



Local Area Case Studies - Methodological Appendix

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About this Appendix

This methodological appendix sets out the research methods that were undertaken in the Autumn/Winter of 2020/21 for local area case studies which form part of the wider ESRC-funded research project on responses to household food insecurity during COVID-19. This appendix is published alongside the first round of findings of the research on the project webpage: <http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/food-vulnerability-during-covid-19/>

The methods set out here underpin the following published research reports:

- Comparing local responses to household food insecurity during COVID-19 across the UK (March – August 2020)
- Argyll and Bute Case Study
- Belfast Case Study
- Cardiff Case Study
- Derry and Strabane Case Study
- Herefordshire Case Study
- Moray Case Study
- Swansea Case Study
- West Berkshire Case Study

It also underpins case studies in Greenwich, Merton, Bradford, Leeds, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

If you would like to get in touch with the project team, please email us at foodvulnerabilitycovid19@sheffield.ac.uk.

How to cite this appendix

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Research approach, aims and objectives

We carried out two sets of case studies aimed at mapping responses to risks of rising food insecurity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK over spring and summer 2020. The first set of case studies was conducted as part of a commissioned piece of research for the Trussell Trust, which had a specific focus on understanding differing trends in their member food banks in different areas over this period. The second set of case studies was a pillar of a wider ESRC-funded project mapping responses to food insecurity over the pandemic and learning from lived experiences of support with access to food over this time.

Whilst the two sets of case studies had some unique objectives, the overall aim of each case study was to map and understand how local governments, third-sector organisations, communities, and businesses responded to concerns about inadequate food access arising from the COVID-19 pandemic over the spring and summer of 2020. Common objectives were:

- To understand what types of food aid provision and other forms of help (e.g. financial support, food delivery for groups unable to physically access food, food bank provision) were available to people facing insecure financial or physical access to food before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To understand how the provision of support for people facing insecure food access (for either financial or physical access issues) changed over the spring and summer of 2020, including changes in operations of projects/programmes that had already been operating and the initiation of new projects or forms of support.
- To assess the long-term outlook of these landscapes into the future. This included examining how provision was reduced with changes in lockdown restrictions and guidance for people shielding and also plans of particular projects/forms of support to continue to operate or cease to operate in the future.

A case study approach was adopted to allow for in-depth discussion with various stakeholders involved in local responses. Each case study involved conducting 2-6 interviews with key stakeholders to obtain a picture of the food insecurity landscape before and during the pandemic in spring/summer 2020. Data collected in these interviews were then used to create an initial food systems map, which was further filled out and discussed with a range of stakeholders in a case study area research workshop.

Each case study area had a lead researcher from the research team who conducted the interviews, led the workshop and undertook the data analysis and write up. 1 researcher led on 3 areas (Cardiff, Swansea and Herefordshire), another on 4 areas (Belfast, Derry and Strabane, Moray and Argyll and Bute) and another on 7 (all the Trussell Trust areas and West Berkshire). A second member of the research team attended each of the workshops. Analysis and write up went through various iterations, with members of the research team reviewing other drafts. A fourth member of the research team, who did not lead on any of the case study areas, provided review and comment on report drafts of each area and contributed to cross case analysis.

Below, we outline additional specific objectives of each set of case studies (from here, referred to as Food Access during COVID-19 case studies and the Trussell Trust case

studies) and the methods for each set of case studies. Table 1 provides a summary that highlights similarities and differences in the methods used for each set of case studies.

Table 1: Differences and similarities in approaches to two sets of case studies.

Methodological Element	Food Access during COVID-19 case studies	Trussell Trust Case Studies
Case selection	Total of 8 areas	Total of 6 areas
	All 4 nations of the UK	Only in England and Scotland
	Mix of rural and urban areas	Only urban areas.
	All unitary local authorities in England; local authorities in each devolved nation.	Two London boroughs; two unitary local authorities in England; two local authorities in Scotland.
	All with % rise in UC claimant rate of 100% or more over January to July 2020.	All with % rise in UC claimant rate of 100% or more over January to July 2020.
	Half with a food poverty alliance registered with the Food Power network; half without.	No selection based on presence of registered member Food Power network.
	No selection based on presence of food bank in the Trussell Trust network.	All areas with a food bank in the Trussell Trust network, half of which experienced an increase in usage over spring/summer 2020, half of which experienced no change or decline in usage.
Identification of potential research participants	Informed by Food Power Alliance member in Food Power Alliance areas; informed by other key respondents in non-Food Power Alliance areas.	Informed by the managers of food banks in the Trussell Trust network and desk-based research.
	Mix of council staff, third sector volunteers and staff, mutual aid/community groups, food bank managers.	Mix of council staff, third sector volunteers and staff, mutual aid/community groups, food bank managers; all included food bank respondent from the Trussell Trust network (either at regional or local level)
Data collection	Interviews, workshop, desk-based data collection, follow-up phone calls and emails.	Interviews, workshop, desk-based data collection, follow-up phone calls and emails.

Food Access during COVID-19 case studies

Additional objectives

Conducted in partnership with the Food Power network, an additional objective of this set of case studies was:

- To understand the potential influence food poverty alliances registered with the Food Power network had on responses to food insecurity within their local areas over the course of the pandemic and thus explore the impact of VCS-driven partnership working and co-ordination of food access-related activity in local areas during the outbreak.

A participatory research approach that engaged leaders of the alliances registered with the Food Power network in the research process was adopted for this set of case studies. Within these case study, leaders of alliances were invited to take part in the research as “Local Research Facilitators”, which involved providing feedback on the research approach and supporting the recruitment and write-up of the case studies, as outlined below.

Case study selection

Two case study local authority areas were selected in each constituent country of the UK. Within these, the local areas selected were areas with either a significant proportion of rural area or that were predominantly urban areas. This was to allow for within-country comparisons to be made between areas with the same level of urbanicity. In England and Scotland, areas were predominantly rural and in Northern Ireland and Wales, areas were predominantly urban but may also have had some rural areas.

All case study areas were areas where there was evidence of the pandemic having an economic impact on the population, as reflected in rising claimant rates. Nationally, the claimant rate rose from 2.9% to 6.3% over January 2020 to July 2020, a rise of 117%.¹ Across all areas, the rise in the claimant rate from January 2020 to July 2020 was examined and areas that experienced a rise of 100% or more were prioritised for selection.² Within each constituent country, where possible, areas chosen were also of approximately the same population size or as close as possible to one another. Points of contrast within constituent countries were the existence of a food poverty alliance registered with the Food Power network before the COVID-19 pandemic within one area and the absence of a food poverty alliance (Food Power or other alliance (e.g., Feeding Britain) before the pandemic.

In all cases, areas with alliances registered with the Food Power network were selected first, based on the rise in the claimant rate, meeting the rural/urban criteria, being a unitary authority, and willingness of a member of the alliance to participate as a Local Research

¹ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

² There were two exceptions to this. In selecting a match for Cardiff city, Swansea was selected as the second largest city in Wales. The rise in the claimant rate was lower than 100%, from 3.3% to 5.9% over January to July 2020, compared to the rise in Wales of 3.3% to 6.6%. Similarly, we selected Derry and Strabane as the comparator area for Belfast, since Derry is the second largest city in Northern Ireland. Here, the claimant rate was higher than Belfast before the pandemic (4.4%) and rose to 7.4% (a 68% increase) compared to a rise of 3.1% to 6.6% in Belfast (113% increase).

Facilitator (explained below). Table 2 below details the areas selected for the eight case studies.

Table 2: Selected case study areas in constituent countries of the UK.

Nation/area	Food Power Alliance	Population size	Rural/urban	% change in claimant rate over January to July 2020
England				
Herefordshire	Yes	192,800	Mainly rural	144%
West Berkshire	No	158,500	Significant rural areas	186%
Wales				
Cardiff	Yes	366,900	Urban	100%
Swansea	No	247,000	Urban	79% ²
Scotland				
Moray	Yes	95,800	Mainly rural	104%
Argyll and Bute	No	95,500	Mainly rural	153%
Northern Ireland				
Belfast	Yes	343,500	Urban	113%
Derry City and Strabane	No	151,300	Mainly Urban (with some rural areas)	68% ²

Participant recruitment

Across all areas, a snowball participant recruitment strategy was used, where through the knowledge of key stakeholders, subsequent stakeholders were identified to be invited to participate in the research. The identification of key stakeholders varied depending on whether or not the area was a Food Power Alliance area, as below. The research aimed to include a range of stakeholders engaged in responding to food insecurity, including:

- Local authority staff engaged in delivery of food and/or financial crisis support in response to insufficient food access before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Local authority staff engaged in delivery of free school meal replacements (where relevant); or, where there may have been a local partnership in place around FSM replacement, representative/s such as a head teachers/school staff involved in the delivery of replacement of free school meals.
- Managers/board members of local food projects offering food parcels, meal deliveries, or meal programmes before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Staff/ volunteers from local organisations/ groups newly providing support with food access as a result of the pandemic.
- Local support agencies who provide referrals to food banks and/or other cash or food assistance.
- Organisations/businesses involved in running Meals on Wheels.

- Where relevant, other local private sector stakeholders who have been active in the area (i.e. from retail).

Role of Local Research Facilitators (LRF) in case study areas with a food poverty alliance registered with Food Power

In the areas with a food poverty alliance registered with the Food Power network, selected as potential case study areas, leaders of the alliances were first approached to ask if they would be willing to participate in the research and have the role of Local Research Facilitator (LRF). This role reflected the participatory approach of this research, utilising participants' local area knowledge and expertise to create an initial systems map and build a local stakeholder group. Four Food Power Alliances were purposively selected based on area characteristics (i.e. only rural areas in England; unitary authorities; rise in claimant rate etc.) and engagement with the Food Power team at Sustain. Leaders from these four areas were initially approached about participating in the research and having the role of LRF; of these, three accepted. A fifth alliance was then approached and agreed to participate.

The LRFs helped with participant recruitment, as they were key stakeholders who could then recommend further stakeholders to approach. LRFs identified other key stakeholders to approach for scoping interviews ahead of the research workshops. These were individuals or organisations who had a level of expertise and perspective to help build an initial systems map (or critical part of it) of food provision activities in the area before and after the pandemic. LRFs also put together a list of invitees of other area stakeholders to invite to the research workshop. In all cases, these lists made up the total of people invited to participate in the research workshop. LRFs sent out the invitations and tracked responses.

Areas without alliances registered with the Food Power network

In areas without an alliance registered with the Food Power network, our contacts from national organisations (Sustain, Independent Food Aid Network, devolved Governments) provided introductions to individuals they knew in these areas. Initial conversations with these individuals then led to identification of other organisations and individuals to invite to either interviews or the research workshop. In one area (West Berkshire), no contacts were identified so web-based searches were carried out to identify managers of food banks and other food provision organisations to have these initial conversations with. Following these initial conversations, the process of further recruitment differed depending on the capacity of the initial interviewees. In Swansea, the initial interviewees took the lead on further recruitment, sending out workshop invites to other potential participants. In Argyll and Bute, the initial contact introduced the researcher, by email, to other potential participants and the researcher contacted them directly with an invite to participate. This was complemented by desk-based research which identified a list of community food organisations in the area, who the researcher contacted directly. Similarly, in Derry and Strabane the initial interviewee introduced the researcher, by email, to other potential participants. Two people interviewed also shared the invite to the workshop to other potential participants and desk-based research identified other relevant organisations.

In each case study area, we aimed to have 2-3 interviews with key stakeholders ahead of the research workshop to obtain a broad overview of responses to food insecurity before the pandemic and during the spring/summer of the pandemic. There were no limits placed on how many organisations/individuals were invited to the research workshop. Any that were

identified as stakeholders in responding to food insecurity in the local area were invited to participate. If someone invited to attend the workshop could not attend due to timing, they were invited to participate in an interview. All participants were sent a participant information sheet and consent form prior to their participation in the research.

Interview schedule

Interviews were semi-structured. The general flow through the interview was to obtain a picture of the nature of responses to food insecurity in the local area before the pandemic, what evidence participants saw of rising food insecurity early in the pandemic that prompted them or other organisations to take action, and then to obtain a picture of how existing responses changed over the spring and summer of the pandemic and of new responses that developed. Here, by responses to food insecurity, respondents were asked to describe financial interventions and direct food provisioning activities, whether arising from financial or physical access needs.

Individuals attached to specific organisations were asked to focus on their work but were also asked to describe other key organisations or activities they knew of. Individuals in roles where they were working with a variety of organisations and/or in positions that enabled them to have a view of a wider picture were asked to describe not only their own work but also to highlight the work of key players before and during the pandemic. All interviews were carried out by online or phone meetings and recorded. Recordings were sent to a professional transcribing company and transcripts produced.

Workshop preparation and execution

Prior to workshops, initial food systems charts were created based on interview data already collected. These outlined key stakeholders and their activities that were in place before the pandemic, how these changed over the spring and summer of 2020 in light of the pandemic, and new activities and organisations involved in responding to food insecurity over this period. Workshop participants were asked to add further details in how they were involved in responding to food insecurity before the crisis and over the crisis and to fill in gaps where activities or organisations were overlooked in the initial food systems charts. They were also asked to share what raised concern about rising food insecurity early in the pandemic.

Once it was felt that a comprehensive picture of responses to food insecurity in the local authority area both before and during the pandemic was obtained, workshop participants were asked to provide their comments on Padlet or share verbally about what factors enabled responses to food insecurity to be developed over the spring and summer and what factors may have acted as barriers to responding to food insecurity at this time. Here, we were interested in gathering information on sources of funding, food supplies, people power, pre-existing relationships/alliances, leadership, space/vehicles and any other factors respondents felt were important. Next, workshop participants were asked to provide their answers to the following questions using Padlet or verbally:

- What responses/features of the response to food insecurity have you seen over the crisis that you think should be continued into the future
- What responses/features of the response to food insecurity have you seen over the crisis that you think should NOT be continued into the future?

- What did you/your organisation stop doing during spring of 2020 because of the crisis, that you have now realised is obsolete? (i.e. What has lost its relevance in a (post) COVID world?)
- What did you/your organisation stop doing during spring of 2020 because of the crisis that you think should be picked back up again?

Lastly, Mentimeter polling was used to gauge workshop participants' feelings about the effectiveness and reach of responses enacted over the spring and summer of 2020. In-session polling results were used as a launch point of discussion. Participants were asked to indicate, in relation to their local authority, the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- The shame and stigma sometimes felt by people about receiving free food aid reduced over COVID-19.
- Hidden hunger, that is, people going without food but not receiving help, is a significant problem in [local area].
- Some groups have not received adequate support with food access over the COVID-19 crisis.
- The responses to threats to food insecurity in [local area] were well-coordinated between different actors.
- Over the course of the COVID-19 crisis, funding and food donations have been abundant to support the work you/your organisation do.
- Except for possibly in first weeks of lockdown, no one should have gone without food over April to August because so much food was available.

Quantitative results are not shared given the small number of workshop participants in each session.

Desk-based research

The websites and social media pages of organisations that participated in the research and of organisations mentioned but not participating in the research were browsed for further information on their organisational aims and activities before the COVID-19 pandemic and over the spring and summer of 2020. Council webpages and press releases were also searched for information relating to food and financial aid relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Research participants were also asked to email reports, leaflets, or any other documents that may have been relevant to understanding activities in the case study area. In particular, we requested quantitative data on the number of calls made to Council and other organisations' helplines, the number of food parcels and/or meals distributed, and any information available on the reasons for people seeking help with food access over this period.

Post interview/workshop follow-up

During the analysis and write-up stage, we identified gaps in our understanding of some activities and of some organisations that were active over the COVID-19 period. These queries were sent to relevant individual participants and on some occasions, further phone meetings were set up to acquire the details we required. Workshop and interview participants were also invited to review draft individual case studies to check that details were correct and provide further details where needed.

Recruitment and desk-based research outcomes The number of people invited, the number of participants and the means of participation (interview/ workshop) are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Number of people invited by sector, number of people who participated by sector, and means of participation (interview/ workshop)

	England		Northern Ireland		Scotland		Wales	
	Herefordshire	West Berkshire	Belfast	Derry & Strabane	Moray	Argyll & Bute	Cardiff	Swansea
<u>Invited</u>								
Council	8	6	4	2	3	2	5	10
Third Sector	8	16	12	12	16	13	15	34
Other ¹	6	3	1	0	1	0	4	0
Total	22	24	17	14	20	15	24	44
<u>Participated</u>								
Council Staff	3	3	3	1	3	2	4	3
Third Sector	4	9	6	8	9	6	6	5
Other	1	1	1	0	1	0	3	0
Total	8	13	10	9	13	8	13	8
<u>Form of participation (interview/ workshop)²</u>								
No. of interview participants	3	6	7	5	5	4	3	3
No. of workshop participants	8	9	7	6	10	5	12	7

1. For example education sector staff, housing sector staff, local businesses involved in a response

2. Some research participants took part in both an interview and the workshop.

Whilst this recruitment strategy was designed to provide comprehensive insight into support with food access in each area, there were inherent limitations in this design. Relying on the snowball technique meant there may have been pockets of activity that were unknown to the participants that would have, therefore, remained unknown to the researcher. Although desk-based research was sometimes taken to complement the snowballing technique some of the activity to support food access, particularly that by small local groups may not have had an online presence. Furthermore, in some areas we heard concerns that different population groups, including those known to be disproportionately affected by the pandemic, were not engaging with the mainstream support available. The recruitment strategy was not targeted to ensure the support available for different population groups was comprehensively identified. Furthermore, pragmatically, we were approaching organisations who had been working at full capacity for an extended period of time during a global pandemic, potentially impacting availability and motivation to participate in the research. Finally, the scale of the responses that were being put in place, ranging from authority-wide statutory response to micro level neighbourhood support meant creating an entirely comprehensive map of food access support was extremely difficult.

A range of secondary data sources were found for each area. Firstly, in many cases participants sent us internally generated reports which detailed their responses during the pandemic. Secondly, publicly available reports were found through Google and organisational websites, particularly in the case of local councils and larger third sector organisations. Thirdly, Facebook posts and websites allowed some insight into the activities of organisations that were not able to participate in the research (although it is important to note that we did not apply a systematic social media method for the identification of all available social media data). Finally, general Google searches for 'food aid', 'Covid-19' and the area returned news reports on local activity. Whilst these searches were not systematic, they provided a range of additional data sources that enhanced the insight provided by the primary data. One limitation of these strategies to locate secondary data is a likely skew towards organisations that have an online presence and have the capacity to produce such reports, potentially missing therefore the more informal community/neighbourhood level support. In some cases we found it difficult to locate quantitative data on the number of households supported, number of food parcels distributed. This may have been indicative of a de-prioritisation of recording such data over this time. For example, one food bank reported stopping the completion of the usual information gathering forms from clients as they wanted to focus purely on quickly providing food.

Analysis

A separate NVivo project was created for each of the case study areas. All interview and workshop transcripts were uploaded to the NVivo projects and any substantial additional data collected (e.g. reports written by organisations). An initial coding framework was developed by one researcher, based on their three case study areas and this was reviewed and added to by a second researcher based on their four case study areas. The coding framework was based on four key categories - actors, response, target, and themes, with sub nodes created under each. This framework was uploaded to two of the NVivo projects (Cardiff and Moray) and data was coded. Having ensured the framework captured the majority of the data for these two areas this then became the framework that was used in each of the remaining NVivo projects. However, there was flexibility for researchers to add

codes as necessary for each individual area, given the natural differences that arose in each.

The coded data then formed the basis for the write up of each area which followed the same format of the interview schedule - key actors supporting food access prior to the pandemic, early signs of food access issues and key actors supporting food access during the pandemic. The coded data was also used to write two later sections, key themes and stakeholders' reflections. During write up any additional data sources that had not been uploaded to the NVivo project were layered in, such as websites, social media accounts and data from the interactive tools used during the workshop. First drafts of each area write up were reviewed by one member of the research team for comment, which often triggered a return to the coded data to clarify and fill gaps.

A second stage of analysis was then undertaken to create the cross-case themes report. Each individual write up of the 14 case study areas became the data for this analysis. Two researchers, having read their own and some of the other case study areas created a coding framework which identified key themes that had emerged looking across the case studies. This coding framework was reviewed by a third member of the team. Using these headings in a word document (the cross case write up) each individual area write up was re-read with content written into the relevant section of the write up document. This analysis was completed by two researchers 1 of who had been a lead for 4 case study areas and one who had not been involved directly in the data collection. The first draft of the write up was reviewed by two other members of the research team, one of the other lead researchers and an external contact who is an NGO partner of the project.

The Trussell Trust Case Studies

Additional objectives

Conducted in part as a piece of commissioned research for the Trussell Trust, an additional objective of this case study was:

- To investigate potential reasons for outlier trends in Trussell Trust food bank usage in local areas, contrasting those that experienced large increases in usage over this period to those that experienced moderate or significant declines.

Case study selection

The geographical focus of this work was at the level of unitary local authorities in England, which provide all services in the local area, and local authorities in Scotland. We focused on urban areas in both countries, including two London boroughs, two cities in the north of England, and two cities in Scotland. Within each region, pairings were made between cities. In London, one borough was identified for having a very large increase in Trussell Trust use (Merton), and it was paired to an area that saw a negligible increase in Trussell Trust food bank use (Greenwich). In both the north of England and Scotland, areas were chosen that had relatively large decreases in food bank use (Leeds and Glasgow), which were paired to cities that had an increase around the network average for the time period (Bradford and Edinburgh, respectively) (see Table 4).

In making these pairings, we also considered the absolute and percent increase in the claimant count to rule out areas that had been less economically impacted by the pandemic. Population sizes were also considered, with the aim to pick areas that had similarly sized populations.

Table 4: Case studies included in the research.

	Population size³	Absolute change in parcels distributed over April to September 2020 compared to same period in 2019	Percent change in parcels distributed over April to September 2020 compared to same period in 2019	Absolute change in claimant count⁴ from Feb to Sept 2020	Percent change in claimant count⁵ from Feb to Sept 2020
Greenwich	286,186	178	4%	9,720	154%
Merton	206,186	10,945	470%	6,255	170%
Bradford	534,300	4,940	94%	14,030	83%
Leeds	793,139	-3,519	-25%	18,160	103%
Edinburgh	524,930	6,964	60%	11,175	157%
Glasgow	633,120	-7,762	-37%	17,400	87%

Participant recruitment

In identifying stakeholders, our criteria included any individual or organisation involved in responding to concerns about economic access to food over the pandemic, as well as concerns about physical access to food over the pandemic, given the overlap between economic and physical inaccessibility to food. These included people working for local authorities, food bank staff and volunteers, leaders of grassroots community groups, leaders of food poverty alliances, school headteachers, people working with groups at risk of food insecurity (e.g. people who are homeless, migrants and asylum seekers, low income families with children). To identify potential stakeholders, we consulted our research partners involved in national work on mapping responses to COVID-19 over the pandemic (e.g. the Trussell Trust, the Independent Food Aid Network, Sustain). Desk-based research was also used to identify key organisations working in each area. After identifying 3-5 stakeholders, a snowball sampling strategy was used, whereby participants who took part in the research were asked for their recommendations/introductions to others we should speak to in the area.

³ <https://directory.londoncouncils.gov.uk/demographics/population/> ; <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/open-data/our-datasets/population/>; <https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/population/>; <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/>

⁴ Universal Credit claimants required to look for work. Data from www.nomisweb.co.uk

⁵ Ibid.

Interview and workshop schedule

The questions posed to interviewees and workshop participants centred around understanding the landscape of responses to insecure access to food before the COVID-19 pandemic and how the landscape changed over the crisis. Participants were asked how their organisations operated before the crisis and then how operations changed over the crisis, including documenting new programmes initiated, new forms of communicating help and assistance, new sources of funding and food donations, new hours of operation and new locations, and changes to referrals and any eligibility criteria. At the same time, challenges to their regular ways of operating and adaptations made were also documented. Participants were also asked to share their observations on who was seeking help with food over this time and how characteristics of clients or helpline callers may have been different from who would have presented before the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, participants were also asked to reflect on how their own activities over this time operated alongside or as part of a wider landscape of responses in the area, and where relevant, on the challenges and benefits of being part of a diverse landscape of responses with many different (and in many cases new) stakeholders involved.

Post interview/workshop follow-up

Following conducting initial interviews and workshop, some participants were asked to complete another interview to collect further details on activities that we may have missed. Targeted requests for data and information were also sent to key stakeholders to address specific answers to questions not fully answered or addressed in initial interviews and workshops. In addition, requests for reports and documentation of activities over the pandemic were made to stakeholders, and where provided, were analysed alongside workshop and interview data. For the most part, however, data comes from oral information shared with us by research participants in interviews and workshops.

Recruitment and desk-based research outcomes

The number of people invited, the number of participants, and the means of participation (interview/ workshop) are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Number of people invited by sector, number of people who participated by sector, and means of participation (interview/ workshop)

	Greenwich	Merton	Bradford	Leeds	Edinburgh	Glasgow
<u>Invited</u>						
Council	4	3	4	3	3	1
Third Sector	5	11	7	9	11	13
Other	1	0	0	0	4	0
Total	10	14	11	12	18	14
<u>Participated</u>						
Council Staff	3	2	3	2	1	1
Third Sector	3	7	5	6	6	9
Other	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	7	9	8	8	7	10
<u>Form of participation (interview/ workshop)*</u>						
No. of interview participants	6	5	4	4	3	4
No. of workshop participants	3	6	7	8	4	6

**Some research participants took part in both an interview and the workshop.*

Analysis

All interviews and workshops were recorded and transcribed. An a priori coding framework was applied where we gathered and documented information to enable a description of the landscape of responses to food insecurity before COVID-19, a description of activities and responses during the pandemic, and specific details on how the food banks in the Trussell Trust network in the area changed their operations specifically in relation to referrals, food parcel distribution methods, and engagement with other stakeholders over the time; sources of funding accessed across all stakeholders; how help was communicated to the community; and how the problem of food insecurity changed over the pandemic in terms of rising demand for help and in the characteristics of people needing help.

Interview transcripts were also inductively coded for themes related to reflections on how responses and adaptations to responses operated over this time.

As with the Food Access during COVID-19 case studies, a second stage of analysis was then undertaken to create the cross case themes report. Each individual write up of the 6 case study areas became the data for this analysis. As above, two researchers, having read

their own and some of the other case study areas created a coding framework which identified key themes that had emerged looking across the case studies. This coding framework was reviewed by a third member of the team. Using these headings in a word document (the cross case write up) each individual area write up was re-read with content written into the relevant section of the write up document. This analysis was completed by two researchers, one of who had been a lead for four case study areas and one who had not been involved directly in the data collection. The first draft of the write up was reviewed by two other members of the research team, one of the other lead researchers and an external contact who is an NGO partner of the project.



The research project **Food Vulnerability during COVID-19** is funded by the ESRC through the UKRI COVID-19 research and innovation fund. To contact the project team please email foodvulnerabilitycovid19@sheffield.ac.uk