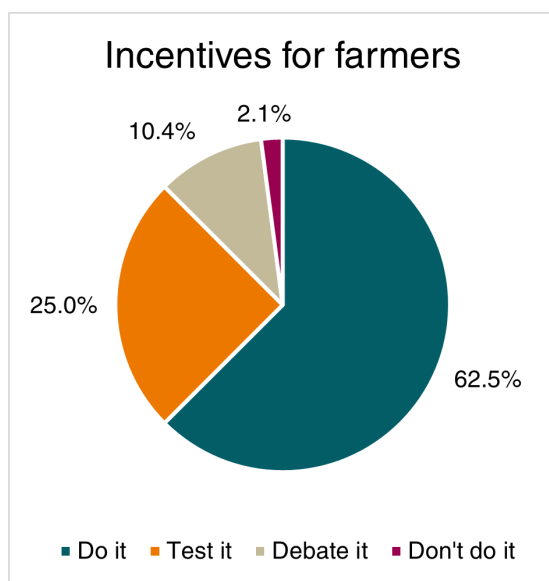


Figure 27: Incentivise farmers to change to regenerative farming methods, including less intensive and higher welfare chicken production systems.

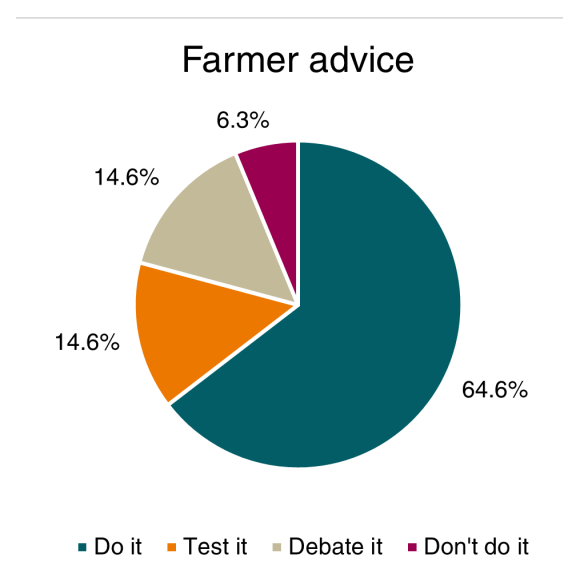


Figure 28: Make sure every farmer can get trusted, independent advice by trained peer mentors and support networks.

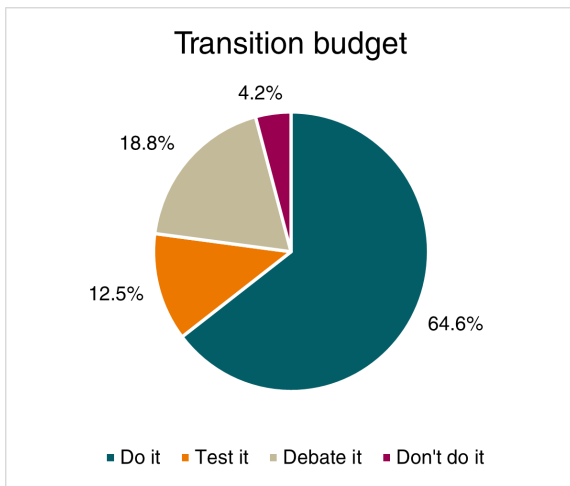


Figure 29: Set a guaranteed agricultural budget until 2029, to give financial support to farmers so they can change to sustainable farming methods.

Participants want farmers to be able to afford the new equipment they might need and to be able to take advice on the best ways in which to develop their land through regenerative farming. Concerns that are raised are similar to those raised when discussing support for families – not every farmer will need subsidies, support and funding, because some are already wealthy landowners.

A participant in Cornwall put it like this:

“Much like we’ve got rich families and poor families in every variation in between, you’ve got rich farmers and poor farmers. Farmers aren’t a homogenous group, so there’s loads of really struggling farmers.

Generally those without a huge amount of land or even those that are renting the land, like tenant farmer. But there are a lot of really rich, massive landowners that get to pass the landowning onto their kids without paying inheritance tax like the rest of us. I just think it’s really important to make sure that whatever the policies are, they’re focusing on the right groups, that we’re helping the farmers that need help and we’re not continuing to financially benefit incredibly wealthy farmers who don’t need our hard earned tax money.” Cornwall

Some participants feel that these farmer supporting policies are not ambitious enough. They would like to see the transition budget period to be extended at least until 2035, and incentives for farmers to be tied to monitoring and evaluation which could in turn feed into the advice scheme. They advocate for a holistic approach to support for farmers not a piecemeal approach which could easily become complex and unhelpful.

Tackling environmental destruction

As we have already seen in this report participants have visions which call for humans to work with nature. This continues into their thinking around appropriate policies to create system change. Of all the environmental policy proposals, the one that received most support was criminalising environmental destruction, with over 84% of participants saying that they believe this policy should be taken forward (Figure 30). Many participants were quite emphatic in their support of this policy,

“I absolutely think we should make it a crime to severely damage or destroy ecosystems because we have to look to the future. One of the presentations we heard on one of the previous days said that in 10 years’ time, we won’t recognize the countryside. The only way

Criminalise environmental destruction

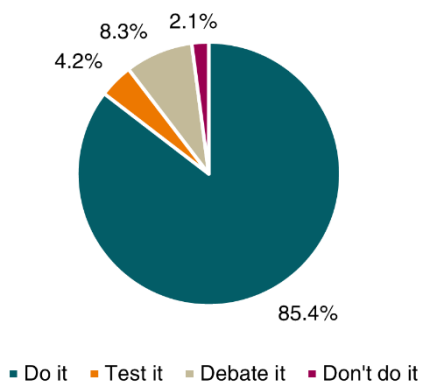


Figure 30: Make it a crime to severely damage or destroy ecosystems (also known as ‘ecocide’).

it's going to stop is if it's criminalized, if it's banned. If you just tax companies for polluting or what have you, or damaging the ecosystems, they're just going to put prices up. It needs to be a crime. It is a crime." Cornwall

The caveat that some put on this policy is that it should be absolutely impossible for companies that pollute or cause environmental damage to avoid being criminalised for their actions, via legal loopholes or similar. They are fearful that somehow it will have no impact on the companies and will not be a sufficient enough deterrent to stop these damaging activities.

Polluter pays was also interesting to over 60% of participants, but again, fear that companies would avoid paying the penalties and would pass the cost of such penalties onto the consumer was an issue for many. These participants are not convinced that Polluter Pays will work.

"I was going to say one last thing about the Polluter Pays box. I keep thinking there about water companies, they keep getting fined, and it doesn't make any difference. I'm thinking do fines equal change?" Cornwall

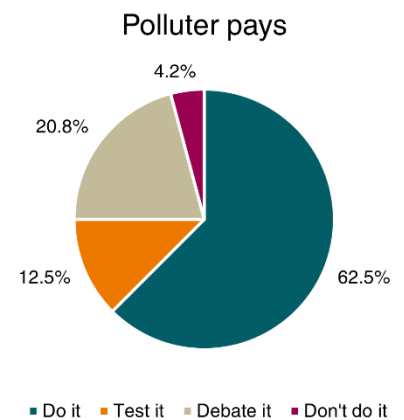
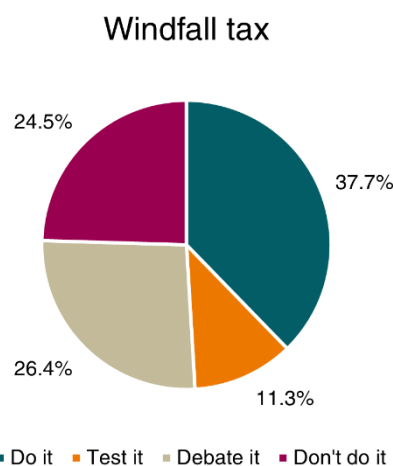


Figure 31: Tax the businesses that profit from polluting, such as companies that make pesticides and fertilisers or encourage intensive meat production.

A mixed response to taxation as a policy lever

In a similar way, some participants are convinced that taxing food companies would cause harm to the consumer. They feel it is unlikely to have a big enough impact on the companies involved, nor encourage them to produce food in a different way.



"Putting a windfall tax or other tax on those producers, but they'll get around that. That will all be costed into their profit margins and it will just simply put the price of everything else up." London

As such over a quarter of participants didn't want to see the introduction of a windfall tax for example (Figure 32). Others were not confident that the Government would in fact use the funds raised from a windfall tax to fund better food provision for lower income households.

Figure 32: Windfall tax on food companies. Pay for schemes like those mentioned by introducing a windfall tax for big food companies who profit the most when prices rise.

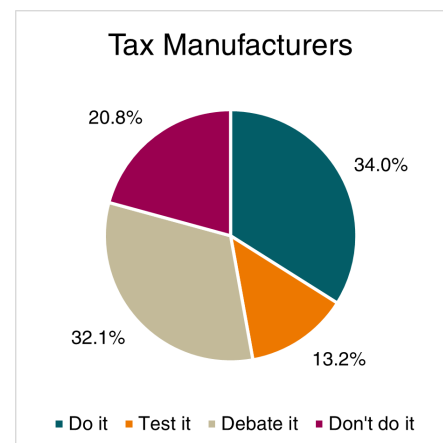


Figure 33: Pay for schemes like the above by introducing a tax on manufacturers based on the amount of sugar and salt they use.

Thoughts to feed into the ongoing conversation

Participants involved in The Food Conversation in South London and Cornwall are calling for change. They see a food system which is unfair, and in which the power and influence is in the wrong hands.

Citizens in Cornwall and South London **believe that:**

Change is both important and urgent. They want to know that the Government is going to take forward policies and action plans that seem to be stagnating currently.

Community and local production are key to a thriving food system which makes nutritious, healthy food accessible to everyone.

The environment, wild and farmed life, and an improved climate are seen as essential, and a resource which needs societal protection.

They call for a re-invented food system which addresses power imbalances and takes all necessary policy actions to improve the situation – creating a system which has fairness and equality at its heart.

A deliberative process focused on food is a powerful way for participants to discuss some of the biggest issues of our time. As we have seen the dialogue led to compelling participant reflections on significant themes such as health, climate change, poverty, the economy, the welfare state, industry regulation and social justice. This brings with it a sense of responsibility which participants take extremely seriously.

As in other waves of this dialogue, having been through this dialogue participants **have a sense of togetherness and mutuality** which they want to continue. They feel that this sense of cohesive community needs to pervade policy actions so that everyone in society has a stake in what happens, cares about it and agrees to work together in a new social contract which prioritises food as something that matters to us all.

Participants are keen to continue the conversation locally, nationally and across the UK and be part of this continued Food Conversation.

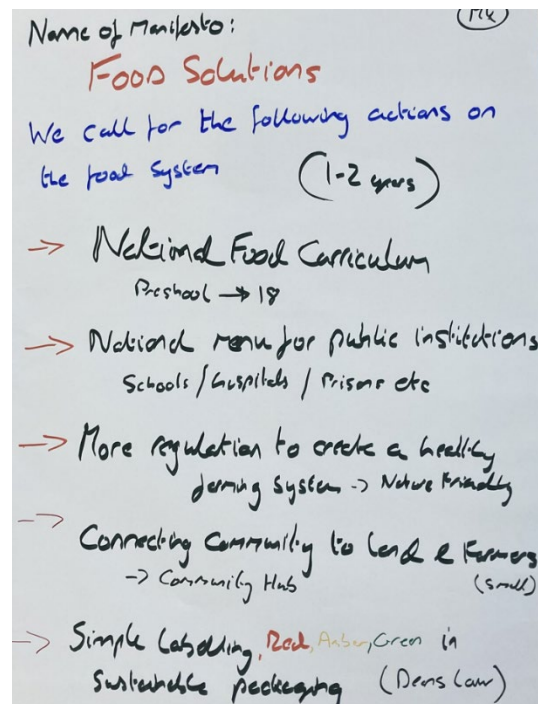
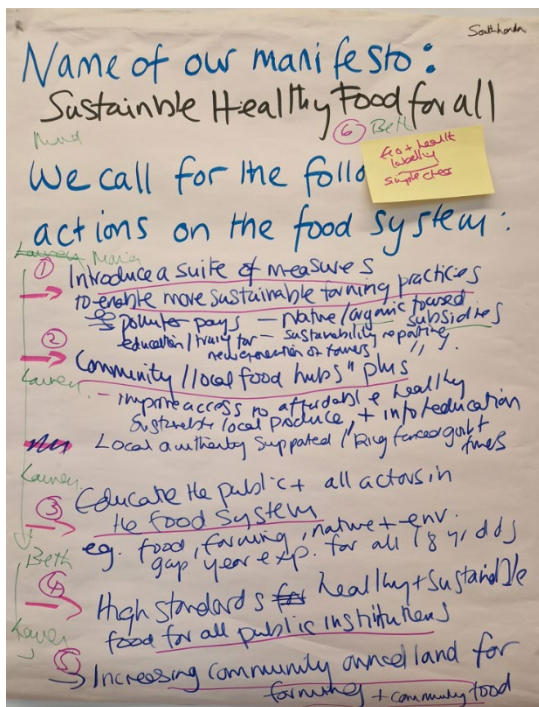
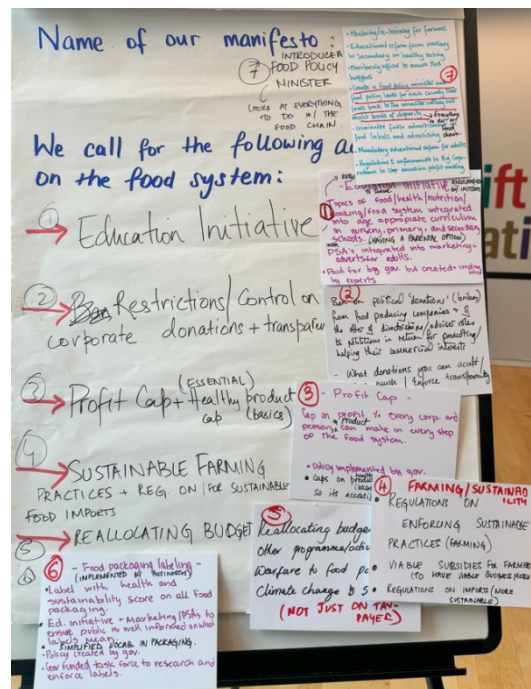
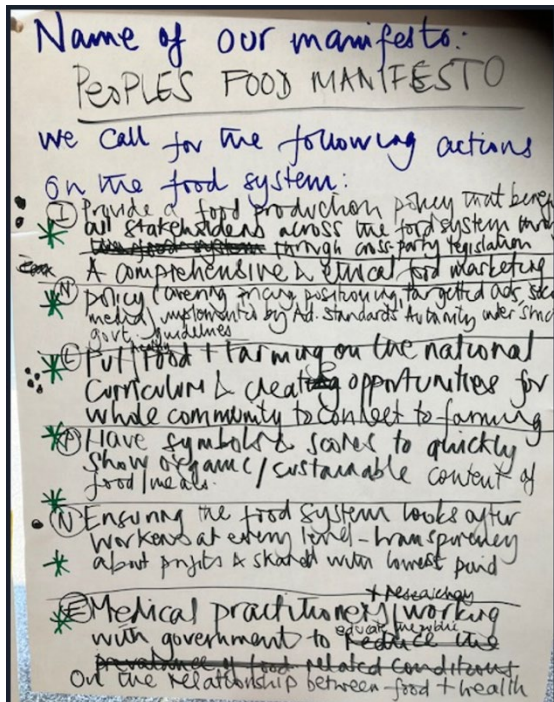


Appendix 1: Manifesto flip charts

Local manifestos

Participants worked with each other and their facilitator to draw up a manifesto for the future of the food system. In each location, four manifestos were produced – one for each small group. These were then shared with the wider group.

South London manifestos



Cornwall manifestos

Name of our Manifesto: [like] **TREYA BOOS** (the Cornish words for change + food)

We call for the following actions on the food system:

- JUDITH** ① Free school meals for all children and eventually all public institutions. (NUTRITIOUS eating)
- DEVYANT** ② WHY: changing eating habits from the early years + future for healthy society. Public Awareness => enforced information on health implications of unhealthy products/diets. less hospital bills = healthier society.
- HELEN** ③ WHY: Reduced packaging - making fully recyclable & compostable.
- VERONICA + DORIEEN** ④ WHY: Benefits environment & people. reducing resources. Support for farmers by providing more lucrative contracts, such as schools, NHS + technical support.
- PAUL** ⑤ WHY: Farmers are crucial in the food system, keeping farmers farming. Food hub in a center of the local community having financial assistance to operate + helpful services. WHY: supporting local producers & inclusivity.

Name of our manifesto: **The fair food contract** ^{cornish}

The key actions on the food system:

1. Polluters should pay for the impact on the environment, with structured fines, transparency + no costs passed on to consumers. ^{learn!}
2. Restrict promotion + advertising on unhealthy foods, including UPFs.
3. An umbrella group/food commissioner to coordinate food production policies between different government departments. ^{think}
4. Introduce of land use framework so that more of the food we eat is produced closer to home (+ monitored). ^{think}
5. Food manufacturers must label food with environmental impact of production (no greenwashing). ^{think}
6. Investment in research into alternative dietary proteins without ultra-processing. ^{think}
7. Local food hubs providing affordable local products. ^{think}

Name of our Manifesto: **THOUGHT 4 FOOD**

We call for the following actions on the Food system:

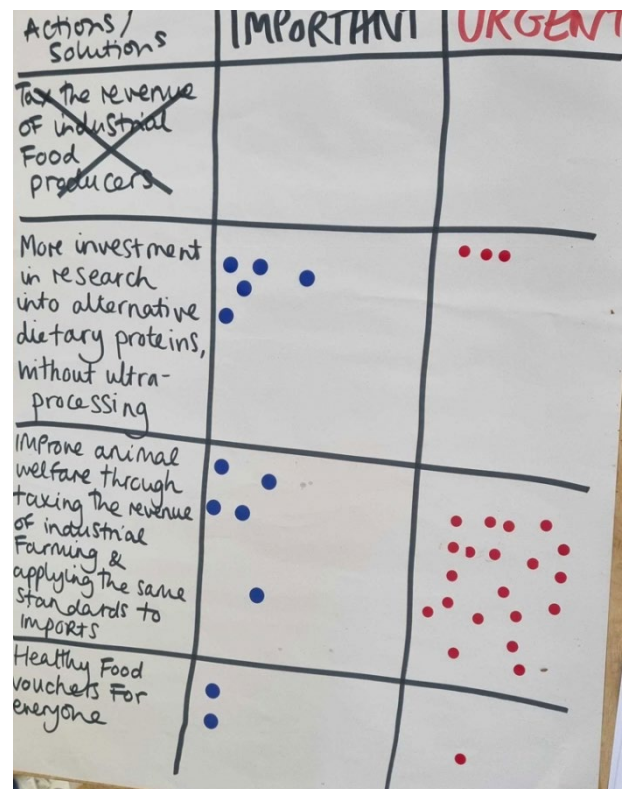
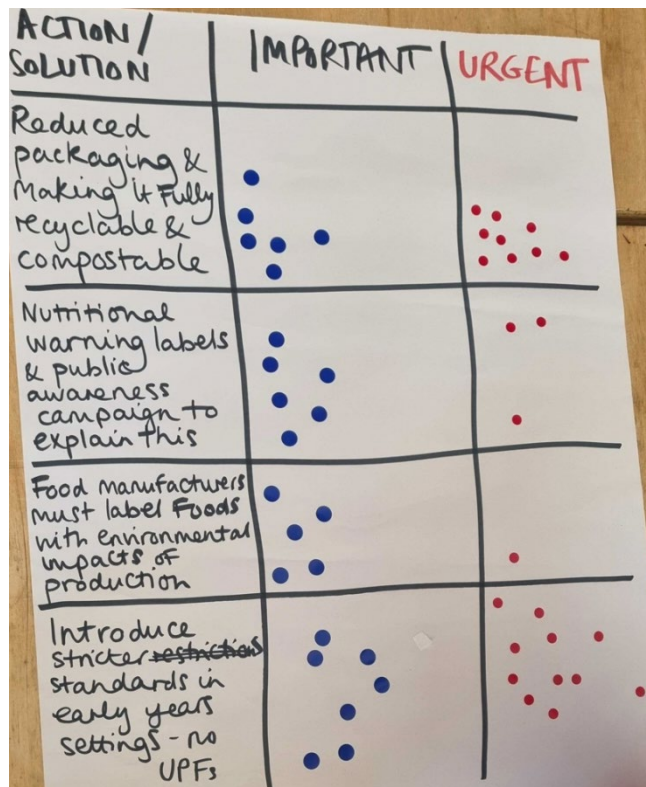
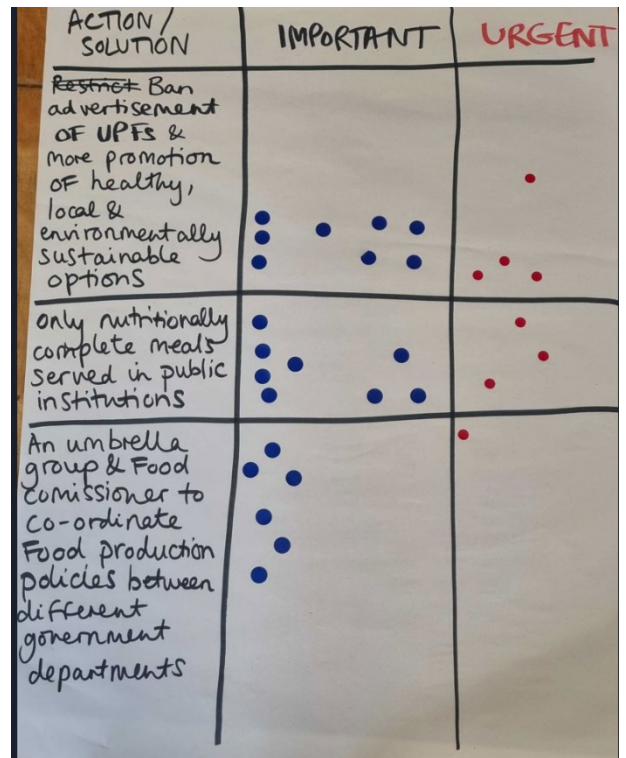
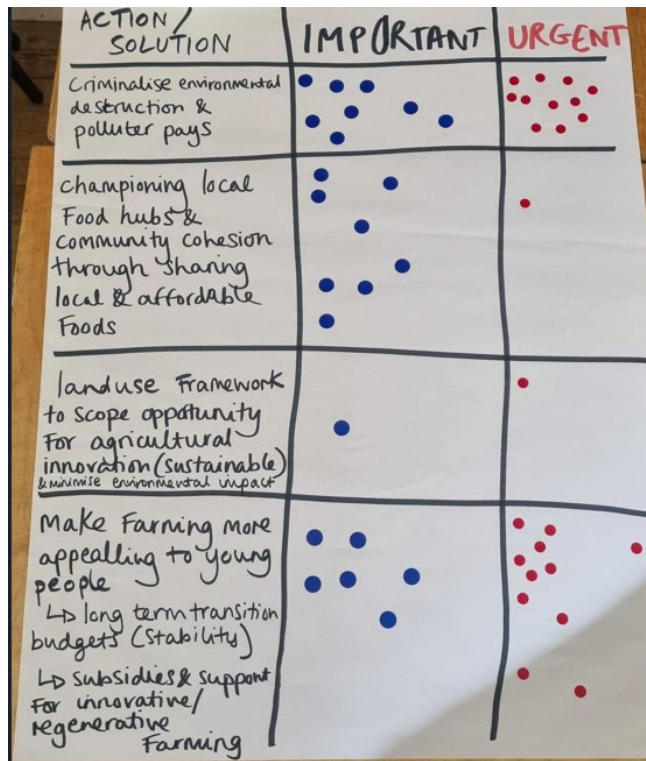
- **LAND USE FRAMEWORK & URBAN DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS**
- **TRANSITION BUDGET FOR FARMING** - increase attractiveness to younger farmers
- **PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN DE-STIGMATISING LOCAL FOOD HUBS & FOOD BANKS**
- **RESTRICT USE OF UPFS IN PUBLIC SETTINGS** esp. schools
- **CRIMINALISE ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION**

Name of our manifesto: **Feed the Future** for +

We call for the following actions on the food system:

- ① **CRIMINALISE ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION** + adopt good practice from other countries. → gov/supermarkets. Why? - Already in place we can sign up to it and make an impact now. - Not a new concept.
- ② **STRICTER STANDARDS IN EARLY YEARS** + settings to improve children's health. → local gov/health gov. Regulations in schools + pre-school + advertising on baby food. Why? - children are the future → advise parents - Reduce impact on NHS.
- ③ **INTRODUCE HEALTHY FOOD VOUCHERS** to improve health. - owned by local gov. - Need to include local producers. → higher income + more interesting than other benefits. - For everyone if affordable.
- ④ **TAX REVENUE OF INDUSTRIALISED FARMING** to improve animal welfare + reduce people buying meat. Same standards for imports as UK produce. → Why? Looking after health, environment and planet.
- ⑤ **BAN ADVERTISING OF JUNK FOOD UPFS** to improve health. → owned by supermarkets. Ensure advertising is on most relevant media - broader than TV. Why? - Health and children's health.
- ⑥ **POLLUTER PAYS** criminal prosecution at the top. Case by case, too broad to be specific at lower level. More active in pursuit of polluters. Why? For the health of the planet and reduce illness - whether accidental or not.

Cornwall policy action prioritisation



South London policy action prioritisation

| GOVERNANCE & NATIONAL POLICY | URGENT | IMPORTANT |
|--|--------|-----------|
| A National Sustainable Food production Strategy (long term to cross party) | ••• | • |
| A Suite of measures to enable sustainable farming (regulations, grants, viable subsidies) | • | ••• |
| A comprehensive, ethical Marketing standards policy (pricing, positioning, social media etc) | •• | • |
| Central government to bring in mandatory food business reporting to improve transparency | • | •• |
| Transparency in government (eg restrictions on food business corporate donations) | •• | |
| A Food Policy Minister | •• | •• |
| Re-allocating budgets from other programmes (eg warfare) to food policy + climate | | •• |

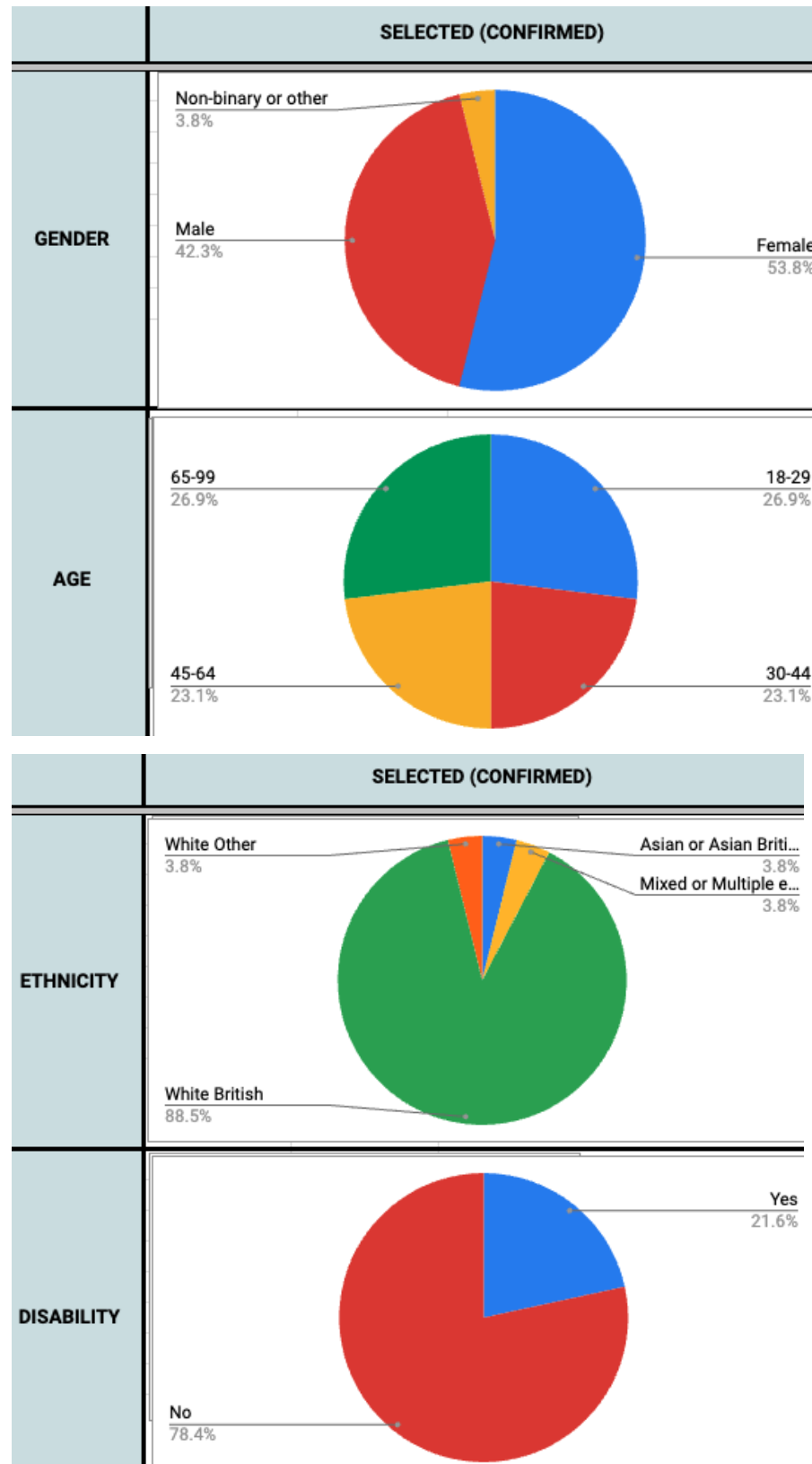
| AWARENESS RAISING | URGENT | IMPORTANT |
|--|--------|-----------|
| National level awareness Campaign to trigger change in the food system | • | •• |
| Embedding education about healthy & sustainable food + farming at different levels - Starting in schools. | ••••• | • |
| Medical practitioners + researchers working with government to educate the public on the relationship between food & health | • | |
| Increase community connection between with local farmers (eg through community hubs, to city farms) gap years. | •• | ••••• |
| Increase community owned land for farming + community food. | | •• |

| FOOD QUALITY STANDARDS | URGENT | IMPORTANT |
|--|--------|-----------|
| High standards for healthy & sustainable food for all public institutions (eg a national menu) | ••• | ••• |
| Free good quality school meals for all | • | •• |
| Simple, clear labelling for eco + healthy food (eg labels, scores, traffic lights) | ••••• | •• |

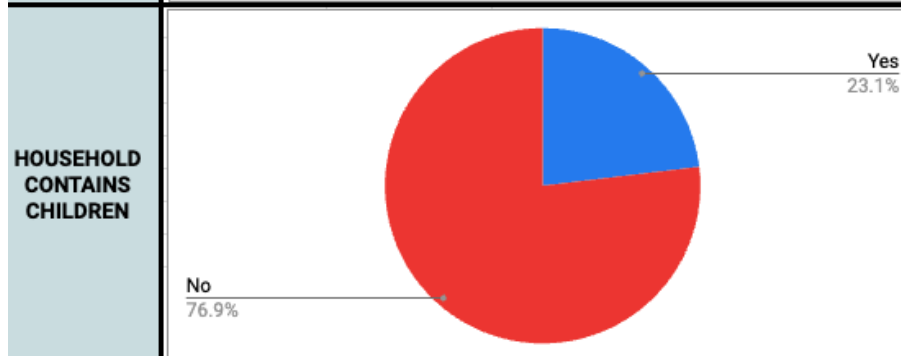
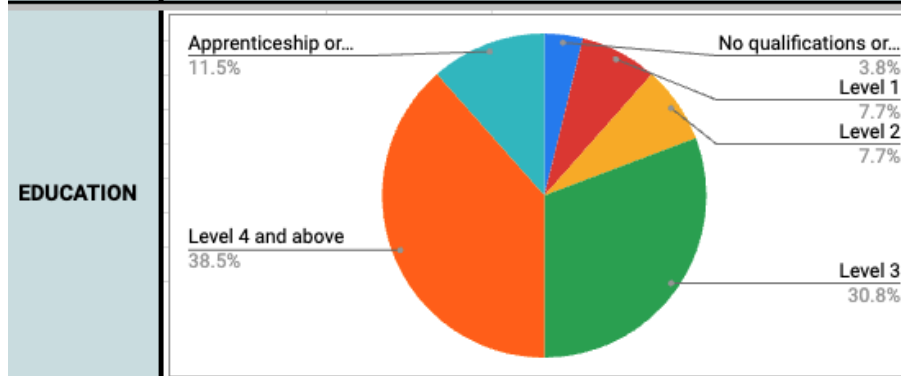
| FAIRNESS & EQUALITY | URGENT | IMPORTANT |
|--|--------|-----------|
| Introduce Universal Basic Income (UBI) | ••• | |
| Food business profit cap - profits shared with workers at every level | | ••••• |
| Caps on product prices for basic, healthy food products | • | •• |
| Rent cap on council housing so those on low incomes can also afford healthy food | | |

Appendix 2: Sortition – demographic breakdown of citizens involved

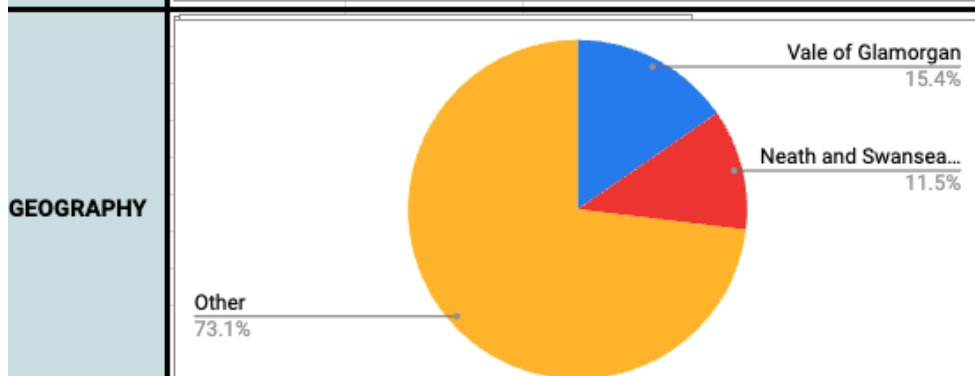
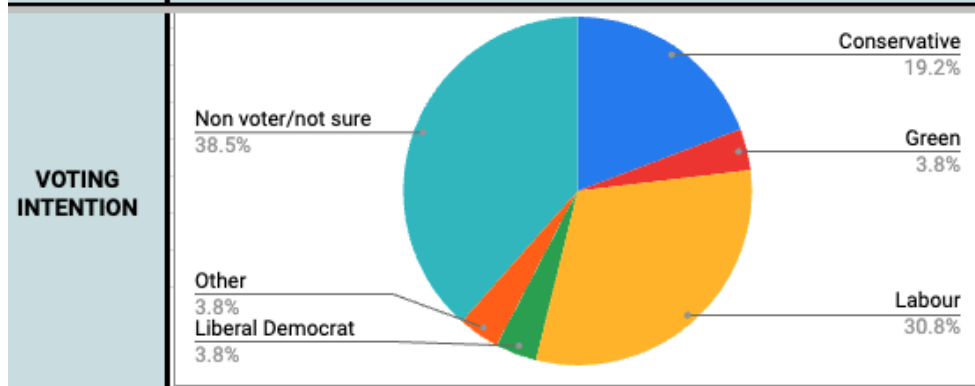
South London

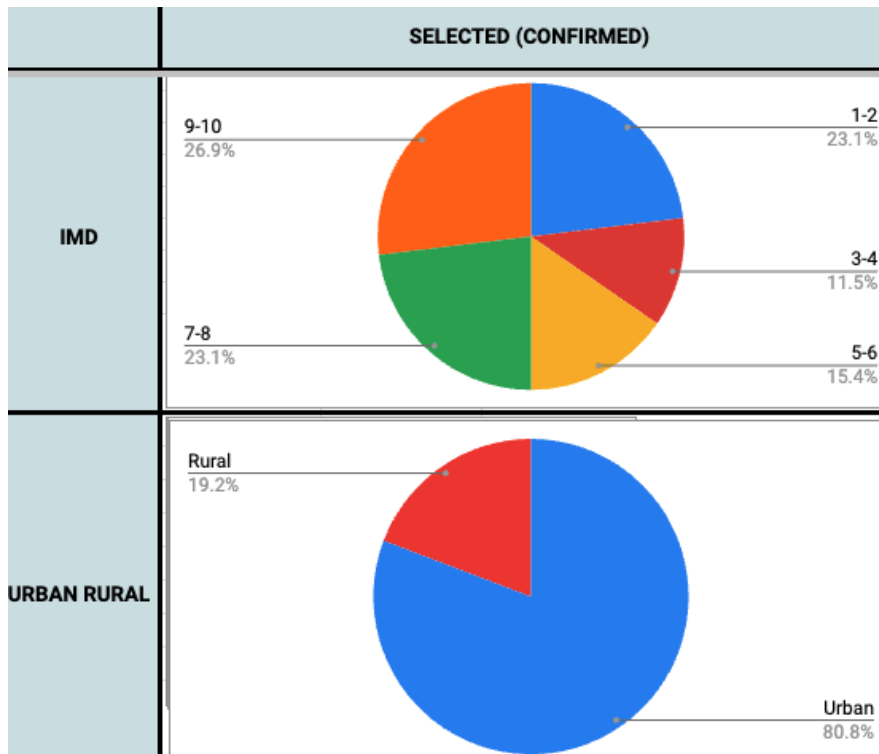


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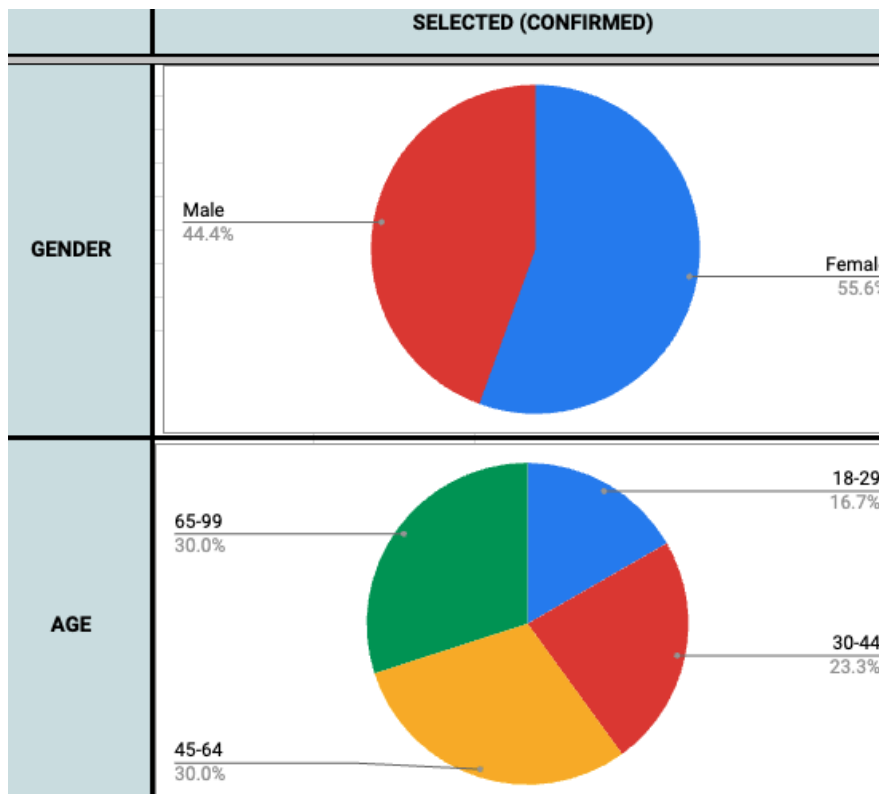


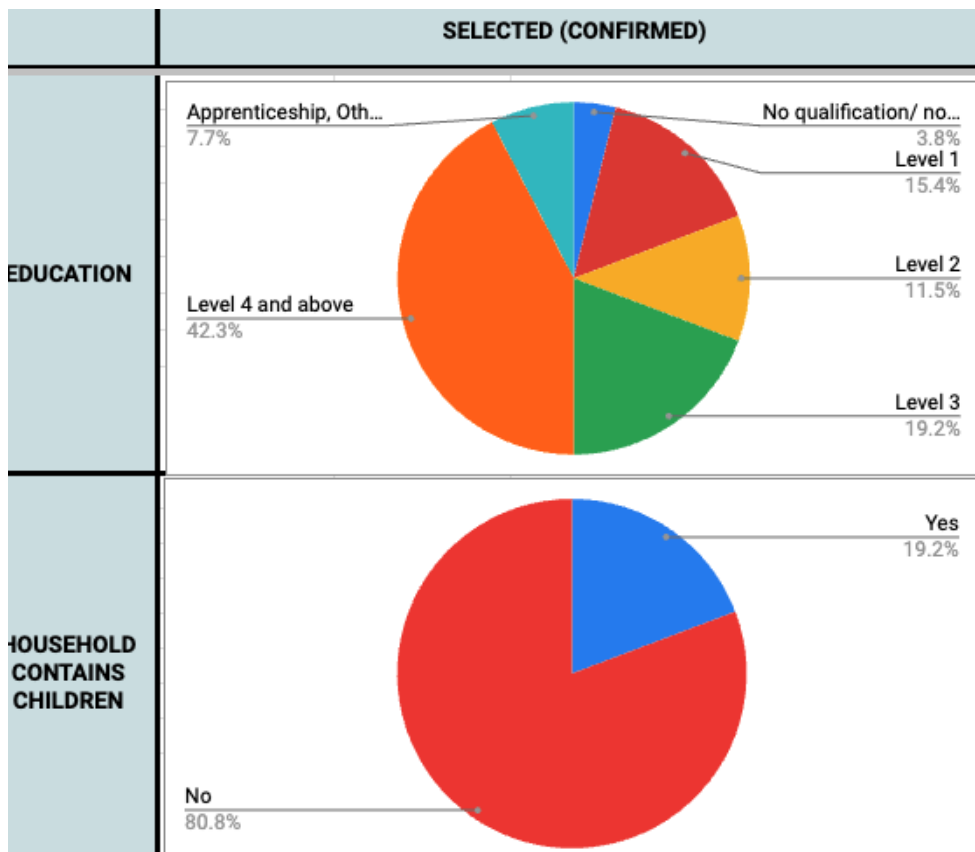
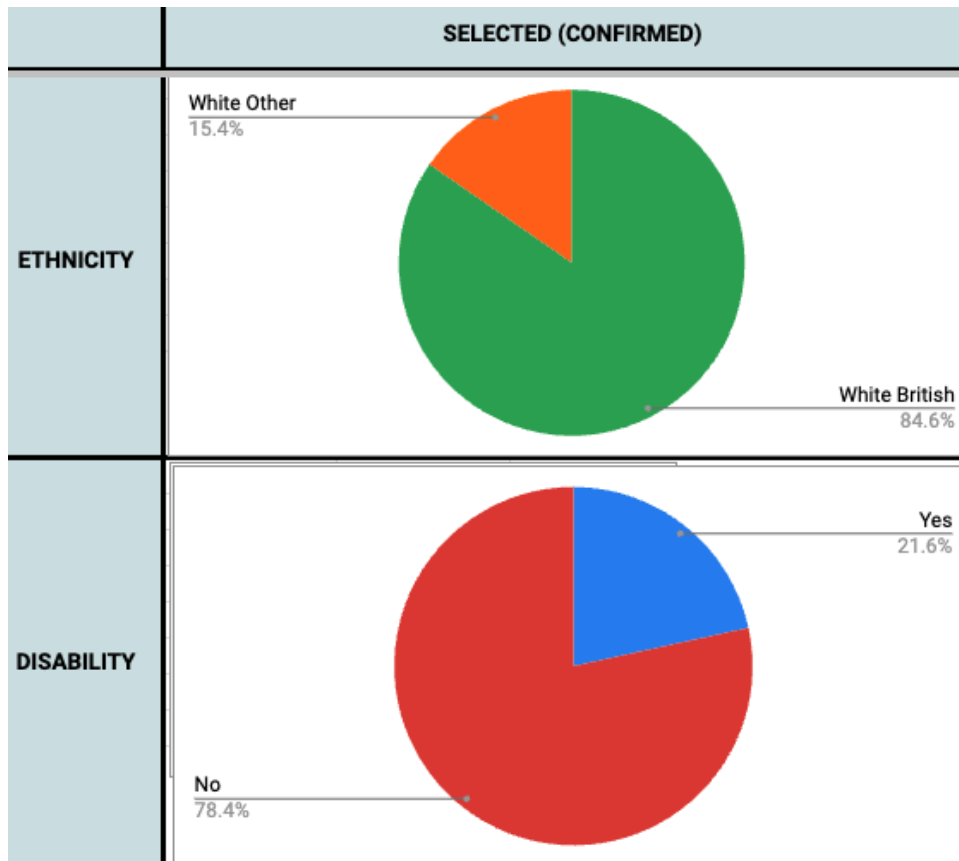
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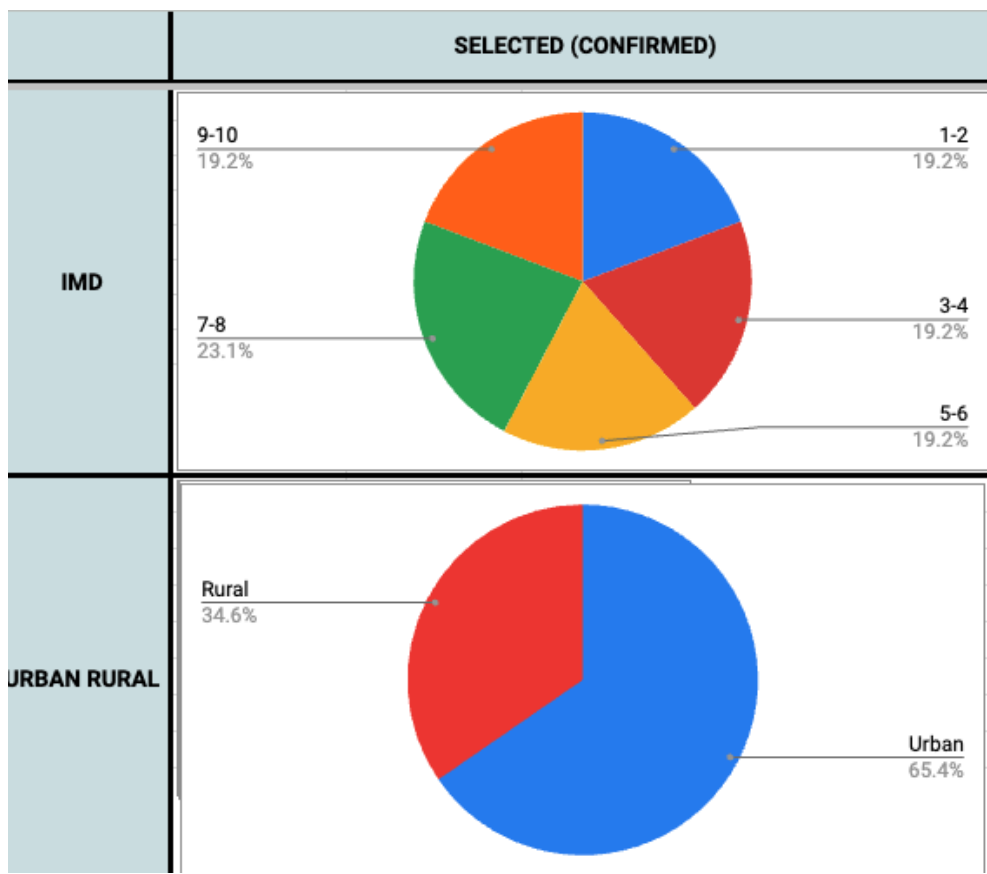
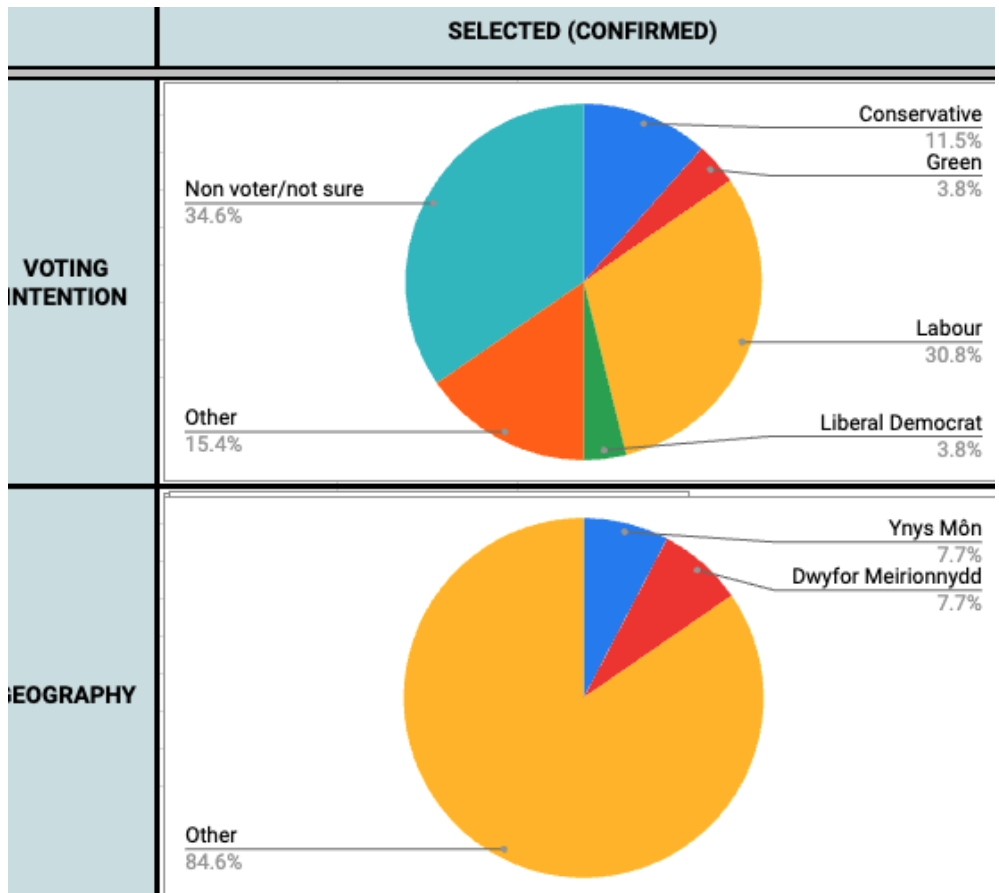




Cornwall







Appendix 3: Policy proposals

The following information was provided to participants on Recollective, with relevant sections shared after workshops, and as a hard copy at the final in person workshop.

Potential solutions to food system challenges

We are not starting from scratch in our discussions about the food system. Lots of organisations have made recommendations about how to tackle issues within the food system. At each workshop, we have looked at a few examples of these recommendations that we are calling ‘policy proposals’ to illustrate the range of the ideas available. This list isn’t exhaustive, as there is a limit to what we could cover in our workshops.

The aim is for you to hear about a range of ideas and to have the opportunity to build on existing thinking by various organisations and individuals. Their inclusion does not mean that the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission (FFCC) formally endorses them.

After each workshop, you also had the opportunity to tell us what you thought about the proposals you have discussed by choosing one of the following options:

- DO IT – I support this proposal and think we just need to get going and do it.
- TEST IT – I like this proposal but suggest we start by piloting it to assess its effectiveness.
- DEBATE IT – I have reservations about this proposal and think the pros and cons require inclusive and balanced debate and collective leadership before a decision is made whether to progress it.
- DO NOT DO IT – I do not like this proposal and do not wish to see it taken forward.

Workshop One – A fair deal for farmers and citizens

A fair deal for farmers and citizens

What are the issues?

Farmers get a tiny fraction of the sale of basic foods compared to shops, advertisers, processors and suppliers. A farmer covers more than half the costs of production on a 480g block of cheese, but takes only 0.02% of the profit (1)

At the other end of the supply chain, many UK adults can’t afford to pay for essential foods due to rising costs. 3 million emergency food parcels were distributed by Trussell Trust food banks in 2022-2023 – the most parcels ever distributed by the network in a year (2)

Policy proposals (a fair deal for citizens)

- Universal Credit. Make sure that Universal Credit payments are enough to cover a basket of essentials including food, household bills and travel cost. (3)
- Housing support. Create a package of support on housing (e.g., affordable social housing, rent cap) to ensure people aren’t having to prioritise their rent payments above buying food. (4)

- Extend the value and eligibility for Healthy Start vouchers (vouchers used on fruit, veg, milk and infant formula) so more families who need them can access them. Healthy Start is a scheme that already exists. (5)
- Tax manufacturers. Pay for schemes like the above by introducing a tax on manufacturers based on the amount of sugar and salt they use. (6)
- Universal Basic Income. Introduce Universal Basic Income to provide everyone, regardless of circumstances, with regular payments, ensuring a financial safety net for essential food. (7)

Policy proposals (a fair deal for citizens)

- Producer payments. Ensure government agricultural payments incentivise sustainable farming and pay producers for delivering 'public goods' such as habitats for wildlife, clean water, and flood management. (8)
- Local food hubs. Invest in systems to get food from producers to people without so many steps in between, run by not-for-profit food hubs and wholesalers to offer fairer prices to farmers and growers. (9)
- Windfall tax on food companies. Pay for schemes like those mentioned by introducing a windfall tax for big food companies who profit the most when prices rise. (10)
- Regulations. Introduce a strong and straightforward regulatory framework that ensures fair dealing between retailers and suppliers/intermediaries and farmers. (11)

Workshop Two – Intensive chicken farming, UPFs and the food environment

Intensive chicken farming

What are the issues?

Chicken is the most popular meat in the UK. Just a few companies produce most of the UK's chicken: Avara foods (Cargill), Moy Park and Two Sisters. 95% of our chickens are raised in intensive indoor units. When concentrated in an area, these units can pollute the surrounding area with nitrate and ammonia.

25% of the UK's chicken production is based around the River Wye. Pollution from intensive units has led to the river's ecological status being downgraded.

Chicken is so popular that 42% of the world's crops - like grains and soy - are used to feed chickens.

The demand for these crops puts pressure on vulnerable areas like the Amazon rainforest and leads to deforestation. Less would be needed if people ate them directly (instead of feeding them to animals).

Policy proposals

- Dietary change. Incentivise people to eat "less but better" meat and dairy, instead eating more beans, nuts, pulses, fruit and vegetables. Reduce overall consumption by 50% by 2030. (12)
- Polluter pays. Fine industrial meat producers who damage the environment. Use the money to help low income households pay food bills. (13)
- Incentives for farmers. Incentivise farmers to change to regenerative farming methods, including less intensive and higher welfare chicken production systems. (14)

- Impact assessment. Require a climate and environmental impact assessments in order to get permission to develop new industrial livestock units. (15)
- Land use framework. Create structures to support local decision making on land use – a land use framework - that considers climate, nature, and food security. (16)

Ultra-processed foods

What are the issues?

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are industrially made foods that often contain high levels of saturated fat, salt, sugar, and artificial additives.

They are often relatively cheap, convenient, and heavily marketed. Examples include fizzy drinks, mass produced bread, sugary cereals and sausages.

Studies show they are associated with an increased risk of poor health and rising obesity rates. The ingredients that go into UPFs – like wheat, soy and corn – are often grown in industrial agricultural systems, reliant on fossil fuel derived pesticides and fertilisers.

Overall half of the UK's calorie intake now comes from UPFs. For children and lower income households the rate is even higher, and one study found 60-70% of calories in UK school lunches were from UPFs.

Policy Proposals

- UPFs in public settings. Restrict the use of UPF in public settings like schools and hospitals by introducing stronger standards for what food they can buy and serve. (17)
- Sugar/salt Tax. Charge the manufacturers and importers of processed foods a tax based on how much sugar and salt they use in their products. (18)
- National guidance. Add information on reducing UPF to official nutrition guidance. Similar guidance already exists in Canada, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, and Uruguay. (19)
- Target. The Government should set a target to reduce how much UPF the UK eats. France has set a similar standard to reduce UPFs eaten by 20%. (20)
- Community Eatwell scheme. Enable GPs to prescribe fruit and vegetable vouchers to people on low income who have poor diets or experience food insecurity. (21)

Children's Food

What are the issues?

Getting the right nutrition is important for child development, but many young children in the UK have poor diets - too much salt and sugar and not enough fibre. This is particularly the case for children living in deprived areas.

Many children have limited access to affordable and nutritious food, leading to unhealthy diets. The marketing of unhealthy foods also influences what children want to eat.

Poor nutrition puts children at risk of health conditions such as: obesity, diabetes, mental health conditions and tooth decay from sugary drinks and foods.

Policy proposals

- Standards in early years settings. Set requirements for nutritious food and drinks in early years settings, such as nurseries and day-care centres. (23)
- Free school meals. Provide free school meals to all children. (24)
- Programme for children. Launch a new programme for children to taste and prepare healthy foods. (25)
- Restricting advertising. Enact the Government's proposed plan to restrict junk food advertising on TV until after 9pm. (26)
- School food standards. Strengthen school food standards by requiring more fruits and vegetables at every school meal and snack and restrict the use of Ultra Processed Foods. (27)

Food environment

What are the issues?

The places people live, work, and play have a big influence on what they eat. Deprived areas often have more fast-food outlets and not much access to healthy foods. People with lower incomes are also likely to lack time and face additional stress in their lives, making it harder for them to access and cook and eat healthy food.

The food served in public institutions, such as schools and hospitals, is often low quality. It's not always sustainable or nutritious and lots of it gets wasted because it isn't tasty. Institutional food standards could better align with climate and nature commitments or public preferences, highlighting the need for reform.

Policy proposals

- Local / small retailers. Local authorities should collaborate with small retailers, such as convenience stores, to make their food offer healthier. (28)
- Local food partnerships. Local authorities should support the establishment of cross-sector food partnerships in every local area to help create a more healthy, sustainable, and fair local food system. (29)
- Food standards in public institutions. Set legally binding nutrition, sustainability and environmental standards for food served in hospitals, and other public institutions. Monitor to ensure food is nutritious and environmentally friendly. (30)
- Public procurement with local input. Increase the participation of smaller and local suppliers in public food procurement for schools, hospitals and prisons. Keep the value in the local economy. (31)

Workshop Three – Nature, climate and sustainable farming

Nature, climate and the food system

What are the issues?

While modern farming has increased food availability and affordability, certain types of food production and intensive farming practices can also damage the environment. About 20% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions come from the food system - or 30% if you include food imports.

Intensive farming relies on fertilisers and pesticides, further impacting nature and the environment. Turning natural ecosystems into intensive farmland has resulted in

habitat loss, which in turn impacts biodiversity. The global food system is one of the primary drivers of biodiversity loss around the world.

Policy proposals

- Sustainability reporting. The Government should require food businesses to make public reports on their impact on health, animal welfare and sustainability. (32)
- Action on deforestation. Supermarkets should cut ties with companies selling or using animal feed from deforested land in places like the Amazon rainforest. (33)
- True cost. Supermarkets and other food businesses should pay the true cost of production for sustainably produced food, including introducing schemes that reward farmers for reducing their environmental impact. (34)
- Polluter pays. Tax the businesses that profit from polluting, such as companies that make pesticides and fertilisers or encourage intensive meat production. (35)
- Criminalise environmental destruction. Make it a crime to severely damage or destroy ecosystems (also known as 'ecocide'). (36)
- Eco-labelling of food products. The Government should introduce a labelling scheme for food products that tells consumers about the environmental impact of their choices, such as biodiversity, animal welfare and carbon impact. (37)

A just and sustainable agricultural transition

What are the issues?

Climate change, a lack of biodiversity and rising operation costs are already making it harder for farmers to produce enough food and make a profit. Some farmers face going out of business, which could affect how much food we are able to produce in the UK.

To tackle the climate and nature crisis, farmers will have to change to more sustainable practices. But to invest in a different future, farmers need clear, consistent policies and markets, and they need access to knowledge and advice tailored to their circumstances.

It takes several years to change the way a farm produces food, and many farmers already make little profit from the food they produce, relying on agricultural payments from the government. After Brexit, these payments are changing, and there is an opportunity for agricultural payments to help farmers transition to more sustainable practices.

Policy proposals

- Farmer advice. Make sure every farmer can get trusted, independent advice by trained peer mentors and support networks. (38)
- Horticulture. Governments across the UK should commit to ambitious horticulture (fruit and veg) growth plans to support the production and increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. (39)
- Agroecological Farming. Agroecology is sustainable farming that works with nature. The Government should set a target for regenerative agroecological farming on 75% of UK farmland by 2030. (40)
- Transition budget. Set a guaranteed agricultural budget until 2029, to give financial support to farmers so they can change to sustainable farming methods. (41)

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Appendix 4: Workshop agendas and speakers

Workshop one: (online)

| Time | Activity – Introduction to the food system & Power, fairness and inequalities in the food system |
|------|--|
| 6.00 | Workshop welcome & introduction, Menti questions |
| 6.25 | Speaker 1: Mhairi Brown, Head of Food Futures, FFCC – an introduction to The Food Conversation and a chicken wrap as a way into this conversation |
| 6.35 | Small group discussion – thinking about your connections to the food system |
| 6.55 | Speaker 2: Angelina Sanderson Bellamy, Professor of Food Systems, UWE Bristol . Introduction to the food system, range of actors in the food system and how power is distributed. Q&A with Angelina and Mhairi |
| 7.20 | Small group discussion – reflecting on the presentations and exploring perceptions of power in the food system. |
| 7.45 | Break |
| 7.55 | An introduction to inequalities across the food system, focusing on consumers Charlotte Hardman, Professor of Psychology and Eating Behaviour, Institute of Population Health, University of Liverpool Video: James Smith, Loddington Farm , a focus on producers Q&A with Charlotte and Emily Linton, Pathways Lead: Farming Futures, FFCC |
| 8.20 | Small group discussion – reflecting on power, fairness, and inequalities in the food system. What are the challenges and reviewing policy proposals that seek to support a fair deal for consumers and producers. |
| 8.50 | Final plenary |
| 9:00 | Close |

Workshop two: (online)

| Time | Activity – Introduction to the food system & Power, fairness and inequalities in the food system |
|------|--|
| 6.00 | Workshop welcome & introduction, Menti questions |
| 6.20 | Speaker 1: Mhairi Brown, Head of Food Futures, FFCC – where are we with the chicken wrap? An introduction to this evening's topics |
| 6.25 | Speaker 2: Yanaina Chavez-Ugalde, University of Cambridge , The impacts of Ultra Processed Foods (UPFs) and foods high in sugar and salt and policy - proposals to address these Speaker 3: Andrew Stark, Eating Better . The impacts of intensively farmed meat and chicken, thoughts on land use and policy proposals to address these challenges. Q&A with Yanaina and Andrew |
| 7.00 | Small group discussion – reflecting on the presentations and exploring policy proposals to address the impacts. |
| 7.40 | Break |
| 7.50 | Filmed presentation: Dr Courtney Scott, formerly FFCC , An introduction to the food environment, linking to public procurement and children's food. Q&A with Mhairi Brown, Head of Food Futures, FFCC |
| 8.15 | Small group discussion – reflecting on the presentation, exploring policy proposals on children's food and the food environment. |
| 8.50 | Final plenary with <u>menti</u> questions. |
| 9:00 | Close |

Workshop three: (online)

| Time | Activity – Introduction to the food system & Power, fairness and inequalities in the food system |
|------|---|
| 6.00 | Workshop welcome & introduction, Menti questions |
| 6.20 | Speaker 1: Mhairi Brown, Head of Food Futures, FFCC – where are we with the chicken wrap? An introduction to this evening's topics |
| 6.25 | Speaker 2 – filmed presentation: Sarah Bridle, Professor of Food, Climate and Society, University of York The impacts (and opportunities) of the food system on climate Speaker 3: Alec Taylor, Head of Policy (Production), WWF-UK , the impacts (and opportunities) of the food system on nature and biodiversity Q&A with Alec |
| 6:55 | Small group discussion – reflecting on the presentations and exploring issues/ challenges and policy proposals to address them |
| 7.40 | Break |
| 7.55 | Filmed presentation: Joe Stanley, The GWCT Allerton Project , An introduction to the transition to sustainable agriculture, the challenges and policies – focusing on arable farming Q&A with Joe Stanley |
| 8.15 | Small group discussion – reflecting on the presentation, exploring issues/ challenges policy proposals to address them` |
| 8.50 | Final plenary with <u>menti</u> questions. |
| 9:00 | Close |

Workshop four: (online)

| Time | Activity – Introduction to the food system & Power, fairness and inequalities in the food system |
|------|--|
| 6.00 | Workshop welcome & introduction, Menti questions |
| 6.20 | Speaker 1: Mhairi Brown, Head of Food Futures, FFCC – where are we with the chicken wrap? An introduction to this evening's topics |
| 6.25 | Speaker 2 – filmed presentation: Dr Kelly Parsons, University of Cambridge An introduction to food policy, policy making and governance Speaker 3: Lise Walbom, CEO of Food Nation , the Denmark experience |
| 6:35 | Small group discussion – reflecting on the presentations and exploring issues/ challenges and policy proposals to address them |
| 7:15 | Break |
| 7:30 | Filmed presentation: Clare Moriarty, CEO of Citizens' Advice and former civil servant, including Permanent Secretary, Defra , An experience of policy making in the UK Panel discussion and Q&A: Farming perspective: David Wilson, Earth Time Farming Retail perspective: Marija Rompani, Director of Sustainability and Ethics, John Lewis Partnership (incl. Waitrose supermarkets) |
| 8.05 | Small group discussion – reflecting on the panel discussions |
| 8.50 | Final plenary with menti questions. |
| 9:00 | Close |

Workshop five – Friday evening: 2024

| Time | Activity – |
|------|--|
| 6.00 | Welcome, housekeeping & introduction |
| 6:10 | Presentation: 1) A round up of what we have heard so far 2) Summary of the key points you've made so far |
| 6.25 | Whole group gathering thoughts on: The food system as it is, the food system as it should be... |
| 6:35 | Small group discussion: Your vision for the future of our food system A postcard from the future |
| 7:40 | A meal together Main course Filmed speaker: A round up of challenges and policy solutions , Tim Benton, Chatham House Video: How the Dutch are reshaping their post-pandemic economy Kate Raworth, Economist Briefing about tomorrow Pudding |
| 9.00 | Close |



Workshop five – Saturday (South London)

| Time | Activity – |
|-------|--|
| 10:00 | Welcome, housekeeping & introduction |
| 10:10 | Creating manifestos for the food system |
| 11:05 | Break |
| 11:20 | Small group discussion: Actions: what steps need to be taken to address the problems |
| 12:45 | Lunch break |
| 13:30 | Sharing your manifestos – with each other and guests |
| 14:00 | South London speaker panel Damien Conrad, The Felix Project Shiraz Sheriff, Public Health Principle at Croydon Council |
| 14:45 | Coming together to prioritise our manifesto actions |
| 15:05 | Thinking to the future - Presentation Food Farming and Countryside Commission (FFCC) – Our plans, how to stay involved Mhairi Brown, Head of Futures |
| 15:25 | The marketplace: exploring how to stay involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get involved in advocacy. Meet your MP • Continue the Food Conversation with family, friends and your wider communities • Join our speaker and explore what else you might want to do locally |
| 15:50 | Final menti.com and thank you! |
| 16:00 | Close / optional group photo |

Workshop five – Saturday (Cornwall)

| Time | Activity – |
|-------|---|
| 10:00 | Welcome, housekeeping & introduction |
| 10:10 | Creating manifestos for the food system |
| 11:05 | Break |
| 11:20 | Small group discussion: Actions: what steps need to be taken to address the problems |
| 12:45 | Lunch break |
| 13:30 | Sharing your manifestos – with each other and guests |
| 14:00 | Cornwall speaker panel Lynne Dyer, Growing Links CIC Lucy Jones, Cornish Food Box Company Rachel Wigglesworth, Director of Public Health Cornwall County Council |
| 14:45 | Coming together to prioritise our manifesto actions |
| 15:05 | Thinking to the future - Presentation Food Farming and Countryside Commission (FFCC) – Our plans, how to stay involved Kenny McCarthy, Programme Manager – Citizen Engagement |
| 15:25 | The marketplace: exploring how to stay involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get involved in advocacy. Meet your MP • Continue the Food Conversation with family, friends and your wider communities • Join our speakers and explore what else you might want to do locally |
| 15:50 | Final menti.com and thank you! |
| 16:00 | Close / group photo |



Hopkins Van Mil report authors

Henrietta Hopkins, Director
Hally Ingram, Senior Associate
Jemima Foxtrot, Associate Researcher
Kate Furber, Researcher

Hopkins Van Mil
Coppergate House
10 White's Row
London E1 7NF
info@hopkinsvanmil.co.uk
www.hopkinsvanmil.co.uk



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