

A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a blue t-shirt and shorts, is bent over working in a raised garden bed. She is wearing pink gloves and using a small tool. The garden is lush with various green plants, including leafy greens and tall stalks. In the background, there are more garden beds, some with blue tarps, and a wheelbarrow. The scene is outdoors and well-lit.

# A One City Food Equality Strategy for Bristol

2022 – 2032

**BRISTOL  
ONE CITY**



**Food equality** exists when all people, at all times, have access to nutritious, affordable and appropriate food according to their social, cultural and dietary needs. They are equipped with the resources, skills and knowledge to use and benefit from food, which is sourced from a resilient, fair and environmentally sustainable food system.

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Avon Wildlife Trust – Grow Wilder

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Black South West Network

Borderlands

Bristol Ageing Better

Bristol Citizen's advice

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Bristol Disability Equality Forum

Bristol Food Network

Bristol Food Policy Council

Bristol Food Producers

Bristol Food Union

Bristol Green Capital Partnership

Bristol Homeless Forum

Bristol Horn Youth Concern

Bristol Local Food Fund

Bristol One City Health and Wellbeing Board

Bristol Outreach Services for the Homeless (BOSH)

Bristol Refugee Rights

Bristol Sport Foundation

Bristol Youth and Community Action

BS3 Community

Caring in Bristol

CHAS Bristol

City Funds

Clifton Diocese

Counterslip Cares Food Bank

Eastside Community Trust

Family Action FOOD Clubs

FareShare South West

Heart of BS13

Henbury and Brentry Community Council

High Sheriff of Bristol

Incredible Edible Bristol

inHope

Inns Court Community and Family Centre

Julian Trust

Knowle West Alliance

Lawrence Weston Community Farm

Learning Partnership West

Malcolm X Centre

National Food Service Bristol

North Bristol Foodbank

Playful Bristol

Power to Change

Quartet

Refugee Women of Bristol

Roots Independent Street Team

Sims Hill Shared Harvest

South Bristol advice service

South & East Bristol Foodbank

Southmead Development Trust

Square Food Foundation

St Nicholas of Tolentino Catholic Church

St Werburgh's City Farm

St Werburgh's Community Centre

Super Supper Club

The Children's Kitchen

The Community Farm

The Matthew Tree Project

The MAZI Project

Trinity Centre

University of Bristol

University of the West of England

Urban Agriculture Consortium (UK)

Voscur

WECIL

Wellspring Settlement

Windmill Hill City Farm



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## Foreword

Food is essential to all our lives. Not only does it fuel and sustain us, it also plays a crucial role in the fabric of our city. It brings people together, is an expression of culture, binds communities and drives a thriving and vibrant economy. In this way, food plays a central role in the health and well-being of us as individuals and for our communities; and when we are not able to benefit from food in this way, food can become a significant cause and driver of inequality.

It is unacceptable that anyone in Bristol should face uncertainty about being able to access adequate food. Yet we know that one in every 20 households in Bristol face this stress regularly. This is just the tip of the iceberg, and the inequalities in our food system run much deeper. For example, the way in which our food is produced places a huge burden on the environment; significant numbers of people in the city are not able to access fresh and nutritious food, which leaves them at risk of ill health; and when food economies function poorly, people miss out of the significant economic and social value this can bring to themselves and communities.

On top of this, the economic and social impacts of COVID-19 have worsened these issues and left more people struggling to afford or access a nutritious diet. Nationally, the pandemic has caused a sharp rise in the number of people seeking emergency food support, and I want to acknowledge the strong network of voluntary, community and grassroots organisations in Bristol that have done an incredible job meeting this



need, in partnership with the council and many other organisations across the city. This has highlighted the need for us as a city to take urgent action not only to ensure support is available to people when they need it, but also to take a committed and dedicated view to preventing these issues from arising in the first place.

Bristol has made a sustained commitment to improving its food system, and this strategy builds on a number of years of work to make the food system fairer and more sustainable for all. The achievements of this were recognised in Bristol becoming only the second city in the UK to receive 'gold sustainable food city' status in May 2021. This strategy builds on this strong baseline

of work, and presents our ambitious plan to strive for food equality for all residents in the city of Bristol within ten years. In it, we present the city's vision of food equality, highlighting the areas we need to address to be able to achieve this aim. This strategy will form the framework for a pragmatic *Food Equality Action Plan*, to be developed in 2022, which will lay out the actions we need to take to achieve each point raised in this strategy. To be able to achieve these aims, food equality needs to be considered as a key priority throughout the wider work of the city, and this strategy has been developed in collaboration with system partners through the One City Approach.

Our ultimate aim is to make Bristol a leading city on issues of food equality, and to become a pioneering city that is leading the fight for food justice. By significantly improving food equality for the people within our own city, we will be able to make positive influence both nationally and internationally on issues that will ultimately make our food system fairer and more equitable for all.

**Councillor Asher Craig** Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Equalities, and Food Champion.



## Executive summary: A vision for food equality in Bristol



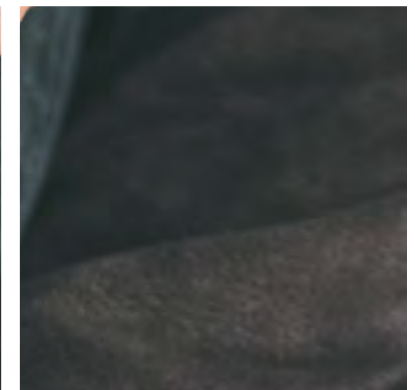
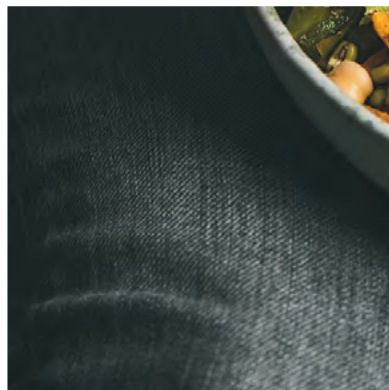
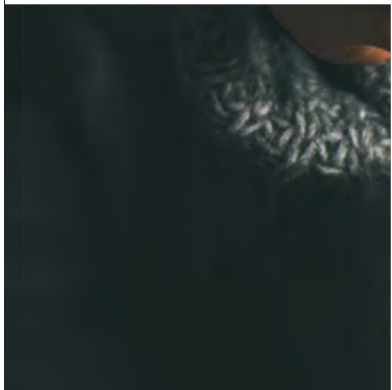
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**Food equality** exists when all people, at all times, have access to nutritious, affordable and appropriate food according to their social, cultural and dietary needs. They are equipped with the resources, skills and knowledge to use and benefit from food, which is sourced from a resilient, fair and environmentally sustainable food system.

Our vision for Food Equality – Bristol Food Equality Stakeholder Group, 2021



”



The *Food Equality Strategy 2022 – 32* is designed to recognise and tackle the issues of rising food inequality in Bristol. Developed out of Bristol's Going for Gold 'Sustainable Food City' campaign,<sup>1</sup> the strategy builds on work and research that has been carried out over the last two decades. The strategy and a subsequent *Food Equality Action Plan* will work alongside other initiatives in the city that seek to tackle poverty and inequality. It will form part of the *One City Bristol Good Food 2030 Action Plan*, which will be focused on creating a fairer, more resilient, and sustainable local food system, benefitting people and the planet.

The need for this new strategy has become even clearer due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which shone a spotlight on the significant inequality that exists in how people access nutritious, affordable, and sustainably

sourced produce, both nationally and locally. Coupled with the impact of Brexit and climate change on our national food system and economy, these inequalities will not only continue to exist, but will intensify if we do not act now to ensure an equitable local food system is established. **It is the most disadvantaged who will feel the impacts first and most severely when faced with food shortages, price increases, and the breakdown of supply chains.**

It was imperative that this strategy was created through a collaboration of key stakeholders throughout the city, including representatives of organisations working both directly and indirectly in all aspects of the food sector, as well as members of the wider community.

Over a period of nine months, we facilitated three stakeholder group meetings and surveys (involving more than 100 individuals representing over 70 organisations)

and eight community conversations (involving 38 people) to test and develop the vision for food equality.

Stakeholder group meetings involved discussions on what food inequality looks and feels like, and what the barriers to food equality are. Participants also discussed what the administration and accountability of food equality should be, and how this could be made more inclusive, ensuring the success of the strategy. The community conversations were targeted at five wards that ranked highest on the 2019 index of multiple deprivation and three community groups at high-risk of food inequality (disabled people, people experiencing homelessness, and asylum seekers and refugees) to provide valuable insights and views from those with lived experience of food inequality.

<sup>1</sup>For more information, please see 'Bristol Named Gold Sustainable Food City': [www.goingforgoldbristol.co.uk](http://www.goingforgoldbristol.co.uk)



## Priorities for achieving food equality

The results of these meetings, conversations and background research led to the formation of a vision for food equality in Bristol. This vision was distilled into five priority themes that will be the foundation for positive change, providing the building blocks for this strategy:

<b>Fair, equitable access</b>	Fair access to nutritious and appropriate food.
<b>Choice and security</b>	Choice, empowerment, and a feeling of security.
<b>Skills and resources</b>	People and communities are equipped with the necessary food knowledge, skills and facilities.
<b>Sustainable local food system</b>	A resilient and environmentally sustainable local food system.
<b>Food at the heart of decision-making</b>	Food is at the heart of community, economy, and city planning.

## Food Equality Action Plan

The next step in the development of the strategy is to shape a *Food Equality Action Plan* (scheduled for early 2022) based on the priority themes above. This will set out a path for positive change, with clear and accountable actions for achieving the vision of food equality in the city. As part of the stakeholder consultation and community conversations we have begun to develop action plan priorities which will continue to be worked on by a broader group including stakeholders, people from identified communities of interest, and those with lived experience of food inequality.

It is important that the aims of the strategy and action plan are monitored and evaluated. This will use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures, some of which already exist and others which will need to be developed.

Appropriate administrative and accountability structures will need to be established and the need for a representative steering group has also been identified. Community-based Food Equality Champions, with lived experience of food inequality, and wider stakeholder group meetings will also be crucial to oversee the delivery and engagement of the strategy and action plan.

The success of this work relies on the *One City* approach, where partners from across the city, including Bristol City Council, take ownership on delivery, development and evaluation of the work needed to make a positive impact to the lives of people who live and work in Bristol. By taking a collaborative and co-produced approach we can significantly increase the chances of success of the strategy.





## Definitions: why ‘food equality’?

The *Food Equality Strategy 2022 – 32* addresses inequalities faced across our local food system, including, but not limited to, food insecurity. To reflect the broad focus of this work we have chosen to use the term ‘food equality’.

As there is no official definition of food equality, a definition has been developed and co-produced through the stakeholder consultations in development of this strategy. This definition has become our vision for food equality for Bristol.

It is important to recognise that this definition is closely related to definitions of ‘food security’, ‘food justice’ and ‘food equity’, and incorporates the key elements of these terms. It is also important to highlight that these terms often have multiple definitions.



Important and related terms	Definition
Equity	Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. (The George Washington University, 2020)
Food Insecurity (also referred to as ‘household food insecurity’ and ‘food poverty’)	...being unable to consume an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food for health, in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so. (Dowler et al., 2001)
Food Security	Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (Food and Agricultural Organisation, 1996)
Food Justice	Food justice is where everyone has access to nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food, which is grown, produced, sold and consumed in ways that care for people and the environment. (Feeding Bristol, 2021)
Food Equity	Food equity is the expansive concept that all people have the ability and opportunity to grow and to consume healthful, affordable, and culturally significant foods. (University of Buffalo, accessed 2021)
Food Sovereignty	Food sovereignty is the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity. We have the right to produce our own food in our own territory. Food sovereignty is a precondition to genuine food security. (Via Campesina, 1996)
“Good Food” (as developed by the Bristol Good Food Charter)	Good food is defined as being vital to the quality of people’s lives in Bristol. As well as being tasty, healthy and affordable, the food we eat should be good for nature, good for workers, good for businesses and good for animal welfare. (Bristol Good Food Charter, 2012)

## Guiding principles

This strategy has been developed using the following underlying principles:

- Equity is the key consideration at all stages**  
The inequalities present in our food system and health outcomes are the primary focus of this strategy. To address these inequalities, we need to ensure inclusion of all members of society, and an appropriate focus on those most at risk of social and economic inequality. We strive for **equity**, by which we mean creating a fair and just system which appropriately prioritises the communities and individuals most in need. This focus on equity is what will enable us to drive towards equality across the city.
- Take a preventative approach** Food inequality should not exist in a just society, and it is not enough to only address the problems of food inequality once they are already established. We need to stop these inequalities developing in the first place. This means taking time to identify all the driving causes of the problem and taking action to prevent them.
- Take a systems view** The causes of food inequality are part of a complex system of interdependent factors, as are the solutions. We must recognise the complexity of food inequality and create this strategy with a view of how it will fit into, and interact with, this complex system.

- Take a place-based approach** This empowers communities and incorporates grass root solutions. Building on the activities and assets already in use in localities, instead of attempting to build solutions from scratch. This also needs to consider the specific needs of at-risk groups. By empowering change at a local level, it can influence positive changes across the city.
- Take an inclusive and transparent approach** Diverse community participation from across the city is fundamental in the development, implementation, and administration of the strategy. This is also key to making it meaningful to the people of Bristol and therefore more successful in achieving food equality.
- A reflective and flexible approach** This actively seeks feedback and adapts accordingly. Feedback from individuals, communities and stakeholders will be continually sought and fed back into this work, which will help build a sustainable working relationship that can then exist beyond the limits of this strategy.
- Link the strategy to a pragmatic action plan** This will ensure the goals set out in this strategy are realistic and achievable.



## Introduction

Essential to our survival, food is fundamental to all our lives. Intimately connected to expressions of cultural and social identity, what we eat and how we eat are major determinants of our health and well-being.<sup>2</sup> But more than this, the entire food system – from production to consumption – has a social, economic, and environmental impact on our society, our communities, and our lands.

The right to adequate food is a basic human right.<sup>3</sup> Bristol has had significant success over the past years in bringing together partners from across the city to improve all aspects of the food system. This achievement was recognised in Bristol becoming the second city in the UK to receive 'gold sustainable food city' status in May 2021.<sup>4</sup> Yet despite this, we are seeing increasing levels of food inequality across the city.

An estimated 1 in every 20 households experienced severe to moderate food insecurity in 2019/20 (JSNA, 2021) – a statistic that is likely to have increased due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This figure rises to 1 in every 8 households in certain parts of Bristol, and the stark reality is that people experiencing this form of food inequality are disproportionately from the most deprived areas of the city, or from key at-risk groups. This both reflects and contributes to a much broader range of inequalities experienced by these disadvantaged groups. The most striking example of this is seen in the gap in healthy life expectancy (the number years lived in good health) between the least and most deprived areas of the city which is approximately 16 years.<sup>5</sup> But it is also seen in inequalities

in the infrastructure, and access to services and provisions experienced by different people across the city.

This food inequality must be addressed.

## The Food Equality Strategy

The aim of the *Food Equality Strategy* is **to strive for food equality for all residents in the city of Bristol** within ten years. Recognising the importance of this issue within our city, this aim is deliberately aspirational and aligns with the targets set out in the *One City Plan*.<sup>6</sup>

Presenting a shared vision for food equality in Bristol, this strategy document explores what drives food inequality nationally and locally and outlines a series of priorities for how the city can work together to achieve food equality.

Drawing on data from previous city-wide work alongside a recent *Food Inequality Needs Assessment for Bristol*,<sup>7</sup> this strategy is co-produced and informed by stakeholder consultations, as well as community conversations with people who have lived experience of food inequality in Bristol.<sup>8</sup> (Full details on the stakeholder consultation and community consultation can be provided on request).

Importantly, this strategy sits alongside a separate Food Equality Action Plan that will be developed based on this strategic vision. This action plan will be co-produced by stakeholders across the city and overseen by a representative steering group. It will contain specific actions and commitments from the council and partner organisations on how we will be able to achieve the vision set out in this strategy.

## The benefits to the city from achieving food equality

The purpose of this strategy is to provide the following benefits to our city:

- A more equitable city for all.
- Reduce hunger and food insecurity for residents, recognising and supporting the 'right to adequate food'.
- Reduce health inequalities across the city.
- Reduce the anxiety and other mental health effects caused by food insecurity.
- Reduce the impacts on the NHS and social care system through these improved health outcomes.
- Contribute to city-wide efforts to reduce poverty in Bristol.
- Help develop a thriving and resilient local food economy.
- Build and strengthen connections and communities through food.
- Have a positive impact on our local environment and contribute to the city's commitment to becoming a carbon-neutral and climate resilient city by 2030.
- Help achieve key aims and goals the city has already committed to under the *One City Plan*, the *Bristol City Council Corporate Strategy*, the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*, *The Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight*, and more.

<sup>2</sup> Dimpleby et al, 2020. National food strategy; part one. Available at [www.nationalfoodstrategy.org](http://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org)

<sup>3</sup> [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)

<sup>4</sup> 'Bristol Named Gold Sustainable Food City': [www.goingforgoldbristol.co.uk](http://www.goingforgoldbristol.co.uk)

<sup>5</sup> Bristol City Council JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2020/21: Healthy Life expectancy

<sup>6</sup> 'One City Plan 2021: A Plan for Bristol to 2050': [www.bristolonecity.com](http://www.bristolonecity.com)

<sup>7</sup> Publication Pending – available on request from Bristol City Council Communities and Public Health team.

<sup>8</sup> Publication Pending – available on request from Feeding Bristol team.

## Background work in Bristol

The strategy builds on extensive work that has sought to make Bristol a more just and sustainable food city for those who live and work here. Over the past ten years, this has included:

- The 2011 report *Who Feeds Bristol*, which explains the food system serving the Bristol area.
- The 2013 *Good Food Plan 2020*, which sought to promote food system change across the city.
- The 2013 review *Food Poverty: what does the evidence tell us?*, which draws together national and local data on food insecurity.
- In 2016, a collective city-wide campaign won Bristol 'silver' status as a Sustainable Food City.
- In 2018, Bristol City Council passed the *Good Food and Catering Procurement Policy*.
- The 2019 report *Bristol food provision and services*, which reviewed available food support in the 10 most deprived wards in Bristol.
- In 2021 the *Advertising and Sponsorship Policy* for Bristol City Council now includes restrictions for food and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt.<sup>9</sup>
- The 2020 city-wide COVID-19 crisis food response. Including reports: *Bristol's COVID-19 Community Food Response* and *COVID-19: Local coordination* delivered emergency food, but food plans must address food insecurity.

This work contributed to Bristol's successful city-wide 'Going for Gold' bid<sup>10</sup> to become only the second place in the UK to achieve the Sustainable Food Places Gold award in May 2021. The 2-year initiative was coordinated by the Going for Gold Steering Group and includes food equality as one of six key themes. This new strategy is a legacy of the *Going for Gold* campaign and is also an integral part of the *One City Bristol Good Food 2030 Action Plan*, which is currently in development.

Importantly, Bristol's *Going for Gold* campaign could not have been successful without the strong network of Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise (VCSE), grassroots and statutory sector organisations providing essential and innovative support and access for residents across the city. This network has also been crucial to the COVID-19 pandemic food response over 2020 – 21, as well as to the development of this strategy.

## Food inequality: causes, impacts, and the national picture

Many of the causes and drivers of food inequality relate to broader social and economic inequality, and in particular poverty and economic disadvantage.<sup>11</sup> A stark example of the interactions between poverty and food inequality is seen in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) *Family Resources Survey*, which reported on food insecurity figures in the UK between 2019 – 20, finding that 43 per cent of households who receive Universal Credit experience high or very high levels of food insecurity.<sup>12</sup>

Poverty is a complex issue and with many causes. The impact of living in poverty extends far beyond food inequality, but the two issues are inherently interlinked. For example, people living in poverty may have less resource, capacity and access to facilities and infrastructure which allow them to cook nutritious food from scratch. Many individuals and families may also have to face dilemmas between paying bills or cutting back on food (also known as the 'heat or eat' trade-off).

However, the causes of food inequality are not as simple as just poverty alone. It is a complex issue that is deeply engrained in the economic, social, cultural and environmental structures of our city, and wider society. The following figures highlight key factors driving food inequality, and the far-reaching impact that food inequality can have on individuals and communities.



<sup>9</sup> Full policy available at [democracy.bristol.gov.uk](https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk)

<sup>10</sup> [www.goingforgoldbristol.co.uk](https://www.goingforgoldbristol.co.uk)

<sup>11</sup> House of Lords Select Committee on Food, Poverty, Health and the Environment. *Hungry for change: fixing the failures in food*. Report of Session 2019-20

<sup>12</sup> Department of work and Pensions (2021), *Family Resources Survey*, financial year 2019 to 2020. Published online 25/03/21, available at [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

**Figure 1:** Summary of the causes and drivers of food inequality. Sources: The 2013 *Food Poverty* report<sup>13</sup> and the 2021 *Food Inequality Needs Assessment for Bristol*<sup>14</sup>

**Causes and drivers of food inequality**

Economic	Social	Environmental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low income, unemployment, and financial hardship.</li> <li>• Poor social welfare provision.</li> <li>• The rising cost of living and reduction of household income in real terms.</li> <li>• High proportion of household income spent on food and other essentials</li> <li>• Over-reliance on supermarkets and a lack of investment in local food economies.</li> <li>• Many economic causes exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of access to culturally appropriate food.</li> <li>• Lack of access to equipment and/or fuel for cooking.</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge or skills required to prepare healthy meals.</li> <li>• Lack of access to emergency food support, due to lack of awareness, inability to achieve a referral, poor availability, or social stigma.</li> <li>• Poor regulation of food industry, which incentivises cheaper processed and calorie-dense options.</li> <li>• Marketing of unhealthy foods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced availability of growing spaces and allotments.</li> <li>• Food system reliant on industrial-scale farms, importing and transporting food.</li> <li>• Local food supply chains under-utilised.</li> <li>• A lack of locally available affordable and healthy food is associated with poor diet quality.</li> </ul>



<sup>13</sup> Maslen, C., Raffle, A., Marriot, S., Smith N. (2013) *Food Poverty. What does the Evidence tell us?* Bristol City Council.

<sup>14</sup> Publication Pending – available on request from Bristol City Council Communities and Public Health team.

**Figure 2:** Summary of the impacts of food inequality. Sources: The 2013 *Food Poverty* report<sup>15</sup> and the 2021 *Health Needs Assessment of Food Equality in Bristol*.<sup>16</sup>

**Impacts of food inequality**

Economic	Social	Environmental	Health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer employment opportunities in local food economy.</li> <li>• Fewer people working and participating in the economy.</li> <li>• The social, environmental and health effects of food inequality place a significant financial strain on the state, particularly the NHS and the VCSE sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes a range of behavioural, academic and emotional issues in children, and can compromise their educational attainment.</li> <li>• Poor quality diets are associated with anti-social behaviour and violence in adults.</li> <li>• Disconnection of people from their local food systems (e.g., food growing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of food growing spaces prevents people from growing their own, fresh food.</li> <li>• Carbon emissions result from reliance on non-local and international food supply chains, contributing to climate change.</li> <li>• Food is sourced from industrial-scale agriculture, which negatively affects local ecosystems and biodiversity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food insecurity is strongly associated with poor diet quality and obesity.</li> <li>• Food insecurity has been linked to poor mental health.</li> <li>• Poor diet quality is associated with cardiovascular disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, and some cancers.</li> <li>• In children, poor diet quality increases the risks of stunting, iodine deficiency and iron deficiency anaemia.</li> </ul>



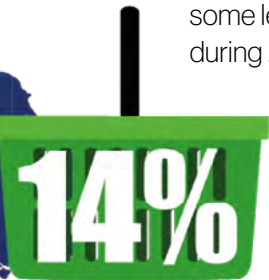
The poorest individuals and communities are disproportionately impacted. As such, food inequality is a key driver of health inequalities.

<sup>15</sup> Maslen, C, Raffle, A, Marriot, S., Smith N. (2013) *Food Poverty. What does the Evidence tell us?* Bristol City Council.

<sup>16</sup> Publication Pending – available on request from Bristol City Council Communities and Public Health team.

## The national picture of food inequality

According to the DWP's *Family Resources Survey* (2021), approximately 14 per cent of households in the UK (equivalent to 9.5 million people) experienced some level of food insecurity during 2019 – 2020 (with



6 per cent experiencing marginal, 4 per cent low, and 4 per cent experiencing very low food security).<sup>17</sup> The distribution of food insecurity across

the country was unequal, with the North West and North East having the highest rates. Food insecurity in the South West was reported lower than the national average, with an estimated 5 per cent of households having marginal, 2 per cent having low and 4 per cent very low food security. However, it is important to note that the data from this survey is not available beyond a regional level, and comparison of our local food insecurity in Bristol to this national average is difficult due to different methods and the lack of consistent recording and reporting of this data. It is also difficult to interpret regional data, where the averages may mask significant variations and inequalities.

<sup>17</sup> Department of work and Pensions (2021), *Family Resources Survey*, financial year 2019 to 2020. Published online 25/03/21, available at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/)

## Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the issue of food inequality, in particular food insecurity, more pressing than ever.

At a national level, it has both exposed and exacerbated some of the long-standing problems of food insecurity which exist in our society. It has also driven a rise in the visibility and discussion of this issue on the national stage, for example in the significant publicity around the campaign spearheaded by the footballer Marcus Rashford around Free School Meals and the problem of food access for children and families.

One of the most visible impacts of the pandemic was that as more households have faced financial pressure from unemployment, under-employment or furlough, there has been an unprecedented rise in households seeking emergency food support. The Trussell Trust (who manage more than half of all food banks in the UK) have reported that between 2019/20 and 2020/21 there has been a 33 per cent increase in food parcels distributed in just one year.<sup>18</sup> And around half of those using food banks were doing so for the first time as a result of unemployment and financial insecurity caused by the pandemic.<sup>19</sup>

Reviewing food insecurity levels during this time, the Food Foundation found that rates of food insecurity have been consistently higher than pre-COVID-19 levels, with those on Universal Credit (UC) especially at-risk. According to their surveys, people who were already claiming UC experienced three times greater levels of food insecurity in the first 6 months of lockdown than the average before the pandemic, despite the £20 uplift to UC.<sup>20</sup>

Importantly, the COVID-19 pandemic has also revealed cracks in our wider food system. It has exposed our over-reliance on supermarkets and long-supply chains, highlighting the severe impact disruption to this model has on food economies at a local and national level; an issue that will be put at further risk of exposure with the impact of Brexit and the indirect impacts of climate change. This does present an opportunity to build a stronger local food system as part of the COVID-19 recovery; one that can both tackle the issues of food inequality and wider issues for workers in the food industry by providing higher rates of job security, pay and financial resilience.



<sup>18</sup> The Trussell Trust. End of Year Stats 2021. Available at [www.trusselltrust.org](http://www.trusselltrust.org)

<sup>19</sup> The Trussell Trust. *Local Lifelines: investing in local welfare during and beyond COVID-19*. Salisbury: The Trussell Trust. 2020.

<sup>20</sup> The Food Foundation. *A Crisis within a Crisis: The Impact of COVID-19 on Household Food Security*. London: The Food Foundation. 2021

## Food inequality in Bristol

Data from multiple sources has been collected to build a picture of the current state of food equality in Bristol. Full details can be found in the Food Inequality Needs Assessment for Bristol.<sup>21</sup> Headline findings are presented below, each of which must be addressed to achieve the vision for food equality in Bristol.

### Food equality shows significant disparity across the city

The effects of food inequality are disproportionality felt within the most deprived areas of the city. While 1 in 20 households (4.2 per cent) across Bristol experienced severe to moderate food insecurity in 2019/20, this rate increased to 1 in every 8 households (12.2 per cent) in the most deprived wards of the city (JSNA, 2021).<sup>22</sup> This inequality mirrors a number of other indicators of food insecurity. For example, up to half of children in some wards of the city are eligible for free school meals, compared to a city-wide average of 1 in every four children.<sup>23</sup> This also relates to the large inequalities in healthy life expectancy (the number of years lived in good health) seen across the city: in 2020, women in the least deprived areas live an average 16.7 years longer in good health. Similarly, men in the least deprived 10 per cent of the city can expect to live 16.3 years longer in good health than those in the most deprived 10 per cent.<sup>24</sup>

Availability of resources across the city is of particular concern. Access to fresh and nutritious food varies considerably between areas, and a report in 2018 found that residents living in some of the more deprived areas

of the city had easier access to takeaways than shops selling fresh and nutritious produce.<sup>25</sup>

Unsurprisingly, emergency food support use is higher among those living in more deprived areas of the city, and people living in the most deprived 10 per cent are three times more likely (8.4 per cent) to access food support compared to those in the least deprived areas of the city (0.3 per cent).<sup>26</sup> Significantly, because this data was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, these rates are expected to have increased.

<sup>21</sup> Food Inequality Needs Assessment for Bristol 2021. Publication Pending – available on request from Bristol City Council Communities and Public Health team

<sup>22</sup> Bristol City Council JSNA health and wellbeing profile 2020/21: food poverty/insecurity.

<sup>23</sup> Free School Meal data provided by Bristol City Council, based on 2021 data.

<sup>24</sup> Bristol City Council JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2020/21: Healthy Life expectancy.

<sup>25</sup> Carey et al, 2018, Bristol Food Provision and Services; informing the work of the Feeding Bristol charity, a short summary.

<sup>26</sup> Bristol City Council JSNA health and wellbeing profile 2020/21: food poverty/insecurity.





## Certain at-risk groups experience higher rates of food inequality

Certain groups are more at risk of experiencing food inequality. For example, according to the *Bristol Quality of Life Survey (2020/21)*, disabled people, full-time carers, single parent households, and those renting from either the council or a housing association were more likely to experience food insecurity.<sup>27</sup>

### Key figures from the *Quality of Life Survey* (reporting on 2020/21 figures):

- Almost 1 in 7 disabled people (14.8 per cent) reported moderate to severe food insecurity in the past 12 months, more than three times higher than the Bristol average (4.2 per cent).
- Residents in council housing were 25 times more likely (11.5 per cent) to have used emergency food support than those who owned their own homes (0.46 per cent).
- 13.4 per cent of single parent households reported that they had experienced moderate to severe food insecurity in the last 12 months, compared to only 1.6 per cent of two parent households.

These findings are supported by the recent food insecurity figures published by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through their *Family Resources Survey* and other studies into food insecurity and food bank use.<sup>28</sup>

Further to this, through engagement with stakeholders and community conversations (detailed later in the strategy) other key at-risk groups were highlighted, including those with No Recourse to Public Funds,<sup>29</sup> people experiencing homelessness, and older residents. Notably, all these groups are likely to be under-represented in *Quality of Life* survey respondents.

## Diet varies across the city

Diet quality (currently only measured as fruit and vegetable intake) was not only shown to be lower for those in more deprived areas, but also for people living in rented accommodation, for people aged 16 – 25, for those with no further educational qualifications, and those who identified as Black/Black British.<sup>30</sup>

## Food inequality is associated with health inequalities in our city

It is difficult to estimate the true impact of food inequality on health outcomes in Bristol. But there are several ways in which food inequality could worsen the health inequalities seen across the city. For example, a healthy diet often costs more than less healthy options,<sup>31</sup> and one of the most direct impacts of food inequality can be lack of access to fresh nutritious food and poor diet quality. This can contribute to excess weight. There are more adults living with excess weight in the more deprived areas of the city: 17.1 per cent of adults in the most deprived areas of the city are classified as obese, compared to only 9.1 per cent in the least deprived areas.<sup>32</sup> A similar pattern is seen in children, with 28 per cent of reception-aged children in the most deprived areas having excess weight compared with 17 per cent in the least deprived areas.<sup>33</sup>



<sup>27</sup> Bristol City Council JSNA health and well-being profile 2020/21: food poverty/insecurity. Available at [www.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.bristol.gov.uk)

<sup>28</sup> Loopstra and Lalor, 2017; Prayogo et al., (2017); MacLeod et al., (2018); Garratt (2017).

<sup>29</sup> This refers to migrants who have no entitlement to the majority of welfare benefits.

<sup>30</sup> Bristol City Council JSNA health and well-being profile 2020/21: food poverty/insecurity. Available at [www.bristol.gov.uk/documents](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents)

<sup>31</sup> [www.foodfoundation.org.uk](http://www.foodfoundation.org.uk)

<sup>32</sup> Bristol City Council JSNA health and well-being profile 2020/21: food poverty/insecurity.

<sup>33</sup> Bristol City Council JSNA health and Well-being profile 2020/21: Health weight (children).

## Priority themes for food equality in Bristol

This strategy aims to significantly improve food equality in Bristol over the next decade. It aligns with other key strategies for improving food systems and addressing poverty in the city, as well as many of the aims laid out in the *National Food Strategy*.<sup>34</sup>

This section sets out the priority themes where action needs to be taken to achieve food equality in Bristol. These themes have been co-produced through stakeholder consultation with representation from over 70 different organisations and community conversations with people who have lived experience of food inequality in the city.<sup>35</sup>

### Priority theme: Fair, equitable access

#### Fair access to nutritious and appropriate food.

Residents are able to access food that is appropriate for their dietary needs, is culturally appropriate, and affordable.

### Priority theme: Choice and security

#### Choice, empowerment, and a feeling of security.

Everyone can make decisions about their relationship with food and are free from the anxiety and stress of food insecurity.

### Priority theme: Skills and resources

#### People and communities are equipped with the necessary food knowledge, skills and facilities.

Residents can foster a healthy food culture, have confidence in their ability to access and use food to meet their needs, as well as the facilities and fuel to cook with.

### Priority theme: Sustainable local food system

**A resilient and environmentally sustainable local food system.** The local food system prioritises resilience and sustainability in food production, food waste management, distribution, economy, and environmental resilience.

### Priority theme: Food at the heart of decision-making

**Food is at the heart of community, economy, and city planning.** Food needs and equality are considered in all decision-making – whether developing social support models, new businesses or planning new housing.

### Priority theme: Cross-cutting strategic aims

**Strategic aims that sit across all the priority themes.**



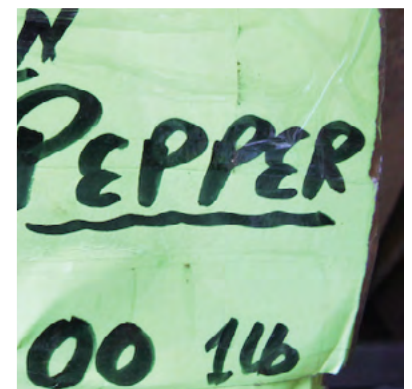
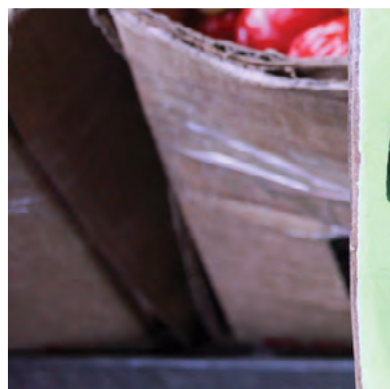
<sup>34</sup>Dimbleby et al, 2020. National food strategy, part one. Available at [www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/part-one/](http://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/part-one/)

<sup>35</sup>Publication Pending – available on request from Feeding Bristol team.

## Priority theme: Fair equitable access



Everyone in the city is able to access food that is appropriate for their dietary needs, is culturally appropriate, and affordable.



## Priority theme: Fair equitable access

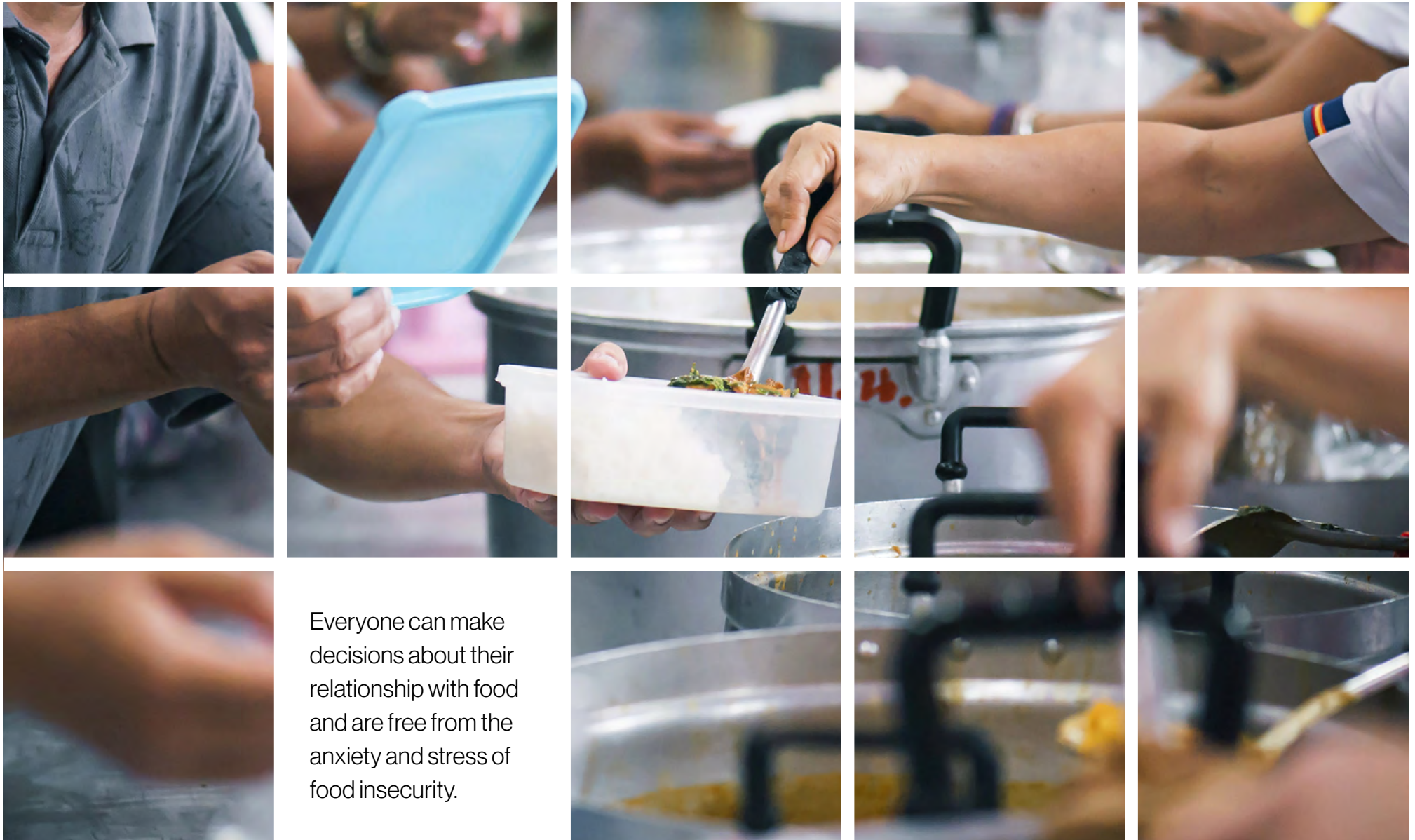
To achieve this, we must address the multiple barriers that people and communities face which limit their access to sufficient fresh, nutritious food that meets their needs. This includes thinking about how our city and communities are structured, for example the variety, location and accessibility of local food outlets, and the transport options that allow people to access them. It also involves thinking about how we can include the specific needs of individuals and groups at risk of food inequality, including disabled people, people experiencing homelessness, different cultural groups and more.

Nutritious and appropriate food needs to be affordable for everyone, but this should not disadvantage the food producer or retailer. We need to encourage innovative models of food support that allows for better access to nutritious and affordable food in ways that enable choice, retains dignity, and develops empowerment.

As a city, we will:

- **Actively investigate and take stock of the specific issues and barriers to accessing nutritious, appropriate food in the most deprived wards and for at-risk communities of interest.** We need to understand how our current food system and transport infrastructure impacts on food access. Mapping shops, social eating spaces, growing spaces, public transport and community groups and facilities will allow us to take a community-led approach to improving access which makes use of the facilities and assets already available. This must include an awareness of the specific needs of different areas and considering specific access needs for at risk groups including disabled people, refugee/asylum seekers, young people, people experiencing homelessness, and older people.
- **Take time and use a participatory approach to understanding barriers and needs.** Listen to and work with communities to understand specific barriers and needs, and co-create solutions, whilst being mindful of the differences that may exist between localities.
- **Recognise and understand that the definition of ‘good access’ to food may differ for different communities and take action to address this consideration throughout services.** Ensure emergency food providers and services are able to take into account what types of food are appropriate for different cultural backgrounds and intolerances allergies.
- **Support diversity of shops that increase access to fresh food.** Do this in a manner which will support communities to eat well and encourage a vibrant local food economy.

## Priority theme: Choice and security



Everyone can make decisions about their relationship with food and are free from the anxiety and stress of food insecurity.

## Priority theme: Choice and security

Eliminating food insecurity is not only a worthy goal but can also prevent a wide range of negative knock-on effects on a person's life, health, and wellbeing. Food insecurity creates anxiety and stress, an issue that was highlighted in the community conversations. While there are a wealth of organisations and schemes providing excellent services addressing food and financial insecurity in the city, many residents are unaware of the support available to them. At all stages it is important to recognise the key role that choice and empowerment can have on people's dignity, perception of and engagement with actions addressing food inequality.

As a city, we will:

- Empower communities to have a platform to make change.** Take a co-designed approach to actions and accountability to address food equality, which helps ensure the right action is taken and encourages a joint sense of ownership. Use the recruitment of Food Equality Champions (people with relevant lived experience based in the communities of interest) as a framework for a positive example of how this might be done in a collaborative way.
- Build resilience through prevention.** Take action to help shift the current needs away from a model of emergency food provision to one of prevention. This will help increase dignity and improve food security.
- Use food as an opportunity to encourage access to other support and services.** Expand access to other support and preventative services that can affect broader positive changes in people's lives, including financial support and mental health services.
- Increase choice and empowerment in food offers from services and projects that provide food support.** Food provision needs to be adaptive to communities to provide more appropriate choice that matches the need. Part of this requires recognising that additional choice is likely to require investment into and training for food support providers.
- Reduce the risk of stigma in programmes that address food inequality.** We need to champion solutions that preserve dignity and don't create stigma and recognise the importance of how we create and deliver solutions in and with communities.
- Maximise income for residents.** Working with welfare support organisations and the broader work in the city to counter poverty, maximise support for people to access unclaimed welfare benefits, and provide financial support and grants schemes, as well as other measures to support income and wages. This includes promoting the Real Living Wage as per the Real Living Wage Foundation.

## Priority theme: Skills and facilities



People and communities are equipped with knowledge, skills and facilities.

## Priority theme: Skills and resources

Provide the necessary tools to facilitate residents to foster a healthy food culture through increased confidence in their ability to not only access food, but also in having the appropriate knowledge, skills and facilities to be able to use the food that meets their needs. Often a person's ability to be able to prepare a meal is hampered by a lack of facilities at home and in the community, or a lack of knowledge and confidence with food. Education has been a key theme in both the community conversations and the stakeholder consultations, and this applies to all ages from early years through adulthood.

As a city, we will:

- **Address barriers posed by lack of facilities or equipment** which are preventing people in hardship from preparing and cooking food in the most affected areas of the city. This can be either at their own homes, or through local community resources.
- **Build and strengthen facilities and assets already in the community.** Focus on the strengths already in the system and building on them. In this way we can capitalise on the numerous resources already available across Bristol and encourage the development of best practice around the city. This can include community kitchens, growing projects, initiatives from the hospitality sector and more. Creating stronger links between them will create a more resilient network that will pass the test of time.
- **Take specific action to reduce food inequality for children and young people,** recognising the key opportunity that working with both children and young people can have in preventing many further issues for themselves, their families and their communities. Ensure interventions that impact this group receive appropriate consideration and prioritisation.
- **Develop and encourage food related topics and skills education in schools, colleges and early years settings,** embedding into existing community-based programs and initiatives across the city. This needs to include elements of the whole food system, from growing, to buying, to cooking. There is a need to invest in subsidising these projects these projects and initiatives to allow for greater access and skills development.
- **Expand food related education beyond school age,** to cover topics as needed (for example budgeting, growing courses, community cooking classes etc). We will need to adapt these opportunities for specific communities (for example the needs of disabled people may differ from those experiencing homelessness).



# Priority theme: Sustainable local food system



A resilient and sustainable local food system.

## Priority theme: Sustainable local food system

Resilience and sustainability are considered and prioritised at all stages of the local food system. Through this, we will achieve a positive impact on the environment at a local level, as well as develop resilience in the food system, and create and support careers for people working in the local food economy. Increased prevalence of small-scale farms and community growing have been demonstrated to have links to increased education, more resilient infrastructure and a stronger local economy. Access to growing spaces helps facilitate improved cooking knowledge and education, as well as providing valuable health and wellbeing benefits.

As a city, we will:

- **Work with our county neighbours to build a fair and equitable food system throughout the region.** We need to acknowledge that we cannot grow enough food within the city to feed Bristol. A resilient, local food system will need to be built through co-operation across local authority boundaries, mixing urban, peri-urban and rural food production that supports food justice. This would include growing diverse food, providing work opportunities and paying a fair price for produce.
- **Expand the food growing capacity within the city.** Importantly this must also consider equity in growing spaces across different areas of the city in response to need. Local and ethical growing space and produce needs to be accessible and equitable to people from all communities and backgrounds.
- **Champion food equality when considering land use within the city,** including equitable distribution geographically. This will include the need to review access to and management of allotments and smallholdings as part of the new *Parks and Green Spaces Strategy* and wider issues of city planning.
- **Champion inclusive procurement for public services in the city** which promote local producers and sustainable methods of production, building on the work already undertaken in this area.
- **Continue to reduce food waste.** Food waste occurs at multiple levels in our food system, from production and distribution to household food waste. Excessive waste has a direct impact on food inequality and also has unnecessary environmental impact. We need to minimise waste throughout all levels of this system, and ensure food equality is a key consideration at all stages of this approach. Find innovative ways of reducing and redistributing food surplus.
- **Support and continue to champion food equality in all work streams that allowed Bristol to become a Gold Sustainable Food city.** Ensure that the work of the Food Equality Strategy is constantly fed into and considered throughout the *Bristol Good Food 2030 Action Plan*. This will set out the wider strategic plans for the city's food system, and will bring together action plans on all aspects of the food system.

## Priority theme: Food at the heart of decision-making



Food is at the heart of community, economy, and city planning.

## Priority theme: Food at the heart of decision-making

We must put food at the heart of our decision-making and recognise that food is a cross-cutting issue. Addressing many of the factors that impact food equality requires close collaboration with multiple partners including the public sector, the private sector, grassroots organisations, and the voluntary and community sector. Food is at the very heart of the lives of individuals and communities, and therefore should be at the heart of decision making across the city. This includes, but is not limited to, working with city planning, transport, housing and licensing decisions, and involves taking opportunities to work across local authority areas to work across local authority areas to reduce food inequality.

As a city, we will:

- Look at the big picture, and consider the interactions of food equality with the wider system.** When addressing food equality, recognise the integral overlap between food insecurity and the broader work to counter poverty in the city. This includes ensuring the work of the strategy aligns with other council policies to maximise impact. For example, the *Bristol One City Plan 2050*, the *Bristol Corporate Strategy 2018 – 2023*, the *One City Climate Strategy 2020*, *Thrive Bristol*, the *Parks and Green Spaces Strategy*, the *Fuel Poverty Action Plan*, and the *Bristol Good Food 2030* plan (currently in development).
- Embed food equality outcomes in all relevant departments and work-streams across the City and the City Council.** The impacts on food equality outcomes should be a key consideration for all departments, and during all relevant decision making in the city. Continue this ‘health in all policies’ approach in development of the *Food Equality Action Plan*.
- Use a One City Approach.** Work closely with the One City boards to ensure food equality is embedded into their six thematic boards: Children and Young People, Economy and Skills, Environment, Health and Wellbeing, Homes and Communities, and Transport. Use this Approach to promote and link the work of food equality to have a wide range of city partners.
- Incentivise investment in the local food economy,** particularly in recognising the impact of COVID-19 on food systems and hospitality sector, and the broader economic impact of the pandemic. Recognise the huge value of volunteers in this sector, but set the culture of hiring from local communities and do not create reliance on voluntary solutions.
- Work across local authority borders** to address the food inequality that exists within the current food system. Create innovative joint approaches to tackling food inequality with neighbouring local authorities, identifying opportunities to have a positive impact at a broader regional level.
- Bristol will become a leading city in our approach to addressing food inequality,** and where appropriate be vocal on the national stage in matters where national policy or intervention will have a significant impact on food equality.

## Cross-cutting strategic aims

The following strategic aims sit across all the priority themes and will need to be addressed in order to maximise the impact of the strategy through the action plan. Importantly, while this section outlines specific cross-cutting themes that impact each of the priority areas, the priority areas themselves should not be seen in isolation, and should be approached together.

As a city, we will:

- **Listen and respond to the needs of the communities.** Build working relationships with communities throughout the ten-year strategy timeline, actively seeking feedback and modifying our methods and actions for maximum impact. We need to be creative with how we engage with people and communities, so there are a variety of ways people can engage and get involved.
- **Commit to investing in solutions.** Creating fair access to food will require financial investment. We recognise that, currently, there are no funds attached to deliver this strategy, but if the city is making a serious commitment to achieving this aim, it must also be prepared to provide appropriate funding for solutions presented in the Food Equality Action Plan. We must be prepared to take advantage of opportunities presented by the National Food Strategy, and to encourage, facilitate and co-ordinate communities and organisations across the city to apply for available funding to enable positive action.
- **Create a system for monitoring food equality.** Currently data on food equality is available from many indirect and proxy sources. Understanding the impact it has on people's lives, in different areas of the city, or trends over time, can be difficult. To effectively evaluate the impact of the strategy and action plan a protocol for monitoring should be established. This will include a compilation of data from diverse sources, which takes into account data that is only available at a national and a regional level, but also more targeted data and qualitative data which can examine inequalities, trends and the lived experience of those living with food inequality within individual areas of the city. This should include focussed action for groups who are under-represented in our current data sources.
- **Develop an accessible communications strategy** with information on services available to support people experiencing food or financial hardship. This also includes improving communication to workers and volunteers working in food-equality related services. This will take into account accessibility requirements across a range of users, for example, non-technology users and different languages, as well as using a variety of media both through digital, print and physical institutions (e.g., schools and community groups). Provide better visibility and links to promote the work of the numerous schemes already providing support in the city, as well as any new schemes that arise.

- **Take a strong stance on food equality and food justice issues at a regional and national level** with the aim of influencing national policy that affects many of the determinants of food equality. We want Bristol to be seen as a pioneering city that is leading the fight for food justice.

## Governance, oversight and delivery

- The strategy is to be embedded in the 'health and well-being' strand of the **One City Approach**.<sup>36</sup> This approach brings together a huge range of public, private, voluntary and third sector partners within Bristol. Through work across six major thematic boards, these partners work together with a shared aim to make Bristol a fair, healthy and sustainable city. Oversight for this strategy is provided by the Health and Wellbeing Board. The strategy and Action Plan will also be a part of the *Bristol Good Food 2030 Action Plan*, which is currently in development and will have oversight from the Environment Board.
- A **Steering Group** will be set up to oversee the implementation of the strategy, who will be report and be accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board. This group will monitor progress, update the relevant boards, and be dynamic and flexible to achieve the aims of the strategy. This Steering Group will have a representative membership from key partners in

<sup>36</sup> [www.bristolonecity.com/about-the-one-city-plan/](http://www.bristolonecity.com/about-the-one-city-plan/)

the public, private and VCSE sectors in the city, as well as representatives of the key communities and groups most affected by food inequality. Membership will also include 10 Food Equality Champions – people with relevant lived experience – to represent their communities.

- The **Stakeholder Group** with a wide representation of organisations across the city will continue to meet regularly. Keeping the engagement of this group through good communication and working to encourage wide representation from the whole system will be key to the success of achieving the aims of this strategy and the subsequent action plan.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are key to understanding the impact and success of the strategy and action plan. Current data sources are not sufficient to adequately assess this in our city, therefore creating a system which will allow us to monitor this sufficiently is one of our key strategic aims. This may involve making better use of existing data sources, as well as potentially creating new methods of monitoring progress.

Sources of data that will help to inform the state of food equality in Bristol include the national measurement of food insecurity in the DWP *Family Resources Survey*; and local data sources, such as the *Bristol Quality of Life Survey*. Other proxy measures, such as Free School Meal eligibility, Healthy Start Voucher uptake and Universal Credit claims will continue to be used to estimate the impact of food inequality. Work to improve this data will overlap on broader work to counter poverty in the city, and good quality data on food equality may be able to provide significant useful insights to many other areas of work. We will commit to collaboration and ensure relevant data sharing where appropriate.

Establishing a framework for monitoring and evaluating the impacts on food inequality will be a core aim in the action plan, and we will endeavour to create a regular, reliable and representative method of visualising the state and impact of food equality work in our city. Importantly, a key method of monitoring will be continuing to have regular community conversations and seeking regular feedback from affected communities and vulnerable groups.

## Risks

This is an ambitious strategy, and we must acknowledge there are risks to achieving the aims sets out in this document.

This strategy will require investment and currently there are no funds attached to achieve its stated aims. Funding will need to be secured through multiple sources, which may include the local authority, Public Health England, and Central Government in alliance with city-wide efforts. An innovative and collaborative approach to funding will be taken.

Achieving this strategy will also involve a significant shift in behaviour, both within organisations and as a society. We need to recognise that these changes will not happen overnight and achieving a sustained shift in our practices will require all people involved to be reflective, open and committed to food equality.

A full risk register will be developed and outlined in the *Food Equality Action Plan*.



<sup>37</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

<sup>38</sup> [www.bristolonecity.com/sdgs/](http://www.bristolonecity.com/sdgs/)

<sup>39</sup> House of Lords (2020), *Hungry for change: fixing the failures in food*. Report of session 2019-2020

## National and local policy context

This strategy sits alongside and complements a number of local, national and international policies and strategies to address food inequality. These have been considered in the development of this strategy, and this section highlights the main international and national policies that the aims in this strategy align to.

**International – United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.** The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognise the importance of food security under their goal number two: End Hunger. Specifically, by 2030 they set the aim to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”.<sup>37</sup> Bristol is committed to delivering the SDGs locally, and conducted a voluntary local review to map progress against these goals in 2019.<sup>38</sup>

**National Select Committee on Food, Poverty, Health and the Environment: Hungry for change: fixing the failures in food (July 2020).** This report looks at the links between food, inequality, public health, and sustainability. It identifies where interventions can be applied, or reinforced, to tackle the serious health, social and environmental damage that is being inflicted by the current food system. This will ensure a healthy and sustainable diet that can be accessed by everyone.<sup>39</sup> It makes a series of recommendations to government that should be included in the government’s white paper on the *National Food Strategy*.

**National Food Strategy.** Published in 2021,<sup>40</sup> this large independent review of the food system in England, covers all aspects of the food system, including food production, farming and trade policy, environmental impact and health impacts. It does not include specific consideration of food inequality, and especially contains little detail on food poverty. Despite this, the recommendations in this strategy would have several positive impacts on food equality in Bristol if they were adopted at a national level. This is especially true in being able to address some of the policy and corporate determinants of food inequality which would be impossible to meaningfully tackle independently at a local level. Initial reaction to this strategy across politics, the media, public institutions and private industry has contained a lot of positive support.<sup>41</sup> The government will produce their White Paper response to this strategy in 2022, at which point the impacts on the *Food Equality Strategy* for Bristol will be reviewed.

### Local policy and strategy links

There are a number of strategies and policies in Bristol which are relevant to food equality. Below is a list of some of the key activities and documents. This strategy has been developed with these in mind, and efforts to join up, collaborate, and work alongside these workstreams will continue through the process of creation and delivery.

- **Bristol One City Plan 2050.** Food equality touches on multiple objectives, specifically:
  - By 2021 ensure Bristol is accredited as a gold standard in the *Sustainable Food City Awards* (already achieved) and establish a legacy programme.

- By 2023 over 50 per cent of fast-food outlets in the city sell healthy alternatives in line with the *Bristol Eating Better Awards*.
- By 2031 everyone has access to affordable fresh food within a 10-minute walk from their home.
- By 2036 all schools will produce and grow food for their own use.
- **Bristol Corporate Strategy 2018 – 2023.** Under the section *Empowering and Caring*, give our children the best start in life, and under *Well-being*, tackle food and fuel poverty. This strategy is currently being updated.
- **Bristol City Council Business Plan 2020 – 2021: COVID-19 Recovery Edition.** Under *Key Commitment 1 – Healthy weight declaration* and *Key Commitment 3 – Tackle food and fuel poverty*. These include a commitment to increase the number of food outlets holding a *Bristol Eating Better Award* in priority wards.
- **Thrive Bristol** is a 10-year programme to improve the mental health and well-being of everyone in Bristol, it recognises the mental health impacts of food insecurity.
- **One City Climate Strategy.** Under *Delivery Theme 9: Food* – “Developing a resilient and low carbon food supply chain will contribute to the reduction of Bristol’s carbon footprint whilst also improving security to the supply chain and boosting the local food economy. Positive change around Bristol’s food culture also

<sup>40</sup> [www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/](http://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/)

<sup>41</sup> [www.foodmanufacture.co.uk/Article/2021/07/15/National-Food-Strategy-Part-2-reaction](http://www.foodmanufacture.co.uk/Article/2021/07/15/National-Food-Strategy-Part-2-reaction)

provides an opportunity to engage with children and adults about health, well-being and nutrition as well as different cultures and diets” and “Sustainable and low carbon food options will be available to everyone, respectful of all dietary and cultural requirements, in all future climates.”

- **Local Government Declaration on Healthy Weight** – adopted by Bristol City Council in 2020.
- **Recovering from COVID-19** – tackling poverty highlights the importance and overlap of fuel poverty and food poverty work.
- **Shaping Places for Healthier Lives** – £300K successful bid to address food insecurity across Bath, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire over the next three years.
- **The Bristol Eating Better Award** is a free award for food businesses that sell healthier food options and promote sustainability. Also available for schools and early years settings.
- **Mayoral priorities 2021 – 2024**, specifically under the commitment to, “Deliver our climate and ecological plans including £1 billion investment in clean energy, double the tree canopy, and grow sustainable food in every ward.”

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## Summary and next steps

This document presents a joint vision of how we can work to achieve food equality across the city of Bristol. It builds on the significant good work already achieved by the numerous organisations across the city. The priority themes and strategic aims needed to achieve this vision are outlined and have been developed with a large stakeholder input.

**This Food Equality Strategy 2022 – 32** will feed into the broader work of the **Bristol Good Food 2030 Action Plan** and will ensure that equality is a key consideration in all decisions relating to food in the city.

**A Food Equality Action Plan** will be developed to bring together key stakeholders under each strategic area to set commitments for how we will achieve each desired goal, and priorities to address the greatest needs.

**A Food Equality Steering Group** will be set up to monitor and ensure progress against these areas and provide accountability through the **One City Approach** via the relevant boards, and through feedback to the wider stakeholder consultation group. A key measure of success and accountability will be the **ongoing engagement with the residents and communities** affected by food inequality, to ensure the actions taken are co-designed and meet their needs in an equitable manner. Through promotion of this strategy and ongoing collaborative work with partners across the city, we believe we can embed considerations of food equality across all decision making in our city. Following these steps will allow us **to achieve our ambitious aim to achieve food equality for all residents in the city of Bristol.**

