

Evaluation report of
Engage Liverpool 2025
seminar series:

LIVERPOOL'S FOOD CULTURE: *have we got one?*



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INTRODUCTION

This report shares what people told us during Engage Liverpool's 2025 seminar series on food culture, what matters to communities across the city, and what they would like to see change in the future.

Engage Liverpool created the series Liverpool's Food Culture – Have We Got One? to bring residents, community groups and local organisations together to explore how food shapes everyday life in the city. With national concerns growing about the fragility of the UK's food system, from supermarket dependence and low food prices to the pressures facing farmers and the impacts of extreme weather, these conversations felt more important than ever.

Across the three events, people shared experiences and ideas about Liverpool's food culture, including how food reaches us, the challenges facing those who produce it, and the huge amount of food wasted in the UK each year. The seminars were designed not just to exchange information, but to spark discussion, build relationships and support community learning across Liverpool's diverse food landscape.



SEMINAR FEEDBACK

Across the three seminars hosted by Engage Liverpool, feedback figures were consistently high:

93%

At Seminar One of participants said they learned something new, met someone new, and would attend a similar event again.

89%

At Seminar Two of participants reported new learning, new connections and willingness to return.

97%

At Seminar Three of participants reported willingness to return - the highest for all three seminars.



SEMINAR FEEDBACK

Across all three events combined:

92%

of participants said they learned something new

90%

met someone new

93%

would attend a similar event again

54%

had attended a previous Engage event

Participants found out about the seminars in broadly similar ways. Word of mouth, social media and Engage Liverpool's own advertising (leaflets and newsletters) were the three main routes, each accounting for around a third of responses. Smaller numbers attended through invitations or partner organisations.



SEMINAR FEEDBACK

Echoing the quantitative feedback, many participants also commented on the value of the events and expressed a desire for further discussion and activity around this topic:

“More events to discuss these issues and funding”

“More information, rich talks / evenings like this”

*“Make these events more accessible -
Talk to kids, unis, workplace canteens -
Get more opinions”*

“To have more community events on food heritage”





SEMINAR ONE:

The Food System in the UK – how good is it?

Keynote from Sheila Dillon,
BBC Radio 4 presenter The
Food Programme and BBC
Food and Farming Awards.



SEMINAR TWO:

Farm to Fork – is our food journey sustainable?

Keynote from Chris Walsh
and Helen Woodcock of
Kindling Farm, Prescot L35.



SEMINAR THREE:

Food Home and Away – are we making the best decisions?

Keynote from Lucy Antal, Feedback
Global Senior Project Manager Regional
Food Economy and Lead for Food
Justice; Director Alchemic Kitchen
CIC; BBC Food and Farming Awards,
Community Food Champion 2021.

We asked: What one action would you like to see to improve Liverpool's food culture?

Across three seminar events, we collected more than 90 suggestions about what would most improve Liverpool's food culture. When reviewed together, these contributions can be summarised into four clear themes, reflecting participants' interest in building a healthier, fairer and more vibrant food system both inside and outside the home.



Make fresh, local food easier for everyone to access

Participants described a strong desire for more opportunities to grow, supply and buy local food, including community gardens, street-grown fruit and vegetables, better access to land, allotments, and support for local farmers and producers.

What people said:

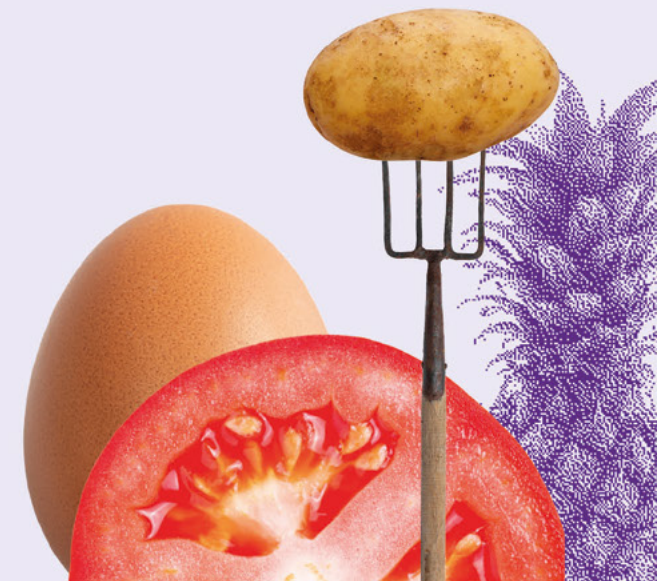
“More space and opportunity to sell/buy food grown/produced locally”

“More community garden initiatives and more allotments linking people with land”

“More farm shops and markets so we can buy locally from independent sources”

What this means:

Participants want a local, community-connected food ecosystem where fresh food is visible, affordable and part of everyday life.



Create regular, affordable food markets across the city

One of the most frequent suggestions was for more regular or permanent food markets offering everyday fresh produce — not just occasional artisan events. People saw markets as a way to support local growers, increase access to healthy food and bring communities together.

What people said:

“A permanent food market for fresh fruit in town”

“A fresh produce market like Borough Market — but cheaper!”

“A central market or somehow increase visibility for local producers”

What this means:

Participants want reliable places to buy fresh, affordable fruit and vegetables, and shared spaces that bring communities together around good food.



Support better food knowledge, and better food for children

Participants called for more opportunities to learn about food, from cooking skills and understanding how food is grown, to reducing waste and making informed choices. Alongside this, several people highlighted the importance high quality food available to children in schools, including calls for universal meals and better support for children's nutrition

What people said:

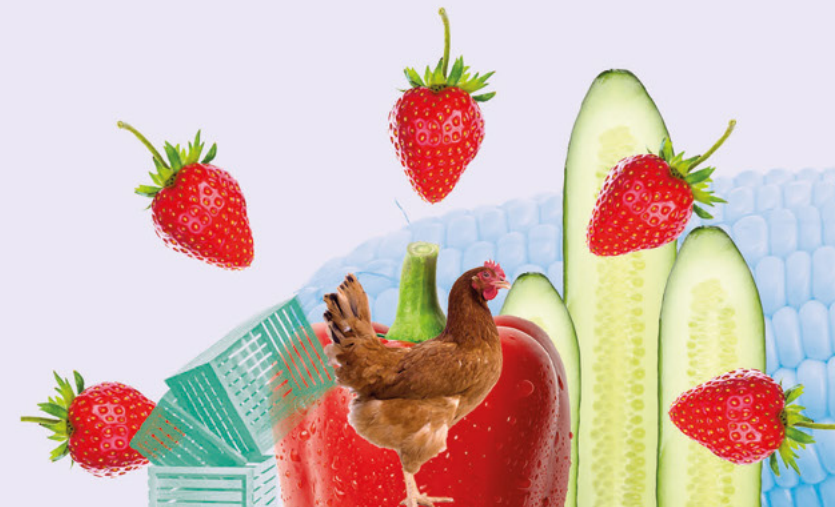
“Food in schools - School dinners and education for cooking”

“Better education across the whole food chain”

“Teach children how to cook”

What this means:

Participants want stronger food knowledge across communities, and good-quality food for children to support health, learning and long-term food confidence.



Support local food businesses and improve food options in the city

Many suggestions focused on strengthening Liverpool's independent food sector and improving the quality and diversity of food available, especially outside the home. Participants also highlighted the need for more support for community businesses and fewer fast-food outlets.

What people said:

“More independent retailers”

“Investment in local independent and community food organisations”

“A flourishing of small, local food businesses”

What this means:

Participants want a stronger local food economy, with more support for small businesses, greater transparency in restaurants and a more diverse, sustainable food offer.



Top actions participants want to see to improve Liverpool's food culture

1. A regular, affordable fresh food market
2. More local spaces to grow food and greater availability of locally grown produce
3. Better food skills and education for children and adults

Closing remarks

Together, these insights show strong public interest in creating a more local, sustainable and community-centred food culture for Liverpool. They provide a valuable foundation for future conversations, planning and action across the city region.

Watch the 2025 Seminar Series on our YouTube Channel



Catch up now at: youtube.com/@engageliverpool

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