

## **Response to Question Three of the Proposed Right to Food (Scotland) Bill**

*What do you think would be the main practical advantages and disadvantages of the proposed Bill?*

Twelve of us are writing today to respond to question number three of the public consultation on the Proposed Right to Food (Scotland) Bill. Our group is made up of three people from the Glasgow region, two from Central Scotland East, three from the Scottish Highlands and Western Isles, three from the Lothian region and one person from outside the UK. The members of our group come from a variety of different backgrounds, including Scottish civil society and the charity sector, Scottish food producers, academics and other members of the public concerned with this issue.

The first advantage we believe would come from having a right to food enshrined in law would be the positive impact it would have on the lives of the Scottish people. One group member mentioned that for them, it would provide “better access to locally produced food, improved environment, improved health of my family and easier access to food.” As a group we also identified that it could cause improvements in the wellbeing and health of adults and it would “ensure food banks are not relied upon to address food insecurity.”

We also think that ensuring a right to food for everyone in Scotland, regardless of social status, income or personal circumstance, would remove the divide from society and remove the stigma associated with food insecurity and poverty as a whole. As one of the people in our group said, the right to food could mean “reductions in systemic inequalities” and as someone else pointed out “when everyone has the same access to food, it makes for a more secure and safe society to live in.”

The final advantage we discussed was with regards to the law itself. One group member stated that “we would be able to hold the government to account. We would see an improvement in mental and physical health – with impacts on productivity, educational attainment. We could see local sustainable food accessibility.” Someone else added, “The law will be a reference point for everyone involved in making sure the right to food is available, accessible and adequate.” Having the right to food in law would give us a framework to measure our progress against.

We did identify some possible disadvantages. For example, one person mentioned that “people may have issues with adapting to regulation” however they “don't think this would really be a disadvantage in the long run.” While others pointed out that “we might see challenge and resistance from organisations and other areas of government” and that “a lot of time would be needed to educate people about healthy food and eating- many children have no idea where food comes from.”

However, our group was in agreement that the advantages most definitely outweigh the disadvantages. Although some possible issues were identified, the majority of

our group could not think of any, and those that found some potential disadvantages are still in support of having the right to food in law.