



ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF FOOD INSECURITY ON DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES

27 April 2021

THE STATE OF HUNGER

INTRODUCTION TO A STUDY OF POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY IN THE UK



WHAT IS 'HUNGER'?

- Household-level food insecurity
- Not about food – incomes
- Beyond poverty – destitution

* [Image links to full document](#)

DRIVERS OF FOOD BANK USE IN THE UK

SOCIAL SECURITY

- Welfare reform
- Rules and design
- Administrative problems

- *Low payment levels*
- *Gaps in payments*
- *Difficult to access*

LIFE EVENTS & HEALTH

- Challenging life experiences
- Ill health and disability

- *Harder to earn*
- *Harder to sustain social security support*
- *Harder to cover living costs*

LOCAL SUPPORT

- Local services
- Family/friends
- Social networks

- *Inadequate*
- *Exhausted*

HUNGER & FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

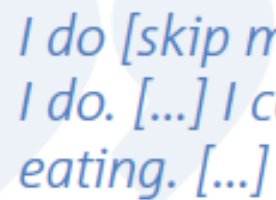


8-10%
of UK households
were *food insecure*
in 2016-18




2.8%
were *severely food insecure*
in 2016

- At particular risk of **food insecurity**:
 - Households with children (11% vs 7%)
 - c11% of children affected
 - Single parents (17% vs 6%)
 - Gendered in couples (14% vs 5%)
- At particular risk of using a **food bank**:
 - Single parents (22%)
 - Families with 2+ children



I do [skip meals]. The kids don't, but I do. [...] I can go three days without eating. [...] When I first started doing it, it was like, oh my God, I feel ill. Now, I'm used to it.

(Qualitative respondent, Female)



“Parents are definitely trying to buffer children, but the kids that I talk to are fully aware of the situation and do what they can to protect their parents, and their siblings. So the kids might pretend that they’re full, or they’re not hungry, but they are.”

State of Hunger, 2019



IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

- 2020/21: more than 2.5m emergency food parcels provided in the Trussell Trust network
 - Nearly 1m emergency food parcels to children
- Demand increased sharply, particularly at the start
- Tip of the iceberg
- Part of long-term trend
- Families with children may have been particularly affected
 - +36% to children vs +32% to adults on previous year
 - Part of consistent trend where over-represented (compared with general population)
 - Wider response (emergency provision in schools, FSM)

BREAKING THE CYCLE

- Beyond food
- Lessons from the pandemic
 - Political will
 - Cross-government working
- End the need for food banks in the UK
 - Ensure people can afford the basics
 - Invest in local support
 - Engage people with lived experience of destitution and the frontline
- All levels of government

