

Social Impact and Food Supply Trends for Fareshare Greater Manchester

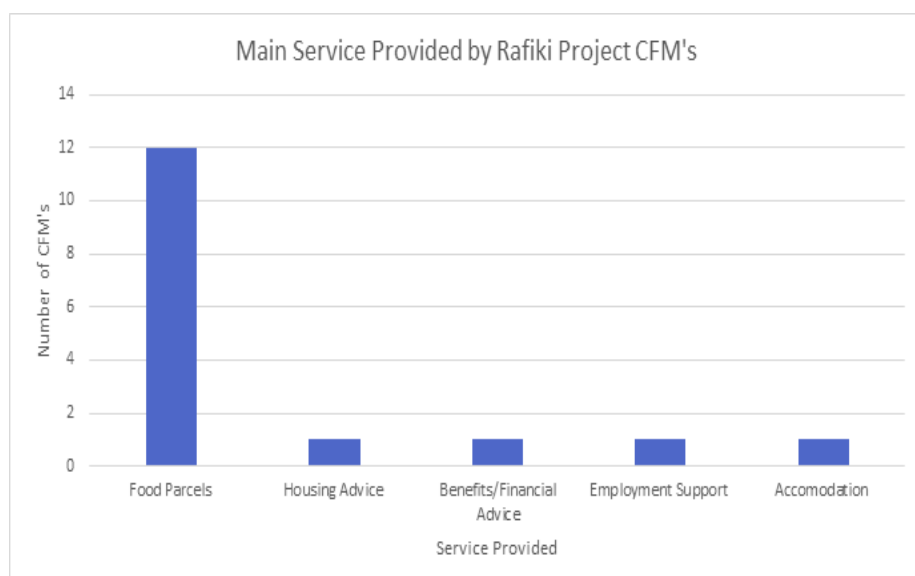
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Overview of the Data Fellowship

My 8-week internship with Fareshare Greater Manchester involved carrying out two separate projects. Fareshare's ultimate aim was to update the information they were using as the pandemic greatly increased their output. The first project involved finding out the individual reach of the charity. For the second project I used exponential smoothing to forecast food supply trends for the next year. All the data used came from the Fareshare database, Gladys, and the analysis was conducted on Excel.

Project One

I collected data on the individual beneficiaries of Fareshare's food. In particular I looked at those who received food through the Manchester BME network as part of a project known as the Rafiki Project. Quantitative methods were mostly used, although I also met with some of the charities to understand the more holistic impact Fareshare has. I collected data from the Fareshare database regarding the demographics of beneficiaries and how the food was used to help them (food banks, school meals, cooking classes etc.). This data was presented descriptively through graphs and tables in a report which used the information to understand Fareshare's impact in Manchester and aid bidding attempts.



Findings showing that food donations are the most common form of support for Fareshare community food members

Project Two

My second project involved carrying out a time-series analysis called exponential smoothing in order to forecast future supply trends. I collected data on how much of specific food groups was donated to Fareshare in the past three years. This focused on the food Fareshare felt was most popular, as well as foods more specific to schools and BAME groups. This data was collated and put into graphs to make up an easily accessible report. It was used so Fareshare could better predict and distribute the food they received.



Findings

- The main findings from project one was that for those who were part of the Rafiki Project, people between the ages of 27-65 are the largest beneficiaries of Fareshare support. Meanwhile, those under the age of 11 were the smallest group. Women make up 57% of all beneficiaries, showing that they are slightly more likely to be vulnerable to food scarcity. It was also found that food parcels were overwhelmingly the primary service of the charities, with other forms of support such as housing advice, employment support and accommodation being much less common. This highlights that access to food is the most pressing issue charities in Manchester are having to deal with.
- The results from project two varied depending on food group. Key findings were that milk and bread donations are expected to remain fairly level for the next year, while fruit and vegetable supply is expected to increase steadily. Food which was intended to be given to schools such as wholegrain bars and cereal are expected to have fairly low levels of donations throughout the year with a spike in April/May. Food types preferred by the Manchester BME network like sweet potatoes and rice are predicted to slowly increase in the next year.

Key Skills Learnt

- Significantly improved my skills in and learnt how to conduct various types of analysis using Excel
- Creating reports for the charity helped develop my communication skills, as I had to write for a variety of audiences. I also had to be ready to adapt my research aims to changing circumstances and to work with the data that was available to me.
- Completing part of the internship in person gave me experience working in a professional environment and how to build strong working relationships.