

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Early Intervention and Community Empowerment
<u>Date:</u>	6 June 2023
<u>Title of Update:</u>	Surplus Food
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UPDATE:

At the meeting of the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee on 10 May 2023, the Committee resolved in respect of Supporting People Through The Cost Of Living Crisis - CUS/23/122:

to instruct the Locality Inclusion Manager to circulate a Service Update in respect of food waste, including information on local supermarkets' arrangements and feedback from organisations on the current situation through Food Poverty Aberdeen

A short survey was developed to establish involvement in local supermarket arrangements for the distribution of surplus food and to gain feedback the current situation and issues. This was distributed through the Food Poverty Action Aberdeen network.

Five responses were received from organisations involved with Coop, KFC, Sainsbury's, Booker and Fareshare. The situation and issues identified are described below.

There are a number of services available which allow charities and community organisations to collect surplus food directly from supermarkets (including smaller outlets such as Tesco Express stores). FareShare pioneered this approach in the UK, working with the Irish social enterprise FoodCloud to develop the system which launched in 2015. There are now a number of services available, including FareShare Go (Foodiverse), Neighbourly, and Olio.

Some services operate via a mobile phone app/text message, and others involve booking days and timeslots to collect the food. The types of food available tend to be 'end-of-day' surplus such as bakery items, fruit and veg, and occasionally chilled items such as ready meals.

Some of the challenges faced have include:

- Often charities and community organisations are required to collect the surplus within the last hour or so of a store being open, meaning collection times of 8pm or sometimes later. Although some stores are more flexible, this can cause difficulty in arranging volunteers willing and able to collect food late in the day, as well as accessing storage at that time when facilities may be closed.
- Training issues, eg instore staff misunderstanding that the food is 'surplus' rather than waste, and allocating inappropriate waste products for collection (including those past USE BY date which legally can't be distributed). The responsibility for appropriate disposal then rests with the charity or community organisation.
- Interpretation of quantities when the store allocates the products. For example, '4 bread' could mean 4 trays of bread or 4 loaves of bread – this can mean charities and community organisations committing volunteer time, effort and cost based on inaccurate information to collect very small amounts of food.
- Technological issues eg issues with mobile phone apps.
- Other groups may turn up before their allocated slot and collect items, occasionally meaning that when others turn up on time, there is no or very low levels of stock, again meaning it is not cost effective.
- Groups without access to transport are effectively excluded from participating in the arrangements.

Areas identified by respondents include improving transport for collection, groups working collaboratively to collect more food and improvements in communication with some of the supermarket programmes.