

Do we need civil food resilience in the UK?

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Do we need civil food resilience in the UK?

- Current UK context
- Likelihood of civil unrest due to food
- Potential pathways to a food crisis
- The Barefood game

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Current context of crises

- Weaponisation of trade tariffs
- Water outages in Kent, Bristol
- Empty shelves in the US
- Power outages in Cornwall, Spain
- Cyber attacks on M&S, Coop

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp3725e98v4de>


Thousands still without water as second leak found



Chris Hurren
Photo: AFP

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/feb/27/donald-trump-tariff>

From threats Canada with 100% tariff over possible deal with China to a tariff threat Venezuela oil



Donald Trump on Saturday said he would impose a 100% tariff on all

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/us-news/gallery/catastrophic-winter-storm-leaves-500k-36611518>

'Catastrophic' winter storm leaves 500k US homes without power as panic buyer empty shelves



Empty shelves in a US supermarket

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2026/feb/14/south-east-wells-residents-struggle-through-several-days-without-water-again>


South East Water blames bad weather as jobs are forced to close, tubs overflow and people go without showers



<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-which-uk-retailers-have-been-hit-by-cyber-attacks-in-2025>

Which UK retailers have been hit by cyber attacks in 2025?

A digital crime spree targeting the high street kicked off with an attack against Marks and Spencer over the Easter weekend



<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-very-thing-went-off-how-spain-portugal-s-massive-power-cut-folded>

Very thing went off: How Spain Portugal's massive power cut folded



Mallory Moench, BBC News and Gabriela Pomeroy, BBC News
28 April 2025

The first sign of trouble Peter Hughes noticed was when his train to Madrid started to slow down. Then the TV monitor and lights went off. Emergency lights continued to be

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Scoping Potential Routes to UK Civil Unrest via the Food System: Results of a Structured Expert Elicitation

by  Aled Jones ^{1,*},  Sarah Bridle ^{2,†},  Katherine Denby ³,  Riaz Bhunnoo ⁴,
 Daniel Morton ⁵,  Lucy Stanbrough ⁶,  Barnaby Coupe ⁷,  Vanessa Pilley ⁸,  Tim Benton ⁹,
 Pete Falloon ^{10,11},  Tom K. Matthews ¹²,  Saher Hasnain ¹³,  John S. Heslop-Harrison ¹⁴,
 Simon Beard ¹⁵,  Julie Pierce ¹⁶,  Jules Pretty ¹⁷,  Monika Zurek ¹³,
 Alexandra Johnstone ¹⁸,  Pete Smith ¹⁹,  Neil Gunn ⁶,  Molly Watson ²,  Edward Pope ¹⁰,
 Asaf Tzachor ^{15,20},  Caitlin Douglas ¹²,  Christian Reynolds ²¹,  Neil Ward ²²,
 Jez Fredenburgh ²²,  Clare Pettinger ²³,  Tom Quested ²⁴,  Juan Pablo Cordero ²,
 Clive Mitchell ²⁵,  Carrie Bewick ²⁶,  Cameron Brown ⁶,  Christopher Brown ²⁷,
 Paul J. Burgess ²⁸,  Andy Challinor ²⁹,  Andrew Cottrell ¹⁰,  Thomas Crocker ¹⁰,
 Thomas George ⁸,  Charles J. Godfray ³⁰,  Rosie S. Hails ³¹,  John Ingram ¹²,  Tim Lang ²⁰,
 Fergus Lyon ³²,  Simon Lusher ⁶,  Tom MacMillan ³³,  Sue Newton ⁶,  Simon Pearson ³⁴,
 Sue Pritchard ³⁵,  Dale Sanders ³⁶,  Angelina Sanderson Bellamy ³⁷,  Megan Steven ⁶,
 Alastair Trickett ³⁸,  Andrew Voysey ³⁹,  Christine Watson ⁴⁰,  Darren Whitby ¹⁶ and
 Kerry Whiteside ⁴¹ — [Hide full author list](#)

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⁴ Global Food Security Programme, Polaris House, Swindon SN2 1UH, UK

⁵ UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH), Maclean Building, Benson Lane, Wallingford OX10 8BB, UK

⁶ WTW (Willis Towers Watson), 51 Lime Street, London EC3M 7DQ, UK

⁷ The Wildlife Trusts, The Kiln, Mather Road, Newark NG24 1WT, UK

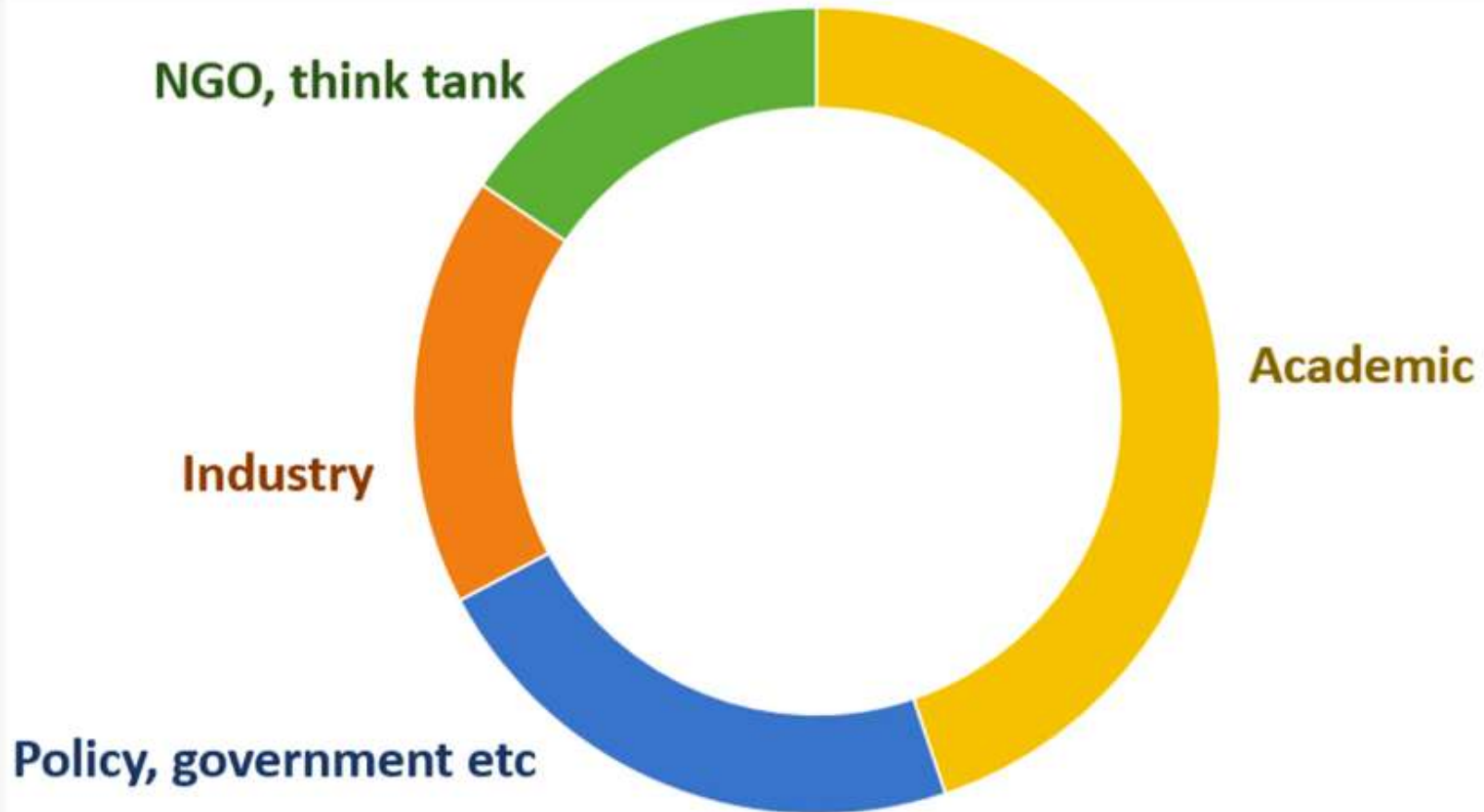
⁸ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Nobel House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR, UK

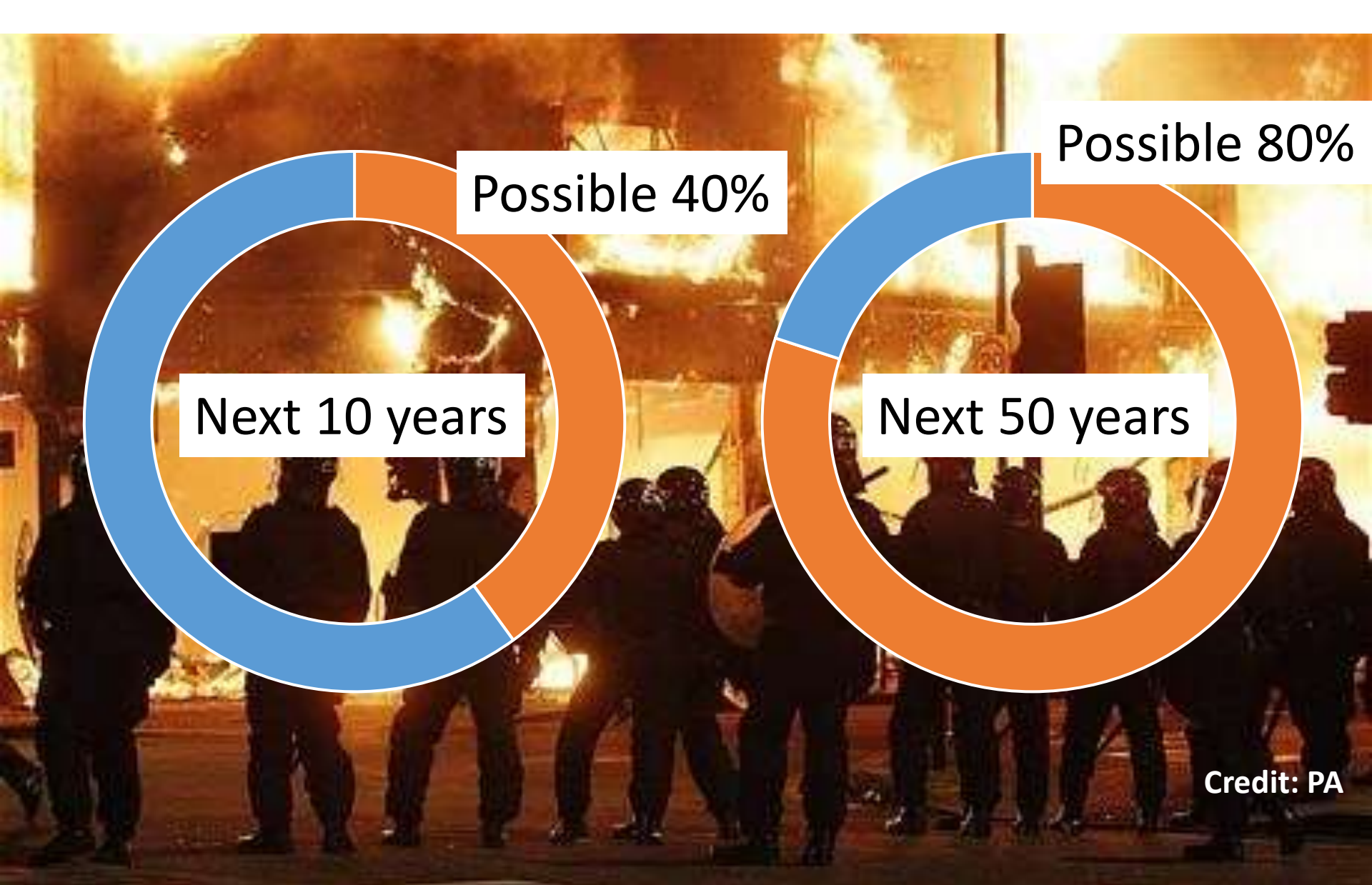
⁹ Chatham House, 10 St James Square, London SW1Y 4LE, UK

¹⁰ Met Office Hadley Centre, Met Office, Fitz Roy Road, Exeter EX1 3PB, UK

Who are these experts?

Figure 1. Classification of the employment types of the survey participants.





Possible 40%

Next 10 years

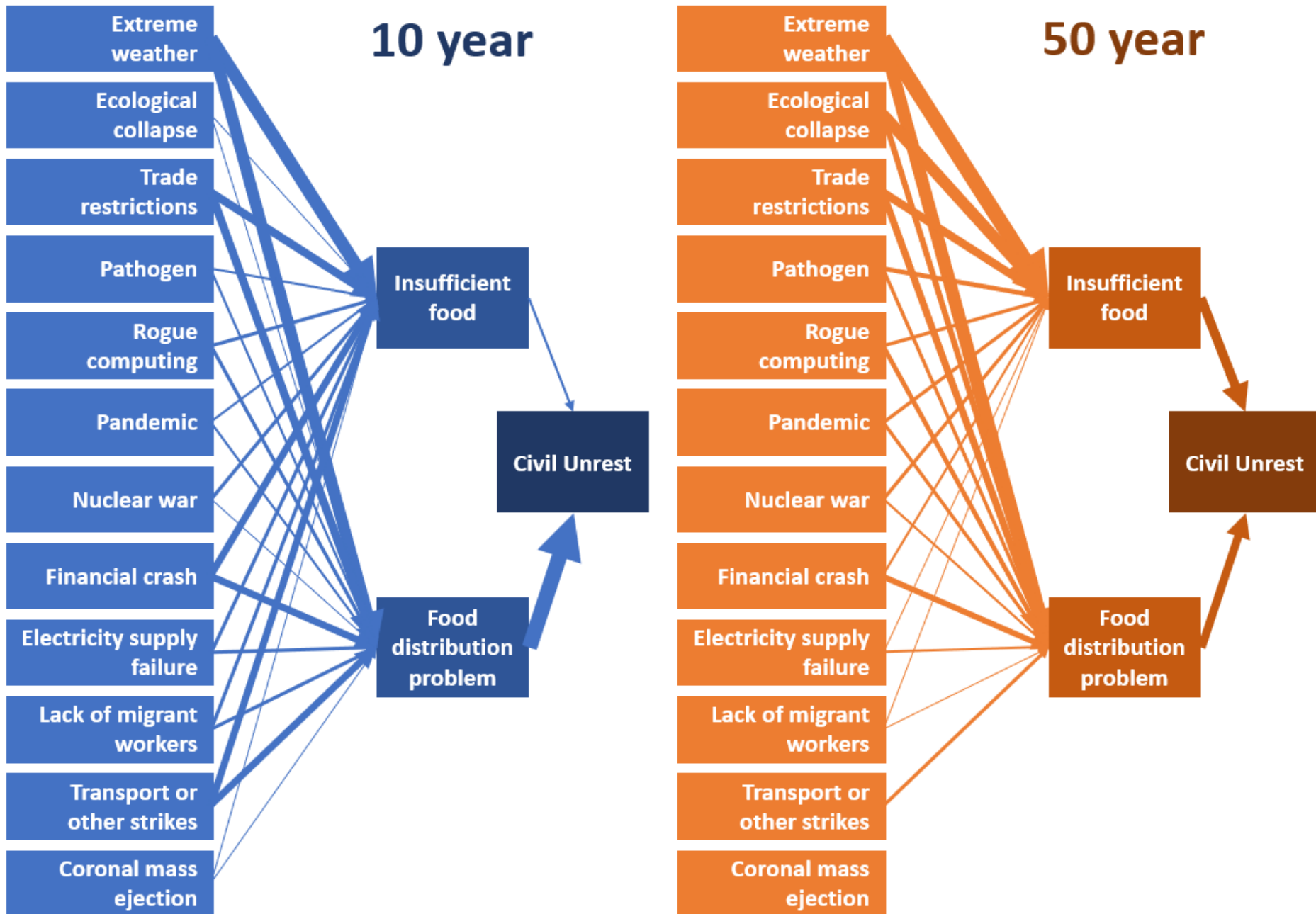


Possible 80%

Next 50 years

Credit: PA

Potential pathways to civil unrest



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Potential Pathways and Solutions to Acute Food System Crisis in the UK

Sarah Bridle^{1,*}, Elta Smith², Aled Jones³, Pete Falloon^{4,5}, Vanessa Pilley⁶, Saher Hasnain⁷, Lucy Stanbrough⁸, Christina Vogel⁹, Caitlin Douglas¹⁰, Bob Doherty¹¹, Philip Tovey^{12,13}, Pete Smith¹⁴, Simon Pearson¹⁵, S.J. Beard¹⁶, Neil Ward¹⁷, Dan Crossley¹⁸, H. Charles J. Godfray¹⁹, Monika Zurek⁷, Julie Pierce²⁰, Dominic Watters^{21,22}, Davide Natalini³, Tim Benton^{23,24}, Riaz Bhunnoo²⁵, Ben Dare²⁶, Juan Pablo Cordero¹, Molly Watson¹, Barnaby Coupe³⁸, Judith Batchelar²⁷, Ella Fleming²⁸, John Ingram⁷, Jude Irons²⁹, Tim Lang³⁰, Tom Macmillan³¹, Daniel Morton³², Sue Pritchard³³, Angelina Sanderson Bellamy³⁴, Eike Sindlinger³⁵, Alec Taylor³⁶, Kerry Whiteside³⁷

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⁴ Met Office Hadley Centre, Met Office, Fitz Roy Road, Exeter, Devon, UK

⁵ School of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

⁶ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Nobel House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR, UK

⁷ Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

⁸ WTW, 51 Lime Street, London, EC3M 7DQ, UK

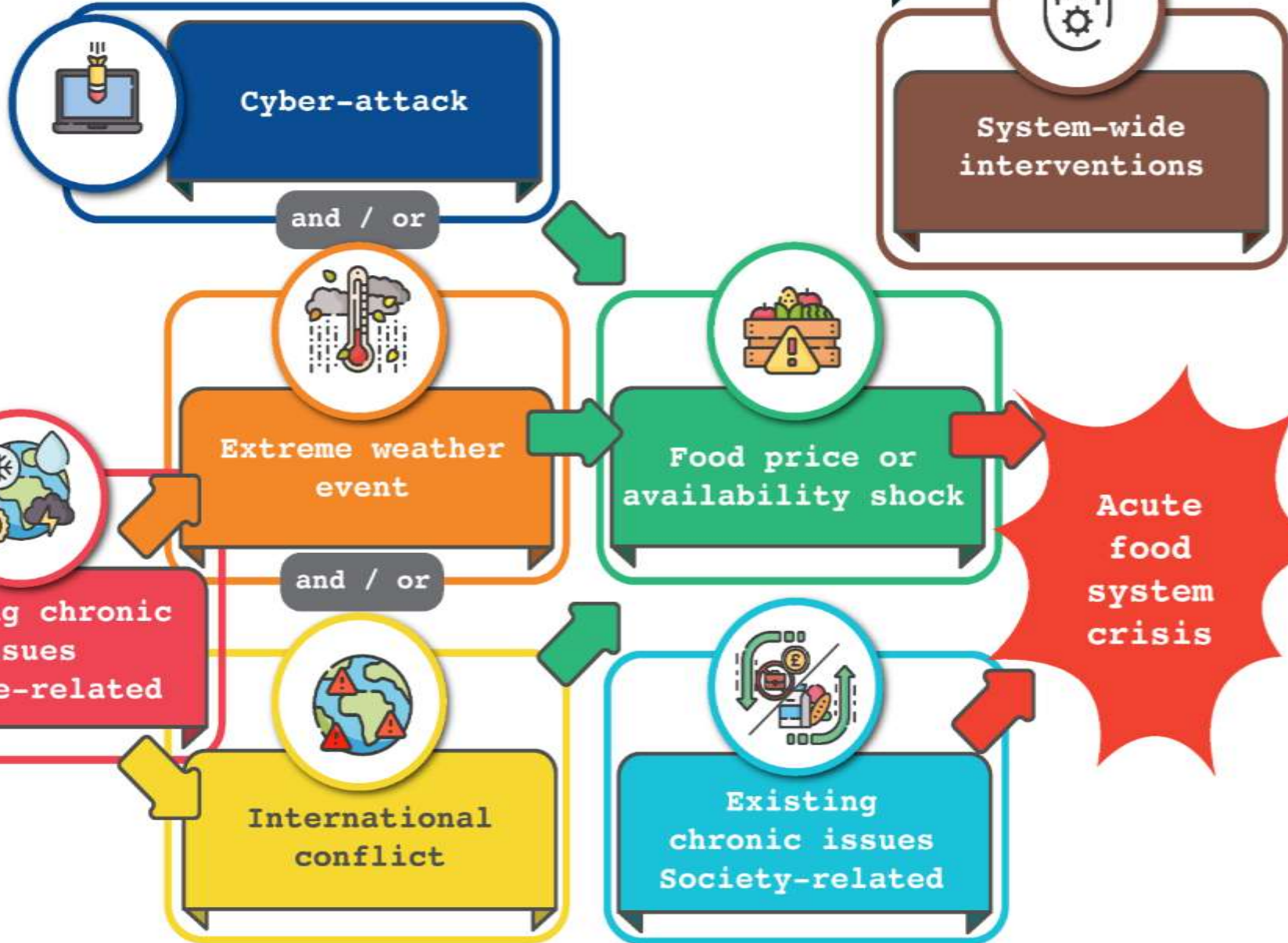
⁹ Centre for Food Policy, City St George's, University of London, London, EC1V 0HB UK

¹⁰ Department of Geography, King's College London, WC2B 4PA, UK

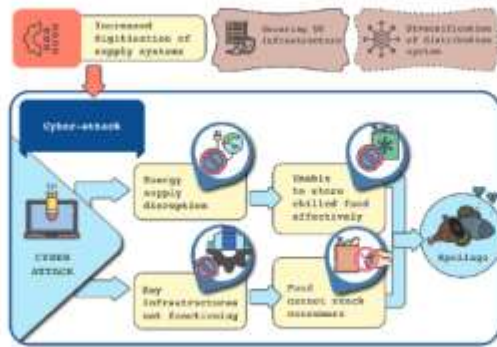
¹¹ School for Business and Society, University of York, YO10 5DD, UK

¹² Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2 Marsham St, London SW1P 4DE, UK

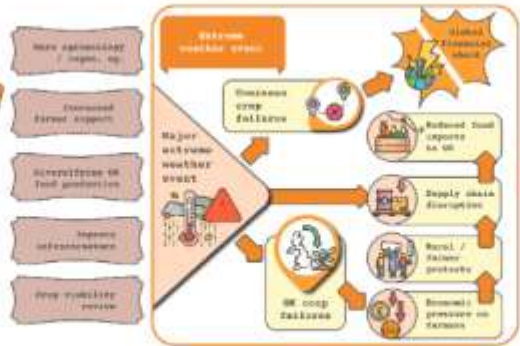
Pathway to acute food system crisis



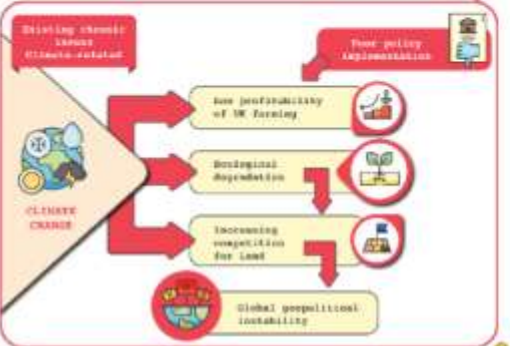
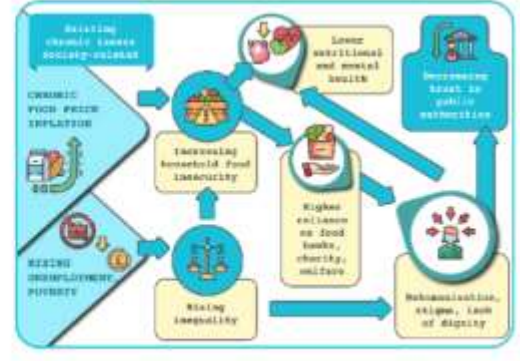
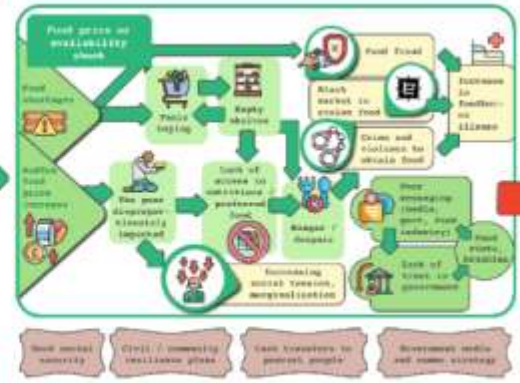
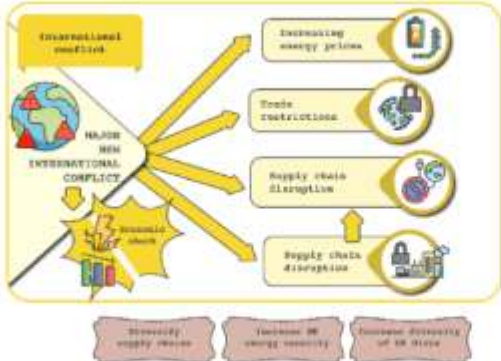
Path way to acute food system crisis



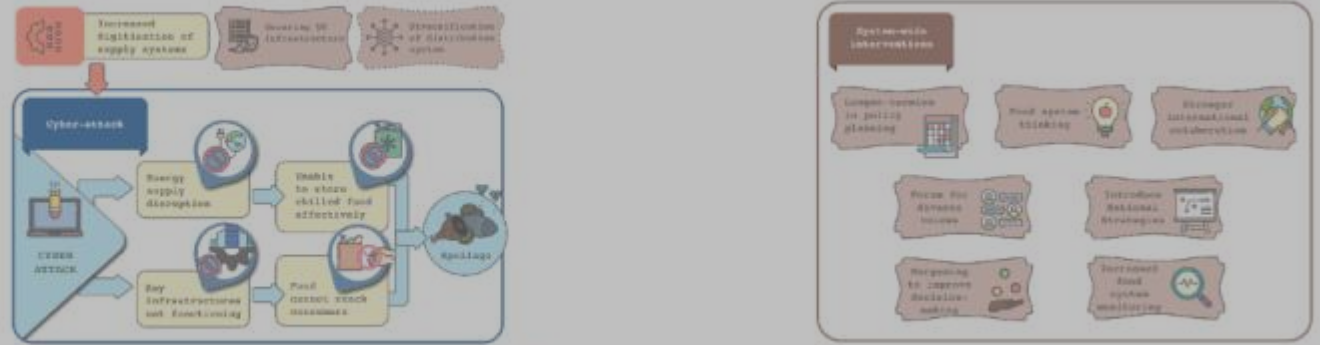
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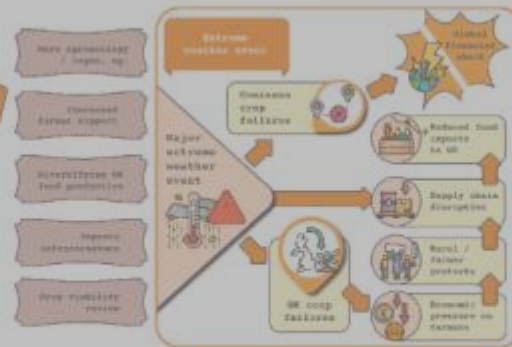
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Path way to acute food system crisis



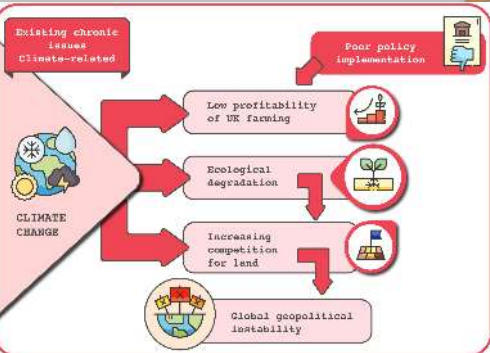
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Acute food system crisis



Existing chronic issues
Climate-related

Poor policy implementation



CLIMATE CHANGE

Low profitability
of UK farming



Ecological
degradation



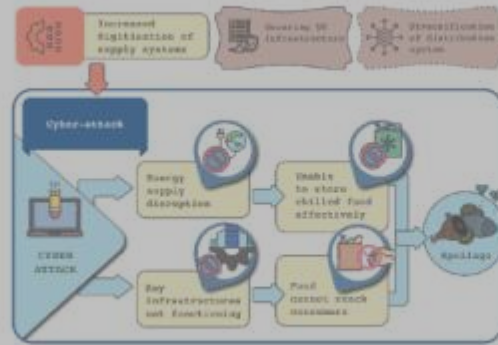
Increasing
competition
for land



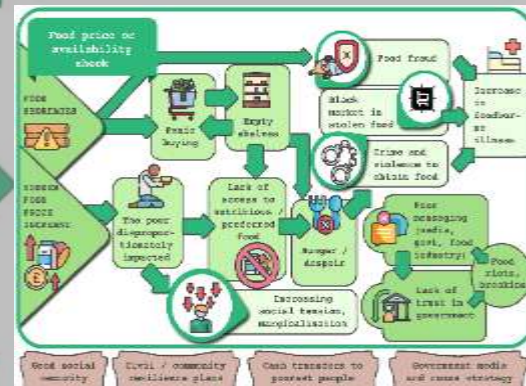
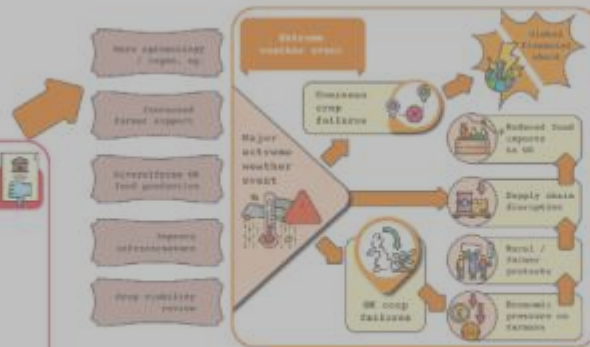
Global geopolitical
instability



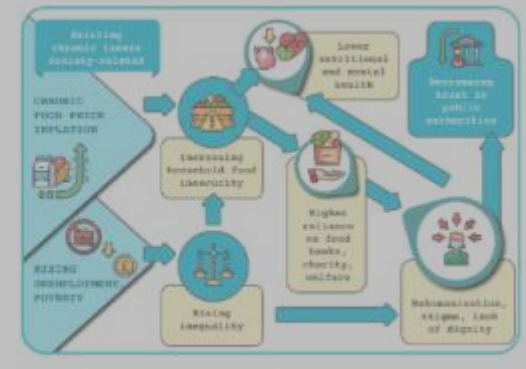
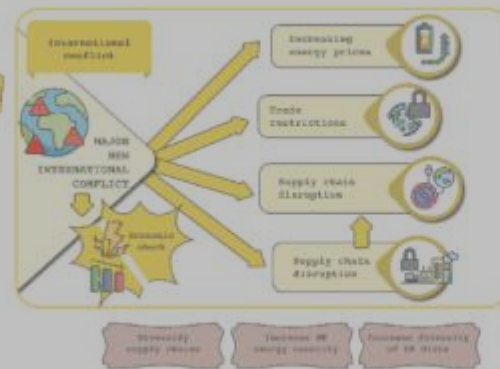
Path way to acute food system crisis

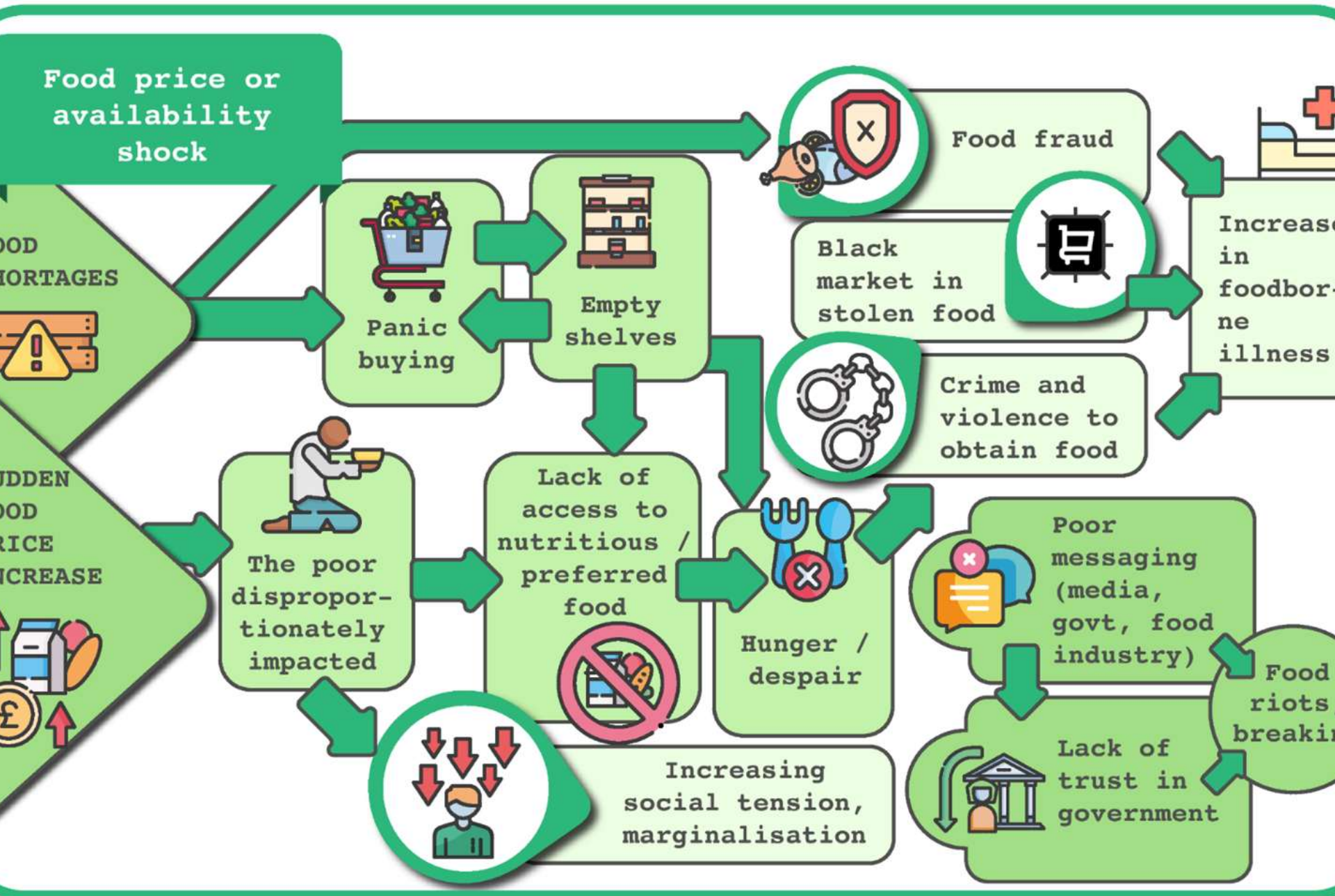


and / or



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Backcasting to Achieve Food Resilience in the UK

- Identify ways to mitigate potential tipping points that could lead to collapse of the food system
- Prioritise the UK food system areas that urgently need to strengthen their resilience to likely risks and shocks.

BAFR-UK PROJECT PARTNERS



PROJECT FUNDERS



The Barefood Serious Game

Scenarios

Crises

Interventions

NOW → 2030

FOOD INSECURITY RISES DUE TO COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Continuing inflation, energy price volatility and stagnant wages leave more households relying on cheap, less nutritious food.

Food bank use more 'normal' food

2030 → 35

EARLY SIGNS

Seasonal rainfall winters becoming

Occasional local treated as internal

SUPPLY CHAINS

Retailers and digital

Digital logistics planning is mini

TRUST IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Sporadic farmer supply chain and

Civil society food insecurity, but a

FOOD INSECURITY DEEPENS

More families turn to food banks as a first resort during economic downturns. While still somewhat stigmatised, it's increasingly viewed as part of the social fabric in many communities.

There is growing evidence responses are muted

CLIMATE EXPOSURE

Summers are warm drop considerably

Winter floods are more emergencies multiple management still highlighting how vulnerable

SUPPLY CHAINS

Businesses weigh uncertainties delay

PROTESTS FLOODED

Farmer protests 'out of touch' urban

Civil society groups some limited support

2035 → 40

FOOD INSECURITY BECOMES ENDEMIC

Diets in the UK have worsened with an increased reliance on ultra-processed foods and no significant shift in diets since the early 2020s.

Food bank use now viewed as a permanent aspect of food insecurity.

CLIMATE HAS MAJOR NEGATIVE IMPACTS

There is an overall reduction in rainfall in the summer months and increased rainfall in winter with no major investment in water infrastructure.

Extreme weather events are more common and last longer.

Agriculture output is regularly impacted by both droughts and extreme flooding in the major growing areas in the UK.

SUPPLY CHAINS ARE FAILING

Food system infrastructure has remained a largely ignored issue by governments and the private sector and it still runs as highly efficient with little resiliency.

Payment systems are protected through cybersecurity measures but logistics and storage infrastructure has little to no protection.

DROUGHT IN ENGLAND

- FOOD AFFORDABILITY

- FOOD

- SELF

INFRA

TRUST

A major

expected

with

Food

CROP FAILURES OVERSEAS

- FOOD AFFORDABILITY

- FOOD

SEL

INFRA

TRU

CYBER ATTACK

FOOD AFFORDABILITY

- FOOD AVAILABILITY

SEL

INFRA

TRU

ENERGY CRUNCH

- FOOD AFFORDABILITY

FOOD AVAILABILITY

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

- INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE

TRUST

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Global oil prices see a rapid rise driven by tensions between the US and Iran. Lorry drivers across the UK stage mass protests and blockade fuel depots causing a shortage of fuel and a significant increase in energy costs for farms. Energy prices rapidly increase causing many farmers to declare a crisis in costs for the forthcoming year. This is coupled with a lack of fuel availability in the short term meaning some farms face a more immediate

ALTERNATIVE FUELS

~ FOOD AFFORDABILITY

FOOD

~ SELF

+ INFRA

~ TRU

EMISSIONS TAX

FOOD AFFORDABILITY

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INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

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TRANSITION SUPPORT

~ FOOD AFFORDABILITY

- FOOD AVAILABILITY

~ SELF-SUFFICIENCY

~ INFRASTRUCTURE

+ TRUST

The government

offer farmers capital

loans to transition

alternative protein

from livestock. The

ing support a

ie for 3 years

ayed over 10

Developed with Matteo Menapace – co-creator of awardwinning Daybreak climate game Jones, Smith, Menapace, Bridle in prep



Playing the game at the World Agri-Tech Innovation Summit 23 September 2025. We had maximum engagement, with 30 participants who played the prototype game during this invited session.

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Yes!