

Surplus Food Redistribution Case Study

Sainsbury's, Cardiff



Summary

Sainsbury's views local food donation partnerships as a great way of making a positive difference to local communities. They have been working with local charities across the UK since 1998 to derive the most benefit from unsold food.

Building on this success Cardiff families in need are benefiting from new partnerships between Sainsbury's and local charities to redistribute surplus food.

A "back-of-store" surplus food project was set up at the Sainsbury's Queen Street store with two local charities, [Bawso](#) and [Cardiff Women's Aid](#). Food was collected by each charity on different days of the week and redistributed directly to the residents of the refuges run by the charities in Cardiff. The project has enabled good quality food to be regularly provided to those who are having difficulty in providing food for themselves due to personal circumstances.

Similar partnerships with other retailers and charities elsewhere in the UK benefit those currently in need in their communities and learning from this case study can help more of this to happen.

Outcomes

- On average, 345kgs of surplus food (equivalent to approximately 700 meals) per month was redistributed from the store by participating charities.
- Matching the amount of food needed by charities to the amount of surplus food generated by the store is essential.
- Processes for collecting food should be simple and easy to implement and adhered to by both retailer and charities.
- Good communication between the charities and retailer maximises the effectiveness of food redistribution.

Forming the partnership

Sainsbury's and WRAP Cymru instigated the project in Cardiff and worked with an intermediary to identify potential charity partners. We contacted an initial list of 12 local charities based in central Cardiff with clients that could potentially benefit from the project. Following discussions with the charities, we created a shortlist of four that wished to participate and had the ability to regularly collect the food from the Sainsbury's store. Following further discussions with Sainsbury's and the charities, we partnered two charities with the store, both of which were highly committed to the project and could demonstrate their ability to make good use of the amounts and types of surplus food to be donated. The whole process of identifying and recruiting partners took almost two months, time well spent to ensure the future success of the food redistribution programme.

Making it work

The Cardiff "back-of-store" project commenced in April 2015 and has been a success due to all partners working together to ensure that the process runs smoothly. A key to this success has been keeping the process simple so that the minimum amount of additional work is placed on the store and the charities. For Sainsbury's the essential activity is segregating and preparing the surplus food for the charity to collect on the agreed time on each day. For the charities the key step is to be on site to collect the food at the agreed time, to redistribute the food promptly, and to freeze food that will be redistributed or used later.

Communicating with partners

Good routes of communication have been shown to be essential in sustaining the project and building long-term relationships. On some days food may not be available, or the collection may be

delayed or unable to be carried out. This project has shown that in such circumstances, quick and effective communication ensures the goodwill of store staff, charity staff and volunteers isn't lost.

'In Sainsbury's Cardiff we were keen to participate in the project as it is a great way for us to support the most vulnerable people in our community in a very local way. We have also moved closer towards our goal of being Britain's greenest grocer by eliminating food waste at source, something very close to our hearts.'

The project has been straightforward to set up, starting with honest conversations around what could be done in a realistic and sustainable manner. The charities have been receptive and with the support of WRAP we have established a consistent working relationship that will grow over time.

There are many benefits to Sainsbury's of being involved, not least the chance to positively impact our local community and our wider environment. Our colleagues have been engaged throughout, as ever they are the key to our success. This has been a fantastic opportunity for us to work collaboratively alongside some great local charities.'

Martin Bennett, Store Manager, Sainsbury's Queen Street

Overcoming potential barriers

Carefully matching charities and retailers leads to the greatest success. A charity or retailer can instigate a food donation partnership. The recommended steps to take are listed below:

- Start with a long list of charities and retailers, to increase the chance of identifying appropriate partners;
- Be clear about all aspects of the project from the outset;
- Shortlist only those retailers or charities who:
 - can manage the logistics and are likely to be complementary with regard to the amounts of food to be donated and used.

Delivering benefits

An average of 345kgs of food per month was collected by Bawso and Cardiff Women's Aid and redistributed locally to people in need during the period of monitoring from April to June 2015. This is equivalent to approximately 50 standard carrier bags of food. This has helped both charities to further their charitable objectives and assisted Sainsbury's in getting the greatest local benefit from unsold food. The project operates at no extra cost to Sainsbury's, diverting food from anaerobic digestion and the cost of transport and redistribution by the charities is far outweighed by the value of the food collected and redistributed.

Next steps

A "back-of-store" surplus food partnership could be instigated by either a retailer or a charity. If you would like to know more about how to set up and run a "back-of-store" surplus food project, please view our guides for retailers and charities on how to set up a "back-of-store" surplus food project based on the experience of this and other projects. Both guides are available on the WRAP website at the link below.

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/piloting-retail-store-surplus-food-redistribution-and-use-wales>

Lessons from other "back-of-store" food redistribution projects can be found from the case studies and the final report of the Food Connection Programme

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(<http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/foodredistribution>).

To find out more about Sainsbury's Food Donation Programme, please go to: <http://www.j-sainsbury.co.uk/>



Photograph: Bawso staff attending surplus food collection

'The donation of Surplus food to Bawso by Sainsbury's has enabled us as a charity to provide food to families, who have gone through traumatic experiences and in some cases cannot access public funds. These families are financially dependent on charities and the goodwill of other supporting agencies, as they are unable to afford the basic amenities needed for their families, such as food. The project run by Sainsbury's has enabled us to help support such families by providing them with free food to help sustain their dietary needs.'

Lorraine Griffiths, Bawso

'After WRAP Cymru made contact with CWA to explain about surplus food from Sainsbury's and asked if would we be interested, we jumped at the chance to have this opportunity. We now make twice weekly collections of surplus food which we distribute between our 4 refuges, which accommodate up to 29 women plus their children. This has been really beneficial as not all our women have access to a lot of funds, so the surplus food has been a boost. With one recent collection, a big sausage casserole and bread pudding was made and shared amongst everyone. This is a great collaboration.'

Lorraine Norman, Cardiff Women's Aid

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