

## SUBMISSION FROM FARESHARE

### Executive Summary

1. There is enough surplus food in the Scottish food industry to feed those suffering food poverty in Scotland. This is one of those moments that calls for 'joined up' government
2. FareShare is not a food bank and uses surplus food to address the causes of hunger, not just the symptoms
3. FareShare dramatically strengthens the Scottish voluntary sector by saving Scottish charities in excess of £1.1 million per year. There is potential to double this
4. As in so many other areas there is potential for Scotland to lead the way in reducing surplus food and strengthening the voluntary sector at the same time.

FareShare is a national charity fighting hunger and food waste by redistributing surplus that would otherwise go to waste to more than 1,000 charities across the UK. FareShare has four delivery partners in Scotland, in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow that provide food to more than 90 charities, including homeless shelters, women's refuge centres, and breakfast clubs for children, feeding 4,500 every day (please see *table one* below for a full breakdown of FareShare's member charities and *table two* for a breakdown of beneficiary type). This is compared to 68 charities last year, helping to feed 3,260 people a day, meaning there has been a 38% increase in charity membership in just twelve months.

*table one*

<b>FareShare's Charities</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>%</b>
Day Centres		19.6
Drop in Services		15.7
Supported Housing		15.4
Hostels		11.9
Other (including youth offenders)		10.3
Church		6.3
Out of School Clubs		4.7
School Breakfast Clubs		4.4
Food Banks		4
Soup Kitchens		3.5
Community Centre/Community Cafe		3.3
Nursing Homes		0.9

*table two*

<b>Beneficiaries at FareShare's Member Charities</b>	<b>%</b>
Homeless	29
Drug/Alcohol	13
Others (including ex-armed forces)	12
Families	10
Disability (physical and mental)	8
School Children	8
Young People	6
Elderly	5
Low/No Income	3
Asylum Seekers	2
Domestic Violence	2
Ex Offenders	1
Rough Sleepers	1

Demand for our services in Scotland is increasing. 42% of our member charities have seen more people turning to them for food. At the same time 48% are facing

funding cuts. Alarming, 71% believe demand for their services will only increase in the future. FareShare in Scotland is working hard to meet this increase in demand and in the last year has received more than 500 tonnes of food, enough for 1.19 million meals. This is an increase of 55% from the previous year.

The FareShare model operates differently to the food bank model as the majority of our member charities prepare and serve food onsite, using it to make nutritious meals for their beneficiaries. This food plays a critical role in enabling these charities to engage with their clients. Once through the door the charities can offer support to help clients tackle wider issues including homelessness, drug addiction and domestic violence and address the causes of why that person is struggling to feed themselves.

When receiving food from FareShare each of our member charities save an average of £13,000 a year on their food bill. More than 80% invest these savings into providing more support services for their clients. 37% of our member charities allocate the money FareShare helps them to save on training their service users in life skills, such as budgeting, cooking and nutrition. 26% provide personal development training for clients, including nurturing confidence and setting goals, while 19% invest more money in employability training, for example, teaching communication, IT and team working.

One of our member charities in Dundee recently told us: *“If there was less food provided by FareShare it would mean funding would be taken from elsewhere. It's not just about providing a lunch, the kitchen is the hub of the organisation. It's a family. They (beneficiaries) learn to budget with food, sit down as a family to eat lunch and then help to clean up. Makes a huge difference to people. People who have had chaotic family life get to experience it here.”*

We asked a member charity in Edinburgh if FareShare could no longer provide them with food what impact it would have on their organisation. They said: *“We would struggle, really struggle, we would really have to go and sit and try and work it out, if we were going to be able to stay open, so it would put the project in jeopardy.”*

The fact that FareShare provides an injection of more than £1.1 million to frontline charities in Scotland at a time when they are facing heightened levels of demand whilst having their budgets simultaneously cut cannot be underestimated. The fact this funding is as a result of a resource that otherwise would go to waste makes this even more significant.

The majority of food that becomes surplus is fresh, such as fruit, vegetables, meat and dairy products, vital for a healthy, balanced diet. It is all in date but has become surplus for simple reasons such as over production, labeling errors or damaged packaging. The fact the produce is fresh is particularly important given that many of the beneficiaries at the charities we support do not consume much fresh produce. 28% only eat fresh produce once a week, whilst 17% never do. We know the significant role that FareShare food can play in addressing this challenge, with 90% of our beneficiaries feeling like their health improves as a result of receiving food from FareShare.

One of our member charities in Edinburgh recently told us: *“Most of the food that people provide for us is long life tins, whereas FareShare is brilliant for the fresh meat and fresh dairy and fresh fruit and veg. And you know, the special items that make people feel good. It works perfectly and it really is so brilliant. Also, it would be so much more laborious for us with all that shopping, the service would suffer, there would be a lot less variety, less constant and definitely less volume.”*

Another charity we support in Dundee told us: *“We are dealing with vulnerability and loneliness. Good food makes such a difference, most of them (beneficiaries) come to us past the stage of being able to cook for themselves, we are able to provide good fresh food. What we get from FareShare has helped us keep alive.”*

3.9 million tonnes of food is wasted every year by the food industry in the United Kingdom before it even reaches people’s shopping baskets. FareShare estimates that approximately 10% of this is surplus and fit for human consumption. Currently we estimate we handle 1% of the surplus food available so we are still only scratching the surface in terms of the impact food redistribution can have on fighting food poverty. It is a political reality that proper measurement and the ability to quantify the amount of surplus food available would generate the momentum needed to tackle the issue. Whilst recent announcements by leading retailers committing to being transparent about their waste is a major step forward, the total amount available for redistribution also needs to be analysed and this figure used to shape policy and action.

Not only are there social and economic benefits to redistributing surplus food but there are also significant environmental benefits when using food for its intended purpose. Firstly, a very small portion of the food coming into the FareShare network has added ‘road miles’ and often the supply chain from field to fork will be shorter than in conventional food distribution. We know that the amount of food being sent to landfill is reducing and recognition and praise needs to be given to the policy of punitive charges for landfill. Whilst these are working, we would like to see greater levels of penalties in this area to further build on this. However, currently we have a waste hierarchy that is completely out of kilter with the economic hierarchy that sits alongside it (see *diagram one* below). At present it makes more financial sense to use food to feed animals or send it to an Anaerobic Digestion (AD) plant than it does to redistribute it to charities. There are currently a range of government funded financial incentives in place to use food and turn it into green energy via AD. In isolation, this seems like a sensible and practical undertaking but these same incentives do not exist for redistributing it to charities that are supporting the most vulnerable in society. Each tonne of food redistributed instead of being sent to landfill means 4.2t of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions are avoided while only 500kg is avoided for each tonne processed through AD.

*diagram one*



An additional key barrier to food redistribution is the cost of transport. Moving bulk surpluses from one location to multiple sites so it can easily be absorbed by the voluntary sector is costly and complex. The UK food industry has led the world in transport sharing initiatives where even directly competitive brands will share spare capacity to reduce their costs. When spare transport capacity is used for social food redistribution we believe these organisations should be given a tax incentive or support to grow this area and to minimise the freighting of ‘fresh air’.

Consequently, FareShare believes that the following needs to occur if we are to take serious steps to redistribute the surplus food available in the UK to help feed people in need:

- Invest in supporting the growth of organisations like FareShare to be able to deal with UK food surpluses on an even greater scale than currently occurs
- Increase the pressure not to send surplus food to landfill through an even more aggressive series of fiscal penalties and regulation
- Invest in the capacity for surplus food to be redistributed
- Realign financial incentives to the policy around AD
- Develop fiscal incentives to use spare transport capacity and to invest in processes to make redistribution easier

FareShare  
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### **A hand up, not a hand out**

Cyrenians operate one of the four FareShare services in Scotland that makes a major contribution to the 4,500 meals provided each day with the surplus food

donated by the industry. FareShare also operates in Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow.

Donated fresh food is quality checked and distributed by FareShare Edinburgh & Lothians with the involvement of a team of volunteers in our Leith warehouse to more than 40 charity kitchens. This not only supplements their food budget but also adds value to food provision and existing services.

FareShare nationally confirms that we are looking for additional food partners in Scotland, more volunteers to help run the programme along with financial support so that we can increase the impact we're making.

It's a brilliant service: "*A triumph of common sense*," as Sir Tom Farmer called it on one of his visits. Charities for the homeless have some decent fare to put in front of folk, as well as help and advice from our food team. Large quantities of food are diverted from waste. Dozens of people who were homeless are helping run the warehouse and delivery vans; helping their recovery while helping others. To that we add over 300 classes with a focus on cooking, budgeting and nutrition. From day one in 2000 we were determined that the programme operated as ***a hand-up, not just a hand out***. We want to see food used to bring people together and move forward in their lives.

Cyrenians are evidencing that the most vulnerable are being hit over and over again in this time of welfare reform. We believe that the way forward is that food provision should not be a standalone activity and should be integrated into more holistic support services. So that if emergency food is needed this will be addressed but alongside this will be an informed benefit check or support to take ensure that individuals and families accessing services climb out of poverty and into a settled lifestyle.

Our big push is on getting people, where they can, into employment. We've got initiatives going to work with employers to supply day-one ready staff. In addition we are working in schools with leavers at greatest risk of NEET. Our growing social enterprises are creating more work experience and training leading to employment opportunities and the FareShare project has been particularly successful in delivering 'hands on' experience which has led to employment for some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

We are involved in the delivery of Emergency Food Packs to organisations signed up as FareShare Community Food Members who are delivering a range of support services. This specific provision has more than doubled in the last year and has a focus on short term help and dealing with the many other issues that create the need to access basic food supplies.

Cyrenians will continue to deliver services that do not create a dependence culture but have a holistic approach service delivery and taking individuals and families to a better future and sustainable outcomes.

**Carol-Anne Alcorn**  
**Interim CEO**  
**Cyreniain**