



Food, Farming
& Countryside
Commission

The Food Conversation

Wave One

Findings report from deliberations in West
Yorkshire, East Kent and Northumberland

Hopkins Van Mil

May 2024

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 over the course of 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. The chicken wrap is used because it is a common feature of food in public settings as well as being a fast and convenient food eaten by many. It encompasses many of the elements being discussed in our four key workshop themes, including UPFs (in the wrap), food and farming (the wrap, and the filling), food environments and public procurement. The four main themes on which participants heard a range of specialists present are:

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

This report is a summary of the findings from the first of four waves of The Food Conversation, sharing what those involved from East Kent, Northumberland and West Yorkshire concluded. A full report of findings from all the waves will be produced towards the end of 2024.

We found a great deal of commonality between what participants said in each of the locations involved in wave one. So much so that the key messages combine to create powerful key findings. Overwhelmingly participants **call for change**.

- They want to see a shift from a food system they perceive as unfair, unsustainable, unbalanced, and overly complex to one that is fair, healthy, sustainable, and affordable.
- They want systemic changes in the food system that support people in eating healthier and more sustainable diets and address the current disconnect people feel between the food they eat and where it comes from.

- They want to see a rebalancing of the food system, with farmers, citizens, and the environment prioritised over large food companies and supermarkets.

Part of the process included reviewing and prioritising policies that have already been proposed by a range of organisations (see Appendix 3). We asked participants after each workshop to assess each policy proposed on a 'Do it, test it, debate it, don't do it' basis. Based on analysis of the findings from this exercise, in which 38 policies were reviewed, plus citizen discussions on how to achieve their visions for the future of the food system, we see seven key action areas are highlighted. These top actions for change are listed in priority order below:

- **Institutional food standards.** Enforce health and sustainability standards for food served in public institutions including schools, hospitals and all early years settings; promote local procurement and on-site meal preparation.
- **Ultra-Processed Foods.** Use a range of approaches to tackle UPFs including warning labels, restrictions in public settings like schools and hospitals, and advertising bans for unhealthy foods; set targets for a reduction in UPFs in the national diet.
- **Education and awareness.** Integrate food system education in school curriculums, promote practical cooking skills, and raise awareness of the food system through national guidance, local learning opportunities and improved labelling.
- **Support for farmers.** Provide incentives and a transition budget for sustainable farming practices, along with advice, support and training.
- **Local food.** Introduce local food hubs, support for and partnerships with local food businesses, and community growing projects to reconnect citizens to the source of their food.
- **Accessibility.** Address structural inequalities through social policies and tackle food deserts to ensure access to healthy, sustainable food.
- **Environmental sustainability.** Support regenerative farming, tackle food system waste, and introduce taxes and fines on companies that harm the environment while ensuring the costs are not passed on to consumers.

Participants believe it is primarily Government's responsibility to drive this transformation and call for a cross-party national food framework, with ministerial accountability (for some at a prime ministerial level) and local government leadership. They advocate for a collaborative approach, which brings together actors from across the system, including farmers and citizens.

In chapter three we explore what participants expressed as their connection to the food system before they began their deliberative discussions in The Food Conversation. For most people connections exist when they are growing, buying, cooking or eating food. A few participants work within the system either in farming or cooking food. For many the best and most important connections to the food system come when they enable:

- Community and social connections to flourish
- Health and wellbeing to be improved, including in growing food locally
- Agricultural practice to be sustainable and in balance with the natural environment

Food system challenges were explored by participants to understand which they feel are most significant and in conflict with their visions for the future. In chapter four we share participants' views on the power imbalances that they see entrenched in the system. Participants describe a changed food culture in the UK. They see how society views food as being different (and worse) from how it was in the past, and in comparison with other countries.

We see participants' key concerns around a lack of focus on healthy, nutritious food in society and a desire for convenience. They see this as exacerbated by the cost of living crisis with more people buying food on very restricted budgets. Concerns were expressed about the environment in which we buy foods, and the connection to ill health and food waste. Other key challenges raised by participants include:

- The impact of UPFs on our health, together with the challenge of ensuring food is nutritionally balanced.
- A concern that both the cost and convenience of UPFs means people on lower incomes increasingly rely on them as a significant part of their diet.
- The cost of food in the current climate is a significant challenge raised by participants, with healthy fresh foods being considered more expensive than the processed alternatives.
- In a linked theme, participants also share their concerns for food standards in the context of food procured by public institutions such as schools and hospitals.

Animal welfare is also raised in this context with participants questioning whether society is being harmed via poor animal welfare practices in farming.

Participants question whether farming in the UK is viable in the longer-term, given the poor returns on their investment, the challenges of land-use pressures and the threats to farming from isolation and poor mental health.

Many participants share the high degree of concern they have for the impacts of our food system on the planet. For many the impacts of the food system on climate was new, and shocking, information. They fear a catch-22 situation: as climate change increases, the more impact it will have on food production and the less likely farming in particular will be able to transition successfully to sustainable practices.

Participants express a clear sense of harm being done to the natural environment. Some participants find it difficult to imagine the scale of harm being overcome or reversed without a seismic shift in how the food system operates.

To move from challenges to solutions we share in chapter five participants' vision for the future and their reactions to the policy proposals already proposed. In these participants:

A focus on local from growing and producing to procurement and consumption, there has been a move away from the dominance of multi-national corporations in the system and local independent shops thrive, providing for the needs of their communities.

- **Fairness, power sharing and transparency** which are at its core with embedded equity: food banks are a thing of the past, food communities bring people together to grow, produce, cook and eat food, improving social cohesion.
- A society which **understands what nutritious and sustainable food is**, UPFs have been reduced/ removed, positive marketing and advertising promote the benefits of healthy food - not junk food. Education in schools works as a lever for inter-generational awareness and change.

- **Connected systemic issues are fixed** so people are no longer prioritising heat or rent over food. The welfare system provides support for those on lower incomes and in financial hardship to access the healthy, nutritious food they need.
- **Regulations** to restrict UPFs, criminalise organisations whose actions harm the planet, and ensure a fairer distribution of risk and reward are in place and enforced.
- Ensured wide-scale **restoration of nature and biodiversity** because farming and food production prioritises combatting climate change and values animals, biodiversity, nature and the planet.
- **Strong, cross governmental leadership** based on a clear, transparent and simple vision with accountable decision making.

The policy actions to which participants are particularly drawn are those which encourage a transition to the food system they wish to see. There are mixed views on taxation and penalties to enact change. There is stronger support for policy proposals on government intervention, initiatives to raise awareness and improve food standards in public institutions than there is for taxation and penalties.

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](#) worked in a co-production process with FFCC. This report has been authored by HVM as the first in a series of summary reports to be produced in waves to inform important policy discussions in this 2024 election year. A final summary report for the full process will be published in December.

1.2 Programme objectives

Food system change is essential for making progress on human and planetary health, but 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 like ‘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 a new narrative about 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.

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 first wave of The Food Conversation are set out in figure 1.



Figure 1: Citizens in these locations took part in The Food Conversation

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 12000 addresses from across each location in wave one (just under 300 addresses for every one of the needed 90 conversation members). Each of these addresses received a letter in the post inviting residents 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 our 80 National Conversation about Food members from the pool of 478 people who registered in such a way to create a representative sample (e.g., the age profile of Conversation members 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 we use, 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 marginal constituencies: In Northumberland - Cramlington & Killingworth and Hexham; in West Yorkshire - Keighley & Ilkley, Leeds West & Pudsey, Ossett and Denby Dale; in East Kent – Canterbury, Dover & Deal, Thanet East.
- **Urban/ rural:** we used 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:** we use 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.

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

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

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

had changed their mind or had something come up (using the algorithm). The details of the final confirmed 30 people in each location (90 in total) and this was handed to TPXImpact who supported participants through The Food Conversation journey. The final numbers for citizens joining The Food Conversation in each location was: 27 in East Kent; 26 in Northumberland; and 27 in West Yorkshire.

1.5 Methodology

In the proof of concept phase 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 proposed, 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; a device to illustrate the complexity of the topic and demonstrate key elements under discussion such as UPFs, the food environment, farming and environment.

Dialogue process

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

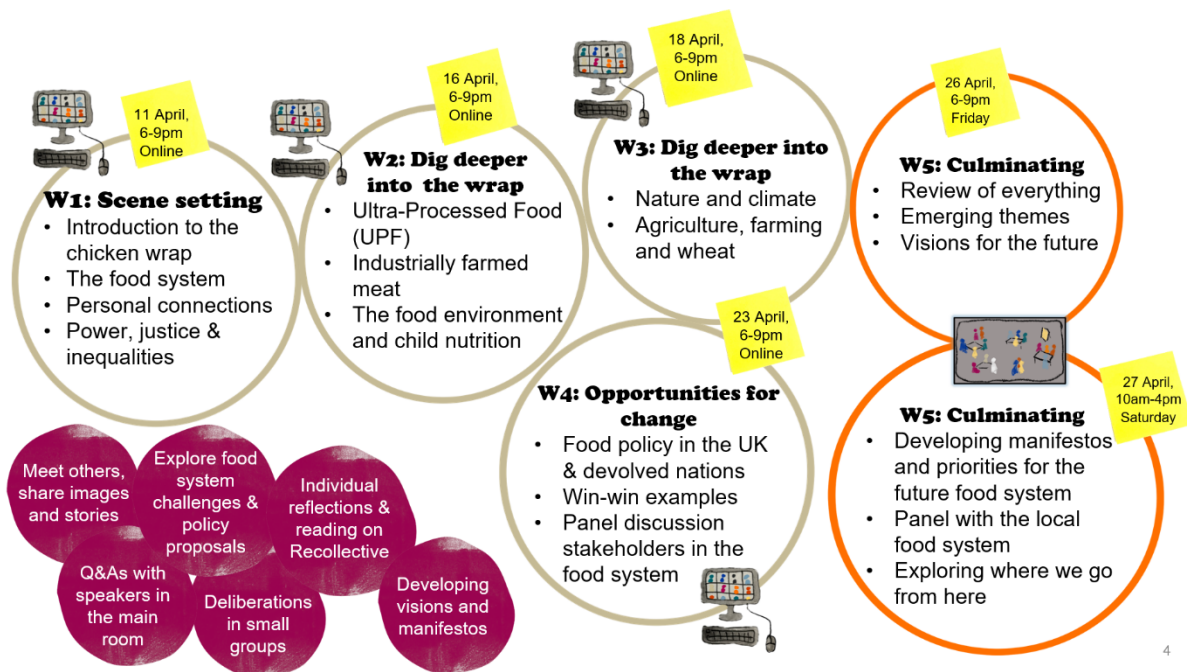


Figure 2: The dialogue process and framing

The dialogue was designed around five workshops. Four workshops were held online for three hours on week-day evenings over a two-week period. The final workshop was held in-person in each location from Friday 26th to Saturday 27th April (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.

In addition to workshops, participants were encouraged to use a dedicated online space tailored from the online platform Recollective. Here participants could review the workshop presentations, comment on video clips shown on topics they didn't see in the workshops and share additional thoughts on any of the material shared. They also did the 'Do it, Test it, Debate it, Don't do it' activity in this space. In this they reviewed a set of the policy actions introduced in the workshops (see Appendix 3) and decided which for them were actionable now (do it), needed further work and piloting (test it), needed further discussion (debate it), or should not be done. The results of these activities are shared throughout this report, and quotations drawn from the Recollective space.

Participants were supported throughout by the facilitation and support teams, a participant handbook, a tech support session, 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. Some quotes are also taken from our online participant workspace Recollective and are marked as such.” Participant, Northumberland

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

- Participants' manifestos call for significant change in the food system. They want to see a shift from a food system they perceive as unfair, unsustainable, unbalanced, and overly complex to one that is fair, healthy, sustainable, and affordable.
- They want systemic changes in the food system that support people in eating healthier and more sustainable diets and address the current disconnect people feel between the food they eat and where it comes from.
- They want to see a rebalancing of the food system, with farmers, citizens, and the environment prioritised over large food companies and supermarkets.
- To achieve their visions, participants call for action to be prioritised in the following seven areas:
 - **Institutional food standards.** Enforce health and sustainability standards for food served in public institutions including schools, hospitals and all early years settings; promote local procurement and on-site meal preparation.
 - **Ultra-Processed Foods.** Use a range of approaches to tackle UPFs including warning labels, restrictions in public settings like schools and hospitals, and advertising bans for unhealthy foods; set targets for a reduction in UPFs in the national diet.
 - **Education and awareness.** Integrate food system education in school curriculums, promote practical cooking skills, and raise awareness of the food system through national guidance, local learning opportunities and improved labelling.
 - **Support for farmers.** Provide incentives and a transition budget for sustainable farming practices, along with advice, support and training.
 - **Local food.** Introduce local food hubs, support for and partnerships with local food businesses, and community growing projects to reconnect citizens to the source of their food.
 - **Accessibility.** Address structural inequalities through social policies and tackle food deserts to ensure access to healthy, sustainable food.
 - **Environmental sustainability.** Support regenerative farming, tackle food system waste, and introduce taxes and fines on companies that harm the environment while ensuring the costs are not passed on to consumers

Participants believe it is primarily Government's responsibility to drive this transformation and call for a cross-party national food framework, with ministerial accountability, and local government leadership. They advocate for a collaborative approach, which brings together actors from across the system, including farmers and citizens.

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 across all locations included “unfair”, “complex”, “unbalanced”, “profit-driven”, “unhealthy” and “unsustainable”, as illustrated in 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 manifestos raised in all locations:

- **Struggles of farmers.** Concerns about unfairness relating to farmers not being paid a fair price for what they produce and being dictated by supermarkets. There are also worries about farmers' wellbeing and a lack of young people entering the farming sector.
- **Power imbalance.** Participants are concerned about the dominance of large food businesses and supermarkets that prioritise profit and shareholder value over the interests of citizens, farmers, and the environment. They also worry about aggressive marketing and advertising of unhealthy, often addictive, food products.
- **Accessibility and affordability inequalities.** There is concern that people living on low incomes struggle to afford healthy food, and that fast food outlets are more prevalent in poorer neighbourhoods, while healthy food is more accessible in wealthier areas.

- **Overly complex system.** Participants express concern about the complexity and opacity of the food system, which leads to a lack of agency and makes it hard for people to understand food production and make informed choices.
- **Lack of knowledge.** There is a concern about a widespread lack of understanding about the food system and how to prepare healthy, sustainable meals. One group described it as “unconscious ignorance”.
- **Unhealthy food culture.** Participants are concerned about the health impacts of Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs), especially on children, contributing to health issues like diabetes and obesity. One group commented that there is a “broken food culture” in the UK.
- **Institutional food.** There are concerns about the prevalence of unhealthy, processed food served in schools and other institutions such as hospitals.
- **Unsustainable.** The food system is seen as harmful to people and planet, with intensive unsustainable farming practices damaging the environment and nature, and contributing to climate change, which in turn impacts food production.
- **Wastefulness and packaging.** Participants are concerned about food waste across the entire food system and about the prevalence of non-recyclable packaging.
- **Reliance on food imports.** There is worry about the UK’s reliance on food imports and the undervaluing of food because of the ability to buy any type of food at any time of year.

A call for change

Participants across all three locations are calling out for change in the food system.

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



Figure 4: Describing the food system as should be

In their manifesto, participants set out their aspirations for the food system which are summarised below:

- **Knowledge.** An educated society that understands where food comes from and knows how to source and cook tasty, healthy, and sustainable food.
- **Leadership.** Ministerial level leadership, simplified governance, and a cross-party strategy for the food system that supports and empowers local action.
- **Sustainable.** A system that is less wasteful and supports regenerative farming, which is better for nature and the environment.
- **Healthy, tasty, and nutritious.** A food system that supports people to eat healthy and sustainable food and reduces the consumption of UPFs.
- **Local.** A food system that supports local production and consumption, where people are connected to and engaged with the food system.
- **Fairness.** A food system in which profits are distributed more equitably, and everyone in society benefits from healthy, sustainable diets.
- **Balanced.** A food system that is in balance, with controls that reduce the power of large food companies and tackle harmful practices.

The actions / solutions needed to change the food system

Participants deliberated on the actions needed to address the challenges facing the food system and to create the food system they want.

These actions are summarised under the following themes:

- Leadership and governance
- Education, awareness and food culture change
- Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs)
- Institutional settings/ public procurement
- Support for farmers
- Local food production
- Accessibility and affordability
- Environmental sustainability
- Taxation and regulation to rebalance the food system
- Other manifesto recommendations

Leadership and collaboration

Participants are calling out for government leadership on food system change. They want to see governance of the food system simplified and strengthened at a national level, along with a national food framework that empowers local action.

Specific suggestions include:

- Ministerial / Prime Minister level leadership and accountability. The Prime Minister or a dedicated food minister should be accountable for cross government policy.
- One responsible Government department. Establish a Ministry of Food to lead a new approach to the food system.

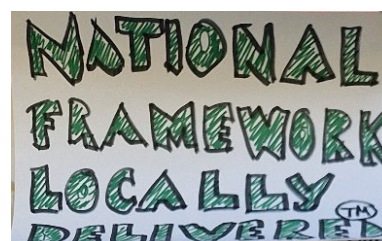


Figure 5: Group manifesto East Kent (zoom in)

- National food framework. Develop a food strategy for the nation led by a group that operates above party politics and the 5-year election cycle, which empowers local level delivery.
- Co-ordination forum. In Northumberland, participants commented that there needed to be “open hearted governance” that brings together actors from across the food system and co-ordinates efforts across levels of government.
- Local government support and leadership. Many participants highlighted the importance of local government leadership and support.
- Citizen engagement. Participants stressed the importance of citizen engagement, such as citizens’ assemblies, and returning power back to citizens.
- Learning. Participants discussed the importance of learning from past strategies and from other countries.

One group in Northumberland highlighted the importance of global collaboration on the food system, given that food is produced in a global context.

Participants emphasised the importance of government prioritising people, rather than being swayed by large food businesses and lobbyists. One group suggested a more representative system. Another group warned against politicians promoting or funding their friends’ businesses.

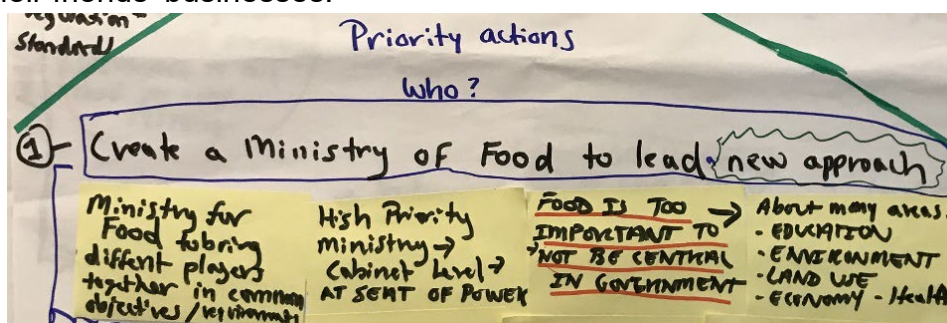
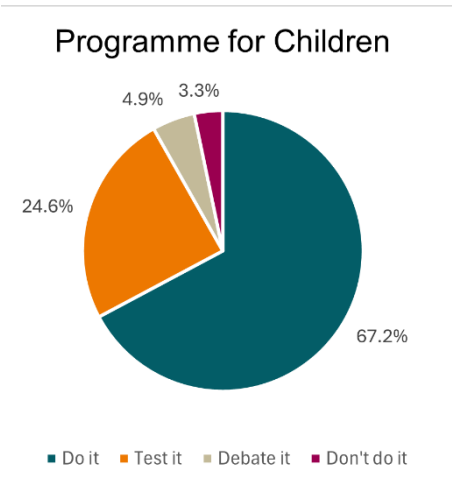


Figure 6: Group manifesto Northumberland (zoom in)

Education, awareness, and food culture change

Across all locations, participants are calling out for education and awareness to ensure everyone understands the food system, including the environmental and health impacts of their choices, and how to source and cook healthy and sustainable food. One group described “bringing the joy back into preparing, buying and eating food together.”

Children and young people. Participants across all locations are calling out for education about the food system to be embedded in the school curriculum and delivered in a way that inspires children. This should include learning about the food system, practical skills in how to source and cook sustainable, healthy food, and how to grow produce (e.g. a school veg patch). Some participants emphasise the importance of delivering learning experiences that engage young people and allow them to take pride in the meals they cook and the plants they grow, as some participants recalled uninspiring cooking classes from their school years.



This recommendation was echoed in many participant proposals to “Launch a new programme for children to taste and prepare healthy foods”.

Figure 7: **Programme for children policy.** Launch a new programme for children to taste and prepare healthy foods.

Wider society. Many participants call for ongoing education, awareness raising and communications about the food system. They call for an approach that aims to empower people to make better choices and shift society away from a consumption mindset towards eating more sustainable and healthy produce. Suggestions include:

- Local learning opportunities delivered with the support of local actors, such as local agencies, farmers, local chefs, and supermarkets.
- Messages from government, mainstream media, and social media that raise awareness about the food system, its impacts, and changes that are needed.
- Targeted courses for members of the public, such as a food system awareness course similar to the driving speed awareness course, should be developed.
- Local community events, such as food festivals, that make eating well a joyful community and cultural experience.

A few participants discussed the value of citizens having opportunities to learn through discussion and deliberation, like their experience of taking part in the Food Conversation. In Northumberland, participants recommended citizens’ assemblies that also inform food system decision-making.

Food labelling. Some participants argue for better food labelling to help citizens make more informed choices about the impact of their purchases. Participants in Northumberland called for the introduction of a mandatory labelling scheme for products sold by food companies, while in East Kent they also recommended the introduction of positive labelling to promote local sustainable produce.

Ultra-Processed Foods (UPF)

Tackling UPFs was a key priority for participants. Some participants want to see a reduction in the consumption of UPFs, while others call for an outright ban of UPFs. Several different policy proposals were recommended in participants’ manifestos:

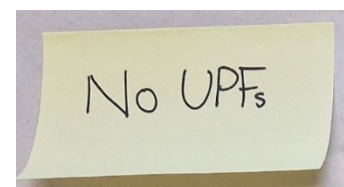


Figure 8: Group manifesto Leeds (zoom in)

National guidance. Some groups recommend adding information about on reducing UPF to official nutrition guidance, which was one of the policy proposals supported by many participants (figure 8).

Target. Some participants supported the policy proposal to introduce a target to reduce how much UPF the UK consumes. In Leeds, one group compared this proposal to climate targets and argued that both the government and corporations should also have targets.

Warning label. In East Kent, participants wanted to see warning labels on UPF products, in the same way that there are warnings on cigarette packadina.

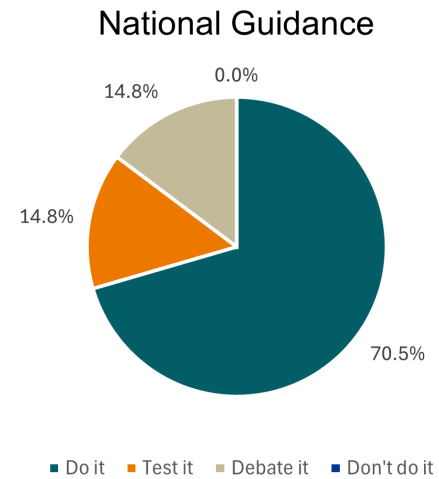


Figure 8: **National guidance.** Add information on reducing UPF to official nutrition guidance. Similar guidance already exists in Canada, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, and Uruguay.

Restricting UPFs. Many participants across all locations support the policy proposal to restrict or completely ban the use of UPF in public settings like schools and hospitals. Other recommendations include creating spaces that are free from UPFs and controlling their supply.

Advertising. Some participants include the policy proposal to ban pre-watershed advertising of unhealthy foods in their manifestos. Others included broader recommendations about the need to restrict the advertising and marketing of unhealthy food products (e.g. UPFs, sugar, salt) and instead to market healthy and sustainable produce.

A few participants who support the introduction of policies to phase out UFPs do so on the condition that research is conducted simultaneously to better understand what constitutes a UPF and what does not. They also advocate learning from other countries that have implemented policies (e.g. targets) to reduce UFP consumption to understand their impact before introducing similar policies to the UK.

UPFs in public settings

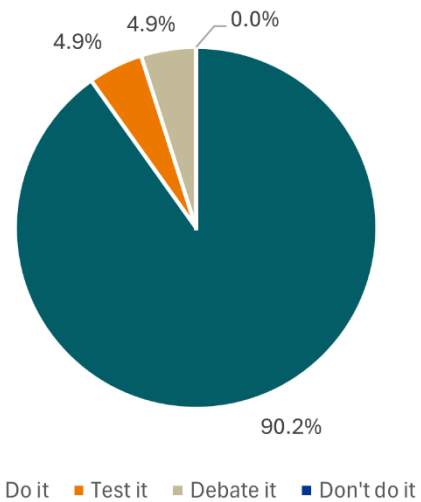


Figure 9: **UPF in public settings.** Restrict the use of UPF in public settings like schools and hospitals by introducing stronger standards for what food they can buy and serve.

Institutional settings / public procurement

Improving the quality of food in institutional settings, such as schools, nurseries, hospitals, is a high priority for participants across the locations.

Legally binding standards. Many participants support the policy proposal that calls for legally binding nutrition, sustainability, and environmental standards for food served in hospitals, schools, and other public institutions.

Early years settings. In addition to schools, early years settings particularly concerned participants when they learnt that food standards do not currently exist in this area (figure 11). Some included the policy proposal to set requirements for nutritious food and drinks in early years settings in their manifestos.

Food Standards in Public Institutions

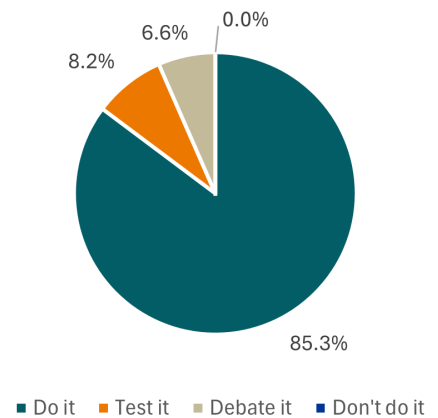


Figure 10: **Food standards in public institutions.** Set legally binding nutrition, sustainability and environmental standards for food served in hospitals, and other public institutions. Monitor to ensure food is nutritious and environmentally friendly.

Standards in Early Years Settings

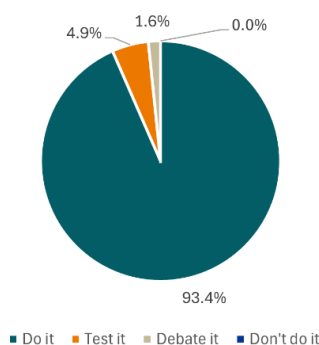


Figure 11: Standards in early years settings. Set requirements for nutritious food and drinks in early years settings, such as nurseries and day-care centres.

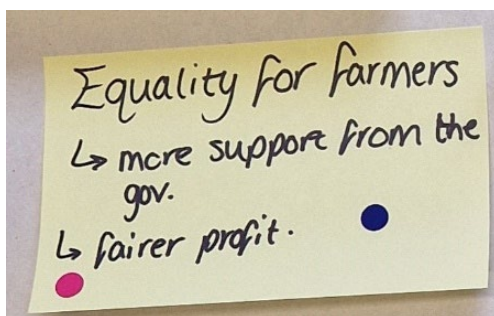
Local public procurement. Many participants want to see increased participation of small and local suppliers in public food procurement, as put forward in one of the policy proposals, to enable a more sustainable food supply and to support the local economy.

On-site food preparation. Some participants want to see public institutions rethink their approach to meal preparation, so that meals are cooked on-site (and therefore fresh and unprocessed), rather than brought in pre-prepared by large catering companies.

One group in Leeds accepted the trade-off that this may mean new approaches to procurement rules and, in some cases, higher prices than current catering contracts.

Support for farmers

Participants across locations call for policy measures which support farmers in transitioning to regenerative and sustainable farming practices. There is widespread support for farmers being paid fairly and receiving a bigger share of profits than they currently do. Participants want farmers to be properly valued and appreciated. Participants included the following policy proposals in their manifestos:



Incentives for Farmers

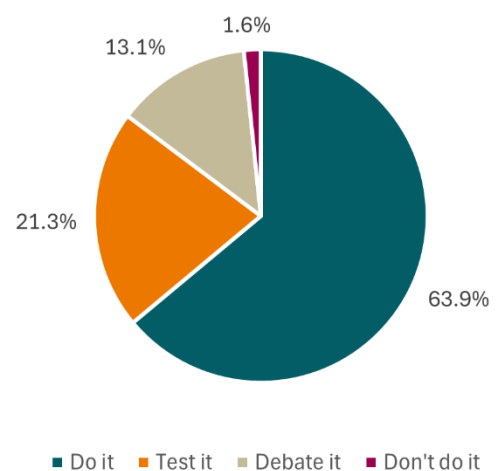


Figure 12: **Incentives for farmers.** Incentivise farmers to change to regenerative farming methods, including less intensive and higher welfare chicken production systems.

Producer payments / farmer incentives. Participants across all locations call for farmers to be paid incentives to transition to sustainable farming practices. They believe this will increase production of sustainable, quality food, such as organic produce; help farmers to maintain public goods such as clean water and natural habitats for wildlife; and encourage farmers to stay farming.

Transition budget. A few participants support the policy proposal to set a guaranteed agricultural budget to provide financial support to farmers so they can change to sustainable farming methods and included it in their manifestos.

Other support. Other policy recommendations made by participants include government encouraging

Farmer advice

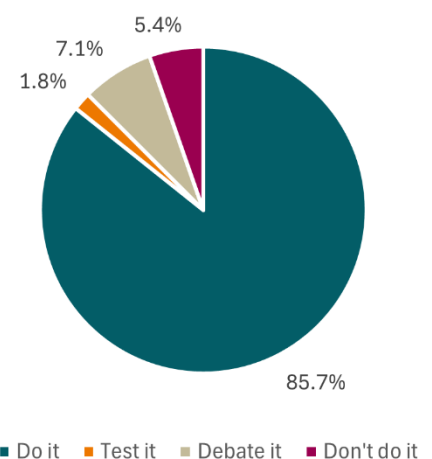


Figure 13: **Farmer advice.** Make sure every farmer can get trusted, independent advice by trained peer mentors and support networks.

farmers to set up apprenticeship schemes, providing advice and training in sustainable farming to farmers, and offering wellbeing support given the challenges farmers face.

Local food production

Across all participants' vision for the food system, they picture communities being able to enjoy locally sourced food and being more closely connected to food production.

They call for government to provide support for local food production and schemes, and for community engagement in local food systems.

Local food hubs. There is widespread support for the introduction of not-for-profit local food hubs and partnerships that bring consumers closer to producers and offer fairer prices to farmers and growers. A few participants highlight the importance of these hubs reaching poorer neighbourhoods and emphasise the importance of local authorities taking a leading role in establishing and coordinating local food hubs.

Local food businesses. In Leeds, participants recommend financial support for local food businesses such as bakeries, greengrocers, and markets. In East Kent, participants see opportunities to revitalise high streets with local food offerings.

Local food projects. Participants want local authorities to work positively with local communities to support local food schemes and integrate local food production into local life, such as community growing projects that engage young people.

Food security. Some participants stress the importance of UK food security and prioritising local production. In Northumberland, one group mentions the need for import regulations to prevent undercutting UK standards. In East Kent, participants recommend developing a food security plan while also supporting international development efforts to address global food challenges.

Support access to healthy food for all
Participants across all locations call for changes that make healthy and sustainable food accessible and affordable for everyone. There are concerns about the affordability of fresh and nutritious food, with some participants sharing personal experience of not being able to buy healthy, sustainable food on tight budgets.

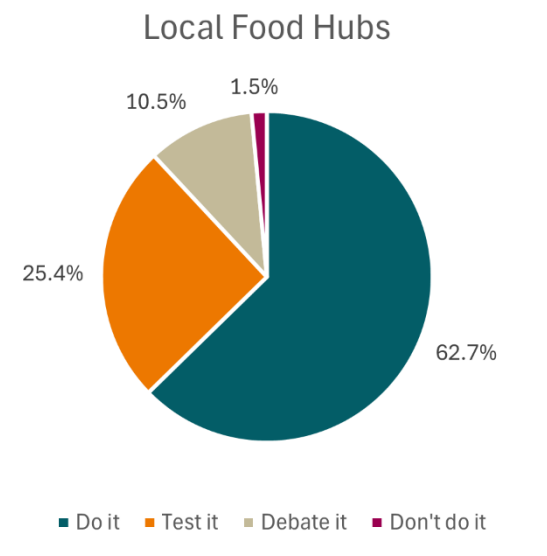


Figure 14: **Local food hubs.** Invest in systems to get food from producers to people without so many steps in between, run by not-for-profit food hubs and wholesalers to offer fairer prices to farmers and growers.

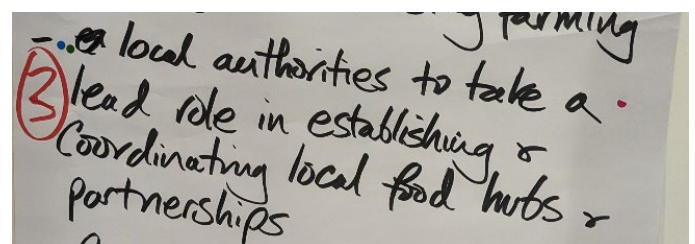
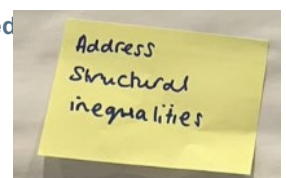


Figure 14: **Group manifesto Leeds**

Figure 15: **Group manifesto Northumberland**



Social support and benefits. In all locations, some groups call for social policies that address structural inequalities in the food system.

- In Leeds and East Kent, participants want to see policies that ensure incomes are high enough to afford healthy food. A group in Leeds argues means testing support, like universal credit, needs to rise with food inflation to ensure access to healthy food. One group acknowledges that this will mean a short-term increase in welfare spending, although longer-term it may help reduce NHS costs.
- In East Kent, one group advocated for housing support so people can focus on food and not have to worry about rent.
- They also recommend reforming social welfare so people can work part of the year in agriculture, which would also help to address concerns related to seasonal agricultural worker recruitment.

Tackling food deserts. In Northumberland, one group highlighted the need to overcome food deserts to enable everyone to have greater access to good food. In Leeds, some participants call for stricter and fairer planning laws to control fast food establishments, especially in less wealthy areas.

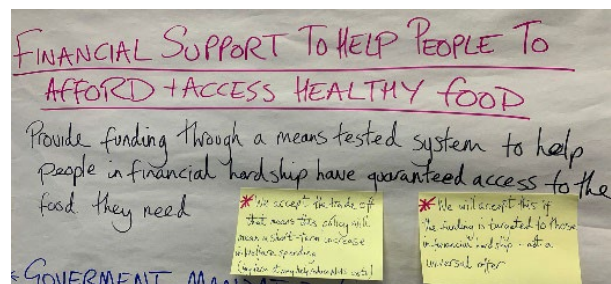


Figure 16: Group manifesto Leeds

Free school meals. A few groups call for free school meals in their manifestos to ensure all children have access to healthy food and to reduce the stigma associated with receiving free school meals.

Addressing the environmental impact of the food system

There is widespread concern about the impact of the food system on the environment, nature, land use, and climate change, with strong support for measures that encourage good practice and penalise destructive ones.

Many participants support environmental incentives and subsidies for the farming sector to transition to regenerative farming. In addition, specific groups included the following environmental policies in their manifestos:

- Deforestation. Incentives for retailers and supermarkets to cut ties with companies involved in selling or using animal feed for deforested land.
- Reduce packaging. Ban non-recyclable packaging.
- Polluter pays. Impose fines on businesses that pollute the environment.
- Food waste. Introduce a universal food waste system that everyone can use.
- Ecocide policies. One group included criminalising environmental destruction in their manifestos, a policy supported by many participants.
- Value the environment. Assign a monetary value to the environment to help businesses to make better decisions.
- Land use framework. Develop a land use plan alongside a national food strategy.

Taxation and regulation to rebalance the food system

Many participants express strong feelings about the need for more robust and enforceable regulation and legislation, but some express a preference for “carrots rather than sticks”. Some groups felt strongly that taxation should be introduced to rebalance the food system and to tackle issues relating to health and the environment. This included support for the following policy proposals:

- Tax on UPF producers and other unhealthy food manufacturers.
- Windfall tax on excess profits by supermarkets and food manufacturers.
- Higher taxes on companies and producers that damage the environment.

However, some participants argue against taxation based on a concern that the cost of this tax would ultimately be borne by consumers. This became a condition of one manifesto, with participants arguing that they would only support a windfall tax on UPF based food production if that cost could not be passed on to the citizen. Similarly, there was concern that a UPF tax on manufacturers would be passed on to citizens.

These differences in opinion are reflected in the divergence of views on policy proposals that relate to taxation and regulation (see chapter 5).

2.2 Who should lead on the changes needed?

Throughout the deliberation participants expressed the view that it is primarily government’s responsibility to lead on the changes needed. They see this as a collaborative exercise, with strong leadership driving partnerships throughout the system, across all the actors locally, regionally and nationally.

We asked about who should take responsibility for change at each workshop. We see in figures 18 and 19 that views did not change significantly from the first workshop to the last.

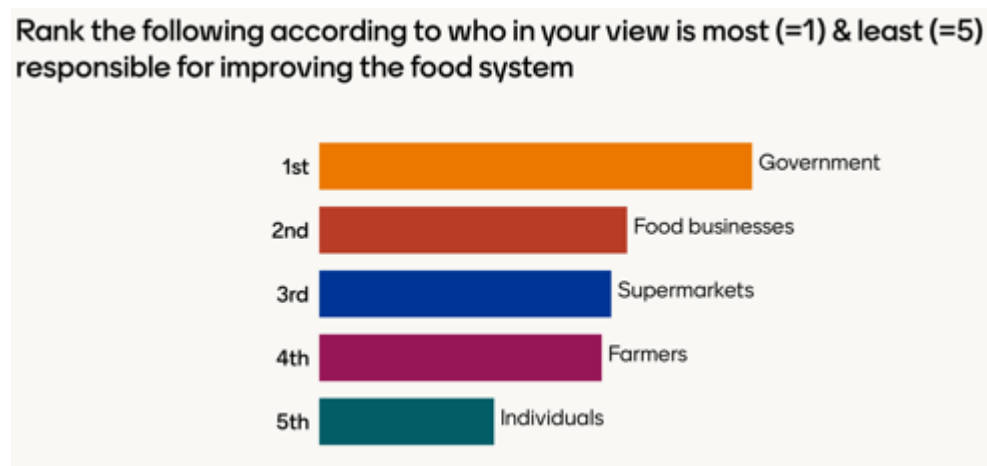


Figure 18: **Workshop 1** vote on who is most responsible for improving the food system.

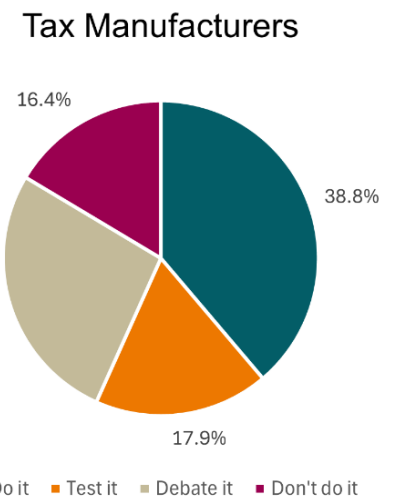


Figure 17: **Tax manufacturers.** Pay for schemes like the above by introducing a tax on manufacturers based on the amount of sugar and salt they use.

Rank the following according to who in your view is most (=1) & least (=5) responsible for improving the food system

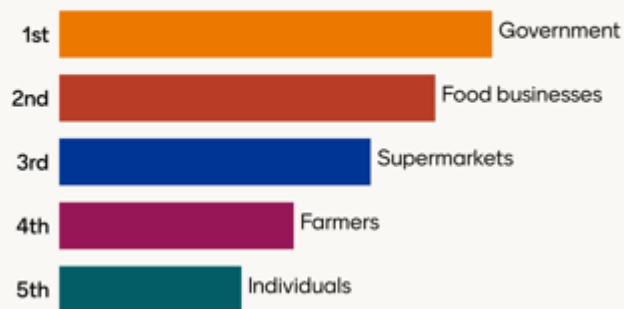


Figure 19: **Workshop 4** vote on who is most responsible for improving the food system.

3. Connections to the food system

Summary findings

Prior to the first workshop, participants were asked to review the Nourish Food System Map¹ 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 food

Some participants feel connected to the food system through the act of buying food. They shared that most of their food purchases are made from larger supermarkets for various reasons, including financial and time pressures. However, many expressed a preference to be shopping from smaller, more local vendors.

Growing food

Whether in their own allotments or gardens, or on local farms, many participants feel a strong sense of connection to the food system through the act of growing food. They share that their connection is strongest when agricultural practice is sustainable and harmonious with the natural environment, and weakest when on an industrial scale. For many, growing their own food plays an important role in maintaining good physical and mental wellbeing.

Cooking food

Cooking food, especially with or for family and friends, is when many participants feel most connected to the food system. They use cooking as a way of strengthening intergenerational bonds with family members. For others living away from their families, cooking traditional recipes is a way of connecting with their heritage and making a 'home away from home'.

Eating food

Sharing a meal with family and friends is another way participants nurture what they consider to be important social bonds and is how they most feel connected to the food system. Many connect what they eat with how they feel, mentally and physically.

3.1 Buying food

Many participants feel most connected to the food system when buying food. They describe themselves as consumers and the end user of the system. Some feel the strongest connection when purchasing locally produced food.

"The supermarket is where I buy most of our food, but I feel more connected when visiting a farm shop as I know it has been locally sourced" Recollective

"Otley markets – I visit 3 times a week. This is where I most appreciate the food choice I have nowadays" Recollective

Buying locally produced food is not an option for all participants. Some spoke specifically about how the cost of living crisis and time pressures have forced them to buy more food from large supermarkets than they would like.

“I have uploaded a picture of fresh vegetables straight from the farm. I do prefer to buy my fruit and vegetables this way, however the cost of living at the moment does prevent me from doing this” Recollective

“I haven’t got the time. I buy my food at the supermarkets for convenience and price as well.” West Yorkshire



For one participant, the pressure of being a working mum has led her to do the majority of her food shopping from a large retailer’s online shop. As a result, she feels quite disconnected from where food comes from and how it is produced.

“My photo was just to really demonstrate how easy it is when you're working 60 hours a week to just be able to log on, go to Ocado, just click whatever you want and for it to arrive the next day, and how easy it is to maybe not to think where food's coming from. Not to think about sustainability, not to think about cost, not to think about exactly what everyone else was just saying in terms of what the farmer's making from it. Just for convenience, working 50 hours a week, 2 kids in tow, being able to click and just have everything arrive at my door” East Kent



Not all participants agree that shopping in large supermarkets disconnects them from the food system. Indeed, a number of participants living in urban areas shared that where they live the supermarket is the only space where they *do* feel connected to the food system.

“I don’t grow any food. I don’t see any farms unless I drive out of the city. The only way I feel connected to food on a daily basis is through supermarket shopping.” Recollective

This sentiment was not confined to those living in more built-up areas. One participant, who described her home in the countryside as being surrounded by sheep and dairy farms, feels a strong connection to the food system when walking down their local supermarket’s fruit and veg isle:

"I would love to say I feel most connected to the food system when growing my own veg...or when I walk in local farmland...but the truth is that the place where I have the closest connection to the food system is in the supermarket, especially the fruit and veg aisle, which feels like 'real' food."
 Recollective

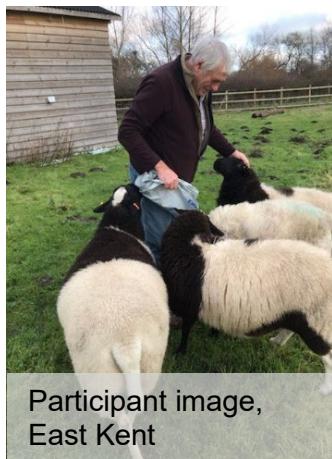


Participant image, West Yorkshire

3.2 Growing food

A number of participants like to complement their shop-bought food with produce grown in their back garden, allotment or farm. Many feel the strongest connection to the food system when cultivating their own food.

Several participants shared their experiences working on farms, either as children or in adulthood. They spoke about feeling particularly connected to the food system when farming.



Participant image, East Kent

"I am most connected to food through livestock and farming. This is me with some of my sheep". Recollective

"Last photo taken of the family farm. The same family have worked on it for 130 years. . The original farmhouse dates from the 1500s and has been extended to the front in Georgian times. The pasture fields had never been ploughed and the hedges never been removed. The field in the foreground was

where my brother and I collected potatoes into a bucket for 1p each! It was also where I learned to drive a tractor, and the field where heritage wheat was grown for me 52 years ago to encourage my corn dolly work." Recollective

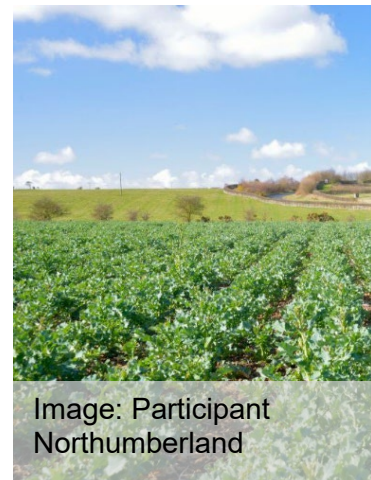


Image: Participant Northumberland

Some feel particularly connected to the food system when growing fruit and vegetables in their gardens or allotments. A number of participants highlighted the nutritional value and health benefits they see their home-grown food to have.

"I am sharing this photo because growing beansprouts is something I can do all year round, and it doesn't depend on the weather. I feel most connected to the food system at this point, as I can provide a nutritious, fresh product in a couple of days"
 Recollective



Participant image, Northumberland

"I feel most connected to the food system at my allotment. I like to grow my own food to know where it is coming from and what is in it...so I know it's organic and not full of rubbish"
 Recollective

For others, growing their own produce is a cost-effective way of feeding their family.

"I currently get universal credit and by the time I have paid my bills, my rent...I have £32 left. I have access to an allotment so that I can top up my food where I can. Because the cost of food as we all know is so expensive." East Kent,



Participant image, West Yorkshire



Participant image, East Kent

"When I grow something on my allotment that's organic, it means I haven't used anything other than water or seaweed, or whatever. To put lots of different stuff on chemicals that surely that makes it more expensive."
 West Yorkshire

"My allotment where I grow chemical free, spray free and work on the organic principle and method of growing sustainable local vegetables and fruit." East Kent

Others chose to reflect on how growing fruit and veg helps them look after their mental wellbeing, providing a welcome break in busy day-to-day life.

"This is a picture of some tomatoes I have grown at Airedale Hospital. The gardeners let us use the greenhouse and I escape there most lunchtimes. I find it very relaxing and a little timeout from an often stressful day. I also adopted a courtyard at Airedale which I tend to, bringing a little brightness to patients and staff"
 Recollective



Participant image, West Yorkshire



Participant image, Northumberland

Beyond their own gardens, allotments and farms, participants shared their admiration for others in their communities who are producing food in a way that is harmonious with the natural environment, rather than at the expense of it.

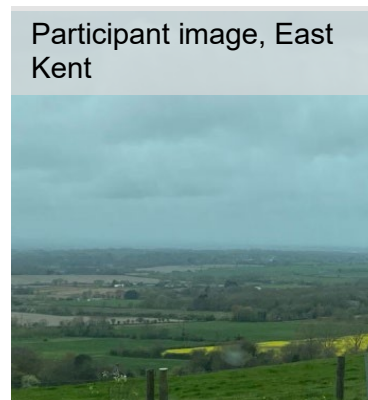
"This photo shows Mark Ridsdill Smith, an amazing local gardener who grows his food in containers in his front yard in Heaton. Very inspiring and shows how we can grow fresh, healthy and sustainable food locally and low cost" Recollective

Others feel most connected to the food system when simply observing the natural environment around them. Some feel a stronger connection when walking through farmland, but for others who have watched their local farming landscape change in

recent years due to industrial farming and housing pressures, positive feelings of connection have been replaced by concern and disappointment.

“The county of East Kent, titled the ‘Garden of England’ by Henry VIII is rapidly converting prime farmland into shoddy housing and huge fields of solar panels” Recollective

“This scene represents a typical patchwork of productive farmland but spoilt by the inevitable field of oilseed rape.” Recollective

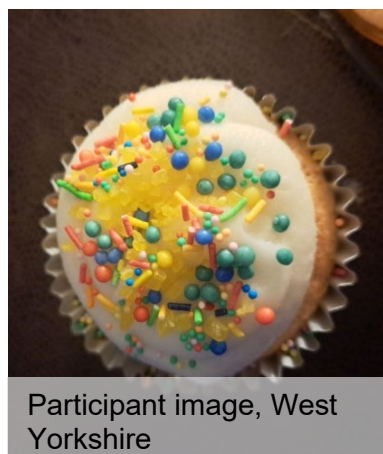


3.3 Cooking and eating food

Other participants feel most connected to the food system when preparing food. A number spoke specifically about how cooking with family members strengthens all-important intergenerational bonds:

“Me and my little boy, we bake quite a lot. I'm a single working parent and we find that time in the kitchen and cooking together is a great way to spend time together away from technology because he's 12 and he's very involved in gaming. We really enjoy it” West Yorkshire

“My mum owns her own baking business which I help her out with. Any opportunity I get to bake with her, I take it. This is probably when I feel most connected to the food system” Recollective



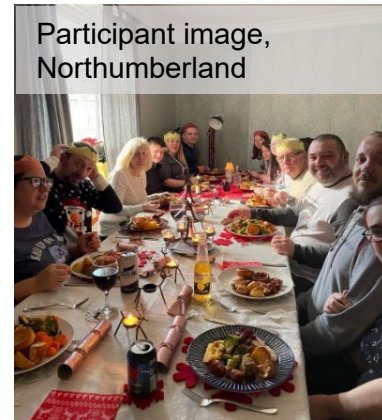
For these and other participants, the act of sharing a meal with family and friends is enough to strengthen these bonds.

“This is a photo from my parents’ house, where we all sit around the table and eat, talk and enjoy the food my mum has cooked”

Recollective

“I feel most connected to the food system when enjoying food with my friends and family. I enjoy cooking and sharing my love of food with them”

Recollective



Participant image, Northumberland

For some participants whose family members don’t live so close by, cooking and preparing certain foods is a way of continuing cherished traditions and connecting with their heritage.

“I try to make my own fermented foods. I'm from Poland. We have a big tradition of making fermented cabbage and cucumbers. That's something that was passed on me by my grandmother.”

West Yorkshire

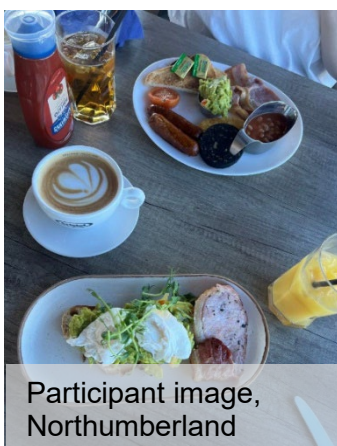
“I think it links down to the food culture. (Cooking and eating maize) is quite a cultural thing for us in Zimbabwe. It's something we eat while we grow as a family”.

West Yorkshire

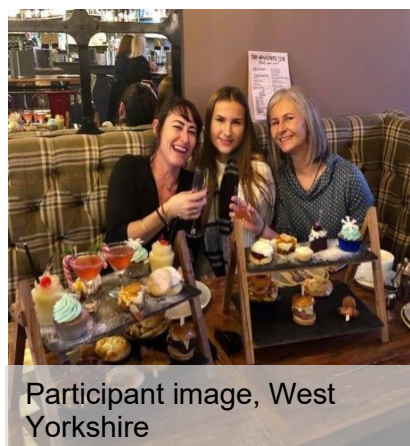
Participants also spoke specifically about the importance of finding the time to share a meal with friends in the context of busy and often isolating modern day lives.

“For me, a huge part of my social life revolves around going to coffee shops, independent cafes, it’s often where I’m able to decompress along with friends, engage in conversation. The ambience is relaxing as people my age, we have limited space in our own accommodation or in sharing with flatmates.”

Recollective



Participant image, Northumberland



Participant image, West Yorkshire

Another drew on their experience working as a mental health practitioner to highlight the relationship between eating well and looking after your mental health.

“I have worked for 12 years with people with mental health conditions and learning disabilities, a lot of this work was to do with nutrition and healthy

eating. I was helping people to buy healthy, eat healthy and stay healthy”
Northumberland

As well as being important for mental wellbeing, a number of participants link the foods they eat with their physical health. For some, this means following certain diets and eating foods which they understand to have specific health benefits.

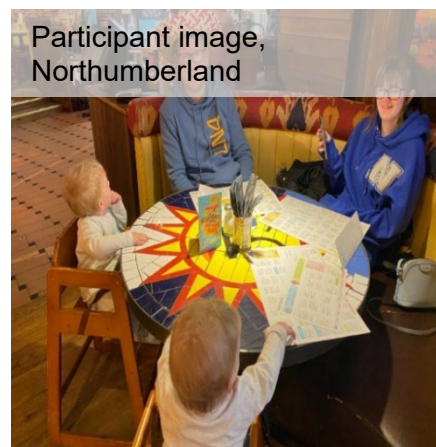
“(This photo shows) a steak from my fridge – I follow largely a ketogenic diet so meat is a major part of that” Recollective

“I like to experiment with fermenting vegetables, as I believe eating fermented foods is important to build a health gut microbiome” Recollective



Participant image, West Yorkshire

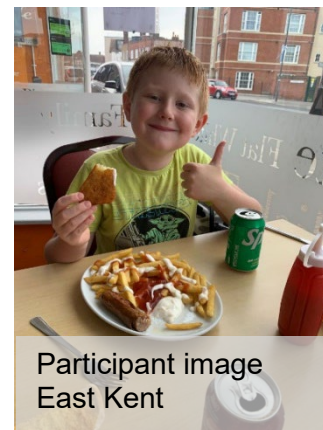
Others spoke about their children’s health, and how nurturing them during their formative years has also nurtured personal connections to the food system.



Participant image, Northumberland

“My main connection with food at the moment is feeding my twin boys (15 months) and thinking about what they should be eating, as well as finding my way back to healthier choices since giving birth and gaining weight” Recollective

“This is my son and food is very important to him and to give him a healthy lifestyle is important to me” Recollective



Participant image East Kent

One participant, who will be starting a master’s degree in dietetics later this year, anticipates that they will feel more connected to the food system when they know more about what ‘eating healthy’ actually means:

“I am starting my masters in dietetics in September so I feel this will connect me more as I’ll be involved a lot with the health side of the food system”
Recollective

4. Food system challenges

Summary findings

In this chapter we reflect on what participants have said they find concerning or an important challenge in how the food system operates. We begin with participants' views on the power imbalances that they see entrenched in the system.

Participants also describe a changed food culture in the UK. They see how society views food as being different (and worse) from how it was in the past, and in comparison with other countries. We see participants' key concerns around a lack of focus on healthy, nutritious food in society and a desire for convenience. They see this as exacerbated by the cost of living crisis with more people buying food on very restricted budgets.

Concerns were expressed about the environment in which we buy foods, and the connection to ill health and food waste. Other key challenges raised by participants and shared in this chapter include:

- The impact of UPFs on our health, together with the challenge of ensuring food is nutritionally balanced.
- A concern that both the cost and convenience of UPFs means people on lower incomes increasingly rely on them as a significant part of their diet.
- The cost of food in the current climate is a significant challenge raised by participants, with healthy fresh foods being considered more expensive than the processed alternatives.
- In a linked theme, participants also share their concerns for food standards in the context of food procured by public institutions such as schools and hospitals.
- Animal welfare is also raised in this context with participants asking if society is being harmed via poor animal welfare practices in farming.
- Participants question whether farming in the UK is viable in the longer-term, given the poor returns on their investment, the challenges of land-use pressures and the threats to farming from isolation and poor mental health.

In the last section of the chapter we share the high degree of concern that participants have for the impacts of our food system on the planet. For many the impacts of the food system on climate was new, and shocking, information. They fear a catch-22 situation: as climate change increases, the more impact it will have on food production and the less likely farming in particular will be able to transition successfully to sustainable practices. Participants express a clear sense of harm being done to the natural environment. Some participants find it difficult to imagine the scale of harm being overcome or reversed.

4.1 Power plays: badly distributed power and responsibility

Our participants spoke about power dynamics and imbalances of power between different players in the food system: farmers, food businesses, governments, supermarkets and people in society. Many participants feel strongly that the power in

the food system is in the wrong hands; that the supermarkets and food businesses held the power as opposed to the farmers, producers and consumers. National and local governments were identified by many as the key players with both power and responsibility to instigate change, but not giving this the attention and the investment it needs.

“Interesting that the people on the opposite ends of the spectrum are the ones expected to make the change as well, isn't it? The consumer's also expected to make the change, then the farmers expecting to join together and refuse to sell, and whatnot. Everyone in the middle is just profiting.” West Yorkshire

A bad deal for farmers

“The farmers always had a raw deal.” Northumberland

Many participants express concern about the lack of power that farmers hold. Individual concerns about this centre on being beholden to mass procurement from supermarkets paying low prices, having to adhere to changing rules and regulations, and having to cater to the changing needs of the consumer.

Some participants spoke about the great responsibility that farmers shoulder within the food system, chiefly in terms of food production but also in terms of taking care of habitats, wildlife, and water.

“Habitats and wildlife, that's another big issue that we keep hoisting on to other people, usually tends to end up on the farmer's lap. Really that's a big ask... it seems to be added responsibility.” Northumberland

Food Businesses – all the money and a lot of the power

Many participants told us they are unhappy with the amount of power held by food businesses, with some specifically mentioning the largely invisible, global companies controlling from within the centre of the system, putting the profit motive above the people motive.

“I think the big food conglomerates are the primary movers in all of this. They have all the money and all the power. It all reminds me of ‘Yes Minister’ a bit really, that the politicians make a lot of noise and they look as though they've got the power. They haven't got the power. It's the people with the money that have the power. That's why the government appears to be so weak, I think. Food businesses, but I don't have much faith in the ethics guiding their decisions.” East Kent

Participants criticised the unreasonable demands dictated by food businesses to farmers as well as the unreasonable price points they purchase at. A few participants raised concerns about the lobbying power of food companies, that their sheer size gives them unacceptable amounts of power as this conversation highlights:

Participant 3: Yes. isn't the concern that they've reached such a size financially that they can actually look at some countries and go, “You know what? We're bigger than you.”

Participant 4: Yes, absolutely.

Participant 3: “We don't have to listen to you because you need us more than we need you.”

Participant 4: Yes. "You'll do as we say. You'll do our bidding. You've got no choice, otherwise we'll bankrupt you."

Participant 3: When you're dealing with third-world countries or south countries, that power is incredible. Northumberland

Many participants expressed scepticism as to whether food businesses would make changes to the food system without being forced to by government regulation, because of their primary motivation being profit.

"None of the food businesses are going to just turn in and say, "We're going to reduce their profits by stopping marketing." It has to come from the government to regulate that." West Yorkshire

A lack of government will and ambition

Some participants told us they are sceptical about the will, ability or ambition of governments to make meaningful change, even though many believe that governments are ultimately responsible for change.

"Government is ultimately responsible. It's just whether they have the will to take the challenge on." East Kent

There was a mix of comments around which level of government has power and should be responsible; local, national, or global, or a combination of those three.

Many commented that, although the government should take responsibility for managing the food system, they are currently not doing so.

Supermarkets hold the power

Participants frequently expressed unhappiness with the amount of power held by the supermarkets, although not all are surprised.

"The main frustration I think for general everyday people is we know the power of the supermarkets and that's the frustrating part." Northumberland

The size of supermarkets as companies is a concern. It means they have purchasing power over producers and are able to attract consumers by providing convenience and offering low prices. Supermarkets investing in and owning certain elements of food production was discussed as a reason why they have so much power over producers.

The fact that supermarkets are driven by profit is a concern and leads to some participants distrusting their claims about their efforts towards sustainability, battling climate change, or developing a fairer relationship with farmers.

An unjust system – cloaked as choice

Some participants expressed anger about senior supermarket personnel salaries and profits, something that was in the news during the course of the deliberation.⁴

⁴ BBC News, [Tesco says price pressures easing as profits soar](#), 10th April 2024

"I'm just feeling really, really angry, that thing about how much that somebody at the top of a supermarket makes. You get this kind of sense that it's all about consumer choice and, "Oh, we can go and buy things if we want," but we are held to ransom with food. We need to buy food. It's just so unfair that there are people who can't afford a decent meal with that much inequality. I've known this, but it's like just bringing it really up, like I can't ignore it and it just makes me feel so angry." East Kent

Participants spoke about feeling powerless to make change in the food system as individuals, because their ability to choose what they consume is limited by availability, convenience, a lack of time, a lack of knowledge, or cost.

I'd like to make better choices about where I buy my food and supplies and stuff but as an individual on a limited income, I feel you're pretty powerless, aren't you, really? East Kent

The themes of unfairness and injustice ran powerfully through many of our conversations, with participants raising concerns about:

- Food inequality and insecurity for consumers, especially those on lower incomes or living in poverty.
- Financial injustice for farmers, workers, and food producers.
- An unfair proportion of profits going to supermarkets and food businesses.
- The unfair distribution of risk within the food system.
- Unfair distribution of power throughout the food system, especially a lack of power for farmers and producers.
- Smaller businesses losing out to large corporations.

4.2 Our food culture

Participants spoke about the culture in the UK around food and eating; how it's changed over time, and in comparison with other countries. Many expressed the view that busy-ness, and a lack of time means that people will often opt for convenience food.

"For me, like you say, I've gone to the supermarket, and I've not even thought about where anything has come from. It's just grab, get home, put it in the fridge and that is it. It's only when I sit down here and I realise, "Wow, we don't have the time." West Yorkshire



Despite many sharing that their connection to the food system is through cooking, making and sharing food, they also commented that, for many families, food, cooking, and eating together is no longer a priority. Some participants spoke about people's expectation of having all types of food available to them at all times.

The idea of a strong disconnect between the consumer and where their food comes from was often a focus of conversations. Participants spoke about a lack of

awareness among the general public about the processes of the food system as well as a lack of knowledge about how to budget for and cook nutritious food. Some participants spoke about lack of transparency in the food system, including a few who talked about confusing, insufficient, or misleading labelling. Others spoke about an absence of education in food and nutrition from schools and parents.

“Regards to this ultra-processed food, I think it all comes down to education from a very young age. Education from your family, parents, schools, everything.” Northumberland

4.3 Our food environment



Many participants spoke about a change in the foods and shops available to consumers; that small local traders such as food markets, greengrocers, and butchers are disappearing. They said that often the supermarket is the only option.

“Unless you're like me living in a rural area where I can go and speak to a farmer and share the meat with a few of the people in the village or get vegetables in a farmers' market, you're chained to these supermarkets now.” West Yorkshire

The availability of fresh and healthy foods in deprived areas was a concern for participants, with a few highlighting the overprovision of unhealthy and convenience food such as takeaways in these areas as a contributing factor to unhealthy diets. A few participants also tied in concerns about transport provision, especially in rural areas, in terms of being able to access healthy food.

“If it's trying to get to somewhere that actually offers cheap food, especially in the food deserts, if it's a case of having to buy a bus ticket or a train ticket just to get some healthier foods, people aren't going to do it as much, especially with the cost of trains.” East Kent

Some participants raised concerns about the lack of seasonal and local food production and consumption, and expressed interest in a future for food where we eat both more seasonally and locally. Participants also spoke about the impacts of our reliance on imports and exports on the climate and our domestic economy, instead favouring the prioritisation of food production in the UK.

A few participants expressed concerns about the impact of the advertising and marketing of unhealthy foods on people's diets and health.



Food waste

An important concern which is very much tied to food environments in many participants' minds is food waste. They draw attention to several key points within the food system at which waste occurs, alongside various reasons for wastage. Several participants identify waste as relevant to their own experience of the food system, for instance at home when clearing out the fridge. They also raise examples of food waste happening at a systemic level. There is a general sense of food waste as a problem on a large-scale that cannot be addressed by individuals, whilst still feeling that individual actions do matter.

“When you plant a seed, it has a potential to deliver this amount, whatever that number is, and it loses it every day through weeds or insects or disease or rain or heat or cold. It then gets lost in harvest, it gets lost in silage, it gets lost in processing, it gets lost in our fridge, it gets lost in aerobic digesters. It goes in the bin all packaged because we didn't get to eat it in time. I'm a bit guilty of that.” Northumberland

Participants suggest a range of exacerbating factors which they feel makes food waste more likely. This includes a tendency for fruit and vegetables to be packaged in larger quantities, rather than loose and individually. This is a challenge for those living alone who buy the packs because that is all that is available and then waste a lot of the bag.



Participant image, West Yorkshire

They also mention that consumers and supermarkets are averse to wonky or imperfect produce. It was also suggested that the increasing ease with which food can be purchased, such as buying a supermarket sandwich whilst on the go, means access to food is more likely to be taken for granted, and food therefore wasted.

Participants also focussed on shelf-life in their discussions and suggest this encourages consumers to be overly cautious about food safety. Supermarkets were felt to be more in favour of waste because a high turnover of food is good for their profits.

“We waste so much fruit and vegetables because it has a shelf life on it, where realistically, we use our eyes and our knowledge, if you like, to know that a tomato lasts longer than a week, for example. If stored correctly, it will last longer. Sometimes we're not educated enough.” East Kent

“Maybe that's what the supermarkets have got us thinking, that it's bad for us and it's good to get rid of it.” West Yorkshire

At a systemic level, some participants refer to specific environments in which they view food waste as particularly prolific or problematic, including hospitals and schools. The idea that patients must order food in hospitals even if they have no intention of eating is cited as one reason for this.

“Some people don't like the hospital food, so they order the hospital food, but they also don't eat it. We probably need some interventions in place where we can reduce food waste in appropriate places.” West Yorkshire

Earlier in the food system, participants express concern about food producers such as dairy farmers being tied into contracts which encourage food waste. Here, they cite understanding that a farmer may be obliged to produce milk for a specific dairy, however if the dairy decides not to accept this milk on the day, the farmer is left in a position where all they can do is dispose of it.

“If on a specific day, the dairy decides that it doesn't want that farmer's milk, that's milk that the farmers just then dump because they can't do anything else with it. I believe, I think it was last year, 490 million gallons of milk were wasted, was tipped because the dairies decided that on that specific day, the demand wasn't high enough and they didn't need it.” West Yorkshire

4.4 Health, nutrition and Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs)

The health and nutritional impacts of food is a key concern for many participants. It is one of the more familiar and immediate ways in which participants connect to the food system. In fact, concern about current diets – either one's own or others – is often cited by participants as a motivating factor for joining the discussions.



“I've been concerned about how my young adult son is eating. He's time-poor at school and work. Although he's been raised to eat really well, it's really impacting on his health and it's just shocking to see what's happening to their generation about access to healthy food.” Northumberland

“I work in the healthcare system, so I quite commonly see the impact poor diets have on folk.” Northumberland

“I personally do not eat well and I've got a newborn. I really want to make good decisions around food for her. I don't have a good relationship with food, and I thought that it was really important for me to join in the conversation and hear a different perspective in how I can do that.” West Yorkshire

One participant spoke about a recent health check which indicated her metabolism was closer to that of someone older, and the feeling this gave her that she had 'eaten into her future':

“My metabolic age in the equipment was 51 and I am just 36 years old and I couldn't figure out, and I told my friend, “See,” I said, “I have eaten into my

future already. I've eaten 15 years into my future." This conversation is really important for us to begin to make some amends and corrections." East Kent

Eating habits are seen as tied-up with a number of other key life domains including health, homelife, work, travel and exercise. In turn, the decisions made in each of these domains are seen to be informed by wider social and political factors.

"The political scene has really changed things, and so that then impacts people's choices about where they work, how they eat, how they move, everything, it all ties into the same stuff." Northumberland

Work and financial circumstances are considered to have a significant impact on the choices people make about food, as well as the extent to which choices are available to them.

"I work full time, I have a busy lifestyle. You can't have this perfect diet and organic food, and all the free-range stuff is so expensive. It's a constant trade-off of whether you've got the time to prepare food, whether you can afford the organic stuff. There's a lot of misinformation." East Kent

UPFs are generally a concerning concept for participants. This includes concern about both the health impacts and prevalence of such foods. They feel there is not enough awareness about the proliferation of UPFs and the suggestion that vegetarian and vegan food choices are not necessarily healthy choices alarms some participants. This leads some to question the role of advertising in how such food is promoted.

"Then you look at what you eat, and you realise that what you actually eat is more processed than you thought. It's quite shocking really, isn't it? A lot of greenwashing and healthy food washing that supermarkets do as well. Claiming that some of the vegan options are healthier when actually they come under the UPF category. That's really confusing." East Kent

Some participants view UPFs as inherently unhealthy. The way in which participants describe the detrimental effects of eating these foods suggests they are possibly seen as more sinister than other types of unhealthy food. The increasing availability and consumption of UPFs is seen as having crept up on us. The harmful effects of eating UPFs are seen as being somewhat disguised, with one participant referring to them as 'unknown' and like 'a time bomb for ourselves'.

"I think there's a distinction to be made between treats and everyday food. Everyone wants a treat and we all acknowledge that that's going to be unhealthy, but it's more the everyday type food, like your breads and your everyday items that are potentially ultra-processed that we don't know about. I think it would make a difference if we just knew which foods to avoid." West Yorkshire

"I think it's very worrying about the amount of UPFs and the unknown effects that it's got on health for long term. I think we're storing up a time bomb for ourselves regarding health and cancers and just the whole future of the food system." Northumberland

4.5 Cost of food

As we have seen many of the concerns of participants rest in the cost of food and society being in the midst of a cost of living crisis. As a result the affordability of food is a central theme in our conversation. Participants spoke about affordability as a key driver of the food people buy. Many participants told us that the ability to make the right food choices was hindered by cost, with healthy, fresh, organic, sustainable and whole foods often being more expensive.

“Living in a poorer area of Northumberland, I realise how difficult it is for people to be able to afford fresh produce, organic, good meat, good veg.”
Northumberland

Participants spoke about the ability of supermarkets to set prices lower in comparison to farmers’ markets or local producers. They also questioned why UPFs were often cheaper than whole foods given the longer chain of production involved. Some participants feel unclear about or dispute the fact that healthier food is necessarily more expensive. As participants wrestled with this question some could not fathom why food that undergoes more processing can ultimately end up being cheaper on supermarket shelves.

“What I can’t get my head around is UPFs, elements of it are food that are grown, whether it be wheat or meat, or whatever. It obviously goes through a more intensive process to get to the end product, which obviously costs more money, labour, equipment, etc. Yet it’s still cheaper, relatively cheaper than, say, an apple that’s just been grown and picked off a tree. I can’t get my head around it.” West Yorkshire

At the same time, some participants shared direct experience of being driven towards less healthy food because of affordability.

“I’m on maternity leave, and when you get the money from the government, that’s the kind of food you have to go for, UPFs.” West Yorkshire

The increase in food bank use in recent years and the cost-of-living crisis were key concerns for some participants.

“We’ve got an increased charge and an increased cost for everything, food included. We’ve got nationally more people than we’ve ever had going to food banks.” East Kent

Some participants are concerned that the low food prices we are accustomed to are not sustainable. A few participants spoke about the focus on providing cheap food as problematic in terms of ensuring animal welfare, a healthy diet, and reducing intensive farming.

“You can’t have three chickens for 10 pounds and not be intensive, and that’s not the fault of the farmer. That’s what the consumer wants and that’s what they can afford.” Northumberland

Some participants raised concerns about the impact of EU tariffs on the price of imported food for consumers and noted that the situation has worsened since Brexit.

4.6 Poor food standards

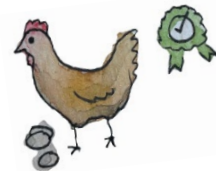
Following specialist presentations on child nutrition and public procurement of food, many participants expressed concerns about the quality of food. They focused on food standard in schools, early years settings, and hospitals. Participants offered stories about their own experience of food in institutions, saying that hospitals or schools weren't able to accommodate their, or their children's, needs.

"Last time I was in hospital because I have problems with dairy, my wife ended up bringing food in because we couldn't actually get through to the catering department, that when we said no lactose, no dairy, no cheese, no nothing, it was still turning up." Northumberland

Participants identified budgetary requirements as an essential limitation in the ability of public institutions to provide healthy, high-quality food. A few participants spoke about the move from producing meals 'in house' to using outside catering companies as being to blame for the deterioration of food in public institutions.

Animal welfare

Animal welfare is an emotive topic for some participants, and it is linked by many to poor food standards as well as cheaply produced food. These participants express a lot of concern about the food system's impact on animals, in particular chickens. Words including 'sad', 'cruel', 'suffering' and 'horrific' are used by participants to capture their feelings about the current welfare of industrially farmed animals. Some participants feel a degree of personal responsibility for this harm given their own role or the role of humans more broadly in the food system. Some suggest people need to be made more aware of the conditions in which animals are farmed and if they were this might influence their choices.



"As someone who eats a lot of meat, I was struck by how much I'm in many ways responsible for quite a lot of suffering. That hit me." West Yorkshire

"It really upsets me. For me, it's a budget thing. I do buy chickens from the supermarket, but I hate it. I hate it every time I do it. It's not right." East Kent

Participants also question whether we are inadvertently or unknowingly harming or disadvantaging ourselves via poor animal welfare practices in farming. Participants ask not only if the taste of food is likely to decline under such conditions, but also whether the health and nutritional qualities are negatively impacted?

Another question is, if these chickens are being farmed in this way, do they have the same health benefits? Does the meat have the same health benefits as a free-range chicken? We may be eating more meat, but is it minerally and vitamin deficient? Is it poor quality? East Kent

4.7 The long-term viability of farming

Many participants highlight the importance of farming within the food system and raise concerns about the viability of farms to keep running.

They are primarily concerned about the economic viability for most farms to run as profitable businesses. Many conversations focussed on the bad deal that farmers get

financially due to rising costs and poor returns, especially considering the high level of risk they have to carry. Some participants blamed the low prices that supermarkets and food businesses pay for the economic unviability of farming.

“I think the egg thing last year really made me feel sorry for farmers because we were getting told that there were no eggs because there was bird flu, but the farmers were all over social media showing hundreds of thousands of eggs saying, “We can’t afford to sell them at the prices that the supermarkets want to pay.” West Yorkshire

“The other big thing is supermarkets selling food under the cost of production. Milk is a classic example when you’re talking about farmers losing between 7 to 9 pence a litre. You can’t carry on like that.” East Kent

Some participants spoke about the impact of climate change on farming viability, citing extreme weather such as heavy rainfall or drought as barriers to farmers being able to produce reliable crops. Other participants expressed concerns about both labour shortages and an ageing farming population impacting the viability of farms and food production.

“At the end of the day, people do not want to work in the fields. All these ideas we’ve heard, especially the first two speakers, rely on labour and the labour is not there and it won’t be there because they’re not interested.” East Kent

A few participants raised concerns about the ability of smaller or family run farms to compete with the bigger, commercial farms, with others citing bureaucracy, regulations, and red tape as a barrier to farming viability. The challenges around farming viability causing an increase in suicide rates in the industry was a concern for some participants, particularly those in rural areas.



4.8 Concerns for our planet: climate, nature, biodiversity and land-use

Impacts on climate

The food system and climate were commonly linked by participants in their discussions. Sometimes connections between food and the climate were familiar to participants, whilst at other times these emerged or became apparent following the workshop 3 presentation on the impacts of our food system on climate.

“I think it was quite fascinating to understand the effect that climate change has on farming, and how farming has effect on climate change. I think it just dawned on me that I never thought about it that way, that they actually interchange and they affect each other.” West Yorkshire

The evidence on the impact of different foods, meals and drinks participants received came as a significant shock to some.

“Every morning on my way to work, I go for a latte. I’ll be rethinking that choice from now on. I can’t believe what the graphs were saying. I can’t believe the percentage and the amount was shocking.” West Yorkshire

“I just want to speak because I got really emotional in that. It’s not just about today, it’s about all the discussions. I didn’t realise that food production was such a driver of nature loss and climate change.” East Kent

Reducing or removing meat from diets appeared to be well understood and something previously considered by many participants. Likewise, international transportation, processing and packaging in the food system were raised as concerns for participants because of their impact on the climate.

“It is really ironic because I think transport has a massive impact on the climate. We should avoid transporting food. We should eat locally.” West Yorkshire

On the other hand, the impact of pesticides and fertilizers on climate was more surprising. In general, participants did not expect the food system to be quite such a significant driver of climate change.

“I actually didn’t know that pesticides and fertilizers and stuff actually had an impact on climate change. I just thought people eating organic food, it was just a decision because they didn’t want fertilizer and pesticides in their system. Again, it was a bit of ignorance for me there. That was a bit of an eye-opener.” West Yorkshire

Participants said that it could be difficult to make more climate-friendly food choices without access to the kinds of information they were provided with in workshops.

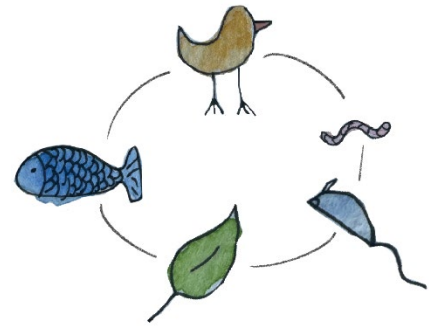
As the speaker said, if you just have half lentils, half beef, you halved your CO2. That’s fascinating. Unless people know this sort of thing, we can’t make that choice. East Kent

A changing climate is also raised as a concern in part because it is seen to feed back into the food system. Crop failure is specifically mentioned as a problem that is being driven by climate change. Participants see this having a ripple-effect which impacts both producers and consumers, whilst also making the transition towards a food system which is better for the climate more difficult.

How can we grow crops if crops aren’t growing? We’ve already got a wheat devastation in our country today because the wheat crop is devastated because of the winter rains. Literally, there’s no wheat crop in this country now. That’s affecting farming. It’s going to affect the price of bread. It’s going to affect the price of everything. How can we move to a more plant-based diet when climate is really affecting the plants we grow? West Yorkshire

Nature, biodiversity, and land use

Participants are concerned about the impact the food system is having on nature and biodiversity. In particular their concern arises in relation to the destruction and pollution of natural environments. Participants see intrinsic value in protecting nature and biodiversity, however they also state its importance for a well-functioning food system. There is a clear sense of harm being done, with words like 'dead', 'kills', 'devastation' and 'decline' being used to describe the state of the natural environment. Some participants find it difficult to imagine the scale of harm being overcome or reversed.



“Just seeing the decline in the environment and I just don't know how it's going to be reversed. I know that there are some positive changes being made as it was shown but I think it's going to take a hell of a lot more to really change the future, isn't it?” East Kent

The impact on rivers and oceans is a specific focal point for some participants. Participants drew on their own experience of these environments to raise concerns about overfishing and pollution. They note a change in the degree to which 'life' appears to be present in these habitats.

“I mean, the river is effectively dead. It used to be a big fishing river. There's no fish there anymore.” West Yorkshire

“The thing that just appalls me is the state of these rivers. The Wye, for example, with the chicken effluent. I just think that's the most awful thing because it kills so much in its wake.” East Kent

This is also a worry for some participants who see such environments as an important source of food. They would like to find a better balance between protecting and preserving the natural environment and benefitting from the food it can offer in return.

“I don't think that's just from an ethical point of view. I think it's because if we don't preserve nature, we won't have any food.” West Yorkshire

“The sea is very much my home. I'm a five-minute walk to the beach and it's a really big area of concern. Considering we've got, I don't know, 10,000 miles of coastline around the UK, I'm amazed that we don't utilise it more but in a more sustainable way.” East Kent

The impacts of land use are also of significant concern. Participants refer to a range of concerning uses and their impacts, including:

- Deforestation – with forests seen as a more natural environment in the UK and elsewhere in the world.
- Soil erosion – seen as fundamental to the sustainable production of food.

“We need to look after our food systems and our soil and how we produce things biologically. The biology is important. If we don't look after the soil, and look after the land, and look after the products, then there's nothing left. It

doesn't matter then whether farmers or politicians or economists have anything to say because there won't be anything to talk about.” East Kent

- Monoculture farming – seen as placing farmers in a catch-22: as the only route to profits in the short-term, whilst leading to the degradation of land in the longer term.

“If you just grow one crop and you pesticide it and insecticide it, there is no nature, there is no biodiversity, and the land eventually becomes completely depleted. That's what's happening. (Farmers) don't have any incentive not to monocrop because they won't make enough money if they farm differently. They produce what they have to sell to make money, but monocropping eventually will kill the land. East Kent

- Resource intensive grazing – seen as placing huge demands on available land, partly due to the amount used up in the production of animal feed.

Participants are also concerned that not enough land is used for small-scale food production at a local level, in particular for fruit and vegetables. They suggest more produce needs to be grown in the UK and that more land should be dedicated to this, and less for livestock grazing and housing.

“We're not growing enough as it is. We really need to be growing more, putting more fields back into farming instead of into housing. I've seen good arable fields around my area, and it's just housing estate now, luxury housing. Not affordable housing, luxury housing.” Northumberland

However, others worry about the amount and types of land now available for food production and whether this can meet the scale of the current population. They are concerned that some types of land are only suitable for grazing ruminants.

“I'm sure everyone would love to eat fresh, organic fruit and vegetables, but I'm not convinced that we have enough space in the UK to grow that for everyone.” Northumberland

“How would they be able to go to a sustainable option because what else can you put apart from grass on some of these hillsides, particularly up in the rural Northumberland up in the valleys.” Northumberland

5. Visions and solutions for the food system

Summary findings

In this chapter we explore how participants expressed a better future and the policy actions they feel are important to deliver it. This builds on and shares more detail on the Manifestos described in chapter two.

We start by sharing participants' visions for the future, thinking ahead to a 2030 near future where the food system is working as they would like it to work. This future system is led from the top of government. It is fair, compassionate, and balanced. Key features of the food system of 2030 are:

- **A focus on 'local'** from growing and producing to procurement and consumption, there has been a move away from the dominance of multi-national corporations in the system and local independent shops thrive, providing for the needs of their communities.
- **Fairness, power sharing and transparency** which are at its core with embedded equity: food banks are a thing of the past, food communities bring people together to grow, produce, cook and eat food, improving social cohesion.
- A society which **understands what nutritious and sustainable food is**, UPFs have been reduced/ removed, positive marketing and advertising promote the benefits of healthy food - not junk food. Education in schools works as a lever for intergenerational awareness and change.
- **Connected systemic issues are fixed** so people are no longer prioritising heat or rent over food. The welfare system provides support for those on lower incomes and in financial hardship to access the healthy, nutritious food they need.
- **Regulations** to restrict UPFs, criminalise organisations whose actions harm the planet, and ensure a fairer distribution of risk and reward are in place and enforced.
- Ensured wide-scale **restoration of nature and biodiversity** because farming and food production prioritises combatting climate change and values animals, biodiversity, nature and the planet.
- **Strong, cross governmental leadership** based on a clear, transparent and simple vision with accountable decision making.

The policy actions which participants are particularly drawn to are those which encourage a transition to the food system they wish to see. There are mixed views on taxation and penalties to enact change. There is stronger support for policy proposals on government intervention, initiatives to raise awareness and to improve food standards in public institutions than there is for taxation and penalties.

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 local

In many of the visions participants emphasised their desire for a food system which pivots on the local. Their visions include direct selling from farms to the consumer. They imagine a future where it is normal for food to go from farm to fork using simple and more direct methods:

- Organic fresh produce is delivered by farm vans which come into areas which are currently food deserts.
- Farmers' markets and hubs give access to affordable fresh produce
- Schools and hospitals are catered for locally, with local produce.



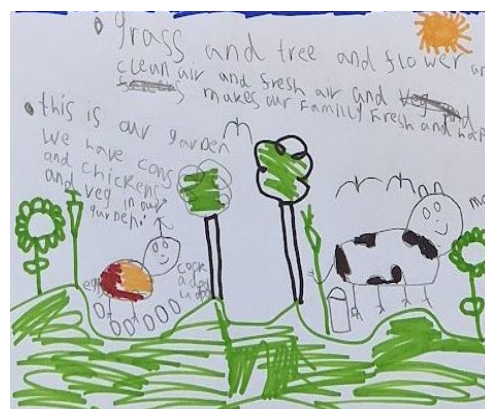
Participant image, East Kent



Participant image, East Kent

"We do have a picture, which is a lovely organic veg van coming around all the housing estates to bring your organic food/produce to your house so there are no food deserts." East Kent

"This is my garden in 2030 and the farmer planted all the trees at the edge of my garden and these are carrots and peas and fruit trees. I've written, the garden is looking good and I have success with carrots and peas, chickens are producing eggs daily and the local farmers planted trees on his land. The new bakery is doing well, the smell of fresh bread is very tempting." West Yorkshire



Participant image, West Yorkshire

They speak about households growing their own food in vegetable patches and allotments. They imagine that independent food shops and business are thriving with the dominance of large food corporations diminished, or even 'gone' from the system.

One group in East Kent discussed having community orchards, free to anyone to pick fruit without charge:

“I’ve got the idea of local fruit trees in towns and cities. Fruit trees, so people can just pick as and when they want. It’s like a community thing, not a try to sell it on or whatever. It’s for the community. It’s not like someone trying to sell it off. It’s not owned by anyone.” East Kent

And in West Yorkshire, one group recommends shared access to farmland for community group projects.



A lot of people growing fruit and vegetables in gardens and allotments

A lot of small independent food shops and businesses.

Big companies are GONE.

Participant image, West Yorkshire



Participant image, West Yorkshire

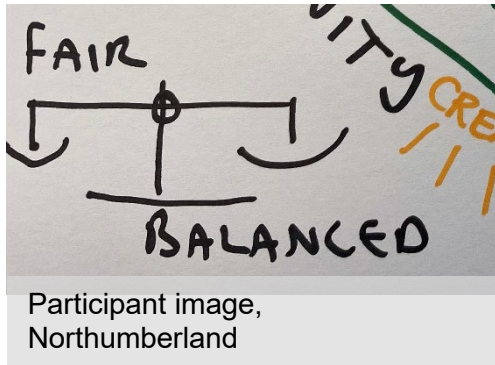


Participant image, Northumberland

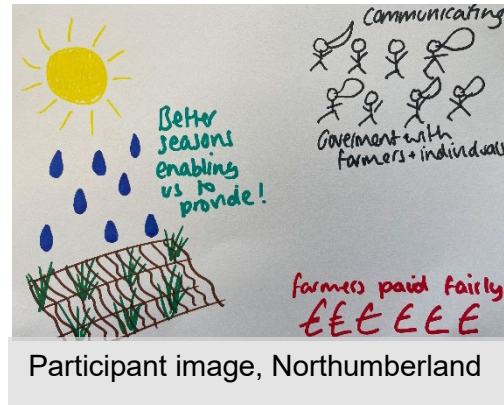
5.2 Fairness, power sharing and transparency

For many participants a successful future food system is dependent on it operating with fairness, with balanced power relationships and in a transparent fashion where people’s needs are explicitly being met. Ensuring the principle of fairness runs through the system will, in participants’ minds, lead to other fundamental benefits such as sustainability, accessibility, community connectedness and a healthy environmental ecosystem. Good communication between government, farmers and individuals in society is essential to enable everyone to buy into the change and understand its purpose.

“We also have a fair power structure between farmers, consumers and supermarkets. Food systems and food are being talked about. It is now a national conversation, it’s diverse. We are hearing on the news everybody’s talking about, everybody’s getting engaged in it.” West Yorkshire



Participant image, Northumberland



Participant image, Northumberland



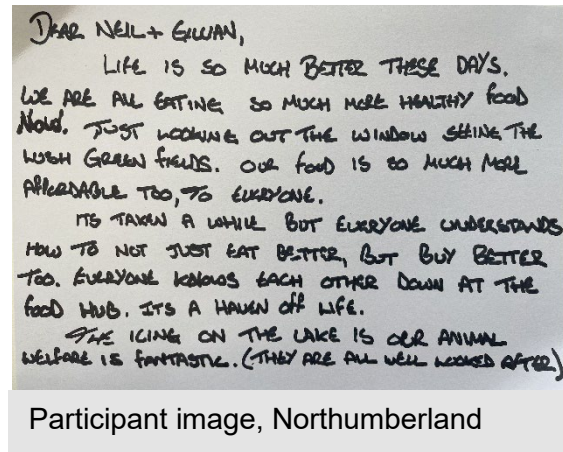
Participant image, West Yorkshire

"Farmers are paid fairly for their produce and the government communicates more and listens to farmers and individuals." Northumberland

5.4 Improving societal understanding

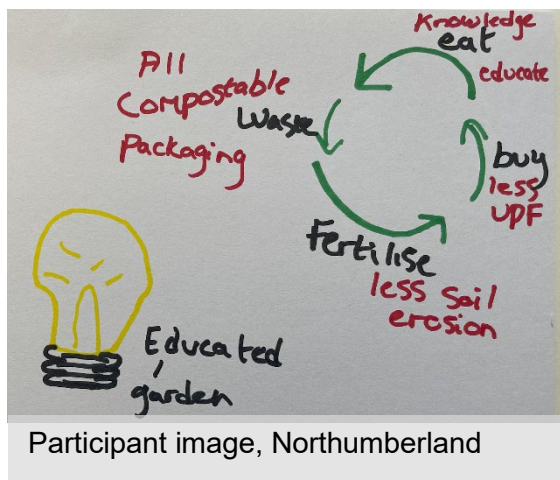
Participants' visions for 2030 include the idea that society needs a much better understanding of the food system than it has currently. They believe that most people are disconnected from the food system. Their visions therefore embrace:

- Re-igniting education for school-age children on all aspects of our food system including cooking and sustainable production.
- Children involved in nature and growing projects so that they understand where their food comes from.
- For some this means embedding education about our food will lead to an improvement in animal welfare, as people with newfound knowledge will demand non-intensively reared meat, chicken and eggs.

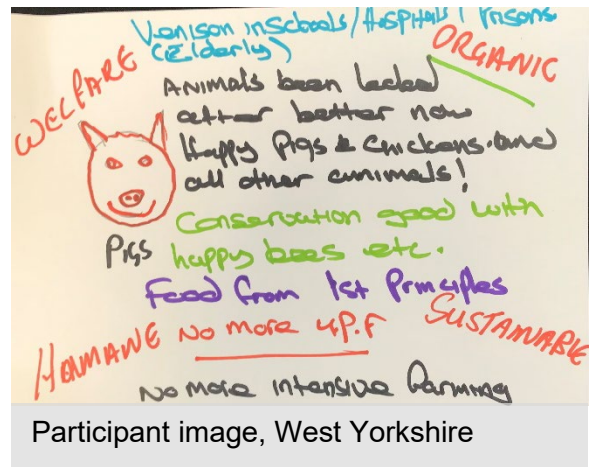


Participant image, Northumberland

- A virtuous circle where more knowledge and education lead to people purchasing fewer health harming foods, food is grown in a more sustainable manner, and waste is managed well.
- Public procurement has improved, bringing nutritious food as standard into schools and hospitals – something that parents and families have pushed for over time.
- As a result, children are understanding more about healthy food and the need for it as part of a balanced diet.



Participant image, Northumberland



Participant image, West Yorkshire



Participant image, Northumberland

5.5 Fixing connected systemic issues

In their visions for 2030 participants described a society which has put right other systemic issues related to food system challenges. For example, some refer to affordable housing, so that people don't have to choose between good food and paying the rent. They discuss the welfare system providing for people on lower incomes, and putting right economic issues which impact on people's ability to prioritise healthy and nutritious food for themselves and their families.

Participant 2: "Currently, I'd say people aren't fussed about the future when there are more issues and everything that's going on like that. For the change to happen, you'd have to see an improvement in how we live in all aspects, we can't go on as we are."

Participant 3: "The standard of living is the crucial thing that is going to determine whether any of that is possible." West Yorkshire

This has a positive impact on the NHS as strain is relieved with people living healthier and happier lives.

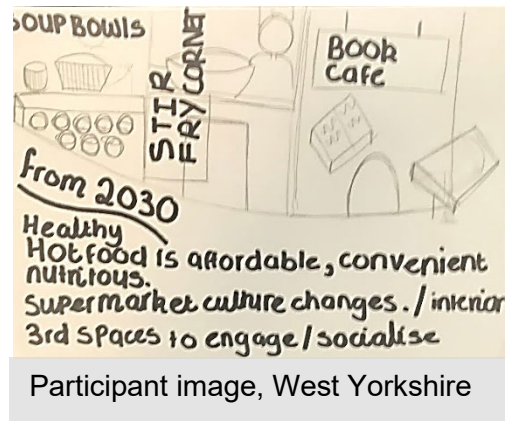
“Farmers are producing food at local levels and UPFs are virtually non-existent. Consequently, people are healthier, taking the strain off the NHS system.” West Yorkshire

Participants demonstrate in their visions that they want poverty to be addressed, and they feel that an improved food system has a role to play in that:

“My other one was accountability at government level, moving away from returning wealth to 5% of the population which leads to less corruption and distributed wealth, decreased poverty.” West Yorkshire

“We want to achieve all this while making sure people don't lose out in other ways. I think if we could sort out housing, which we've done in 2030, then things will look up across the piece.” East Kent

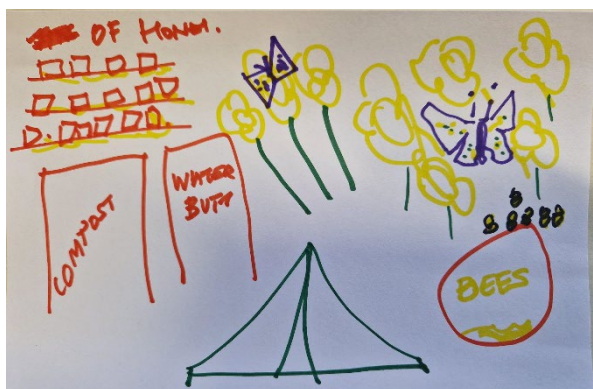
In addition, they discuss making food retail a social activity, a community activity which brings people together in the community. This, some participants shared, will reduce social isolation and combat loneliness in society.



Participant image, West Yorkshire

5.6 Working for climate, nature and biodiversity

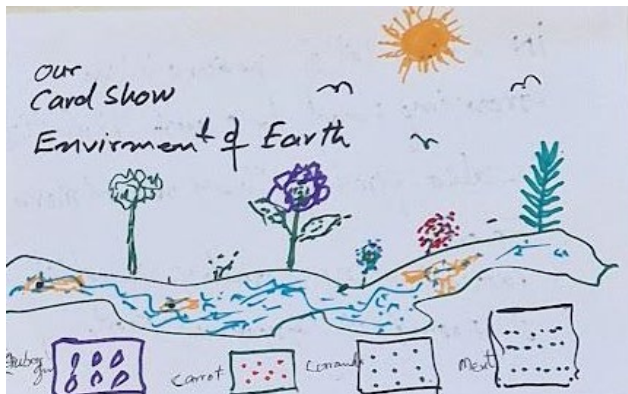
Some participant visions for 2030 have an environmental focus. They express a desire for a future in which farming is sustainable and works with climate and nature. Their futures involve a holistic approach to our food system in which farmers are incentivised and supported to transition to regenerative farming, with all animal and wildlife being encouraged to thrive from pollinators to livestock, and from fields and hedges to rivers, woodlands and forests.



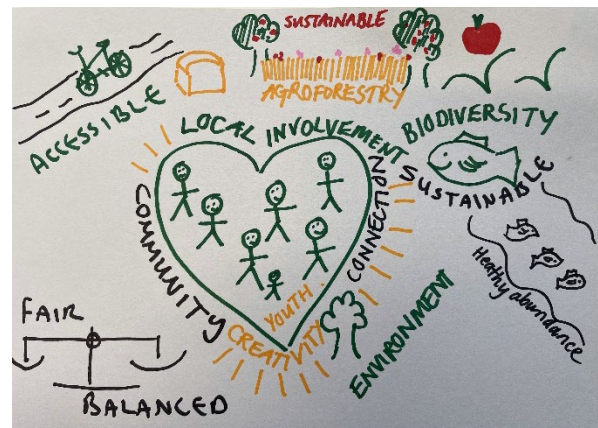
Participant image, East Kent

*Is acting much more responsibly & nature is quickly recovering
Here in Yorkshire the moorland is being restored back to wild forest with some sustainable forestry work.
Farmers are using mainly agro-ecology methods and producing much better foods - even the soil is recovering
☺ bye for now, see you in 6 yrs*

Participant image, West Yorkshire



Participant image, West Yorkshire



Participant image, Northumberland

5.7 Strong governance, decisive leadership

As in the manifestos for change, strong leadership was a theme in some of the visions for 2030. This group describes cross-governmental leadership and governance which in itself has vision and is decisive:

Participant 6: Having the Tsar. Having that over-sight, someone-

Participant 2: A food Tsar.

Participant 4: Yes, who works across government.

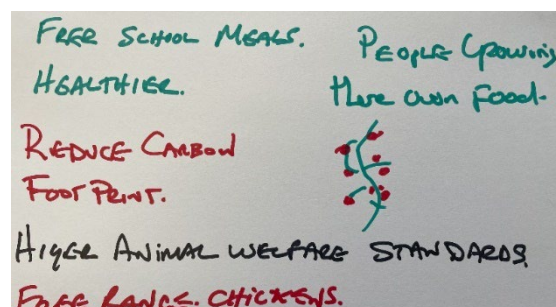
Participant 2: Yes, who is the ultimate buck-stop decision-maker. Has to be someone with a good vision.

East Kent

For many good governance expressed through the visions for 2030 involves setting standards and having significant and enforceable regulations to:

- Ensure food in public institutions is of a high quality, meeting standards for health, palatability and nutrition
- Limit the powers and the profits of the small number of large multi-national corporations dominating the middle of the food system
- Address the profit motive of supermarkets which drives them to promote, and give offers (such as 'buy one get one free' and multi-packs) on UPFs and high in salt, sugar and fat foods
- Rebalance the profits paid to farmers and smaller food producers
- Penalise/ criminalise organisations that do nothing about the pollution they cause in rivers and on land in food production, and for practices damaging to animal welfare.

"All this of course, has got to sit within a framework which leverages standards, regulation, advertising, punishments and incentives to encourage people to adopt these measures, get them to stick and to make them do it." East Kent



Participant image, Northumberland

5.8 Reactions to policy proposals

Many of the solutions and actions that participants want to see to fulfil their visions for the future and arrive at the food system as it should be, and these actions are embedded thematically in their visions for the future (5.7). They are also made clear in the 'do it, test it, debate it, don't do it' activities completed on Recollective, the responses to which are set out in chapter two. In this section we explore the policy solutions (see Appendix 3) to which participants are drawn in order to achieve their visions. We also reflect on those which they believe can only be enacted with caution or will experience substantial barriers to implementation.

Throughout the deliberation participants reflected on existing policy solutions under the following workshop themes:

- A fair deal for farmers and citizens
- UPFs, child nutrition and the food environment
- Intensive farming
- Nature, climate and sustainable farming

We have seen that participants want change in the food system. They want this change to be substantial and involve holistic and comprehensive leadership and decision making at all levels of the system.

Taxation and penalties

There are mixed responses across the locations on taxation and penalties. Whilst some participants feel that organisations and industries which cause harm to people, animals, biodiversity, nature or adverse impacts on the climate should be strongly penalised, others believe this will not result in the required change because:

- Large multi-national companies will find ways of avoiding taxation.
- It will not be possible to monitor and enforce penalties and fines, resulting in long legal battles, and the continuation of harm.
- They do not believe ideologically that more regulation is a good thing, nor that government is independent enough of those causing harm to enforce the change.
- They fear that as a global problem, for example deforestation to make way for mono-crops, it needs a global solution which will be hard to implement only in the UK.



"I think the thing about ecocide, that will never get off the ground because there are too many big money people making lots of money out of destroying ecosystems in other continents. Ethically, it should definitely be a law, but I don't have much faith as I said, in big government." West Yorkshire

"These companies, they've got the money, so they can employ the best and brightest minds. If there's a way around something, they'll find a way around something far more effectively than a government can, but obviously, the government generally don't pay as well. A solicitor at a big firm gets far more than an MP, for example. Private companies that can pay the money. They've got the power in that sense." Northumberland

“That seems like the kind of thing that we’ll go, “Oh, yes, we’ll definitely do that.” Then when time comes to enforce it, we won’t do it. Again, it needs some more thought around it, how are you going to do this? How are you going to penalize people? Are you going to put people’s businesses out of commission? Are politicians going to risk losing votes and political donations to do this?” Northumberland

We see this clearly from the ‘Do it, Test it, Debate it, Don’t do it.’ activity, where consistently many participants felt that this policy lever should be exercised with caution (figure 20). While many still agree with taxation, many participants suggest taxation should *not* be used as a means of creating change than for other policy actions.

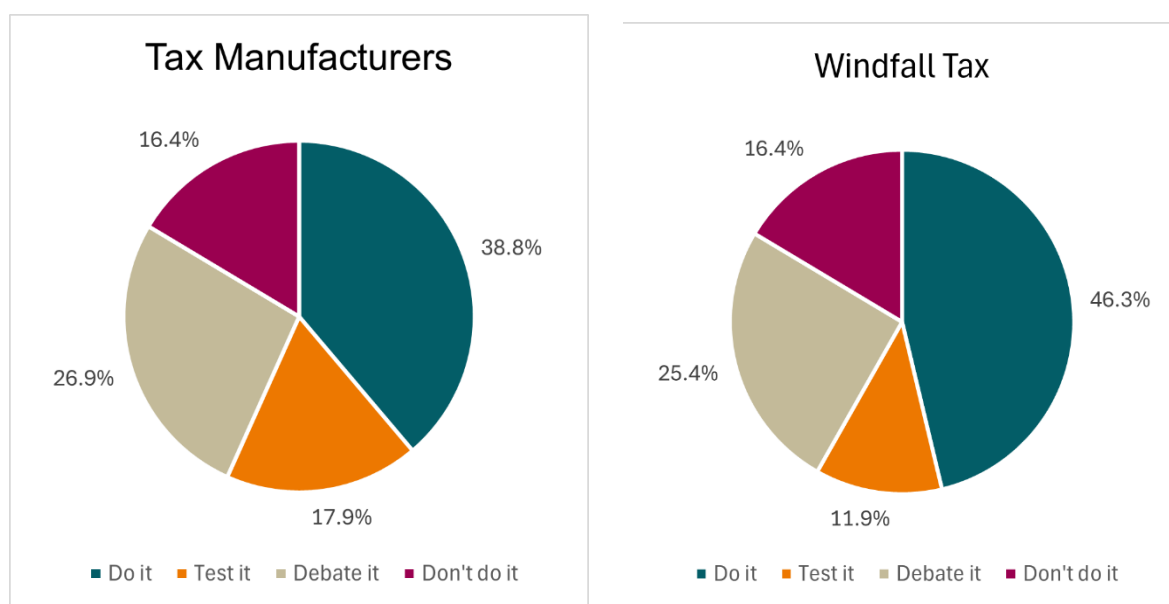


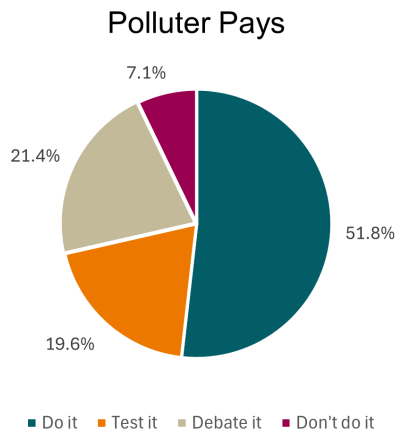
Figure 20: **Tax manufacturers.** Pay for schemes like the above by introducing a tax on manufacturers based on the amount of sugar and salt they use. **Windfall tax.** Pay for schemes like those mentioned by introducing a windfall tax for big food companies who profit the most when prices rise.

Some participants are more drawn to taxation in those policy proposals where the funds raised through the taxation are put back into the system to improve people’s or environmental health.

“I think Healthy Start Vouchers and tax manufacturers who are using sugar and salt. These are the good ideas. It’s hard to think about any downsides.” East Kent

However, there is still a concern that manufacturers will simply transfer the cost of paying the taxes to those buying the products. This is of particular concern during the cost of living crisis,

“I think the problem with that is that’s just going to push the price of those products up. People already can’t afford to buy the food, so they’re buying cheaper food, if you make it more expensive, people can’t eat.” East Kent



For some a 'polluter pays' principle is a helpful policy solution, but it doesn't go far enough and should be combined with other initiatives to include other pollutants, including plastic packaging on foods.

"The polluter pays, which is a good idea as well but I also think that needs to include packaging and waste as well, and some responsibility from the manufacturers and producers about packaging and waste as well, in terms of pollution." East Kent

Figure 21: **Polluter pays.** Tax the businesses that profit from polluting, such as companies that make pesticides and fertilisers or encourage intensive meat production.

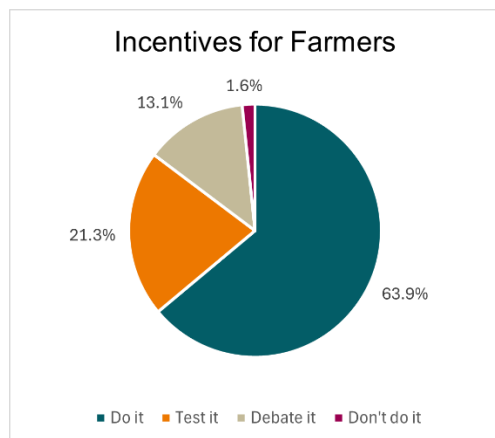
Subsidies and incentives

On the other side of the coin, many participants are drawn to subsidies and incentives to support the transition to an improved food system. This includes incentives to farmers to work using less intensive methods, which support the environment and protect animal welfare. Participants are drawn to policies which explicitly support change.



Participant image, Northumberland

"I think the one that most stands out to me is the incentive to the farmers. I think if the farmers were benefitting from providing better animal welfare rather than benefitting from the profits that they get from providing worse animal welfare, a lot more farmers would definitely be on board." West Yorkshire



Whilst there is a lot of support for such incentives to farmers, there remains a concern that the cost of this could be passed on to citizens' shopping bills.

"I think the best (policy proposal) is the incentives for farmers because if we can change or convince them to use regenerative farming methods, that's better for everybody. Of course, it might make the food more expensive."

Northumberland

Figure 22: **Incentives for Farmers.** Incentivise farmers to change to regenerative farming methods, including less intensive and higher welfare chicken production systems.

For some, as the exchange below demonstrates, incentives to farmers could have other related benefits, for example in people's diets, which they support.

"Participant 5: I think, anything that moves towards a change in farming is a good idea because they need to know that they're being supported in what"

they're doing. Because too often the conversation makes it sound like we should make farmers feel guilty for what they're doing. Whereas in reality, it's about supporting change.

Participant 4: The incentives of farmers could also lead to the dietary changes as well. It could run in. If you get higher welfare for chickens and production systems, that can come into the dietary change as well, as well as other foods.

Facilitator: That's the idea that the incentives for farmers could lead to dietary change?

Participant 4: Yes, it could lead to several of the ones there. More so dietary change, I think." Northumberland

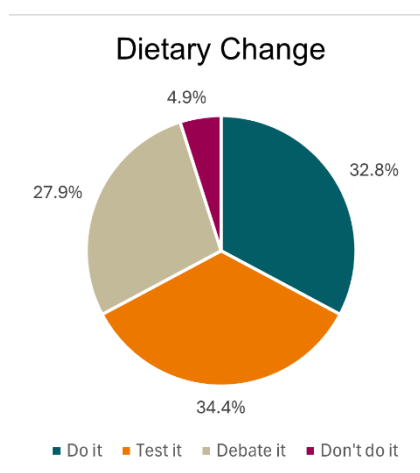


Figure 23: **Dietary change.** Incentivise people to eat “less but better” meat and dairy, instead eating more beans, nuts, pulses, fruit and vegetables. Reduce overall consumption by 50% by 2030.

The policy proposals which are intended to improve people’s dietary health are supported by some participants.

They believe these too will be gateway policies leading to change across the system, including encouraging the food industry to improve the quality of the food they produce.

“Incentivising dietary change. To me, any other ways that are tail wagging the dog, if we eat better, those companies will make better food.” West Yorkshire

“Dietary change, I think people are changing their diet when they can afford to do so. I feel for people I know who have got some dietary limitations, and it costs more money to eat and it's harder to find good food. We need to look at how that's factored in really.” East Kent

Food standards

A great deal of very strong support comes for policy proposals which will lead to improved food standards in public institutions such as schools and hospitals, and in early years settings.



“School food standards, I think they're the crux of it. Because if you don't have standards, there's no point giving free school meals if you're just giving them pizza all the time, that's not going to give their brain any nutrition. I think the school standards are important.” West Yorkshire

Participants see good food standards, particularly in schools as a lever for other positive change, including lifelong healthy eating.

“I think it's good to install good habits at a young age, so eating healthy and things like that. I think if it was in the schools and they just had to do it all the time, it's teaching them good habits. Whereas if they're eating bad things at school and throughout their childhood, then they're going to carry on into adulthood as well.” West Yorkshire

For many such standards are essential and need to be implemented at pace.

“I can't see why we wouldn't do any of them, and get on with it. Personally for me, I just think it's worth investing in our children and they're our future out there. Their health now has huge implications for their later life.”
Northumberland

“I like the food standards in public institutions, mainly with the primary schools and the idea of it's now a common, I guess, standard not to bring a chocolate bar for a packed lunch. If you have those standards in public institution food that, okay, you can serve this, but it can't contain certain-- this food or that, then I think that's also a good way. I think regulation is a very good idea for these types of things.” East Kent

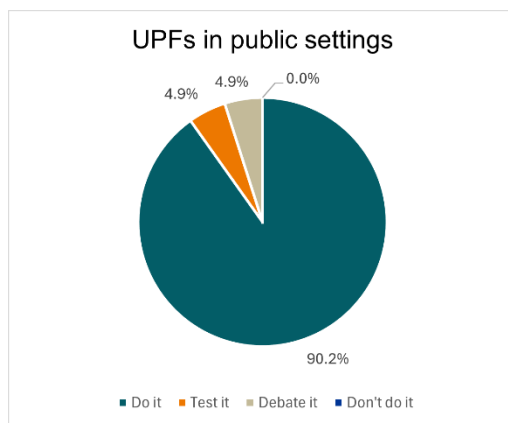


Figure 24: **UPFs in public settings.** Restrict the use of UPF in public settings like schools and hospitals by introducing stronger standards for what food they can buy and serve.

There is very strong encouragement from participants for the implementation of policies which remove, or substantially restrict, UPFs in public institutions. This seems to be obvious to many, particularly in hospitals and schools where healthy eating should be the norm.

“Just shadowing what other people have said, especially with the UPFs in the hospitals and the schools. It's quite low-hanging fruit as well. It's something that we can implement without drastic change. I think focusing on the schools and hospitals with this dreadful food would be good.” East Kent

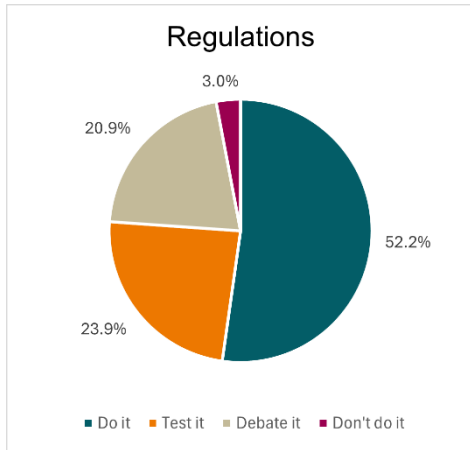
Regulations and frameworks

The groups are divided on the efficacy of regulations and frameworks to change the food system. For some they are an appropriate means of rebalancing power and profit within the food system, as this participant describes in relation to the price of wheat,

“The one that I'm drawn to most would be the regulation side of things. I think it might be a better solution to try and strike something right at the heart (of it), how governments could regulate how much the average cost for a crop, if that makes sense. Like, supermarkets should be regulated to sell or to buy wheat at a certain price.” Northumberland

Other participants are more cautious about this approach. They feel that adding more bureaucracy to the system will not provide the simple, clear from farm to fork implementation that they wish to see. They believe it will create an overly burdensome system.

“As soon as we start putting in a regulatory framework, it all suddenly becomes very complex. Then you have all the rules you've got to then jump through, then the regulations and framework then change. The goalposts keep moving. That's what generally happens.” West Yorkshire



Again, the participants who are cautioning against the implementation of additional regulations are those who are concerned that the cost of the process would be passed onto the food purchaser, and that the regulations would not be effectively monitored. There would be more support for strong regulatory frameworks if it could be guaranteed that the government or appropriate authority will take action if the regulations are flouted.

Figure 25: **Regulations.** Introduce a strong and straightforward regulatory framework that ensures fair dealing between retailers and suppliers/intermediaries and farmers.

Changing the food infrastructure –

local initiatives

Participants feel very positive towards policy proposals which would shake-up and reframe the local food infrastructure (figure 23). This includes policies which support their ambition for a pivot to the local in the food system, particularly local food hubs and partnerships, and public procurement with local inputs.

“I think particularly the local food hubs is a really good idea because if there were local food hubs where, say, local farmers or producers could sell their goods without having to go through supermarkets or wholesalers or whatever, if there were enough of them so that people didn't have to travel long distances to get to them, it would be really good because not everybody has a car or anything like that. They need them to be local and plenty of them. I'm sure that the farmers would appreciate selling to local people as well.”
Northumberland

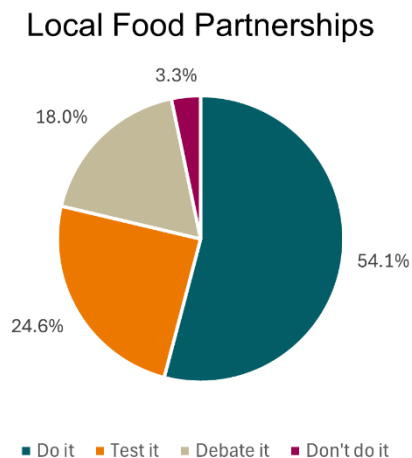
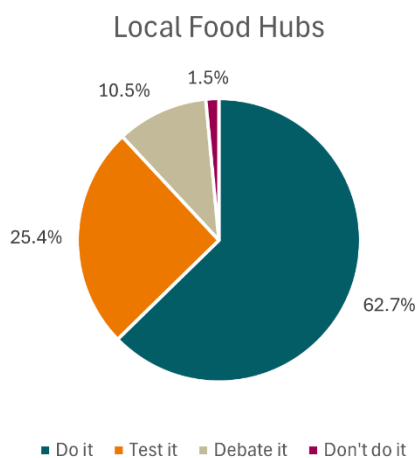


Figure 26: **Local Food Hubs** Invest in systems to get food from producers to people without so many steps in between, run by not-for-profit food hubs and wholesalers to offer fairer prices to farmers and growers. **Local Food Partnerships.** Local authorities should support the establishment of cross-sector food partnerships in every local area to help create a more healthy, sustainable, and fair local food system

Participants particularly support initiatives which reduce the number of steps between farmer and consumer. They are also strongly supportive of these initiatives because it is felt they will contribute to improving local economies. They see this as a fundamental infrastructure re-think which is to be welcomed.

"I think a radical approach of somehow to bring production and autonomy more locally and to somehow try and keep the money in the town."
Northumberland

Looking again at the high street offer is seen as an important initiative to support and prioritise. This includes food hubs and partnerships, and encouragement for local and independent food retailers back on the high street. Initiatives which encourage current corner shops to include fruit, vegetables and other local produce in their offer are seen as a good step forward, including for benefits for health, environment and community.

"I've got quite a large elderly demographic near me. I don't know how often they get out, but to encourage them to go to a local store to buy veg every day, that's good. They get out and they do walking, there's a health option. There are those things, it helps to look at the holistic health and wealth of the community. That's got to be a good thing, it really, really has." West Yorkshire

The only word of caution raised here is that it might be challenging to implement in inner-city urban areas where it is not necessarily straightforward to access local produce.

National guidance and awareness raising

Given participants' interest in using education as a mechanism for long-term improvement in the food system, there is also a high level of support for policy proposals which focus on guidance and awareness raising - particularly a programme for children to inspire their interest on cooking and tasting new foods. For many such initiatives should include inspiring children to grow their own food too. This exchange in East Kent shows a discussion on the extension to this policy idea. It also shows that some participants continue to be concerned about how such initiatives are funded.

Participant 1: *Just having access to fresh fruit and vegetables, and that should be standard within schools.*

Participant 2: *Yes. Exactly. They should grow it. They should have schools where they can.*

Participant 1: *Because if they grew it, it'd be an extra budget for the kitchen to use, and it could be recycled back into the school.*

Participant 2: *There are schools that do that, but for some strange reason, they're wacky private schools, but that should be in every school. Every school should have a this.*

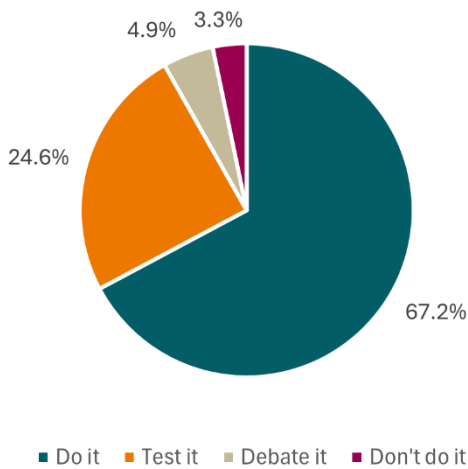
Participant 1: *Then that generates some money for the school because when the schools aren't there in the summer holidays, the kids can see where the food goes. They send it to a local restaurant. They get a local restaurant on board. Then in turn, it answers the question, "Where does my chicken nugget come from?" They can say, "Where does my vegetable nugget come from?"*

The school can then go to the restaurant and say, "We can show you." Opposed to children not knowing where their food comes from.

Participant 5: At the moment, schools are actually being cut back on their playing fields. Expecting them actually to find land that they can use to produce a reasonable quantity of food in a sustainable way, is simply unrealistic.

Participant 1: We've got a lot of wasteland, a lot of areas around here that just don't have-- there's so much wasteland available, but yet they do nothing with it. Why can't that area then be, in a sense, designated into an allotment, or it's for a school or for a community centre to use. Somewhere that's accessible so that everybody can potentially grow vegetables. East Kent

Programme for Children



National Guidance

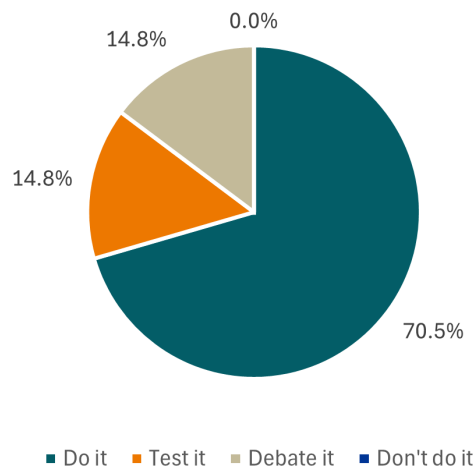


Figure 27: **Programme for Children** Launch a new programme for children to taste and prepare healthy foods. **National Guidance.** Add information on reducing UPF to official nutrition guidance. Similar guidance already exists in Canada, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, and Uruguay.

For some national guidance and awareness raising initiatives should have a much higher profile, using all available channels, including social media to show people across society what they need to know to make healthy and nutritious food choices.

"The national guidance, I think that would be really helpful, because I'm not always sure whether it is UPFs I'm buying, for example in sliced ham, or bread." West Yorkshire

Having been through this deliberative process participants believe that people across society should also benefit from the knowledge they have acquired in the process. There is a strong push in each location for more understanding about every aspect of the food system, in part so that the government can be clear that intervention in our food policy is needed.

Welfare system change

There are mixed views on welfare system change amongst the participants in wave one. Some participants are highly supportive of policies which address social

inequalities head on and support those on lower incomes. These participants welcome the proposal for universal free school meals because they would reduce the stigma for those who currently access them and improve the quality of food available for everyone.

They also welcome a boost to healthy start vouchers so that the number of people eligible for them is increased and the threshold for their receipt is raised. Improving Universal Credit so that it covers the cost of basic foods and ensuring people don't have to choose between rent and heating and food is welcomed by these participants.

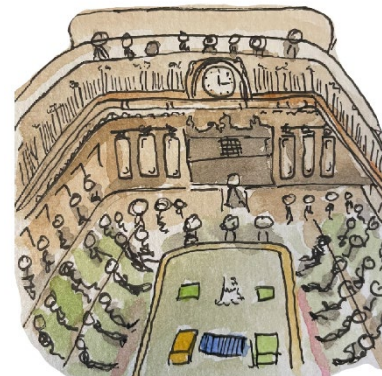
However, others describe policies which support those on lower incomes as 'controversial'. They are concerned that people can't be told how to spend their benefits, nor can you guarantee that the vouchers won't be swapped for other things which some participants have experienced.

"I think this is quite a controversial topic. My personal opinion is I agree with the Healthy Start vouchers and also the tax manufacturers, but we can't dictate what people choose to spend their money on, whether it's income or benefits or whatever it may be. We can't dictate what they choose to spend it on. You can't suddenly start asking people, "Look, we've given you £100 this week, what have you spent it on? You could have spent £60 on your rent, you could have spent £30 on your food, and have £10 left to travel to the job centre." That's taking over people's lives completely." West Yorkshire

Government intervention

In contrast, we end this section by sharing that participants in each location call for the government to intervene decisively in the food system, and they welcome initiatives which require government intervention. These include policies which:

- Support farmers to transition to sustainable practices and work on an agroecological basis.
- Change our horticulture infrastructure to embed ambitious plans for growing fruit and vegetables in the UK, as well as increasing consumption of those foods.
- Schemes which promote healthy eating as well as restrictions to advertising on unhealthy foods, particularly UPFs.



Again with this policy, as with others, participants call for more intervention rather than less, and for policies to go further than has previously been suggested. For example, in a budget to support farmers to transition participants suggested that this should run for longer than five years.

"I'm thinking about the transitional budget. I think it's a great thing to encourage farmers to look at sustainable farming methods. I think it's got to be the way to go, but why would you limit it to 2029? Is five years maybe going to be sufficient in order to make a reasonable change in farming practices? To implement sustainable methods?" West Yorkshire

Government intervention in advertising is also seen as something that should be taken as far as possible, with some calling for an outright ban on advertising, likening it to the ban on tobacco advertising.

Participant 2: Ban it, definitely, like smoking. Do it, yes.

Participant 3: Definitely ban all of it.

Participant 5: Definitely. Without a doubt, I agree with you.

Participant 5: Horrible. It's horrible. East Kent

"Advertising. I think that's the one thing that the government could have more impact on is advertising. In the same way that they changed the laws about advertising for tobacco, they should change the laws about advertising for Ultra-Processed Foods and stuff like that." West Yorkshire

Participants also welcomed the idea that the government could set targets for a national reduction in UPF consumption. They see this as linked to local authority policies on how high streets are managed with fewer licences issued for take-away and fast food outlets that are allowed to open.

"I can walk out of my front door and in 10 minutes I can pass in any direction at least six. I think it's atrocious that they're allowed to just pop up and open wherever they like. There needs to be more restrictions set on things like that." West Yorkshire

In supporting policies which require government intervention participants highlight this as a key route to making vital changes to the food system, stating that government holds both power and responsibility. Individual participants spoke about governments' power and responsibility to make change via:

- Regulation of food businesses and supermarkets
- Creating policies to improve citizens' health
- Regulating food provision in public institutions
- Planning laws to change food environments
- A longer-term food strategy

"Everything we've spoken about, who gets free school meals and budgets, and so on, it's all driven by the government. If they turn around and say, councils need to do this, or this amount of money needs to be put into allow-- it's all driven from that" West Yorkshire

Although some participants told us that supermarkets hold responsibility to drive food system change, for example by providing and advertising healthier food or educating consumers through their messaging, they were sometimes sceptical about this possibility.

"Supermarkets are all for profit, and that's why I do believe they have a lot of power, but they have no interest in changing things because they're not going to switch their goal from making money to making the food system fairer." West Yorkshire

Despite identifying limitations on the consumer, some participants spoke about individuals holding responsibility to change the system by making different choices

about the food they purchase and where it comes from. A few participants spoke about the power of citizens as voters.

Some participants highlighted the power of the consumer and felt hopeful that, by acting collectively, they can make a change in the food system.

“If everyone stopped buying chickens for a week and all it would take is one week, the supermarkets would have so many problems in their supply chain that they'd be in really deep trouble.” Northumberland

7. Thoughts to feed into the ongoing conversation

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

Wave one participants believe that:

Food touches all aspects of our lives, and strong leadership across government and through all public policy (housing, transport, health for example) is needed to make the necessary change.

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 is fair to everyone throughout society. They are reflecting on the next generation and the impact no change would have on them. They have hope that with strong leadership, direction and a co-ordinated plan for our food system change is achievable.

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.

Having been through this dialogue participants **have a sense of togetherness and mutuality** which they want to continue. They feel that a sense of togetherness needs to pervade the 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.

“Our vision and aspiration is for communities of food, about food for everyone in a forum for stakeholders, a citizens’ assembly to share and coordinate action and assist the government in generating good policy that delivers for all of us.” Northumberland

Participants are keen to continue the conversation locally and nationally and be part of this community of food.

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.

Northumberland manifestos

Name:
A BLOOMING FOOD SYSTEM

Key problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FINANCIALLY DRIVEN NOT HEALTH DRIVEN (UPFS) LACK OF INNOVATION, EDUCATION & RESEARCH UNSUSTAINABLE (BIODIVERSITY, CLIMATE, WELFARE) INEQUALITY (INSECURITY - STRATEGIES IN FOOD PRICES) 	Vision / aspirations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AWARENESS KNOWLEDGE (EDUCATION SYSTEM) AFFORDABILITY (HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL) SUSTAINABILITY (BUSINESS, ANIMAL WELFARE, LAND MANAGEMENT) TASTY & NUTRITIOUS (VALUES - ETHICS - HEALTHIER - TRACEABLE)
--	--

Priority actions who?

- ONE REGULATORY BODY (Simplification of Food Strategy & Policies) "PARLIAMENT"
- SUPPORT FOR FARMERS. (ENVIRONMENTAL INCENTIVES - FOOD ADOPT - SUBSIDIES) "ONE REGULATORY BODY TO UPLIFT NFO."
- ONE MANDATORY LABEL (FOOD PRICES - INFOBOX) "FOOD COs & SUPERMARKETS"
- IMPROVED PUBLIC NUTRITION STANDARDS (EATING YEARS - FREE SCHOOL MEALS - COLLEGE LUNCH - HOSPITALS) "GOVERNMENT"

Empowering Communities: Making the food system better together

Key Problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government policy change is long-winded. There is inertia Individual behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> education motivation & opportunity information Living in an unhealthy environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> availability of UPFS being misled / advertising impacts on nature / climate 	Vision / aspirations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faster government action for long-term change The Prime Minister accountable for cross-government policy A farm for stateholders. A citizens' assembly to share co-ordinated action Penalties / fines / taxes which will have impact Community of food - about food for everyone
--	--

Priority Actions

- Import regulations to stop undercutting UK standards
- Global collaboration for a global issue
- Prioritize the population's health over money
 - Schools + Youth Centres / community hubs and gardens
 - Funded to bring education & awareness raising in the system
- Address UPFS issue
- change food advertising
- Motivate change across the system: farming industry / individuals

Address structural inequalities

Who: the Prime Minister accountable for co-ordinated action

Name: FOOD IS POWER

Change for the health of the Nation

Key problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of co-ordination, leadership + strategic thinking Lack of priority given to food and... Everyone's responsibility - all play a part in food system Lack of balance / power across the system Lack of regulation / standards 	Vision / aspirations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People understand + embrace the importance of 'real food' Enough food for everyone + of good quality Healthier people + planet through better use of resources (eg land)
--	--

Priority actions who?

1. Create a Ministry of Food to lead new approach

Ministry for Food - bring different players together in common objectives / missions	High Priority Ministry - Cabinet level - AT SEAT OF POWER	Food is too IMPORTANT TO NOT BE CENTRAL IN GOVERNMENT	About many areas: EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, LAND USE, Economy - Health
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OPEN - INVITE GOVERNANCE, ZEEBOLS IN DECISION, FOSTER INNOVATION, NEW IDEAS + help to ensure achievable / feasible

2. Make good food accessible to everyone

Lower food demands to enable greater access to social food	Fairer Prices / Fairer access (Role of Ministry of Food)	education / discuss value of good food to people / with people like "volunteers"	Reduce waste of food
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Food Conversation

NAME: COMMUNITY NOT CONVENIENCE

KEY PROBLEMS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> wider infrastructural problems in the UK eg. public transport, housing, healthcare system - poor foundation weak food system power held by the corporate world "unconscious ignorance" about the food system is changing climate change 21st century work life balance 	VISION / ASPIRATIONS <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger foundation (inc. improved healthcare, housing etc.) in the urban food system Knowledge - everyone gets to learn what we have learnt in this process Diagnosed: eating well & community cohesion go hand in hand UPFS are treated like alcohol / smoking Food production isn't driving climate change
--	---

PRIORITY ACTIONS WHO?

- Polluter pays + UPF tax
- Programme for school children to learn about food system + school food standards
- Local Food hubs
- Regenerative Farming - subsidies & transition budget
- Eco-labelling (& other ways of sharing information with adults) FA actually accurate, honest (national guidance)

Volunteers please!

West Yorkshire manifestos

Name: Food for thought + action

Key Problems	Vision & aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • business-led vs people • complex + opaque lack of agency • cost of healthy + sustainable food • Unequal food environment • damaging nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food communities • local + seasonal food • simple, natural food • fairer structure • Nature friendly

Actions & by who

- Govt support for local businesses
- Govt regs for sustainability
- Regs + incentives for fairer deals
- targets UPFS ↓ (Govt + companies)
- Individual choices empowered by ongoing education

OUR MANIFESTO FOR THE FOOD SYSTEM

Problems / Issues

- Cost of healthy food is expensive - drives market
- There should be controls in place for junk food + UPFS
- Local authorities should have a role to play in driving change

Vision

- Make healthy food affordable + accessible
- You can buy fresh, it shouldn't be too expensive
- Put controls in place to ensure quality + safety
- Cook on site + food supply chain
- Make sure the food is fresh + healthy
- Make sure the food is available to all
- Make sure the food is affordable

Other things to consider

- market price increases
- increase tax on marketing
- increase price on consumers

Policies / action

- solutions we think might help
- set up in public settings
- increase quantity of fresh food
- cook on site!
- universal credit in line with market price - to afford quality food. Should not be a penalty
- controls are in place to access UPFS - healthy, safe + affordable
- Support for farmers, increase of quality food production

What **Steps** need to be taken (to address our problems → achieve our vision)

- ⑤ more ^{financial} support for farmers to use sustainable methods & to encourage them to stay farming
- ③ local authorities to take a lead role in establishing & coordinating local food hubs & partnerships
- Government to regulate to control ingredients in foods → food standards

More Steps

- Government to include food production, cooking in the national curriculum + nutrition & to encourage using local farmers to help deliver this
- Government to encourage farmers to set up apprenticeship schemes
- encourage govt. to change the rules on advertising unhealthy foods

West Yorkshire manifestos continued

SOLUTIONS

- * PRODUCER PAYMENTS
Pay farmers to incentives sustainable farming practices + maintaining natural habitats for wildlife, clean water + flood management
- * NATIONAL GUIDANCE + TARGETS ON ULTRA PROCESSED FOODS
follow examples from other countries to set a national target for reducing our consumption of UPFs and set guidance for all food companies to follow in creating food products
- * ACTION ON DEFORESTATION
Incentivise retailers + supermarkets to cut ties with companies involved in selling or using animal food from deforested land
- * LOCAL FOOD HUBS
Invest to support local / not for profit organisations to bring together food producers + consumers, so farmers + growers get fairer prices, while the public get closer access to where their food comes from

* Lead to ensure the spirit of the guidance + targets in other countries before setting our own

- * FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO HELP PEOPLE TO AFFORD + ACCESS HEALTHY FOOD
Provide funding through a means tested system to help people in financial hardship have guaranteed access to the food they need
- * GOVERNMENT-MANDATED FOOD STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS + SERVICES
Set + strengthen food standards that ensure legally binding nutrition, sustainability and environmental targets / rules are met in public institutions like schools, hospitals, nurseries and other places where public services are delivered

* We accept the trade off that means this policy will mean a short-term increase in welfare spending (but over the long term we will see a net benefit)

* We will accept this if the funding is targeted to those in financial hardship - not a universal offer

* We accept the trade off that this means new approaches to procurement rules - a more open, higher priced, fairer contract industry contracts

East Kent manifestos

FOOD FOR THE FUTURE Manifesto Group

Key Problems	Goals
Power of big business	Stronger links between local food production & consumption
Food culture that no longer works	Link food culture to health
Lack of food security	Increase food security to 90% in UK, support other countries to do similar

Policy / Actions

- Tax UFP to fund local focus
- Strengthen links between local producers & supermarkets
- Create a new food culture around food linked to health
- Food education in schools
- Less attractive advertising for UFP
- Increase community & individual food quality
- Reduce food waste
- Support international development

OUR VISION *Kent's Anna*

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK LOCALLY SOLVERED

Key Problems

- Not thinking / clear / food up + standards
- Inclusiveness: Pop / Age / Gender / Ethnicity / Religion / Race / Individual
- Pop / Community with food

Primary actions / what & how?

- Get longer analysis / Shared to NHS Educ. / period
- citizens self change
- Trade-offs
- Name: **NATIONALLY FRAMEWORK LOCALLY SOLVERED**

Other notes: "make sense to better", "help food shops under all guidance & support of a future-focused-national & local-national", "supported really delivered national framework", "Primary actions: 'Better pricing' all public sector organisations, 'low health, food, cultural', 'linked with standards, sharing, food'.

Problems

- Maggie
- PATRICK
- Lack of knowledge
- Institutional Food
- Progress + WASTE
- Profit DRIVEN Big Businesses
- Disconnect between consumer & production
- Affordability Accessibility Equality
- Environmental Impact UK + Abroad
- Lack of direction from the top
- Future Challenges

UK FOOD SYSTEM REFORM

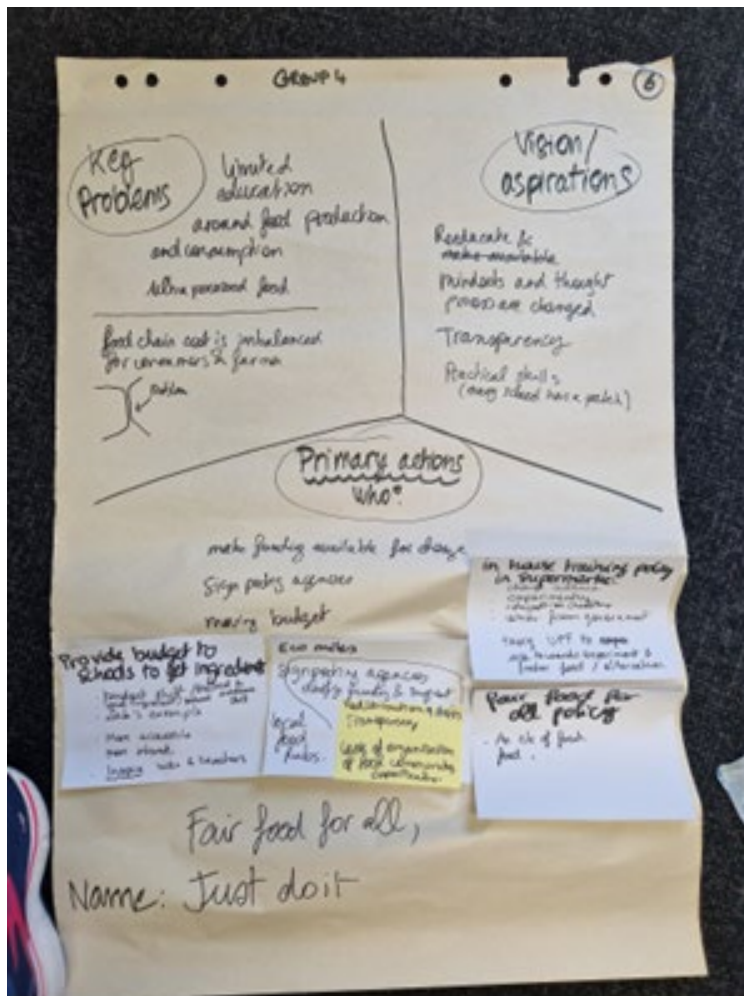
Actions

- JO
- UPF
- free school meals

Aspirations

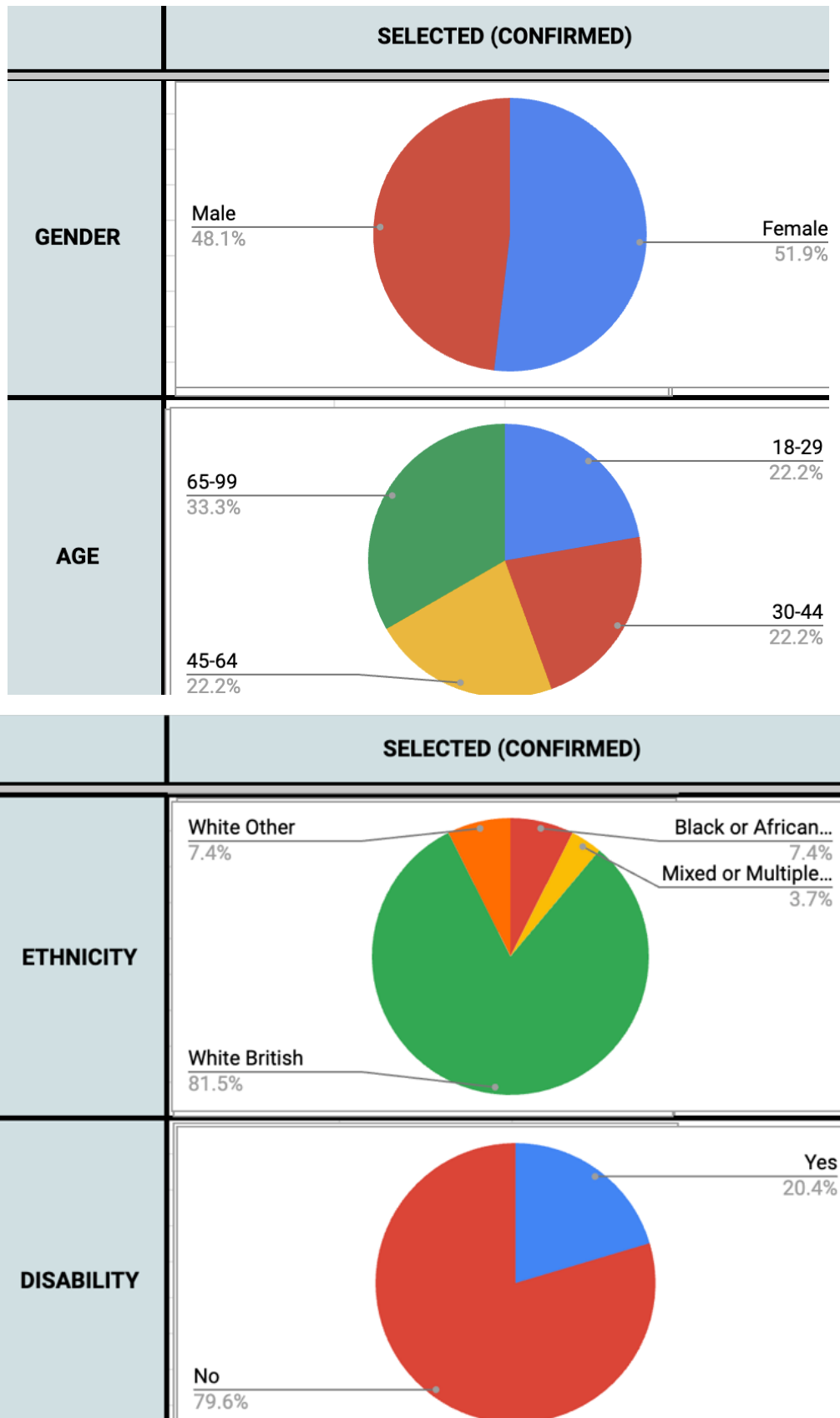
- No UFPs
- Equality for farmers
- Environmentally friendly food system
- Packing no longer an issue
- More equitable distribution of profits
- Local food shops
- Universal food waste systems
- More educated society
- More responsive shopping
- Shift from consumption to health
- Cross party dialogue
- Universal Basic Income
- More housing support
- handicap / disability or a certain food cost
- Get national Govt to help for people to make response

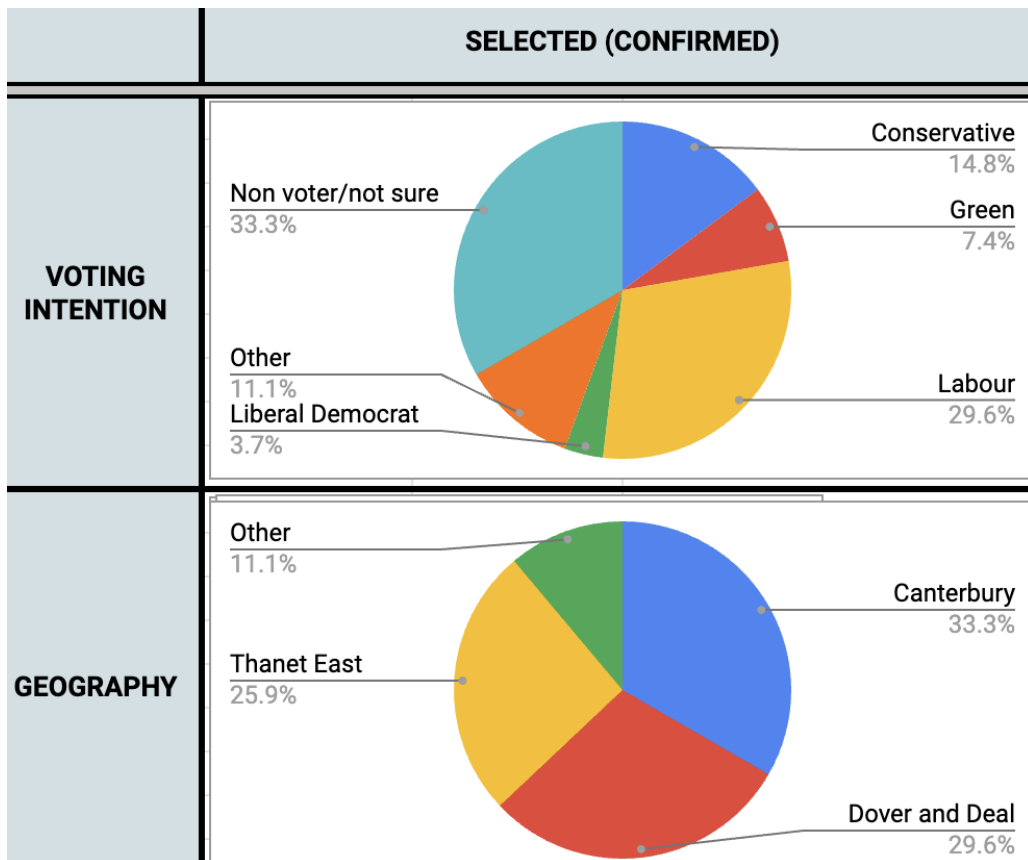
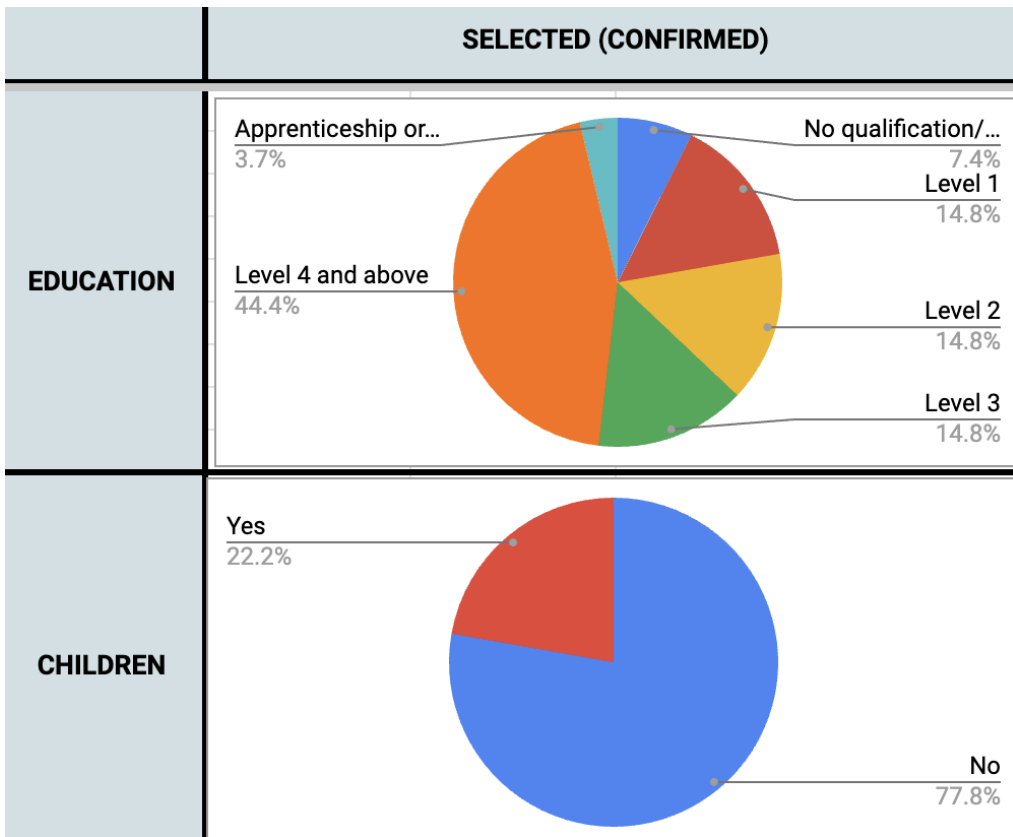
East Kent manifestos continued

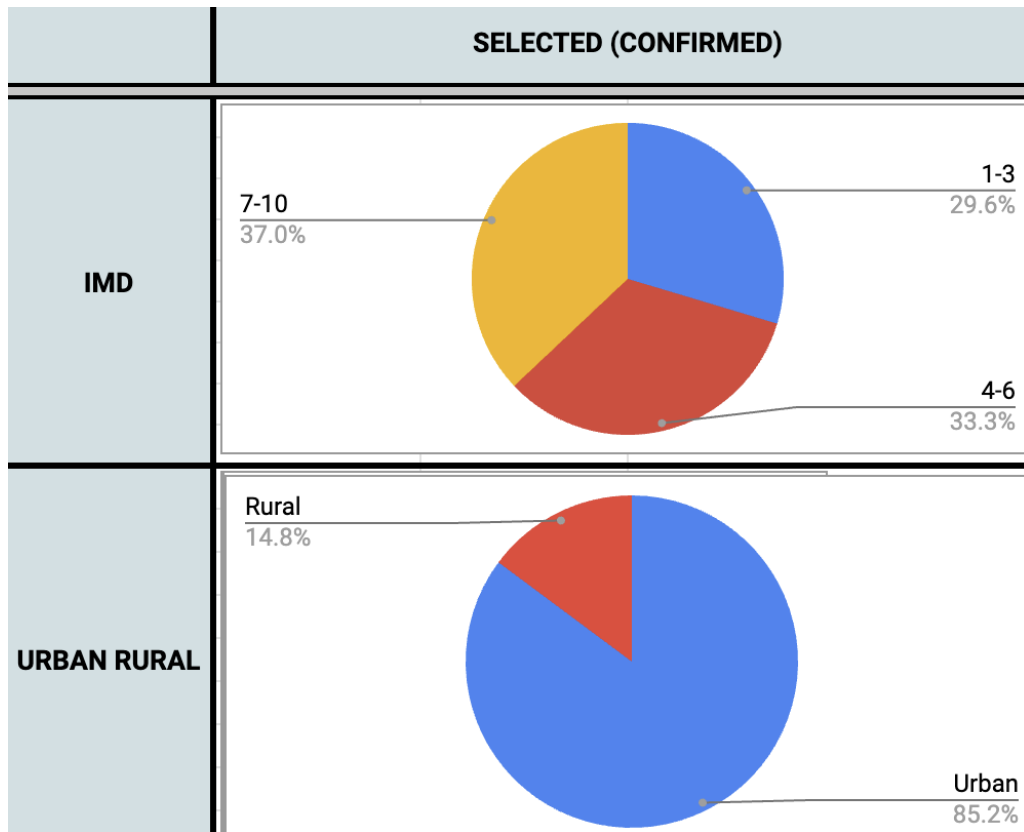


Appendix 2: Recruitment Summary

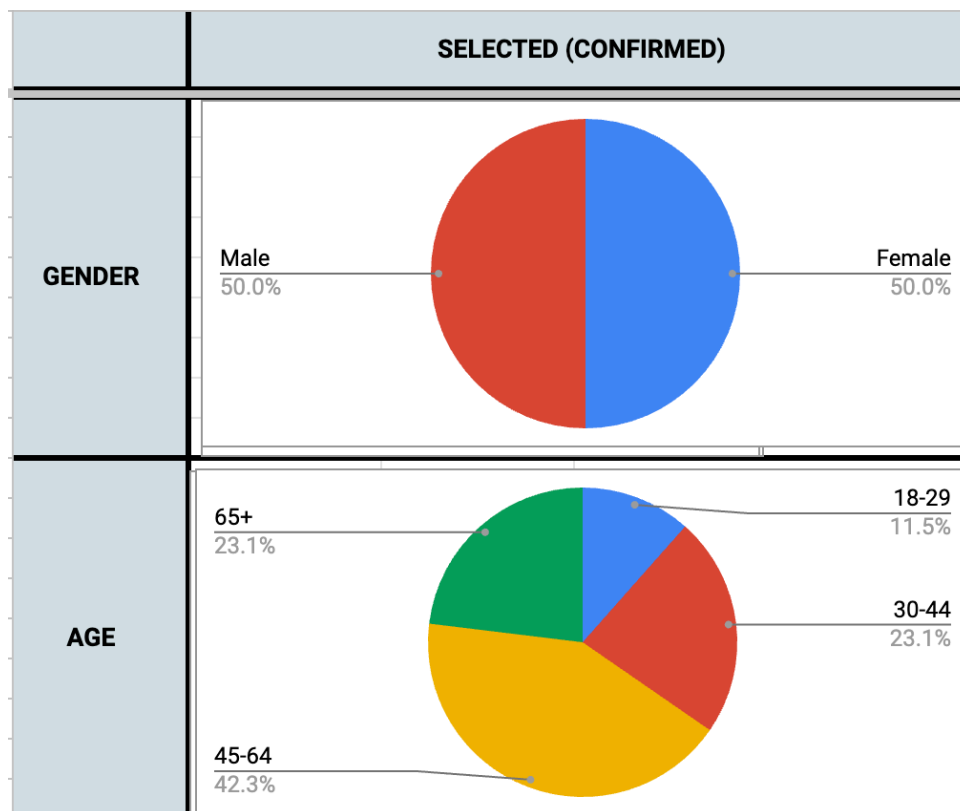
East Kent

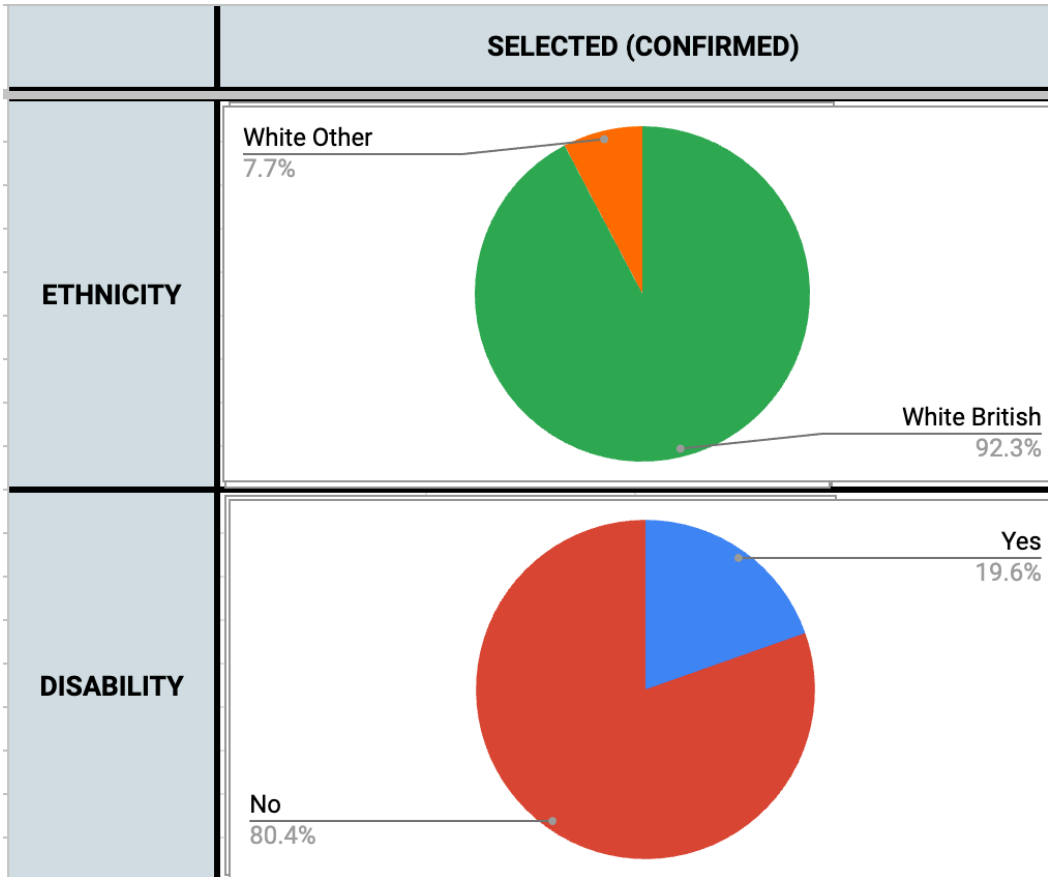
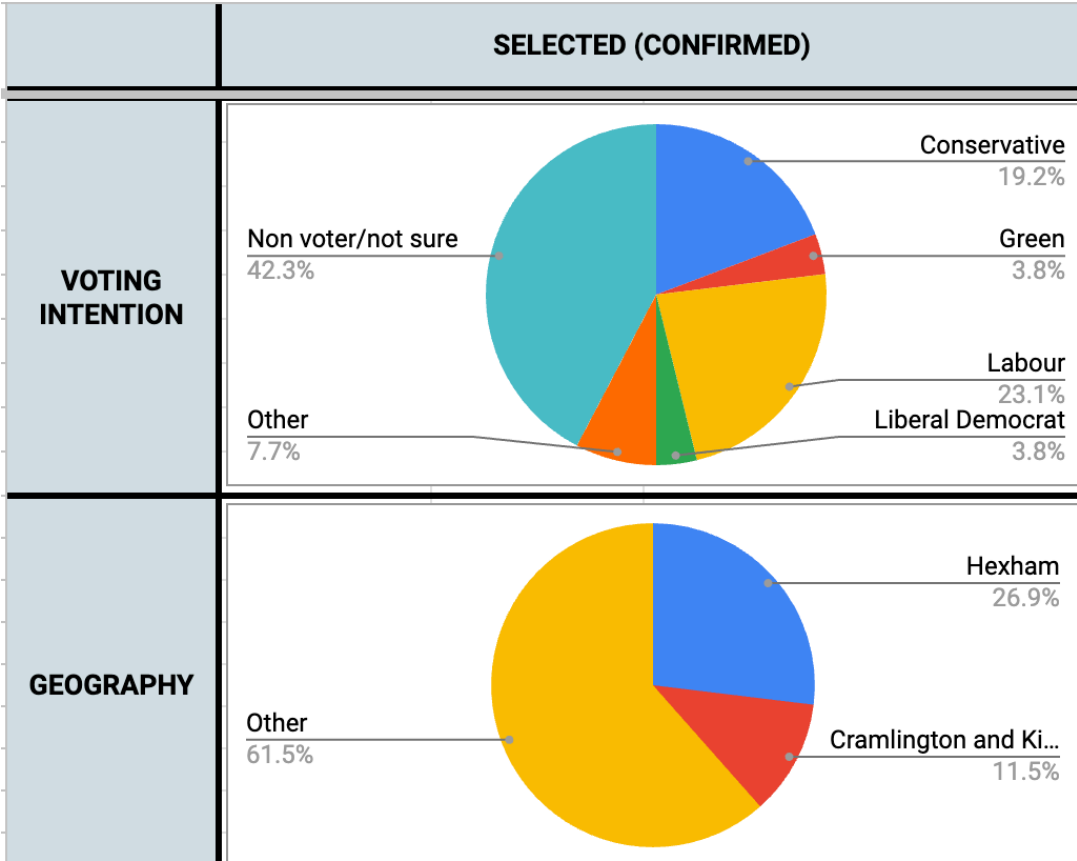


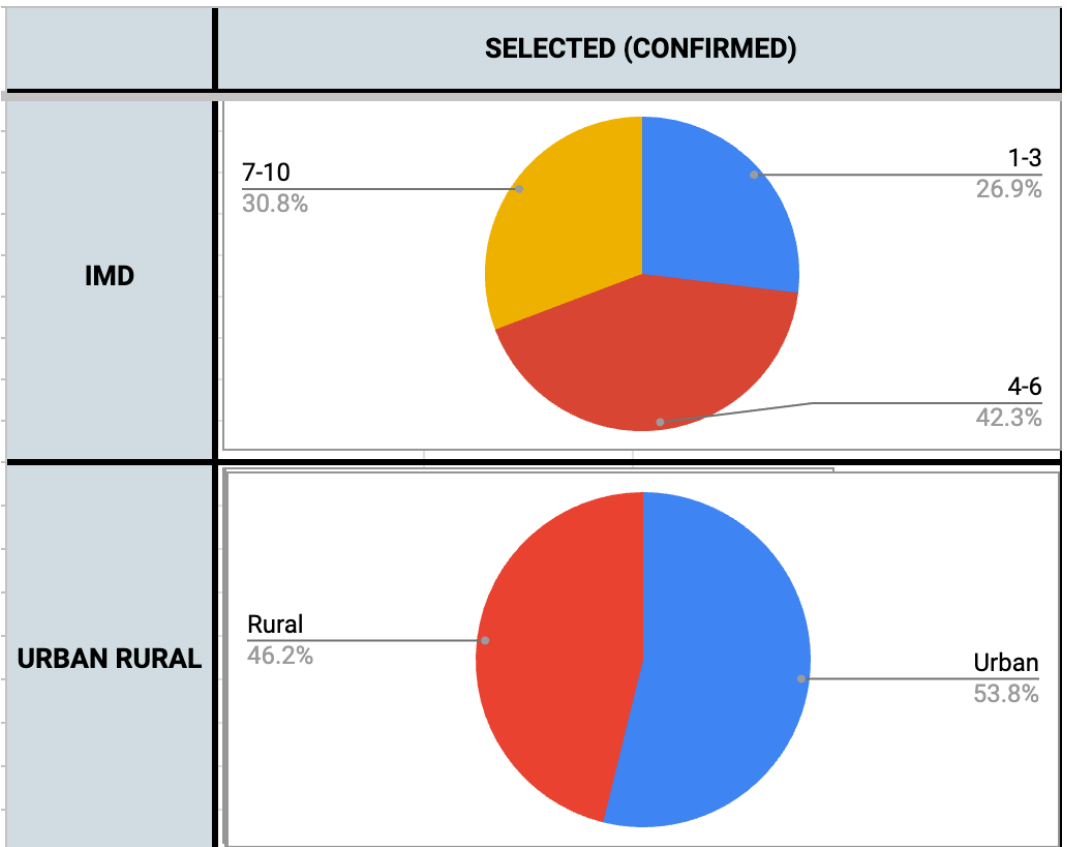
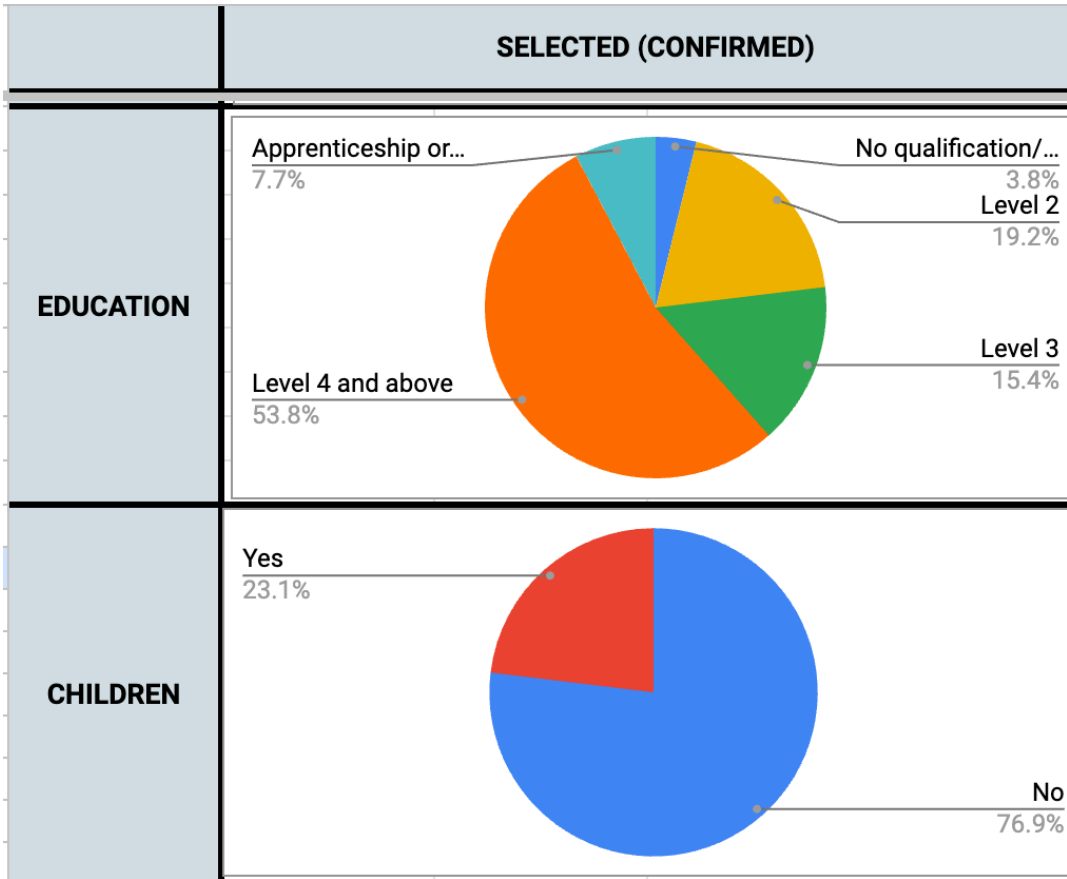




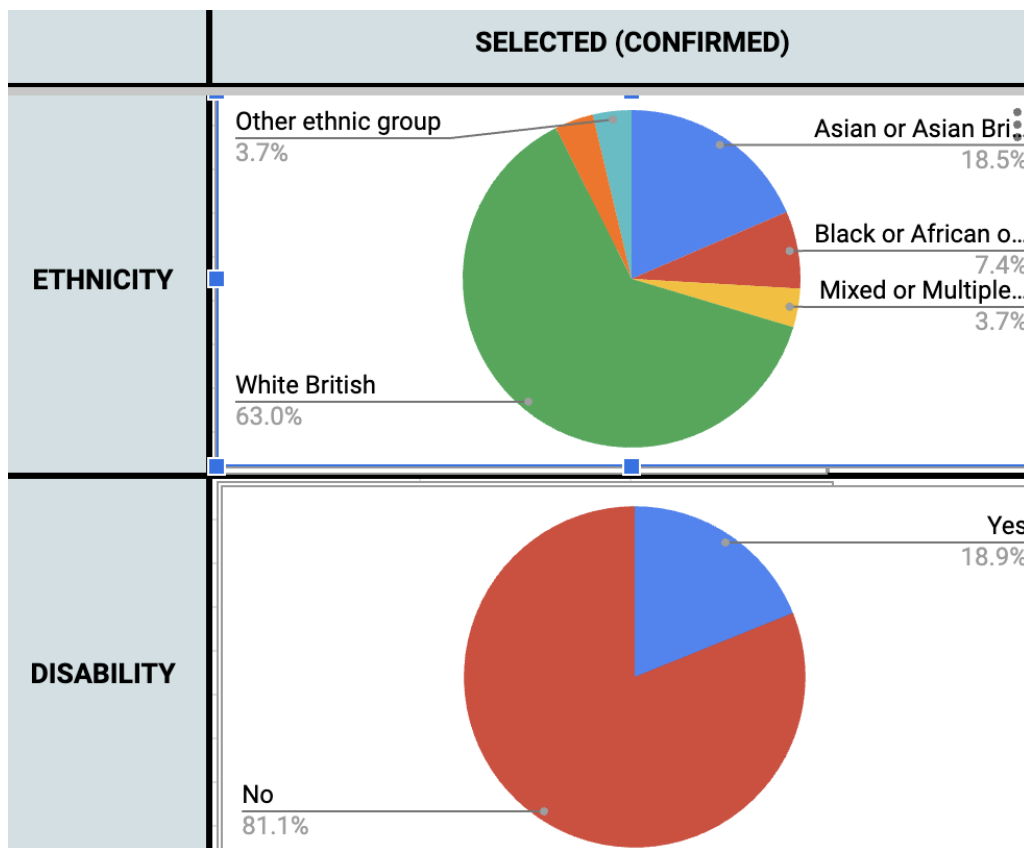
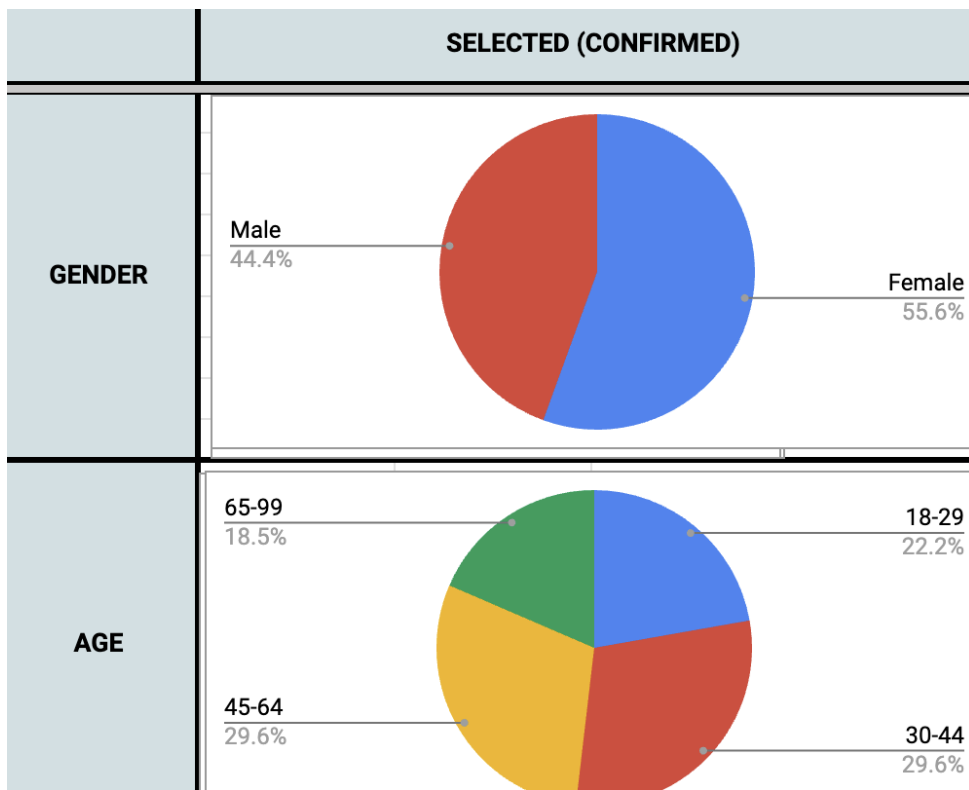
Northumberland

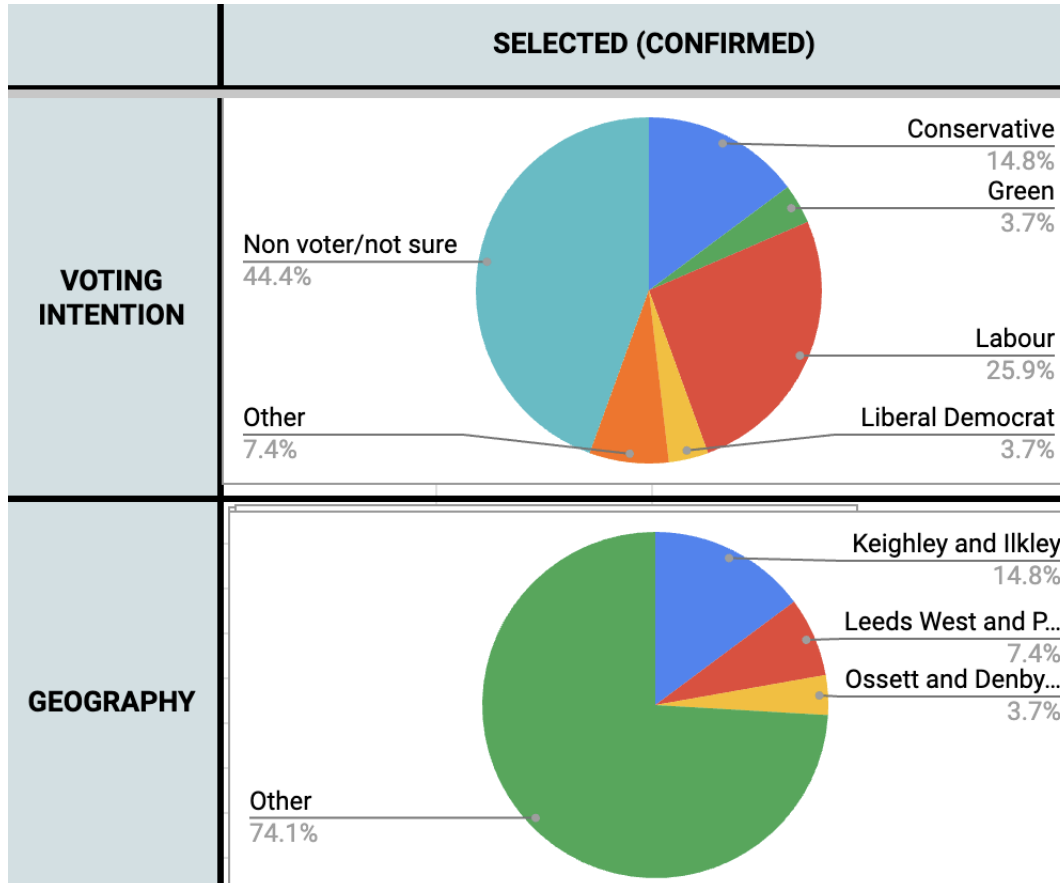
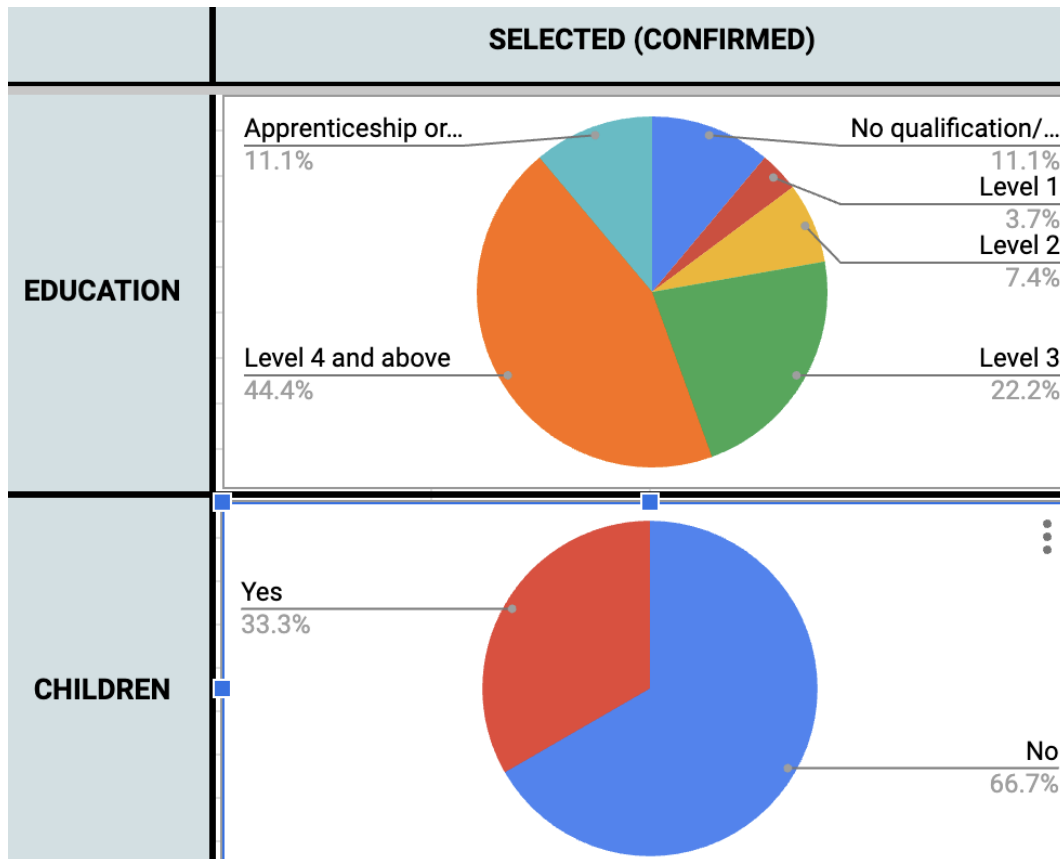


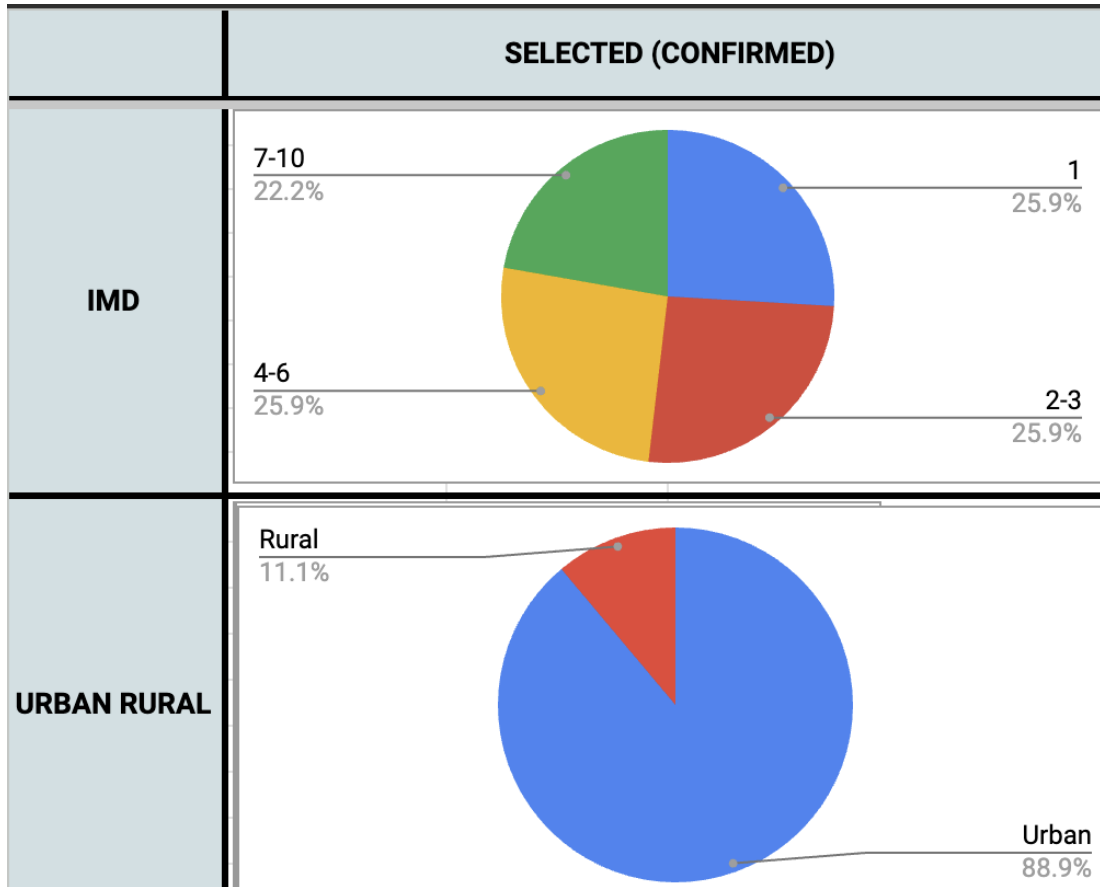




West Yorkshire







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: 11th April 2024 (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: Dr Courtney Scott , Director of Policy & Research, FFCC – an introduction to The Food Conversation and a fast-food chicken sandwich as a way into our discussions.
6.30	Small group discussion – mapping participant connections to the food system
6.50	Speaker 2: Angelina Sanderson Bellamy , Professor of Food System, UWE Bristol. Introduction to the food system, range of actors in the food system and how power is distributed.
(7.00)	Q&A
7.15	Small group discussion – reflecting on the presentations and exploring perceptions of power in the food system.
7.40	Break
7.50	Speaker 3: An introduction to inequalities across the food system, focusing on consumers Professor Charlotte Hardman , Institute of Population Health, University of Liverpool
(8.10)	Video (3 mins) – A producer’s perspective Q&A with Charlotte Hardman and Dan Crossley , Food Ethics Council
8.25	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 & close (9.00)

Workshop two: 16th April 2024 (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: Dr Courtney Scott , Director of Policy & Research, FFCC – where we are with the chicken wrap, plus an introduction to this evening’s topics
6.25	Speaker 2: The impacts of Ultra-Processed Foods Dr Janaina Chavez-Ugalde , Research Associate, University of Cambridge
6.45	Speaker 3: The impacts of intensively farmed meat and chicken, land use Sarah Wakefield , Executive Director, Eating Better Q&A session
7.00	Small group discussion – reflecting on the presentations and exploring the challenges and policy proposals.
7.45	Break
7.55	Speaker 4: Dr Courtney Scott , an introduction to the food environment, public procurement – linking to child nutrition
8.05	Q&A session
8.15	Small group discussion – reflecting on the food environment, public procurement and child nutrition
8.50	Final plenary
9.00	Close

Workshop three: 18th April 2024 (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: Dr Courtney Scott , Director of Policy & Research, FFCC – where we are with the chicken wrap, plus an introduction to this evening's topics
6.25	Speaker 2: The impacts of the food system on climate , and policy proposals to address this Sarah Bridle , Professor of Food, Climate and Society, University of York
6.35	Speaker 3: The impacts of the food system on nature , and policy proposals to address this Alec Taylor , Head of Policy (Production), WWF-UK
6:45	Q&A session
7.00	Small group discussion: Reflecting on climate, nature and the food system. Exploring the challenges and policy proposals.
7.45	Break
7.55	Filmed presentation: Joe Stanley, The GWCT Allerton Project , an introduction to the transition to sustainable agriculture with a focus on the current challenges and possible solutions.
8.05	Q&A session with Alice Midmer, the GWCT Allerton Project
8.20	Small group discussion: Reflecting on the transition to sustainable agriculture
8.50	Final menti, preparation for next week
9.00	Close

Workshop four: 23rd April 2024 (online)

Time	Activity –
6.00	Workshop welcome & introduction, Menti questions
6.15	Speaker presentation: Where we are with the chicken wrap, plus an introduction to this evening's topics Dr Courtney Scott, Director of Policy & Research, Food, Farming & Countryside Commission
6.20	Filmed speaker: An introduction to food policy, policy making and governance , Kelly Parsons , University of Cambridge
6.35	Filmed speaker: The Danish experience , Lise Walbom, CEO, Food Nation
6:40	Small group discussion: Your reflections on food system policy making and governance in the UK and Denmark.
7:15	Break
7:30	Filmed speaker: Reflections on policy making in the UK , Clare Moriarty, CEO Citizens' Advice
7:40	A panel discussion on food policy challenges and opportunities in practice : David Wilson, Earth Time Farming; Amy McDonnell, Senior Sustainability & Social Innovation Manager, Danone; Emma Keller, Head of Sustainability, Nestlé, UK and Ireland
8.15	Small group discussion: Reflecting on the panel discussion, your thoughts on preventing/ encouraging change
8.50	Final menti, preparation for next week
9.00	Close

Workshop 5: 26th April 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 Briefing about tomorrow Pudding
9.00	Close





Workshop 5: 27th April 2024 (Northumberland)

Time	Activity –
10:00	Welcome, housekeeping & introduction
10:10	Creating manifestos for the food system
11:05	Break 
11:20	Small group discussion: Solutions: what steps need to be taken to address the problems
12:20	Lunch break 
1:20	Sharing your manifestos – with each other and guests
1:50	Northumberland speaker panel Hannah Davison, Senior Climate Change and Sustainability Manager, Northumberland County Council Tom Burston, Sheep farmer Sarah Bredin-Kemp, Full Circle Food Project, Community Partnership and Impact Manager Ending with a Q&A
2:45	An introduction to the Food Conversation Community – staying involved locally Small Group discussions – two options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and Influencing Exercise • Community Action Exercise
3:45	Pledges and Next steps
4:00	Close

Workshop 5: 27th April 2024 (East Kent)

Time	Activity –
10:00	Welcome, housekeeping & introduction
10:10	Creating manifestos for the food system
11:05	Break 
11:20	Small group discussion: Solutions: what steps need to be taken to address the problems
12:20	Lunch break 
1:20	Sharing your manifestos – with each other and guests
1:50	Kent speaker panel Steve Oram, Founder, Kent Veg Box Carol Ford, Chair, Kent Fresh Produce Task Force Zoe Rodda, Founder, Lily's Social Kitchen Huw Jarvis, Growth, Environment and Transport Programme Manager, Kent County Council Ending with a Q&A
2:45	An introduction to the Food Conversation Community – staying involved locally Small Group discussions – two options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and Influencing Exercise • Community Action Exercise
3:45	Pledges and Next steps
4:00	Close

Workshop 5: 27th April 2024 (West Yorkshire)

Time	Activity –
10:00	Welcome, housekeeping & introduction
10:10	Creating manifestos for the food system
11:05	Break 
11:20	Small group discussion: Solutions: what steps need to be taken to address the problems
12:20	Lunch break 
1:20	Sharing your manifestos – with each other and guests
1:50	West Yorkshire speaker panel Juli Thompson, CEO, Food Savers Cllr Abigail Marshall Katung, Food Champion, Leeds City Council Sonja Woodcock, Sustainable Food Cities Coordinator, FoodWise Leeds Ending with a Q&A
2:45	An introduction to the Food Conversation Community – staying involved locally Small Group discussions – two options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and Influencing Exercise • Community Action Exercise
3:45	Pledges and Next steps
4:00	Close



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