

LIVERPOOL'S
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FOOD
PLAN**

All-Party Parliamentary Group inquiry into ending the need for foodbanks

Feeding Liverpool submission made on
behalf of 20 organisations in Liverpool



**Feeding
Liverpool**

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1. About this submission

Feeding Liverpool is the city of Liverpool's food alliance, connecting and equipping people and organisations to work towards good food for all.

This document presents the views of 20 organisations who responded to a call from Feeding Liverpool to submit evidence to the inquiry via a city-wide coordinated submission. They include responses from community centres, faith communities, foodbanks and foodbank distribution networks, food pantries, homelessness provision services, asylum support services, a children's centre and two housing associations.

This report has been compiled by Dr Naomi Maynard, Good Food Programme Director, Feeding Liverpool. Naomi is happy to present oral evidence in September and October 2022.

A varied range of views and ideas are presented in answer to the inquiry's questions. They are not necessarily the views of all Feeding Liverpool staff or trustees; care has been taken to specify when we are presenting our own reflections. In our reporting, we have respected the wishes of organisations when they have requested to remain anonymous.

Feeding Liverpool have also coordinated two further submissions: a submission from the Good Food Community Advocacy and Policy Group, and a submission of evidence from individuals who use emergency food provision. These will be submitted separately.

Liverpool City Council are making their own submission to this inquiry.

2. Effective crisis support

This section contains a selection of answers, presented as quotes, to the two questions in the inquiry about what effective crisis support could look like. The following sections then outline and summarise the advantages and disadvantages of the specific forms of crisis provision.

a. What is the most effective, appropriate, and dignified form of crisis support and why?

“Clearly the most dignified form of crisis support is not to let it happen in the first place. Homelessness on refusal for Asylum Seekers is an insult to humanity and has allowed a large undocumented and extremely vulnerable population to grow in the UK for over 20 years. As an alternative to homelessness, letting people work until they are removed or their case resolved is an option, maintaining their housing and benefit payments, not forcing them into theft, shoplifting/prostitution or working with gangs/criminals who take advantage of their vulnerability. But while I might wish for this I cannot see it happening. The best way of supporting homeless asylum seekers (for the voluntary and faith sector) is to provide a flexible range of support – some food (fresh and ambient), some cash/vouchers, access to good 2nd hand clothes/shoes. Some people won’t be able to cook or heat food – that’s not too common but it is something to bear in mind.” Asylum Link Merseyside

“I think for anyone accessing any level of support, creating wholesome connections is incredibly important. Many of our participants open-up and admit they’re in crisis only once they have established a trusted relationship with us. I feel the most effective, appropriate and dignified form of crisis support comes when those in crisis feel safe and comfortable to reach out; when they feel they are in a place where they are ready to accept help from people they know will not engage with them whilst holding any form of judgement.” Community organisation

“We think the Trussell Trust network provides the most effective, appropriate and dignified way of providing crisis support when it relates to food. This is because it meets an immediate need in a manageable way i.e. the processes TT give us are well thought out, the network of support across the country is excellent and the relationships they have with the large supermarkets ensure adequate food provision (pre-covid). The referral process and data management elements enable us to support people well and know who they are and why we are supporting them. This then allows us to control the distribution of emergency food parcel and feed this data up the chain. The e-referral process significantly reduces the need for people to visit more than one agency in order to access support, it also reduces the amount of time between referral and getting the support. Whilst pantries are more dignified for members, they are not aimed at crisis support though they do help prevent crisis. Our debt and benefits service is, as often as is possible, face to face. We believe this is the most dignified way of supporting people, enables a relationship to be built and provides the best outcomes for clients. Ultimately, we believe a benefits system that is fit for purpose will have the biggest impact on preventing crisis in the first place.” St Andrews Community Network who operate North Liverpool Foodbank (Trussell Trust), the North Liverpool Your Local Pantry network and debt advice across the region

“To give people the money they need to support themselves and their family. People don’t need organisations making choices for them about what they eat or what their financial priority is.” Children’s Centre

“A small financial award coupled with effective longer-term targeted advice and support, and mentoring/advocacy where possible.” South Liverpool Foodbank (Trussell trust)

“At Micah Liverpool we believe that a cash first approach to poverty would glean better results and give dignity to those who need support. We would like to see more preventative measures put in place such as community markets or community pantries as these seem to have a direct effect on the number of people using foodbanks. Provision and finance put in place locally and nationally that would reduce food waste and provide those on the lowest in-come with healthy food, where they have choice and dignity” Micah Liverpool runs a large independent foodbank and community market

“People in crisis need an instant handover of food. Simple no nonsense no judgement. In the longer term local, easily accessible quality fresh, frozen and ambient food choices in a community setting which has a rich diversity. No judgement from members of their local community initiative.” Pantry Leader

“We would say vouchers for supermarkets however this would probably be abused by some who may have addiction or they may buy foods that are not necessarily healthy. The council or government could issue vouchers for local pantries rather than foodbanks and then the money claimed back. This would stop unfair funding too.” New Beginnings Improving Lives – who operate both a foodbank and a community shop

b. What forms of crisis support do people facing destitution prefer to access and why?

“Pantries are the preferred option (choice, more dignity), but many people have no choice but to come to foodbank because they do not have even £3.50 that week.” South Liverpool Foodbank

“We work with refused Asylum Seekers and those with NRPF status. People prefer to have a mixture of support. Cash provides a measure of flexibility, but other staple food is useful...people appreciate seeing friends, socialising and being able to access other services from the same building (casework, etc) The Women’s Group and Choir has several destitute members. Also our kitchen provides breakfast and lunch, which can be an extra meal for the destitute group” Asylum Link Merseyside

“From our observation, people in a crisis need help quickly and this sometimes reduces the opportunity for having a preference. However, a space that is local, welcoming, friendly, and supportive is desired. Regarding debt and benefits advice, a local centre, staffed by local people who can offer expert face to face advice has proved significantly more effective in engaging clients than over the phone advice or on-line. In addition, our debt drop-ins are very popular and increase the turn-around time.” St Andrews Community Network

“The biggest form of support I observe being used frequently is the opportunity for participants to off-load their stresses and express their emotions to members of staff. Once someone has found an activity/activities they enjoy, we can then engage with them on a level that explores deeper into the causes of the crisis they face. Having built up that connection through activity participation, I find the community are more comfortable in opening up about things they might

be struggling with. These ‘welfare chats’ bring to light areas that we can either help directly with, or help the participants to access further support. Often this includes support in completing Government finance support forms (PIP/ UC/ etc.), securing vouchers for food banks, registering participants with a GP.” Community organisation

“Our experience is that individuals experiencing destitution often lose agency and are desperate for any type of support. A number of individuals find it difficult to ask for any support, even when available. Often **emotional support ahead of practical support can be useful** as it breaks down barriers and enables individuals to feel more comfortable to be in a position to express their needs. We work with many different demographics, including people with NRPF, ex-offenders, disabled people and refugees.” Homelessness support agency

“Culturally appropriate, fresh, quality, easily accessible food shared **from a recognised friendly source.** A community initiative that welcomes all, reduces stigma - develops friendships and mutuality, building up the community. Important to welcome diverse groups, families and individuals.” Pantry Leader

“**Anything that looks to be “normal”** and not formal or something that would make one anxious. We are able to reach a high number of drug users who buy food rather than be reliant on foodbanks that’s because we are a shop front. I don’t think they would come in if we were hidden in a community setting.” New Beginnings Improving Lives

3. The role of foodbanks

a. What are the advantages of the provision and supply of emergency food parcels by food banks?

Foodbank parcels were identified as the ‘tried and tested’ model, with some reflecting that there is high levels of public understanding and support for this model. Other identified advantages include that they are free for the user, quick to administer and often staffed by friendly volunteers who may be able to offer signposting to other forms of support. In some venues wrap around support (e.g. money advisors, housing officers) is available on the same site as the foodbank.

The two Trussell Trust networks in Liverpool offered the following responses:

“The advantages are in the short-term people receive **reasonably nutritionally balanced**, three days’ supply for practically all clients (excepting perhaps the very largest families). We provide basic toiletries and some other items such as pet food and nappies where possible. Wide geographical area covered. Signposting and direct links with advice organisations provided. No cost.” South Liverpool Foodbank

“The advantages are foodbanks are quick access via a supporting agency, balanced food offer, equal offer for all, voucher system for referral, ease of set up for organisations (ambient food that is easy to store), **people being helped by people like them** – mostly volunteers passionate about helping people, relies on donated food, lot of public support for the work we are doing.” North Liverpool Foodbank

One housing association, who refers tenants into foodbanks, reflected that the foodbank referral system works well for their organisation as it does not drain their own resources and enables them to quickly get food to a tenant who is in a crisis:

“The advantages are that **we can get food to them ASAP with little resource**, putting the responsibility on the client”

Asylum Link Merseyside described the current foodbank system as a final safety net but identified the danger of the normalisation of foodbanks:

“The main advantage of a food bank is it stops people dying – whether through poverty and malnutrition or through suicide and self-harm. **It is a place to go when everyone else has said no.** The disadvantage is it lets the Government off the hook, in an increasing way – they pat themselves on the back and congratulate themselves on this caring society they think they have produced.”

b. What are the disadvantages of the provision and supply of emergency food parcels by food banks?

All respondents identified multiple disadvantages of the current foodbank model.

Several raised concerns about a lack of dignity in the current model where the user does not get a choice over what food they are given. There were concerns over the stigma of going to a foodbank, meaning some people in need will not use them.

The **inappropriateness of the food offer** was repeatedly highlighted as a concern:

- **Lack of adequate catering for diverse diets**, including culturally appropriate food, those struggling with specific health conditions =including requiring a gluten-free or dairy free diet
- **Lack of fresh food**, with most foodbanks either solely offering ambient items or reliant on unpredictable surplus food donations
- **Food may require cooking facilities** which some groups may not have access to (in particular but not exclusively those living in hostels) – this challenge is becoming accentuated due to the rising cost of energy meaning some people are unable to maintain either safe storage facilities (e.g. fridges and freezers) or afford to run cookers / microwaves.
- One person felt there was a **lack of appropriate food for babies** and those in the weaning stages provided at foodbanks

One referral agency had **concerns over the distance often needed to travel to a foodbank** – particularly challenging if their clients have mental health struggles, disabilities or cannot afford to travel to the foodbank via public transport. Others identified the limited opening days and times as a concern, limiting access: as foodbanks are staffed by volunteers/charities they are only open on certain days which can mean that your nearest open foodbank is a 40+ minute walk away on the other side of the city. Some days and times (e.g. Sundays, or evenings after 7pm) there is little-to-no foodbank provision in the city.

One faith group, who supports the Jewish community, offered the following reflection:

“Attending a foodbank or seeking charity is a huge step for most people and impacts upon self-esteem and dignity. Some adults/children are traumatised by the need to seek charitable assistance.”

Micah Liverpool, a large independent foodbank who supports hundreds of asylum seekers each week, explained that their foodbank was **no longer serving its original purpose of being emergency provision**:

“The disadvantage is that the “emergency” element of food is becoming less recognisable as the people we support are using our services for longer and longer due to the lack of other support services available”

This is reflected in Liverpool’s Trussell Trust network’s current statistics which identifies ‘low income’ as overwhelmingly the most common reason for foodbank use.

One further challenge accentuated during the cost of living crisis, is about the **sustainability of a model which is led by the charity sector** (and therefore is dependant predominately on the availability of grants) and is reliant on donations (both food and financial donations) from the public. This has been raised by Feeding Liverpool to Liverpool City Council's Poverty Action Group last month (see also blog: www.feedingliverpool.org/can-we-put-the-lights-on)

A summary of a briefing on this issue produced by Feeding Liverpool is below:

Foodbank supplies at Liverpool's two Trussell Trust networks and the independent foodbanks are significantly down at a time when demand has increased, raising concerns about the ongoing sustainability of the foodbank system in the city. This observation mirrors the national picture: in a survey of foodbanks conducted by the Independent Food Aid Network¹ last week, 78% reported a drop in food or financial donations in recent months, with over half of these having to dip into their financial reserves to pay for food or vouchers.

Reasons for the **challenges with supply** include:

- The cost of living crisis impacting middle and higher income households – the traditional doner base for foodbanks – therefore impacting both donations and charitable financial giving
- Price increases – including rises in energy, petrol and food prices – have a knock-on impact on the charities running the foodbanks who operate venues, vans and who purchase food stock with financial donations – foodbanks who are purchasing in stock can now get less for their money
- Donations never fully recovering after the pandemic as shoppers moved online / to delivery models meaning a reduction in collections made at supermarket collection points and work-place collections have reduced as some offices have maintained working from home levels

St Andrews Community network reported that donations via Fans Supporting Foodbanks at Liverpool FC and Everton FC football matches have also decreased (although remain a significant source of donations). The end of the football season, and lack of an upcoming festival (donations usually increase around Harvest, Christmas and Easter) means the outlook is concerning for the summer months. The concern is immediate (with two of the independent foodbanks warning they may not be able to continue operating sustainability by the end of June (L6 centre) and August (Micah Liverpool). There is also a longer-term concern with anticipated increases in demand in the Autumn and Winter – foodbanks do not have either the financial or stock reserves built up to cope with this.

Further details from three of the main foodbanks in Liverpool:

Micah Liverpool

“We have seen donations drop off a cliff, in 2021 we were able to build food and cash reserves that we expected to see us this year at least, but the sustained increase in demand, the drop off in donations as well as increased food and fuel prices have meant we have worked through

1 <https://www.thenational.scot/news/20156719.cost-living-crisis-food-bank-demand-soars-donations-plunge/> and <https://www.bigissue.com/news/social-justice/food-bank-donations-crisis/>

our food stocks and **we are currently on course to spend our cash reserves for food by August.** We are in an unprecedented situation and we are all going to feel the strain. We are happy to be involved in any group or forum that can help everyone in the city not just the people we support.”

North Liverpool Foodbank

Demand is outstripping supply at North Liverpool foodbank, and the current trajectory is unsustainable. As an illustration of the unsustainability of the system, between 1st May 2022 and 17th May 2022 they have received 2725kgs of stock and have sent out 4490kgs (stock sent out to 11 Foodbanks and 10 pantries).

North Liverpool foodbank have tracked increases in demand since November 2021 (when the impact of the removal of the £20 Universal Credit uplift began to be felt).

L6 Community Association

L6 Community Association says they pay for the majority of goods that they give out in their foodbank parcels. Rising food prices has therefore had a knock-on effect on their financial situation. They are currently reviewing the viability of continuing their foodbank:

“We cannot maintain these price increases, and what’s worse is it’s the most needy we are hurting as we are cutting back, our weekly food bill has increased by £200 and still increasing. I cannot cut back on what we give as it’s what’s most needed. I would rather close our food union/foodbank than make cuts to what we give, but I’m under pressure from my trustees over the over spend We are reviewing and to be honest if I cannot give a quality bag of food I won’t give anything, we could close within 28 days”

c. In a future society where food banks are no longer needed to provide emergency food, what are the values and attributes of food banks that you would want to see held onto by communities, and why?

Respondents spoke about how the foodbank model is premised on **generosity, kindness** and the idea that it is morally right to look out for your neighbour – these were all values that as a future society we would want to see held onto (although they are not values exclusively held or displayed via a foodbank model).

Others identified the value in the volunteering opportunities offered via the foodbanks, and the importance of having somewhere in the community where there was ‘**a supportive, listening ear**’.

Several reflected that the values displayed in foodbanks are already seen in other community models so there wasn’t a value or attribute held specifically or exclusively by foodbanks that would need to continue.

4. Cash Grants

Liverpool City Council's submission will address the key role of the Liverpool Citizens Support Scheme in Liverpool's cash-first approach.

a. What are the advantages of providing crisis support via cash grants?

The advantages identified for cash grants include that, when administered efficiently, they can be quick and easy for the recipient to access, and that they **prioritise values of dignity, agency and choice** – giving the person in crisis the power and responsibility to decide and prioritise what they need for their particular situation, which as the L6 Centre summarises, gives the person a chance to “shop with dignity”. One respondent noted that this meant there would be less food waste in comparison to when someone gets given a pre-selected foodbank parcel which may have items which are inappropriate for their household. Unlike food vouchers which can be restricted to a particular shop, a cash grant also gives the person the freedom to shop around for the best price for their food.

b. What are the disadvantages of providing crisis support via cash grants?

The primary concerns identified with providing cash grants were that, unless combined with appropriate longer term support, they **do not address the longer-term, underlying reason** why someone is in a crisis. As a cash grant can be administered via a PayPoint or ATM, there may not be the opportunity for signposting and soft-setting support (e.g. a friendly listening ear) frequently on offer in community settings. One practical disadvantages of some cash grant approaches was that they may need a person to have a bank account.

Many respondents relayed the commonly held critique that, as cash grants put the responsibility on the individual to prioritise need, grants may not be spent on food (some expressed concerns that the grants may be spent on drugs, alcohol or unhealthy food).

Asylum Link Merseyside – who offer support to asylum seekers – commented that whilst they are in favour of a dignified cash-first approach, on a practical level it is difficult for charities to get funding for cash grants – and much more cost effective to use charity funding to bulk buy food.

5. Community Food Spaces

a. What role should community food spaces play in crisis provision?

Over the last two years, Feeding Liverpool have played a role in supporting the development of community food spaces (food pantries, community markets, community shops, community gardens) across the city. The following paragraphs outline our understanding of their current role.

Community Food spaces are centred around good food that brings communities together. Though offering lower cost food, many play a significant role in reducing the amount a household spends on food, they also can significantly impact the type of food households are eating. [Dignity, Choice, Hope](#), an impact report authored in 2021 by Dr Naomi Maynard (in an independent capacity to her role at Feeding Liverpool) and Dr Fiona Tweedie on behalf of Your Local Pantry, reported that 59% of members said they ate less processed food due to pantry membership, 54% ate more fruit and vegetables and 36% ate more protein. Members also reported positive benefits on their mental and physical health and community connectedness. The key difference from a foodbank model (and a cash grant model) which is designed around providing short term emergency support, is that community food spaces are designed to be visited again and again.

Community food spaces in Liverpool have grown from 12 or so before the pandemic to over 40. Promoting community food spaces has been a key part of the [third Goal of the Good Food Plan](#) around Food Citizenship – Feeding Liverpool have created a city-wide map – a resource which shows where community food spaces are located. We work hard to ensure frontline staff/volunteers (e.g. housing officers, link workers, health visitors, voluntary sector organisations) know and understand how to signpost to this level of community provision.

Community food spaces have the potential to play a significant role supporting households experiencing mild-moderate food insecurity and/or who are just about making ends meet: by visiting a community food space regularly, household budgets can be eased (Your Local Pantry report ‘savings’ of £780 per year when a pantry is visited weekly), as well as reducing household stress over food. **Community food spaces often represent many of the values we’d want to see in any form of crisis food provision: good food, choice, dignity, agency, however in their current form, they are not designed to deliver or replace short term crisis provision currently provided via foodbanks, or cash grants** e.g. in situations such as when someone has no money at all, has suddenly been made homeless, is fleeing domestic violence or has just come out of prison signposting them to a community food space may not be appropriate (they may not have any money to afford to use them).

“When centred around good food, dignity, friendship, learning together, community food spaces can play a key role in building up community resilience and food citizenship. I’d like to see more community hubs which could include a variety of wrap around support services (money, benefits, housing, advice, skills and training), good food (including communal kitchens, spaces to grow food and eat together) alongside social activities – places which can support people before they find themselves in an acute food crisis. However, many community food spaces do not yet have the capacity to offer this kind of holistic support (or for some reliable supplies of good food) – **so we need to be careful not to simply replace the foodbank model with the food pantry model as it currently stands, and lose sight of the top priority, which is**

addressing the root causes of why people are experiencing acute food insecurity, which so often is due to a lack of financial resources due to broken systems (asylum seekers system, benefits system, poor pay and poor working conditions)” Dr Naomi Maynard, Feeding Liverpool
Several of the respondents identified the preventative role community food spaces currently play, with some suggesting they could be re-designed to offer crisis provision alongside their current role:

“Community food spaces have the potential to actually address some of the issues surrounding food insecurity, rather than simply supporting in crisis. Provision of sustainable, affordable food is paramount in addressing food insecurity. Ideally these provisions should go towards avoiding crisis, as well as promoting independence, choice and agency.”
Homelessness support provider

“Community food spaces can offer a place of welcome, **they may have the ability to give a one off free week for those in the community in crisis.** Can be a signpost to other services and depending on the network in the session can help with budgeting, debt management and other issues. Can help to highlight a particular issue in an area. Pantry members are generous and friendly and often take those in crisis under their wing - e.g. people fleeing DV, those just moved to the area, homeless and the destitute. The network is invaluable. If the food space is attached to a wider organisation or faith group then the interaction can open other avenues of support.” Pantry leader

“Food banks have done a great job but it’s time to move on. People have a right to good quality food, perhaps food donations should go to pantries and emergency food should be given to pantries for people who cannot afford to pay...so pantries can provide emergency food at no cost to people in need” Pantry leader

“We began our journey with food pantries because we had seen an unsustainable rise in referrals into our Foodbanks over a two year period. We wanted to find a way of supporting people who were just about managing to reduce their household expenditure and be in a position to cope with unexpected crises that might previously have meant they ended up in a foodbank. We have significantly grown the pantry network and whilst some of our foodbanks have become pantries, we have not stopped operating the foodbanks as there is still a need for emergency food provision. We have seen referrals into foodbanks drop over the last 12 months which we believe is due in part to the offer of pantries. **Going forward, we see the link between foodbanks and pantries becoming closer.** Whilst we don’t expect the need for emergency food provision to ever go away completely, we see a time when the two types of food provision might operate in the same space, maybe in some kind of food hub which would include a wider offering such as cooking classes but also provide community use space for all manner of food related activities.” St Andrews Community Network who operate North Liverpool Foodbank (Trussell Trust), the North Liverpool Your Local Pantry network and debt advice across the region

Citizens Advice Liverpool are currently piloting a scheme whereby they provide vouchers for people to access food pantries for free for a set number of weeks (e.g. first 4 – 6 weeks), with the idea that over this time period households will see the value of becoming members of these spaces and be able to pay beyond the free trial period.

If community food spaces were to play a significant role in crisis food support, as one community worker explains, care needs to be taken to think through the relationship between crisis support and surplus food, which so many community food spaces rely on: “There is a horrible connotation that people in crisis should be grateful for anything they are given, and that because they are in crisis, they are not “eligible” for basic human pleasures. Our pantry mostly runs on surplus food donations. I would say 90% of all the food we receive has either expired its Use-By date or will expire in 3 days or less. This system of charities utilising surplus food to feed the community has an incredibly unhealthy link to associating food poverty as a way to reduce waste. While I would agree that reducing waste is incredibly important, using food poverty to achieve less waste is just wrong. Why are people in food crisis only worth food that would otherwise just be put in the bin? You likely won’t get a birthday cake for your 4 year old in an emergency food parcel. You’ll be lucky to get a slither of chocolate to have a moment of quiet bliss in the midst of looking for somewhere to sleep that night. Just because someone is in crisis, it does not mean they are not worthy of enjoying food. Nor that they should just accept what they are given and be grateful to have an emergency food parcel.”

6. Other forms of support

Food vouchers were generally portrayed as a middle ground alternative between foodbank parcels and cash grants, which, whilst offering more choice and perhaps more dignity than foodbank parcels, still restricted elements of choice (e.g. the ability to shop around for the best deals, or split your shop across multiple shops or prioritise shopping in a place that matched your own ethical values) and could still be stigmatising unless handled well. Like cash-grants, respondents felt it was important that food vouchers were accompanied by appropriate wrap around care that looked at the root cause of why someone was in a crisis.

Schemes which enabled households to purchase **white goods** were praised by respondents - if this is what the household needed. Concerns include whether enough consideration was given to the running and maintenance costs of items.

7. Learning from best practice and new ideas

This final section contains quotations from respondents when asked about what policy changes they would prioritise to end the need for foodbanks.

a. What policy changes would you prioritise to end the need for foodbanks?

“From September 2021 Micah Liverpool has seen the steepest and most consistent rise in food parcel giving ever. This is due to many factors.

- The removal of the £20 Universal Credit uplift
- The effects of Brexit and job losses
- The poor build back from the pandemic nationally
- The rise in cost of living
- The poor treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK

We would like to see Universal Credit increased, National minimum wage increased and more support given to the poorest communities. Micah would also like to see the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers improved and would lobby for **the right to work for refugees and asylum seekers**. Since Brexit we have seen a skills shortage and have the highest number of vacancies in the UK for over a decade with thousands of refugees and asylum seekers unable to fill these vacancies, although would be willing to.” Micah Liverpool

“Three priorities: ensure everyone is paid a Real Living Wage, with fair working conditions – for example offering Real Living Hours and ending the use of zero hours contracts, secondly, reduce benefits sanctions – introduce a yellow card warning system and operate a people-first approach, and thirdly, fix the broken asylum system – so many of our city’s repeat foodbank users are asylum seekers who simply cannot live off the amount they are given – the system needs to be faster, more generous and allow people to work to earn a living whilst they wait for a decision” Dr Naomi Maynard, Feeding Liverpool

“Abolish Universal Credit in favour of a workable benefits system - **no bedroom tax, no sanctions, no delay in application, more accessible**.” Anonymous

“Take account of cost-of-living so as to prevent real-time decreases in benefits” South Liverpool Foodbank

“Ensure everyone has a real living wage. Change the benefit system all together and give people a weekly income which allows them to live well. Remove sanctions. Everyone’s contribution to society should be recognised and welcomed - change the language and narrative of inequality to one of mutuality. Have a high pay cap which ensures no manager is paid more than 20 times the lowest paid employee.” Anonymous

“Not putting people on the street following an asylum refusal, would alleviate much of the destitution we see overnight. I know it’s a second policy change but we’re unlikely to see the first, so giving people permission to work would be another game changer.” Asylum Link Merseyside

“Tax the highest earners/corporations to ensure we do not need food banks...share the wealth.”
Liverpool Irish Centre

“Restore the £20 uplift to Universal Credit” New Beginnings Improving Lives

“Provide adequate welfare benefits (means tested) which ensure that people have enough money for food and heating. Prompt payment of benefits or food/utility vouchers - otherwise people end up in a vicious circle of debt and arrears.” Faith community staff member



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