



# Public Affairs Unit

## 'Rethinking Food in Wales' Consultation

Dear Committee Members,

### Our Background

1. The Salvation Army has a unique perspective on the heritage and potential of food in Wales and is especially interested in tackling food poverty and waste.
2. As a Christian church and registered charity which began ministering in Wales in 1874 and is now working in at least 43 Welsh communities, we have long-lasting and wide-ranging experience and expertise. This is grounded in our relationships with some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals in some of the most challenging and diverse situations in our country. In keeping with our 'Heart to God, Hand to Man' slogan, we are not content with the circumstances that many people find themselves in and struggle to emerge from. We *believe* that food poverty and waste are intolerable and will *act* to find their solutions.

### Our Vision

3. The Salvation Army envisions a future Wales in which every person has the opportunity to access the food they need. This means sufficient affordable, nutritious and varied food. It also means avoiding waste throughout the food production and consumption cycles. We must never accept as normal a culture in which some people cannot feed themselves while other people produce or obtain so much excess food that a significant proportion is wasted.
4. We would like to make the following points to policy makers:
  - 4.1. Food poverty and waste are not isolated problems. Rather, they are symptoms of ailments affecting society at large. People do not simply materialise as poor or wasteful, they arrive through a process and they depart through a process. If we really want to address food poverty and waste, then we must also reform education, social mobility, health, welfare and numerous other policy areas. **The Salvation Army calls for every effort to be made to build a Wales that is progressive, just and provides opportunities for all.**
  - 4.2. Rural and remote communities experience especially challenging circumstances. Typically, people living in these areas have to contend with higher prices, fewer choices and reduced opportunities. This can magnify the issues of food poverty and waste. **The Salvation Army asks that special efforts be made to evaluate the impact of policies on these communities and ameliorate any ill effects.**

- 4.3. Food is not just fuel, it is also fellowship. There are many people who are not just hungry for a meal but for a relationship. Churches and charities, like ours, are here to meet nutritional needs but also social needs. **The Salvation Army highlights how food can enhance quality of life and social cohesion - this factor should not be forgotten going forward.**
- 4.4. Many of our churches and centres receive donations of waste food from businesses and individuals. This can be extremely positive, ensuring that good food goes into people's hands and not people's bins. However, in our opinion, it is preferable to avoid waste in the first place. This could mean changing the way food is produced, handled, vended, consumed and discarded. **The Salvation Army invites Wales to develop food production and consumption systems and behaviours that limit opportunities for waste.**
- 4.5. Brexit will be the defining political event for a generation. As such, it will present the food industry with many opportunities and challenges. **The Salvation Army encourages the government to think and act creatively so that opportunities are maximised and challenges are minimised as details of Brexit emerge.**

#### Our Offer

5. The Salvation Army is pleased to be able to contribute to this consultation and would welcome further dialogue. We will be happy to share our experience and expertise, especially in relation to food poverty and waste. If policy makers would like to experience first-hand some of our more traditional or innovative programmes and activities, we will gladly make this happen. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any assistance.

May God bless you,

Major David Emery MBE  
Public Affairs Officer (Wales)