

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

## Toward a vision and strategy for a sustainable and affordable food plan for the LCR

A report from the VS6 Sustainable and Affordable Food Assembly

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



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## Foreword

We want to see an affordable and sustainable food ecosystem that works for everyone in our City Region.

This report, collating the wisdom and insight shared by VSFCE partners during the Food Assembly, provides a vital roadmap as we work together towards this vision. It mirrors the practice present within the workshops, where we sought to distil our hopes and desires for our region down into clear action points, identifying the appropriate geographic scales for their implementation.

This assembly reminded us of the need to continuously widen the invitation to these conversations, welcoming, amongst many others, the growers, small businesses owners, social entrepreneurs, supermarket managers, city planners, cooperative leaders, volunteers and experts by experience to the table. It has become clear that there is a clear role for Food Alliances – partnerships which intentionally bring together the voluntary and statutory sectors – to drive forward these conversations. Holding each of us to account whilst providing, what Bishop Paul describes as ‘a line of sight to the street and back’, ensuring our decisions are informed with lived experiences.

In commending this report and the six recommendations within it to our Combined Authority and local authorities, together as a sector we are offering to play our part to ensure the vision of a healthier, fairer, kinder foodscape becomes a reality.

*Dr Naomi Maynard*  
*Food Insecurity Lead Executive*  
*Together Liverpool*

## Background

The VS6 Sustainable and Affordable Food Assembly was held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 as an online Zoom event with the purpose of initiating conversations and cultivating ideas on how to develop a strategic sustainable and affordable food plan for the Liverpool City Region. The event was chaired by Dr Naomi Maynard, Food Insecurity Lead Executive at Together Liverpool, and was attended by 68 individuals from over 80 VCFSE organisations across the Liverpool City Region.

The event was split into two workshop sessions where participants were put into small groups to discuss:

- A. What groups participants most concerned about and most at-risk of hunger and severe food insecurity, both before and during the coronavirus pandemic.
- B. Actions and interventions that we could put in place for each vulnerable group identified in Workshop A.

This report summarises the feedback received from assembly attendees during the workshop sessions. It also identifies 6 strategic visions that have emerged as key themes from the assembly to provide the foundations for developing a sustainable and affordable food plan for the Liverpool City Region. Each vision has associated high-level objectives and next steps for the LCR Combined Authority, local authorities or the VCFSE sector to take forward to begin to address food insecurity across the region.

# The Vision for an LCR Sustainable and Affordable Food Plan

## 1. Increase the accessibility to food locally by improving the amount of affordable, healthy food available within communities and high streets

### Why is this important?

During the coronavirus pandemic our local, independent high street shops, community food businesses and foodbanks provided an incredible response for those who were unable to access food within our communities. Shielded and vulnerable people who struggled to source food from supermarkets were supported by local communities and food businesses that were able to mobilise quickly and effectively for those in need. Many people rely on their local high streets to purchase food, and therefore we need to make sure that our high streets are able to offer affordable and healthy food options, and to build upon the community cohesion witnessed during the pandemic.

### What is needed?

- A fuller understanding of what is available on high streets in each local authority area in relation to affordable and accessible food, this will enable us to identify gaps in provision.
- Support for local food businesses and VCFSE food organisations operating in communities and high streets, including financial support and advice for new businesses and start-up organisations that will increase the accessibility of food locally.
- Ensure that affordable food accessibility is a key aspect of high street revitalization work and existing high street projects across LCR.
- Closer links between access to food and transport infrastructure, to ensure that there are available public transport routes for everyone to access food.

### Next steps

1. Each local authority in LCR should conduct a review of local high streets to identify what is currently available in terms of accessing affordable and healthy food, and identify where there are gaps in provision. This should also include a review of transport routes in the region to identify communities who may not be able to access food easily. We recommend that this review is conducted in partnership with the VCFSE sector
2. LCR Combined Authority should support the development of best practice guidance for community food provision by reviewing existing models across the region and sharing key learnings that could be implemented in each local authority. We recommend that this is conducted in partnership with VCFSE sector, including local infrastructure organisations.

## 2. Develop and build upon local food supply chains with local food sources and producers

### Why is this important?

Throughout the food assembly the theme of locally grown food and local food supply chains was raised by the majority of groups during the workshops. It was recognised that within our local communities across LCR there are many community gardens, allotments and even home gardens that are used to grow fruit and vegetables which presents a significant opportunity to link these growers into a local community food supply chain to increase the amount of healthy, fresh food available. Gathering food that grows naturally in the environment should also link into local supply chains, such as wild berries or other fruits.

Keeping supply chains as local as possible benefits communities by supporting local producers,

providing potential training and volunteer opportunities and promoting a circular economy.

#### **What is needed?**

- Support for new and existing projects that encourage the local growing of food and use of land for growing healthy fruit and vegetables for local communities.
- Linking new and existing growers, gatherers, and community food projects into local supply chain and distribution networks. This should also include local farmers and producers as well as VCFSE community groups.
- An LCR development plan to link growers and gatherers into food supply chains.
- Establish an LCR community food company managed by the VCFSE sector that would be responsible for sourcing and supplying food to community food initiatives and procuring locally produced food.

#### **Next steps**

1. Local authorities to review council land assets across LCR to identify unused land that could be transformed into community gardens, allotments, and urban farms for local growing initiatives.
2. LCR Combined Authority to work with infrastructure organisations and the VCFSE sector to map existing food suppliers, producers and community food projects in the region to develop and refine a local food supply chain to increase the accessibility of healthy, affordable food within communities.

### **3. Develop and maintain partnerships with the private, public and VCFSE sector**

#### **Why is this important?**

Many VCFSE community food groups in the region rely on not only donations from the public but on the generosity of the private sector to provide food for those struggling in our communities, including large supermarkets and distributors in the region such as Amazon and Unilever. Workshop feedback stated that food donated by the private sector is appreciated however sometimes is not usable because it is out of date or does not enable the recipient to cook a well-balanced meal. Additionally, the coronavirus pandemic has highlighted issues with supermarket delivery, with some households on low incomes and the elderly struggling to afford the minimum order amount and delivery charges whilst being unable to visit the store in person.

#### **What is needed?**

- Stronger relationships and partnerships between the private, public and VCFSE sector around food accessibility, encouraging good quality food donations to maintain the dignity and meet the needs of those needing support with food. This should include food donations that are appropriate for different cultures and diets.
- Work with supermarkets to better identify priority and vulnerable customers, and remove minimum spend requirements and delivery charges for these customers, including volunteers or carers who may be supporting them.

#### **Next steps**

1. Local authorities should approach or build upon existing relationships with the key private sector suppliers in their area to discuss how they can contribute to the community food sector and develop appropriate protocols for doing so, to ensure support is consistent and valuable.
2. LCR Combined Authority to work with the private sector suppliers to review opportunities for support with warehousing, food storage and the logistics of food supply for the VCFSE community food sector.

## 4. Understand the LCR community food economy and improve data sharing opportunities and processes

### Why is this important?

Feedback from the workshops during this assembly highlighted the significant and multi-faceted work and support that community food organisations provide across the region, and how the size and scale of the sector is not necessarily recognised at an LCR level. It is important to understand the contribution of the community food sector to the region so we can understand the value of the sector and how it supports public sector services to reduce food insecurity and inequalities. Additionally, better data sharing protocols across the VCFSE and public sector will improve communication and improve the capabilities of all statutory and non-statutory services to provide support where it is most needed.

### What is needed?

- A stronger understanding of community food provision and activity across the region; this will help to capture the economic value of the community food sector to the LCR economy. This should include the Gross Value Added (GVA) of the sector, number of organisations, employers, volunteers and social value.
- Better data sharing protocols and agreements between the public and VCFSE sector to share data and information to understand the needs of vulnerable groups.

### Next steps

1. LCR Combined Authority to review the scale of community food activity across the region, working closely with the VCFSE sector including infrastructure organisations. This could be a commissioned piece of work and should link in with other mapping work described previously.
2. Local authorities to review how data can be better shared with VCFSE organisations and vice versa to enable the development of an improved understanding of the food needs of communities across the region to target support.

## 5. Improve digital inclusion across the region and use technology to increase access to food

### Why is this important?

Those without access to a digital device or the internet are already disadvantaged in many ways; the coronavirus pandemic emphasised the impact of digital exclusion in relation to access to food. With libraries and community centres closed, assembly attendees raised concerns that those who are digitally excluded had limited ability to order food for delivery online with reduced opportunities to search and apply for support with many services moving online. This is particularly apparent for those requiring Universal Credit support for finances to purchase food and for people who have been emergency housed during the pandemic, including asylum seekers, domestic violence victims and newly released prisoners. Digital inclusion has many positive outcomes for people in terms of food. People can easily find their nearest support service online and also search for ideas to make affordable, healthy meals.

### What is needed?

- Increased provision of digital devices for those who live in digital poverty, to support people to search for services, complete online application forms, purchase food for delivery and keep up to date with the latest rules and regulations.
- Improved Wi-Fi accessibility across the region, targeting vulnerable groups including those who have been emergency housed such as asylum seekers, domestic violence victims and newly released prisoners.

- Clear guidance for residents across the region on how to find food support services.
- Support for people to learn and develop skills to cook affordable, healthy meals and a review of the opportunities to create or share online cooking videos.

#### **Next steps**

1. LCR CA and local authorities to review existing digital inclusion programmes to ensure that they reflect sustainable and affordable food needs and related issues, e.g. purchasing food online.
2. Local authority housing services to ensure that digital inclusion for residents is a priority, particularly for those in emergency housing situations.
3. Ensure that community food support services are available on local authority service directories and that this is easy to find. Local authorities must also ensure that digitally excluded groups also have access to this information, working closely with the VCFSE sector.

## **6. Working with the VCFSE sector to develop innovative and community focused solutions for food insecurity**

### **Why is this important?**

Many people who struggle to afford or access food will turn to the VCFSE sector for support, and this has been evident throughout the coronavirus pandemic as the demand for foodbank use has significantly increased from existing and new users. With concerns about the rise in unemployment levels due to the pandemic, it is vital that the VCFSE sector is at the heart of affordable and sustainable policy and decision making. VCFSE organisations understand the needs of their communities and are able to respond to these needs rapidly and flexibly.

### **What is needed?**

- Partnership working with the VCFSE sector to develop innovative, sustainable solutions for eradicating hunger and food insecurity.
- Combined and local authorities and public sector services to continually engage with the VCFSE sector and communities across LCR on food insecurity issues.
- Ensure BAME organisations are at the centre of this work to support the voices of marginalised groups that may not access mainstream services to be heard.
- Financial support for community food organisations to provide support for those who are at risk of hunger and severe food insecurity, and for infrastructure organisations who provide leadership and guidance for VCFSE organisations.

### **Next steps**

1. Each local authority area to have a local food alliance with representation from the voluntary sector to understand and address food affordability and sustainability issues in each area. In areas that currently do not have a food alliance, local authorities should support the VCFSE sector to do so. Local food alliances should regularly feed updates and issues to local authorities for action. This could be supported by infrastructure organisations.
2. Local authorities to ensure that relevant strategic and policy groups have representation from the VCFSE sector.

## Workshop A

### What groups are you most concerned about over the next six months?

Participants were asked to think about:

- How has the pandemic specifically impacted most at-risk groups?
- Is this a 'new' group that has emerged directly because of the pandemic?
- Why is it that they face these issues?
- Identify any issues surrounding access to healthy and nutritious food and the affordability of food.

Assembly participants identified numerous groups that were vulnerable to and at risk of food insecurity across the region. These consisted of groups of people that were either:

- a) Already vulnerable prior to the coronavirus pandemic and whose vulnerabilities have increased as a result and,
- b) New groups of people and new users of services that are at risk of food insecurity directly due to consequences of the pandemic.

Across each breakout room, similar at-risk groups were identified and have been summarised in the below table from assembly feedback. The groups are listed in order of most frequently mentioned.

Group	What issues do they face and why
<b>Shielded and vulnerable people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those shielding are at increasing risk of becoming isolated from friends, family and community services</li> <li>• A lack of face to face services due to pandemic restrictions is increasing vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Lack of appointments reduces the opportunities for people to be signposted to relevant food support services</li> <li>• There are concerns that shielded people may not know how to access the services they need including sourcing medication and food</li> <li>• Some services have moved online however many shielded and vulnerable people may be unable to access help online due to lack of skills and technology</li> <li>• Online food shopping can be a struggle and not suitable for everyone</li> <li>• Issues such as minimum spend and delivery charges can make online shopping unaffordable</li> <li>• Vulnerable people are fearful of leaving the house, going to the supermarket and taking public transport however local shops are often more expensive, have less choice and often do not stock fresh food.</li> <li>• Pre-COVID users of food support services have lost contact with support structures and are seen less frequently.</li> <li>• Newly vulnerable people may be unaware of support available and how to access support with food shopping</li> <li>• Increasing poor mental health will impact on ability and motivation to look after oneself and cook healthy meals.</li> <li>• Domestic violence victims who are emergency housed may not have the finances, equipment and facilities needed to purchase and cook food.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarly, homeless people and newly released prisoners may also lack the fundamentals needed to purchase and cook healthy food.</li> </ul>
<b>Low income families and new users</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This group includes both existing families on low income and newly low income families because of the pandemic.</li> <li>• Families on Universal Credit are struggling to make ends meet, with a lack of affordable healthy food available to feed a whole family. Some reports that families were living on basic food for days at a time, e.g. bread and jam.</li> <li>• Some families are just above the threshold for free school meals, however as children have not been in school their food bill has doubled throughout the pandemic.</li> <li>• People who have been furloughed or made redundant, are self-employed and working on a zero hours contract have been hit hard by the pandemic.</li> <li>• People who are no longer working or whose work is now limited are spending more time at home with increased food and utility bills whilst their income has dropped or ceased.</li> <li>• Those with reduced income are struggling to maintain standards of living, for example paying their mortgage or paying for various contracts such as their cars, phone bills, credit card repayments etc.</li> <li>• Delays with setting up benefits have impacted people's ability to pay their bills and purchase essential items including food.</li> <li>• Newly low income individuals may not know how to access services they need including debt advice, legal support for evictions, emergency food support etc.</li> <li>• There is a stigma associated with accessing support, including around food, especially for those who have not had to worry about food access before. This prevents some people from seeking help.</li> <li>• The stress of job and financial insecurity can have a big impact on mental health.</li> </ul>
<b>Migrant, refugee and asylum seeker communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are various difficulties for these communities to access support including language barriers, cultural barriers and recourse to public funds.</li> <li>• Recently a lack of face to face appointments and increase in online applications, particularly benefit applications, has been difficult due to varying English language and digital skills, as well as having access to technology and internet.</li> <li>• Food parcels provided to asylum seekers are often not culturally appropriate</li> <li>• Food drop offs are not done in conjunction with other services</li> <li>• Refugee and asylum seeker communities are often isolated due to a lack of services and English language courses</li> <li>• Cancelled and delayed appointments due to the pandemic can impact on the time left on visas and right to remain in the country</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge of how to navigate the system</li> <li>• Instances where a person relies on their English speaking partner who has sole access to the money however their partner is hospitalised due to coronavirus. That individual is then isolated with no funds or means of purchasing essential items.</li> </ul>
<b>Older people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people are finding it difficult to keep up with all the recent changes</li> <li>• Some older people are wary of going on public transport to go to the shops and to go to the bank for money.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many older people are reliant on using cash to pay for things and are unfamiliar with using a debit card and contactless payment. Many shops have moved to contactless payment only to reduce transmission of the virus, leaving elderly people unable to pay</li> <li>• Banks and post offices moving out of villages and small towns means that elderly people must travel further to withdraw money, yet they are fearful to travel.</li> <li>• Older people who live in rural areas have limited transport routes and internet access</li> <li>• Local smaller shops feel safer however they are more expensive and have less choice.</li> <li>• Older people who have lost their partner, or their partner is hospitalised or moved into a care home can be extremely isolated, and may not have the skills to cook for themselves if their partner usually did this for them (generational issue).</li> <li>• Older people can lack essential digital skills for ordering food online, interacting with online services or searching for support. May also do not have access to a computer or the internet.</li> </ul>
<b>Other groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children - Children who are entitled to free school meals have not all receive this support throughout lockdown, passing expenses for children's food onto low income families who are already struggling. Concerns around children who are having to isolate due to their own health conditions and children who are caring for their parents.</li> <li>• Women – Food insecurity also includes access to baby milk and access to sanitary products</li> <li>• Homelessness – People who are homeless being emergency housed and questions over whether they have the finances to afford food and the equipment and skills needed to purchase food and cook a healthy meal</li> <li>• Newly released prisoners – Similar to the above compounded by delays in setting up Universal Credit</li> <li>• Traveller and Gypsy Communities – Difficulties accessing services and the stigma the communities already face.</li> </ul>

### Barriers to accessing food

Throughout the feedback from the first workshop, consistent themes were raised across each vulnerable group mentioned above that impacted on that group's ability to source, purchase and eat healthy nutritious food sustainably. These barriers are a result of issues within the entire food process, from farms to table, with problems relating to food supply chains and how customers obtain food. These are highlighted and discussed in the below table:

Barrier	Why is this a barrier to food access
<b>Food accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people are reliant on the food outlets available to them in their community, in some cases this is a Farmfoods where there is little or no fresh food to purchase</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food donations from supermarkets are not always usable or dignified e.g. a food pantry receiving a crate of leftover kale.</li> <li>• Unusable food often goes to waste when there could be an alternative use</li> <li>• Supply chain issues in rural areas</li> <li>• Many people, particularly the elderly and vulnerable/shielded, do not want to go to the larger shops as they do not feel safe, but local shops are more expensive with less choice</li> <li>• Free food is not sustainable in the long term, there needs to be support for people to be able to purchase their own food</li> <li>• Food deserts reduce opportunities to access fresh food due to lack of supermarkets and transport e.g. Kirkby</li> <li>• Local authority food packages throughout COVID have been poor, with lack of fresh, nutritious food</li> <li>• Food supplies are decreasing whereas demand for support is increasing</li> <li>• Difficulties with accessing baby milk and sanitary products</li> <li>• Supermarket delivery charges can be expensive and sometimes the minimum spend for delivery can be unaffordable.</li> </ul>
<b>Digital exclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some people do not have access to IT equipment to order food online</li> <li>• Some charitable organisations also do not have digital access to ordering food for food banks and are reliant on donations</li> <li>• Those without access to IT are unable to complete Universal Credit and other benefits applications online which has been difficult throughout the pandemic due to the closure of libraries and other services.</li> <li>• Delays to Universal Credit have resulted in people relying on foodbanks</li> </ul>
<b>Stigma</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a stigma attached to receiving “handouts” which prevents people from accessing the support they need, particularly to those who are newly unemployed due to COVID or have never struggled with affording food before.</li> <li>• Due to stigma people do not identify or recognise themselves as being in need and therefore will not seek support.</li> <li>• Irish traveller communities already face a stigma in society and being unable to afford food compounds the stigma.</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment and Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people who experience food insecurity do not have the equipment and facilities needed to cook healthy, fresh food</li> <li>• Additionally, many do not have the knowledge or skills to cook a meal from scratch</li> </ul>
<b>Transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals who do not have access to a car can find it difficult to get to a supermarket particularly in food deserts</li> <li>• Supermarkets are not always on public transport routes, and when they are it can be difficult for people to carry their shopping home, especially the elderly and disabled</li> <li>• Elderly people are fearful of getting public transport due to COVID and have been walking large distances to get food shopping in some cases.</li> <li>• Rural areas often have poor transport routes</li> </ul>

# Workshop B

## What could we do to resolve food insecurity issues?

Participants were asked to think about:

- Actions and interventions that we could put in place to for each vulnerable group identified in Workshop A.
- Over what geographic scale could these interventions take place:
  - Hyperlocal
  - Local (borough wide)
  - Liverpool City Region
  - Nationally

Below is a summary of the responses received for each vulnerable group and issue in the workshop.

Vulnerable Groups				
Group	Hyper Local	Local (borough wide)	City Region	National
<b>Shielded and vulnerable</b>	Conduct wellbeing calls to vulnerable clients  Post notes through doors with signposting information  A befriending service for vulnerable people to reduce feelings of isolation  Put stickers on wheelie bins with signposting information	A renewal of local high streets to make them accessible and safe  A triaging service to act as a central point of contact for other services  Each borough to adopt Halton & St Helens “Community Tasks” app in which support referrals are posted for volunteers to offer to complete. No need to manually search for a volunteer.	LCR CA to obtain data on shielded and vulnerable people in the region and map out where support is most needed, including identifying areas with gaps in support.  To support a co-ordinated conversation to share knowledge and best practice across the LCR	Increased funding needed to continue to support these residents  Pressure on supermarkets to play their role in meeting these needs of this group, including reducing minimum spending and delivery charges for online shopping. Supermarkets also need to be more flexible with how they accept payments and look for alternative methods for shielded and vulnerable people.

<p><b>Low income families and new users</b></p>		<p>Support individuals to purchase food preparation equipment</p> <p>Support newly unemployed people into volunteering to provide structure and purpose.</p> <p>Utilise skills of newly unemployed or furloughed people</p>	<p>Support for low income families to make sure they can afford utilities including gas and electric to be able to cook food.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for people improve and gain new skills to increase employability.</p> <p>Lobby the Government over delays to Universal Credit</p>	<p>Need a national response to Universal credit delays and barriers</p> <p>Pay people the living wage and implement universal income</p> <p>Legislation to ensure that employers and paying employees who are self-isolating or waiting for test results</p> <p>Work with energy suppliers to ensure that people on low income are able to pay for utilities to cook food.</p> <p>Free school meals to be provided for those who are entitled and these to be provided even if a child is not able to go to school.</p>
<p><b>Migrant, refugee &amp; asylum seekers</b></p>	<p>Better understand cultural needs for different migrant communities, including minimum standards and individual food requirements and diet. Work with local BAME organisations.</p>	<p>Data sharing between local authorities and food charities to locate asylum seekers who may be in need of food related support</p>	<p>Ensure that asylum seekers are housed in accommodation with internet access.</p> <p>Support food charities to stock culturally appropriate food</p>	<p>Implement a food equivalent of a national basic income.</p>
<p><b>Older people</b></p>	<p>Volunteer shopping service for older people</p>	<p>Provide charities with tablets with data to distribute to older</p>	<p>Practical and financial support for charities to re-open</p>	

	Neighbourhood scheme to build relationships with older isolated people  Lunch clubs and community groups to re-open safely	people with tech support on how to use to order food, keep in touch with family etc.  Local authorities to assist with the reopening of community organisations	community centres and events safely for older people  Increased information sharing needed for elderly people on continued changes to COVID requirements and legislation to reduce confusion. Print based comms messages are more accessible for older people e.g. letters, leaflets, newspapers.	
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### Barriers

Barrier	Hyper Local	Local (borough wide)	City Region	National
<b>Food Access</b>	Disseminate knowledge on how to access food support  Local community kitchen use for people to cook or learn to cook food  Local businesses to donate food and facilities  Make use of community gardens to grow food  Community shops/social supermarkets to open on high streets to fill the gap between food banks and supermarkets. Pop up shops.	Local Whatsapp groups to communicate between organisations, move surplus food and identify where food is most needed  Open a local “food hub” that contains a social supermarket, kitchens to cook, community garden etc.  Engage with national suppliers and farmers that are in the area for donations.  Develop a food alliance/collaboration/network	Give people the skills and knowledge to cook food, including recipes, grants to help with fuel costs and purchasing cooking equipment.  Mapping of food organisations in the area including foodbanks, social supermarkets, high street shops, big supermarkets to understand areas of need.  Review of council land assets available for community gardens, allotments and farms.  Develop an LCR Community Food Growers Network	Business rate reductions to support high street and small businesses  Limit the number of betting shops and off licences  Work with national supermarkets and supplies to play their role in meeting need.  Funding

	<p>Posters in community areas such as GP practices, bus stops, local shops.</p> <p>Community forages</p>	<p>for joint funding, sourcing and distribution of food.</p> <p>Maximise use of local supply chains when purchasing goods.</p> <p>Youtube videos with how to cook meals and recipes</p>	<p>Develop a plan for surplus, unusable food e.g could be used for compost for community allotments or go to animal charities.</p> <p>A development plan for increasing the local food supply and distribution network.</p> <p>An LCR food distribution centre to supply food to community organisations</p> <p>Initiatives to encourage home growing.</p> <p>Funding for food support services to continue vital work and innovate.</p> <p>Involve trade unions in the management of supply and distribution logistics</p> <p>Agree protocols for emergency food provision across LCR</p> <p>A move away from Foodbanks to food pantries and social supermarkets</p>	
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<b>Digital Exclusion</b>			<p>Recycled laptop/smart device scheme to give to those in need of IT equipment (e.g. Reboot)</p> <p>Improve access to internet across LCR</p> <p>Increase and promote digital skills development programmes.</p> <p>Access to technology and internet for asylum seekers</p>	<p>Increased funding for digital inclusion initiatives</p> <p>Make all government documents/forms accessible in different formats</p>
<b>Stigma</b>		<p>Develop ways of providing dignified food related support which promotes choice and autonomy.</p> <p>Support people to buy food if they can</p> <p>Promote good news stories</p>	<p>Ensure quality food is available for people who need support by partnering with supermarkets</p> <p>Promote the third sector as being there for the whole community, not just for those who are struggling.</p>	<p>National image of the third sector needs to change – it is not just charities.</p> <p>Educate supermarkets on the value of fresh food donations</p>
<b>Equipment and facilities</b>		<p>Review available community cooking facilities</p>	<p>Ensure that those in emergency housing situations have the equipment needed for cooking</p>	
<b>Transport</b>			<p>Review transport infrastructure for distribution of food</p> <p>Review transport providers, public and private, to ensure that everyone on the region can access food or have food delivered</p>	

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



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

## VCFSE in Liverpool City Region

- Over 8,600 VCFSE groups supporting communities across the City Region including 5,500 community groups
- 24,000 plus FTE employees working in the sector
- £918m GVA contribution to the City Region
- 180,000 volunteers contributing over 500,000 hours per week<sup>1</sup>

## What do we do?

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

## How do we do this?

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

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

- Offering solutions to some of the most challenging economic issues facing our City Region
- Driving community-centred approaches to transforming health and well-being
- Providing a single point of contact for the city's VCFSE sector

## Contact

Karen Conway, Partnerships Manager, VSNW

E: [karen.conway@vsnw.org.uk](mailto:karen.conway@vsnw.org.uk)

W: [www.vs6partnership.org.uk](http://www.vs6partnership.org.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> **Source:** *Measuring the size and scope of the VCS in Liverpool City Region (Liverpool John Moores University: 2015)*