



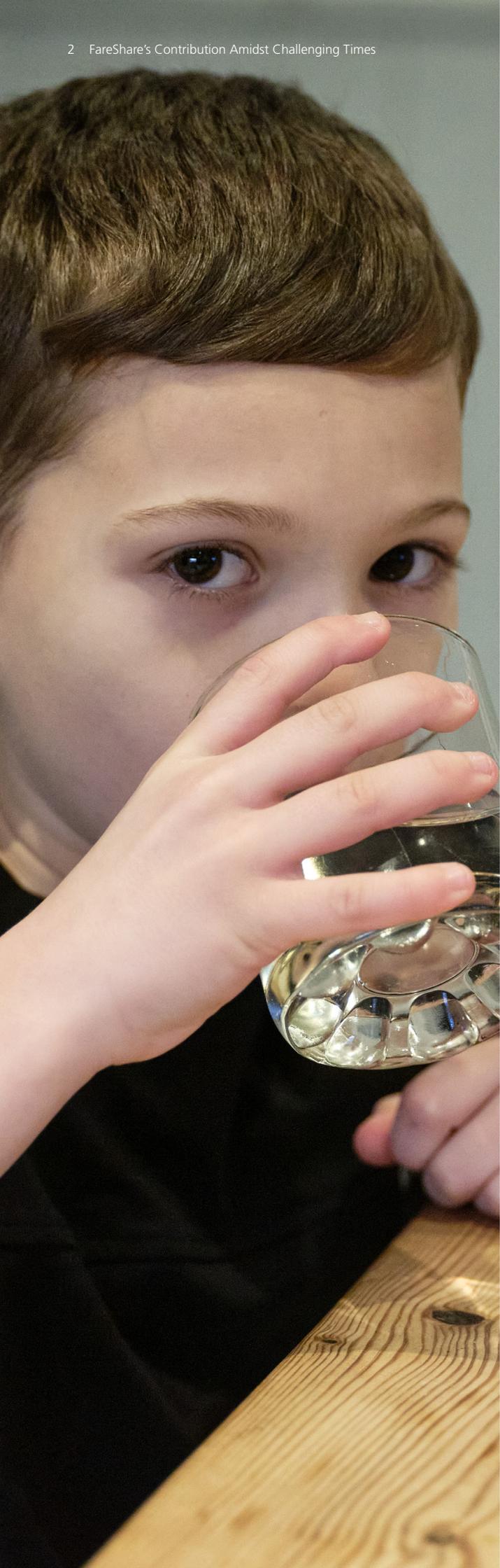
FareShare's Contribution Amidst Challenging Times

The economic and social impact created by
FareShare's work in redistributing surplus
food in the UK



University of
Hertfordshire **UH**

Hertfordshire
Business School



Contents

A Message from our CEO	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction: The Ongoing Cost-Of-Living Crisis and Impact on Families	6
The Role of FareShare	7
Theory of Change	8
SROI Methodology	9
The Estimation of the Social and Economic Value of an Outcome	11
Results of the SROI Analysis	13
Comparison with Previous Impact Evaluations	18
Impact for the Volunteers	20
Impact on the Employability Trainees	21
Limitations and Future Steps	24
Conclusion	25

This report was carried out by the University of Hertfordshire on behalf of and in collaboration with FareShare

Authors:
Dr Christopher Nicholas, Dr Tassos Patokos & Dr Aarti Rughoo

Date: April 2025

A Message from our CEO



Kris Gibbon-Walsh, CEO, FareShare UK

I am proud to share this new report on FareShare's Social Return on Investment and to work for an organisation that can spend our supporters' generous gifts in such a powerful way; **together we multiply the impact on people, on communities and the environment.**

These charities are doing much more than feeding people, they use food to reduce isolation, support mental and physical well-being and reduce addiction. At FareShare we care about where surplus food goes and the difference it makes to every one of the million people we reach.

This in-depth piece of research by the University of Hertfordshire showcases the significant social and economic impact FareShare has across the UK. Every tonne of food redistributed through FareShare and our partners generates an impact value of £5,600 by supporting people, communities and the planet.

This report lays out both the social impact, but also crucially that it is hugely cost-effective. By redistributing surplus food to charities spanning the length and breadth of the UK, FareShare saves the economy millions of pounds in avoided costs that ease pressure on public services, alongside supporting frontline services and helping people live healthier, more connected lives.

FareShare's impact goes far beyond meals; it provides a gateway to connect people with wider services that support their well-being and even future employment opportunities. Our network of 8,000 charity partners tells us that, thanks to this food, people skip fewer meals, they feel healthier, and are more engaged in their communities.

Executive Summary

FareShare is helping to transform lives across the UK by unlocking the power of surplus food. In 2023-24, the charity rescued more than **56,000 tonnes of good-to-eat surplus food**—enough for **135 million meals**—through a network of **8,357 charities and community groups**. As the UK's **largest food redistribution charity**, FareShare plays a vital role in supporting people to eat well, feel connected, and live healthier, more stable lives.

Nearly **1 million people**—including children, families, older adults, and individuals facing tough times—benefited from this food. But the impact goes far beyond meals. FareShare's latest Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation for 2023-24 highlights the significant economic and social value created through their work.

By supporting a wide range of frontline organisations, FareShare helps deliver outcomes that include better nutrition, improved physical and mental health, reduced financial stress, stronger communities, and a lighter environmental footprint.

For every £1 FareShare receives, together with its network partners and local charities, it generates £13 in social and economic value. Of this, £8.45 is saved by the state—thanks to reduced pressure on public services—and £4.55 directly benefits individuals through lower food costs and access to essential services.

The impact is being delivered through:

- Community Services (37%)
- Food Services (31%)
- Drop-in Services (16%)
- Faith organisations, schools, childcare, residential settings, and local authorities (16%)

In terms of who's benefitting:

- **61%** are adults
- **25%** are families with children
- **7%** are children under 18
- **7%** are older adults aged 65+

What sets this year's report apart is its depth.

FareShare expanded its data collection to capture more detail across key areas—outcomes, charity types, and beneficiary groups—allowing for a clearer picture of the impact at every level.

Despite ongoing challenges across the UK, FareShare's impact is widespread and impressive. By making the most of surplus food, the charity supports people, strengthens local networks, reduces demand on public services, and helps build healthier, more resilient communities.

The findings reveal that FareShare's work creates an outstanding net economic and social impact of **£319,696,504** annually.

The average net value generated stands at **£321** per beneficiary.

The study calculates the impact created for each volunteer at FareShare at **£1765.**

The economic and social benefits for each trainee undergoing the employability programme are estimated to stand at **£3,974.**



Introduction: The Ongoing Cost-Of-Living Crisis and its Impact on Families

The knock-on effects of a cost-of-living crisis that emerged in 2021 are still being felt in 2024 across the country and remain particularly detrimental for low-income households. Whilst the inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic drinks eased to 7.0% in January 2024², data from the Food Foundation showed that in the same period, 45% of households receiving Universal Credit were experiencing food insecurity³.

Furthermore, with no real wage growth expected before 2029⁴ and with rates of material deprivation rising substantially recently⁵, the situation remains dire.

There can't be much that's more important than giving children a good start in life, so well done FareShare for leading the charge in supporting vulnerable children.



A lot more people accessing our service and different demographic e.g. more families and young children.

A significant (45%) reduction in food donations- the middle class can no longer afford to give a few additional items in their weekly shop anymore.



The Role of FareShare

FareShare is the UK's leading food redistribution charity. It provides surplus food (that would otherwise go to waste) to several thousands of frontline charities and community groups. In 2023/24, FareShare supported 8,357 charities and redistributed an estimated 56,687 tonnes of food - equivalent to 135 million meals that helped feed almost one million vulnerable individuals⁶.

The Covid-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020 resulted in significant expansion of FareShare's operations. Since then, the combined effects of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis have driven unprecedented demand, doubling the overall volumes of food compared to 2019 levels^{7,8}, and enabling FareShare to re-distribute **56,687,130T in 23/24**, compared to 23,543T in 19/20.

A core principle of FareShare has always been to prioritise collaborations that promote the social impact of redistributed food. In practical terms, this means that frontline charities and organisations that deliver wrap-around care and support services that help tackle poverty at the root level are prioritised over charities that only give away food parcels.

Following this principle ensures that FareShare is instrumental in addressing the cause of the problems faced by individuals turning to charities – rather than providing temporary relief for these problems' symptoms.



Theory of Change

Prioritising charities and organisations that use the redistributed food in the most impactful way leads to an increase in FareShare's own social impact. In order to articulate this impact and inform its impact evaluation, FareShare has developed a "theory of change" in partnership with NCVO Charities Evaluation Service⁹. This framework outlines FareShare's key activities and the outcomes delivered in support of its dual aim: maximising the social value of redistributed food and preventing good surplus food from going to waste minimising emissions.

The framework includes two dimensions of the impact statement, tying in with FareShare's mission: **a)** the social value of surplus food is maximised to better support individuals to improve physical well-being, mental well-being, social inclusion, and food security, and **b)** reduced negative environmental impact of surplus food. FareShare has been working on evaluating its impact on both dimensions. With regard to the first dimension in particular, one major evaluation happened in 2018, when New Economics Foundation (NEF) Consulting was commissioned to conduct a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study and estimated that FareShare creates approximately £50.9 million on socio-economic impact every year¹⁰.

After this study and starting in 2020, FareShare began running an annual survey to track the progress linked to the theory of change. In 2023, the University of Hertfordshire used data from FareShare's annual survey and conducted a newer SROI study, evaluating FareShare's annual impact at an outstanding £225.2 million¹¹.

The present study by the University of Hertfordshire is an update of the 2023 study using data from the latest annual survey, and also taking into account additional outcomes that were not considered in the 2023 calculation.



SROI Methodology

In accordance with the Theory of Change, FareShare had already developed a series of outcomes to measure the benefit to charities and their beneficiaries. Based off this, the following themes and corresponding outcomes are measured in the SROI report.

Theme	Outcome
Quantity of Food	Increased quantity of food delivered
Quality of Food	Trying new things Access to better quality food
Balanced Diet	Increased variety of food Eat more fruit and vegetables Developing better eating habits
Health	Improved physical health Improved mental health More energy
Well-being and Support Services	Increased access to well-being support Increased access to support services
Food and Cooking Skills Services	Increased cooking skills Increased food literacy
Employment Services	Increased access to work-related education, training and skills
Sense of Community/ Helping Families	Strengthening communities Increased volunteering Helping Families Feeling less lonely
Cost of Food	Less financial pressure Not skipping meals Time saved sourcing food People save money they can spend on other essentials
Stigma around accepting food	Experiencing less stigma
Environment	Reduced food waste



SROI Methodology

All charities receiving food from FareShare were aggregated as follows:

Charity types:

- Childcare (pre school/nursery/childminder)
- Community Centre (including Food Growing/ Gardening)
- Drop-in Services (Advice/ Resource Centre, Day Centre/ Drop-in Centre, Medical Facility, Training Centre)
- Faith Organisations
- Food Services only (e.g. food bank, pantry, meals)
- Local Authority
- Residential Setting
- School Age Services (School, Holiday Provision, Out of School Club)

The primary sources of information were the annual charity and individual impact surveys undertaken by FareShare in 2023/24. The purpose of the surveys was to understand the impact of FareShare's food redistribution on the charities and community organisations that use their services. 1,423 charities completed the charity survey while 2,588 individuals completed the individual survey. There were 236,289 beneficiaries represented in the survey with the main beneficiary types identified as Children under the age of 18, Families with children, Adults and Adults over the age of 65.

The overall aim of this SROI analysis is to estimate the monetary value of the social and economic impact of FareShare's theory of change outcomes. For some of these outcomes, the monetisation of the socio-economic impact can be relatively straightforward such as the ones assessing the cost of a balanced meal, or the savings generated from reducing food waste. For those outcomes that are not typically monetised, a financial proxy is attributed to measure their impact. For example, this was the approach taken to estimate the well-being and support services outcomes or the sense of community and helping families. The monetary values measure the social benefits to society and the individuals from accessing and benefiting from these outcomes. Ultimately, the sum of the social and economic monetary value from all the outcomes is the resulting value created from the work undertaken by FareShare in redistributing surplus food. This overall value translates into savings to the state and the beneficiaries.

A warm place to sit all day, with a free hot meal during cold weather, saves on heating and cooking.



The Estimation of the Social and Economic Value of an Outcome

The SROI approach is a step-by-step approach¹² that has been applied to each of the twenty-four outcomes from FareShare's annual charity impact survey under each of the four beneficiary types and across all the eight charity groups. To provide an example, below is an application of the social and economic model to the outcome 'People Experience Improved Physical Health' for the beneficiary type 'children', under the 'Community Centres including Growing Food/ Gardening' charity type.

Step 1: Identification of the unique number of beneficiaries e.g. children being serviced by Community Centres and impacted by FareShare's work. Calculations: 1) According to the FareShare annual charity impact survey 2023/24, there were an estimated 2,587 children using the charities within the Community Services Group surveyed, representing 1.1% of the total beneficiaries in the sample. 2) To ringfence FareShare's impact, the number of beneficiaries in the sample is weighted by the proportion of FareShare food received (67.2%) so the sample group consists of 1,738 children.

Step 2: Application of the outcome incidence which is 55% as per the Impact Survey 2023/24. This represents the frequency reported under the outcome 'support for health services' for children within community centres. The next step in the calculation is $1738 \times 0.55 = 956$ children.

Step 3: A deadweight is subtracted to account for the outcome still being achieved regardless of the charities' or FareShare's intervention. As reported by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2024)¹³, children living in poverty are significantly more likely to suffer from acute and long-term illness and require hospital admission as well as being 72% more likely than other children to be diagnosed with a long-term illness. We therefore infer a deadweight of 28% representing those who are not affected. The calculation gives 469 children [$956 - [1738 \times 0.28]$].

Step 4: Application of the first attribution to capture the direct impact of the charity which is reported as 82% (based on the frequency this charity type is used by this beneficiary type). The calculation gives $469 \times 0.82 = 385$.

Step 5: Application of the second attribution to capture the direct impact of FareShare which is estimated at 83%. This is derived from the proportion of community services charities out of all charities that responded, 'Extremely likely' and 'Likely' to 'having to close down our service if we were to stop receiving food from FareShare'. The calculation yields $385 \times 0.83 = 320$. This means that 320 children from the sample of 2,587 beneficiaries categorised as children accessing community services experienced an improvement in their physical health from directly accessing food and services from a charity dependent on FareShare's food redistribution. This is the net impact of FareShare's contribution in terms of the number of children impacted.

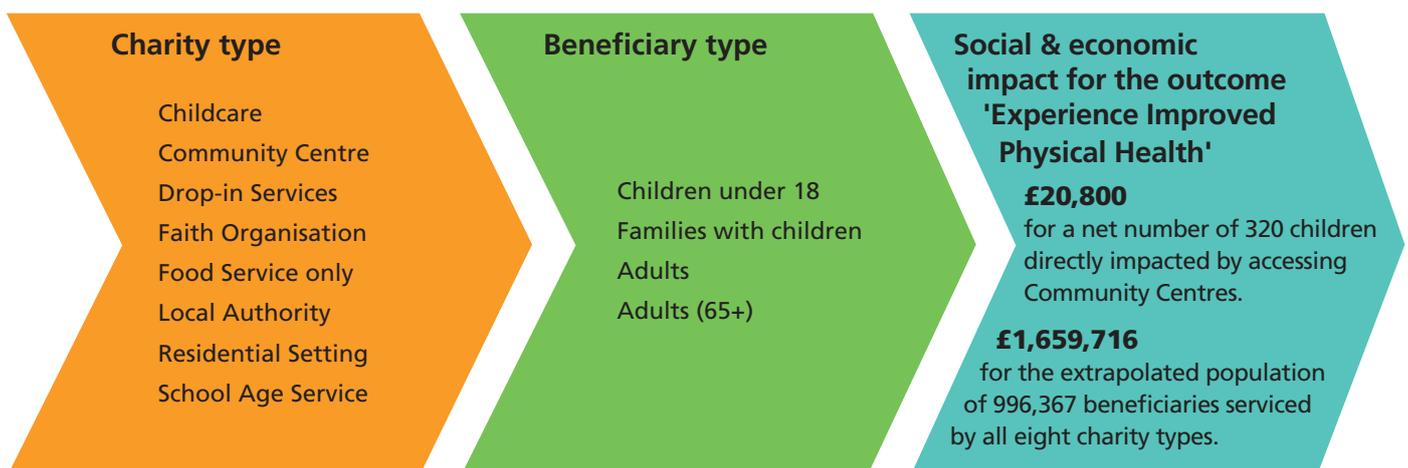
The Estimation of the Social and Economic Value of an Outcome

Step 6: Monetisation of FareShare’s impact. This is obtained by applying a financial proxy of £65 per child to the 320 number of child beneficiaries, which equals £20,800. The financial proxy is obtained based on the following reasoning.

- 1) As reported by the Kings’ Funds (2024)¹⁴, in current prices, the cost of poverty on health as estimated by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation stands at £34 billion. In 2021/22, six million people experienced ‘very deep’ poverty (JRF,2024). The cost of poverty on health is therefore estimated at £5,667 per person.
- 2) According to JRF (2024), more than 1 in 5 people in the UK (22%) were in poverty in 2021/22 – 14.4 million people. This included 4.2 million (or nearly 3 in 10) children.
- 3) The savings are adjusted on the basis of savings on health costs for each beneficiary receiving typically 2 weeks of food supplies. The calculations are $0.3 \times £5667 = £1700$ per year $\times 2/52 = £65$.
For 320 children helped by the Community Services charity group, the impact is equivalent to £20,800 per year.

Step 7: Extrapolation of the impact per beneficiary for the improved physical health outcome to FareShare’s total beneficiary population of 996,367 which gives a net impact of £1,659,716 for this outcome for all four beneficiary types across all eight charity groups. The extrapolated final value is weighted by the contribution of this outcome to total net impact. A visualisation of the process is shown in **Figure 1** below:

Figure 1. Illustration of the social and economic value of an outcome



Results of the SROI Analysis

The SROI sample model estimates the economic and social value generated by FareShare in 2023/24 at £75,816,207... In 2023/24, FareShare served 996,367 beneficiaries. Using the per-beneficiary value generated in the sample model and applying it to the total beneficiaries served annually by FareShare yields a total economic and social value of £319,696,504, as presented in **Table 1**.

FareShare together with their network partners, FareShareGo and their local charities generates a Social Return on Investment of **£13 for every £1** received.

Individually, the return on investment is **£10 per £1** for the Regional Centres only and a staggering **£34 per £1** for FareShareGo.

FareShare, together with their network partners and their local charities, creates an impact value of **£5,640** per tonne of food redistributed.

Table 1:
Sample and Extrapolated Net Value of FareShare

Number of beneficiaries used in the sample	236,289
Overall net value of sample	£75,816,207
Average net value per beneficiary	£321
Total number of beneficiaries serviced by FareShare	996,367
Extrapolated net value of FareShare	£319,696,504
Extrapolated saving to beneficiaries	£112,895,682
Extrapolated saving to the state	£206,800,822
SROI Ratio for Regional Centres and FareShare Go ¹⁵	£1: £13
SROI Ratio for Regional Centres ¹⁶	£1: £10
SROI Ratio for FareShare Go ¹⁷	£1: £34



Results of the SROI Analysis

A lot of people are depending on our services more than before and is increasing every month.

A sense of community is felt, as people return time and again to our services.

The economic and social value created by FareShare through each of its Theory of Change outcomes is illustrated below. **Table 2** shows the value of contributions of each of the outcomes and **Diagram 1** (page 16) shows the percentage contributions.

Table 2:
Contribution of each outcome to total net impact

Theme	Outcome	Sample Value	Extrapolated Value	Extrapolated value by theme
Quantity of Food	Increased quantity of food delivered	£655,934	£2,765,896	£2,765,896
Quality of Food	Trying new things	£1,443,883	£6,088,464	£42,783,898
	Access to better quality food	£8,702,343	£36,695,434	
Balanced Diet	Increased variety of food	£1,750,631	£7,381,938	£53,167,750
	Eat more fruit and vegetables	£6,204,539	£26,162,867	
	Developing better eating habits	£4,653,592	£19,622,945	
Health	Improved physical health	£393,603	£1,659,716	£43,632,733
	Improved mental health	£9,425,646	£39,745,407	
	More energy	£528,279	£2,227,611	
Well-being and Support Services	Increased access to well-being support	£1,564,520	£6,597,157	£33,402,510
	Increased access to support services	£6,356,905	£26,805,352	
Food and Cooking Skills Services	Increased cooking skills	£1,937,148	£8,168,431	£8,306,779
	Increased food literacy	£32,809	£138,348	
Employment Services	Increased access to work-related education, training and skills	£9,683	£40,830	£40,830
Sense of Community/ Helping Families	Strengthening communities	£4,944,538	£20,849,783	£53,368,886
	Increased volunteering	£4,936,134	£20,814,344	
	Helping Families	£1,429,259	£6,026,800	
	Feeling less lonely	£1,346,531	£5,677,958	
Cost of Food	Less financial pressure	£3,912,878	£16,499,551	£58,998,279
	Not skipping meals	£2,290,757	£9,659,503	
	Time saved sourcing food	£220,333	£929,085	
	People save money they can spend on other essentials	£7,567,507	£31,910,139	
Stigma around accepting food	Experiencing less stigma	£4,697,907	£19,809,809	£19,809,809
Environment	Reduced food waste	£810,850	£3,419,134	£3,419,134
	TOTAL	£75,816,209	£319,696,504	£319,696,504

Diagram 1:

Contribution of each outcome to total net impact.

- Cost of food **18%**
- Sense of community/helping families **17%**
- Balanced diet **17%**
- Health **14%**
- Quality of food **13%**
- Well being and support services **10%**
- Stigma around accepting food **6%**
- Food and cooking skills service **3%**
- Environment **1%**
- Quantity of food **1%**



Diagram 1: The economic and social value generated by FareShare can be broken down into eight charity groups, as shown below. **Table 3** shows the value contributions of each of the charity groups and **Diagram 2** (page 17) shows the percentage contributions.

Table 3:

Value contributions of each of the charity groups

Charity Type	Sample Value	Extrapolated Value	Extrapolated number of beneficiaries	Value per beneficiary
Childcare (pre school/nursery/childminder)	£893,452.07	£3,767,446.46	14,645	£257.26
Community Centre (including Food Growing/ Gardening)	£28,116,470.30	£118,559,573.92	248,720	£476.68
Drop-in Services (Advice/ Resource Centre, Day Centre/ Drop-in Centre, Medical Facility, Training Centre)	£11,787,082.38	£49,702,948.12	129,298	£384.41
Faith Organisation	£4,909,905.43	£20,703,747.30	124,748	£165.96
Food service only (e.g. food bank, pantry, meals)	£23,514,964.11	£99,156,263.09	380,003	£260.94
Local Authority	£875,911.02	£3,693,480.57	14,134	£261.31
Residential Setting	£979,925.23	£4,132,080.48	20,021	£206.39
School Age Services (School, Holiday Provision, Out of School Club)	£4,738,496.89	£19,980,963.71	64,798	£308.36

Diagram 2:

Contribution of each charity type group to total net impact.

- Food service only **38%**
- Community centre **25%**
- Drop-in Services **13%**
- Faith organisations **13%**
- School age services **7%**
- Residential setting **2%**
- Childcare **1%**
- Local authority **1%**

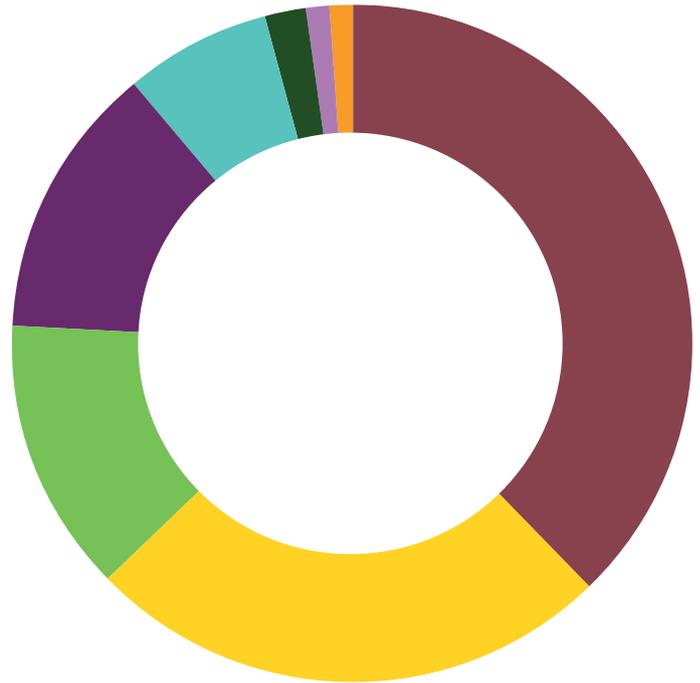


Diagram 2: The economic and social value generated by FareShare can be broken down into beneficiary types as shown below. **Table 4** shows the value contributions of each of the beneficiary types and **Diagram 3** shows the percentage contributions.

Table 4:

Value contributions of each of the beneficiary types

Beneficiary Type	Beneficiary composition	Sample Value	Extrapolated Value	Extrapolated number of beneficiaries	Value per beneficiary
Children (under 18)	7%	£2,627,707	£11,0880,327.09	66,949	£165.50
Families with children	25%	£23,623,820	£99,615,290	248,707	£400.53
Adults	61%	£45,080,184	£190,091,083.55	612,628	£310.29
Adults (65+)	7%	£4,484,496	£18,909,820.15	68,083	£277.75

Diagram 3:

Contribution of each beneficiary types to total net impact.

- Adults **61%**
- Families with children **25%**
- Adults (65+) **7%**
- Children (under 18) **7%**

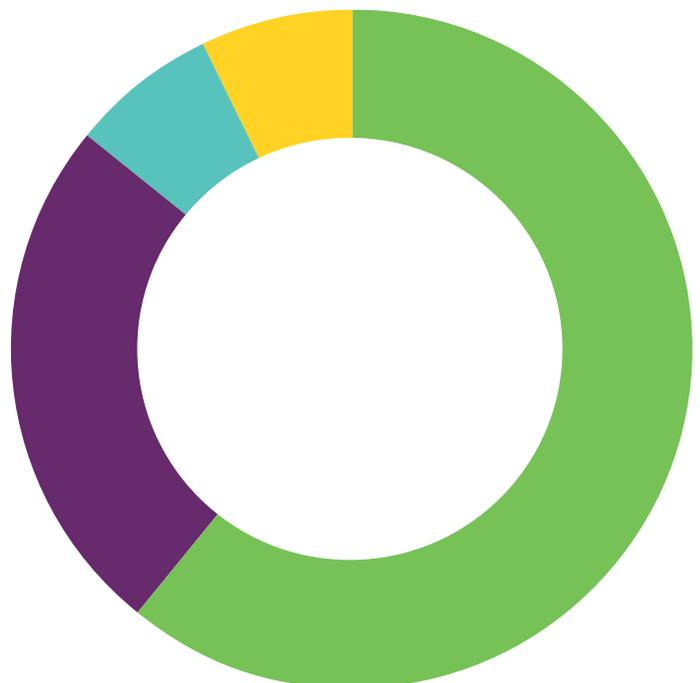
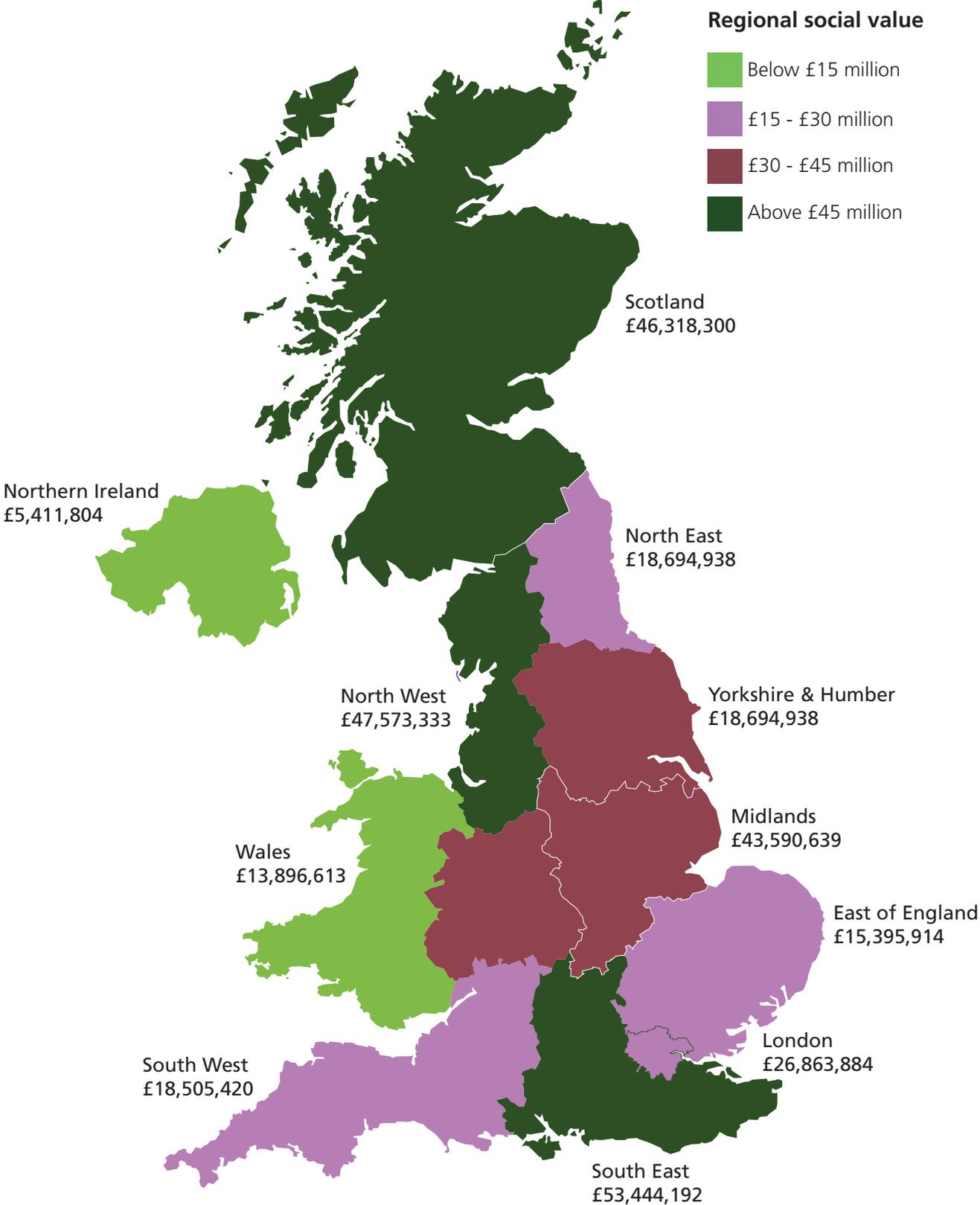


Diagram 3: Some highlights from the results:

1. The outcomes under the 'Cost of food' theme generate the biggest impact (18%) followed by the 'Sense of Community /Helping Families' theme (17%);
2. The Food Services only charity type generates the biggest total impact (38%) followed by Community Centres (25%);
3. The highest value per beneficiary is created by the Community Centres at £476.68 per person followed by Drop-in Services at £384.41;
4. The bulk of the benefits go to adults (61%) followed by families with children (25%).

Map illustrating the socio-economic impact created by region: The South-East Regional Centre (17%) followed by the North-West Regional Centre (15%) deliver the biggest impact based on a regional breakdown



Comparison with Previous Impact Evaluation

A comparison of FareShare's recent impact evaluation with previous evaluations—conducted by NEF Consulting in 2018 and the University of Hertfordshire in 2023—highlights both consistencies and shifts in key outcomes, as detailed in **Table 5**. The comparison reveals a significant increase in FareShare's impact in the last six years from approximately £50 million to £319m. Part of this increase is due to FareShare reaching out to more beneficiaries, more wrap-around services being provided and most importantly, improved data quality capturing the outcomes achieved.

Although there are now almost three times as many more beneficiaries than in 2018, the net impact value has actually increased approximately 6.3 times, which is indicative of FareShare's increased efficiency in allocating its resources and redirecting surplus food to charities that create more social and economic impact across the country. FareShare's socio-economic impact can be broken down to £112,895,682 for the beneficiaries (35%) and £206,800,822 for the government (65%).

The latter finding means that in the absence of FareShare, the government would be expected to spend an additional £206.8 million per year (for example, in order to fund additional NHS resources that would be needed if beneficiaries did not have access to the surplus food redistributed by FareShare).

Compared to the previous year's evaluation, in absolute values, the savings to the State have increased significantly while for the beneficiaries, the increase is smaller. This is attributable to the easing in the cost of food. In reality, the savings to the state are conceivably bigger, as there may also be a level of indirect saving. This is because the beneficiaries themselves save an estimated £321 each annually, which in turn means that they potentially need less support from the government. The SROI ratio for 2024 is also greater than the ratio for 2023 which is altogether remarkable. Despite challenging times, FareShare has kept costs under control to enable a wider pool of outcomes to be achieved across a larger group of different charities, thus capturing greater impact.

Table 5:
Comparison of SROI results

	2018 evaluation NEF Consulting	2023 evaluation University of Hertfordshire	2024 evaluation University of Hertfordshire
Number of beneficiaries used in the sample	174,024	153,703	236,289
Overall net value of sample	£28,272,419	£32,153,362	£75,816,207
Average net value per beneficiary	£162	£209	£321
Total number of beneficiaries serviced by FareShare	313,388	1,076,669	996,367
Extrapolated net value of FareShare	£50,913,878	£225,230,009	£319,696,504
Extrapolated saving to beneficiaries	£6,883,556	£107,661,372	£112,895,682
Extrapolated saving to the State	£44,030,322	£117,568,637	£206,800,822
SROI Ratio¹⁸	5.6:1	5.72:1	13:1



Impact for the Volunteers

In 2023/24, 6,089 individuals regularly volunteered in FareShare Regional Centres. While in the same period, 18,647 corporate employees volunteered at various FareShare Regional Centres. There were also 1,620 Tesco Food Collection volunteers, and 205 corporate volunteers for initiatives outside of a Regional Centre (e.g., Step Up to the Plate). In the aftermath of the pandemic and with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, the contribution of volunteers has been even more instrumental in getting help to those in need. At the same time, the benefits for volunteers are just as impactful. For instance, volunteering can generate a social identity or rekindle social connectedness and provide social rewards.

This can positively shape the motivations and experiences of volunteers and promote a sense of belonging and appreciation and better mental and physical well-being^{19,20}.

Table 1 below provides an overview of the impact generated for the 637 individual FareShare volunteers from the outcomes surveyed in 2023/24 while **Table 2** outlines the total impact created for all the 6,089 individual volunteers over this one-year period.

Table 1:
Impact generated for the 637 FareShare volunteers surveyed in 2023/24

Theme	Outcome	Monetary Value
Sense of community and social life	Give back to the community	£337,533
	Feel less isolated and maintain a social life	£252,516
	Create a sense of purpose	£32,619
	Enjoy the company of the people	£16,794
New Skills: Training and Employment	Feel ready to enter the workforce	£12,687
Health and Well-being	Feel fitter and maintain this fitness	£2,221
	Feel happier / more fulfilled /Less stress	£23,896
Contribution to society and overall sense of satisfaction	Help tackle food waste	£45,899
	Help tackle food insecurity	£45,679
	Sense of accomplishment	£354,485
	Total	£1,124,329

Table 2:
Extrapolated impact value for all individual FareShare Volunteers

Impact per volunteer	£1,765.04
Number of individual volunteers	6,089
Impact of individual volunteers	£10,747,312.16

Impact on the Employability Trainees

FareShare delivers a range of employability programmes designed to support individuals on their journey into meaningful employment. This section will provide a snapshot on the impact of employability programmes, through presenting the evaluation of the social impact for the participants of the following three main employability programmes: the **John Lewis Partnership** (JLP) employability programme in Aberdeen, the **New Horizons** (NH) programme at FareShare Merseyside, and the **Nando's** programme which runs across the UK. As of September 2024, the JLP programme was completed by 89 individuals, the NH programme was completed by 46 individuals.

The impact of the three programmes was broken down into four main outcomes: securing employment, promoting well-being, skills acquired (excluding employability skills), and employability skills acquired.

Securing employment: The impact was captured by calculating the difference between an annual salary based on the minimum wage in 2023 (£18,756) and the 2023 annual benefit cap for a single adult outside Greater London (£14,753.04). The calculation took into account that 112 individuals overall secured employment after participating in one of the three programmes (63 from JLP, 30 from NH, and 19 from NAN).

Promoting well-being: The impact of this outcome was calculated for the following three dimensions: improvement in mental health, self-improvement, and problem-solving, and feeling closer to other people. The data was taken from a survey that was completed by more than half of the JLP cohort, and we extrapolated the findings to include the NH cohort as well.

The NAN participants were excluded on account of the program's focus on getting job opportunities as well as the shorter nature of their placement.

Skills acquired: This outcome included all the areas/skills for which the JLP survey respondents reported that they received training. Like the previous outcome, the findings were extrapolated to include the NH cohort and the NAN participants were excluded.

Employability skills acquired: This outcome included the employability-related skills for which the JLP respondents reported that they received training. This outcome also included all the NAN participants, as the NAN project did focus on those particular skills.

The total impact of the three employability programmes was calculated at £612,048. This is a conservative estimate based on the assumption that the participants who secured a job were paid the minimum wage.

The figures corresponding to each of the four outcomes are shown in the table on the following page. The average impact per participant is estimated at £3,974 (£5,066 for those who secured employment and £1,063 for those who completed the placement without securing employment).

Impact on the Employability Trainees

Securing employment

Net increase in income (for 1 year)	£448,332
TOTAL	£448,332

Promoting well-being

Improvement in mental health	£61,596
Self-improvement & problem solving	£13,725
Feeling closer to other people	£8,749
TOTAL	£84,070

Skills acquired

Manual handling	£795
Health & Safety	£2,771
Food safety	£2,453
Communication	£2,571
Organisational skills	£1,800
Teamwork	£2,314
Mental health	£0
Forklift truck	£41,783
Salesforce / Gladys	£0
Cooking	£5,315
IT Skills	£2,218
First aid	£3,600
Budgeting	£0
TOTAL	£65,621

Employability skills acquired

Work behaviour	£10,686
CVs and cover letters	£1,579
Job interviews	£1,761
Job searching	£0
TOTAL	£14,026

TOTAL ALL OUTCOMES £612,048

Average benefit per participant securing employment £5,066

Average benefit per participant not securing employment £1,063



FareShare's Impact in 2022-23



£319,696,504
of economic and social
value created.
Impact per beneficiary
stands at
£321.



134
million meals provided
to beneficiaries.



SROI ratio
£1 : £13



56,687
tonnes of food delivered to
8,357
charities.



996,367
beneficiaries serviced.

Limitations and Future Steps

Whilst the Social Return of Investment of £13 for every £1 figure represents the value created across the FareShare network and factors in, the combined impact delivered by both the FareShare Regional Centres, charities and their network partners, it should be noted that due to the unavailability of data, the operating costs of their network partners were excluded from the calculations. As a result, the full operational costs across the wider network were not captured.

In addition, currently, this report only captures the impact of 6,089 individual volunteers rather than the full FareShare volunteer population of 26,561, which includes corporate onsite, corporate offsite, and Tesco Food Collection volunteers, due to outcome data only being collected from individual volunteers through the volunteering survey.

FareShare delivers a wide range of employability programmes to support individuals into meaningful employment. This analysis is based on data from three core programmes, which were selected due to data availability at the time of writing. As a result, the findings presented offer a partial but important picture of our overall impact in this space. The full scope of FareShare's employability work is likely to be even broader and more varied than what is reflected here.

We also acknowledge some considerations around data interpretation. At sites where multiple FareShare UK-funded programmes operate—such as JLP and NH—there may be some overlap, as individuals could have engaged with more than one employability programme. Additionally, some employment outcomes may be attributed to the work of the Employer Engagement Manager, whose activities sit outside the formal scope of the programmes evaluated. These overlaps may indicate a more integrated and holistic impact, but they also introduce a possibility of outcome duplication, which should be kept in mind when reviewing the data.



Conclusion

In 2023-24, FareShare redistributed 56,687 tonnes of food which provided almost 135 million meals to a total of 996,367 beneficiaries. Alongside, FareShare has continued on its trajectory to prioritise charities that deliver additional wrap-around services, thus maximising the social and economic impact of the redistributed food.

The findings from the study by the University of Hertfordshire confirm that FareShare's socio-economic impact has increased since the previous evaluation.

The analysis shows that FareShare created almost £320 million of socio-economic impact in 2023-2024. Of this amount, approximately £113 million of social and economic value is created for the beneficiaries themselves, and approximately £207 million of savings to the State. Consequently, for every £1 spent on redistributing surplus food, FareShare together with their charities and regional centers have enabled £13 of socio-economic value. This is split into £8.45 as savings to the State and £4.55 as savings to beneficiaries.

These outstanding results underpin that, even in challenging times, FareShare's contribution continues to be amplified as it works collaboratively with charities determined to help those in need by offering services beyond emergency food supplies. The long-term benefits of such initiatives are countless.



Notes

¹ Representing 33% of the total 170,000 tonnes of food redistributed in the UK (see WRAP (2023) Annual survey of redistribution organisations in the UK: 2022, available at <https://www.wrap.ngo/resources/report/annual-survey-redistribution-organisations-uk-2022-update>).

² ONS (2024). Cost of living insights: food. Available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/costoflivinginsights/food>

³ Food Foundation (2024). Families stuck in food insecurity are buying less fruit and veg as UK's health divide widens. Available at <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/press-release/families-stuck-food-insecurity-are-buying-less-fruit-and-veg-uks-health-divide-widens>.

⁴ Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) (2025). Economic and fiscal outlook – March 2025. Available at [Economic and fiscal outlook – March 2025 - Office for Budget Responsibility](https://obr.org.uk/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2025).

⁵ IFS (2024). Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2024. Available at [Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2024 | Institute for Fiscal Studies](https://ifs.org.uk/living-standards-poverty-and-inequality-in-the-uk-2024).

⁶ FareShare (2023). Annual Report 2022-23. Available at: <https://fareshare.org.uk/what-we-do/annual-reports/>

⁷ FareShare (2020a). Mammoth Covid-19 response sees 16 million meals provided to UK's most vulnerable through pandemic. Available at: <https://fareshare.org.uk/news-media/news/mammoth-covid-19-response-sees-16-million-meals-provided-to-uks-most-vulnerable-through-pandemic/>

⁸ FareShare (2020b). Annual Report 2019-20. Available at: <https://fareshare.org.uk/what-we-do/annual-reports/>

⁹ FareShare (2019). Invitation to tender – Evaluating the impact of The National Lottery Community grant on FareShare (Appendix A). Available at: <https://fareshare.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/TNLCF-External-Evaluation-Brief.pdf>

¹⁰ NEF Consulting (2018). The socio-economic impact of the work of FareShare. Available at: <https://www.nefconsulting.com/our-work/clients/fareshare-the-socio-economic-impact-of-the-work-of-fareshare/>

¹¹ Nicholas, C., Patokos, T. and Rughoo, A., 2023. Waste Britain: An evaluation of the economic & social impact of FareShare's contribution to fighting hunger and tackling food waste. Available at: <https://fareshare.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/UH-FareShare-Waste-Britain-Short-Report-2-page-view.pdf>

¹² The SROI Network (2012). A guide to Social Return on Investment. Available at <http://www.socialvaluelab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/SROI-a-guide-to-social-return-on-investment.pdf>

¹³ RCPC (2024). Child health inequalities driven by child poverty in the UK -position statement. Available at <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/generated-pdf/document/Child-health-inequalities-driven-by-child-poverty-in-the-UK---position-statement.pdf>

¹⁴ Mallorie S. (2024). Illustrating the relationship between poverty and NHS services. The Kings Fund. Available at <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/long-reads/relationship-poverty-nhs-services#poverty-and-worse-health-outcomes>

¹⁵ Based on the 2022/23 average total cost of food sourced to FareShare's Regional Centres and FareShare Go at £438.62 per tonne.

¹⁶ Based on the 2022/23 average total cost of food sourced to FareShare's Regional Centres at £556 per tonne.

¹⁷ Based on the 2022/23 average total cost of food sourced to FareShare Go locations at £165 per tonne.

¹⁸ The ratio for 2018 is based on the pre-pandemic cost of food sourced to FareShare's Regional Centres and out to charities at £590 per tonne. The ratio for 2023 is based on £730 per tonne for FareShare Regional Centres only while for 2024, the average cost is £438.62 per tonne for Regional Centres and FareShare Go together.

¹⁹ Gray D., Stevenson C. (2020) How can 'we' help? Exploring the role of shared social identity in the experiences and benefits of volunteering. Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology; 30: 341–353. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2448>

²⁰ Mak HW, Coulter R, Fancourt D. (2022). Relationships between Volunteering, Neighbourhood Deprivation and Mental Well-being across Four British Birth Cohorts: Evidence from 10 Years of the UK Household Longitudinal Study. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2022; 19(3):1531. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19031531>



About the authors

Dr Christopher Nicholas is a senior lecturer in the Strategy Group at Hertfordshire Business School and his research interests are in the field of community economics and economic geography.

Dr Tassos Patokos is a principal lecturer in Economics at Hertfordshire Business School. His research interests are in the fields of game theory, social choice theory, decision making, behavioural economics and political economy.

Dr Aarti Rughoo is a principal lecturer in Economics at Hertfordshire Business School and her research interests are in the fields of Financial Economics (European banking efficiency & integration, financial markets) and on the Economics of food vulnerability.

University of Hertfordshire

Hatfield, UK

AL10 9AB

+44 (0) 1707 284000

herts.ac.uk

 /uniofherts

 @UniofHerts

 @UniofHerts

**University of
Hertfordshire UH**

Hertfordshire
Business School