




HUNGRY CHRISTMAS

A report on foodbanks in South East England 2018 for **Keith Taylor MEP**



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A photograph of Keith Taylor MEP, a man in a dark suit and light shirt, sitting at a table with a yellow and blue checkered tablecloth. He is engaged in a conversation with an older man whose back is to the camera. The man in the foreground is wearing a green jacket. They are in a room with red chairs and a window with red curtains in the background.

Keith Taylor MEP on a visit to Canterbury Food Bank

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FOREWORD KEITH TAYLOR MEP

“I’m scared to eat sometimes in case we run out of food.” That’s what one foodbank user told Philip Alston, the United Nations (UN) rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights during a visit to the UK earlier this year¹.

Mr Alston’s report on poverty in the UK² found the Conservative government had deliberately inflicted ‘great misery’ on the most vulnerable people in Britain – the fifth richest country in the world³. One impact of ‘punitive, mean-spirited, and often callous’ austerity policies has been an 85 per cent rise in foodbank reliance over the last five years⁴.

This year we saw reports of thousands of nurses being forced to rely on foodbanks as the reality of in-work poverty levels continued to hit home⁵. An estimated 60,000 nurses in the UK used on a foodbank in 2018, according to a survey by Cavell Nurses’ Trust⁶.

Since I published my Hungry Christmas report last year⁷, the Tory government has overseen another 15 per cent rise in foodbank dependency in my constituency⁸.

Low Income continues to be the single biggest reason why people are forced to seek emergency food aid. In the UK, there are 14 million people living in poverty⁹. Four and a half million of those are children¹⁰. And seven million are from working households¹¹. A shocking 60 per cent of Britons in poverty are working. Despite low headline unemployment figures¹², insecure work and zero hour contracts are soaring¹³ while the growth of underemployment reveals the lie at the heart of the official employment statistics¹⁴.

Over the last year, we have also seen continued benefit freezes¹⁵ and a huge expansion of the damaging changes wrought by Universal Credit. A broken and failed policy the UN relabelled ‘universal discredit’¹⁶. When taken together, almost 40 per cent of people cite benefit changes and delays as the main reasons they are pushed into crisis. Cross-party MPs have slammed Universal Credit as ‘pointlessly cruel’¹⁷. In response, the government scrapped claimants’ £10 Christmas ‘bonus’¹⁸; which has been paid since 1972.

Since 2010, we have seen the number of rough sleepers skyrocket by 169% under the Tories¹⁹ while homelessness has soared²⁰. In the South East, there are at least 27,000 people without a home²¹. Poverty, homelessness and foodbank dependency are issues that are inexorably linked and have intensified in the last eight years. It is why, like last year, foodbanks remain one of Britain’s few booming industries.

Amidst all of the statistics, though, it’s easy to forget that each food parcel handed out goes to somebody in real and genuine need. From my visits to foodbanks, meeting both clients and volunteers, I have always been struck by the quiet desperation affecting people across my constituency.

During a visit to Portsmouth, I met Mary, a single parent who just couldn’t keep up with the cost of clothing and feeding her children. She would often go without food so her kids could eat. For her, the foodbank was a lifeline at a time of desperation.

This report aims to highlight the hardship faced this Christmas by thousands of Marys across the South East, and indeed up and down the country. It reveals the truly shameful underbelly of a British economy that is deliberately hidden from view by the government.

As wages fail to keep pace with the cost of living²², which is, in turn, pushed up by the continuing Brexit shambles²³, and as the government continues to push ahead with Universal Credit, there is even less hope this year that the situation will improve.

Foodbanks are a lifeline to those in need across the South East but they continue to be a stain on the Tories’ record on poverty. Some will say poverty isn’t political. Greens reject this. Poverty is clearly political and, for us, its elimination will always be a top priority.

WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE 2017: UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Food banks, almost unknown in the UK before 2010, are now so common in the South East it would be more surprising for a town or village to be without one.

Several of the food banks in this report are having to expand their facilities to cope with demand. The system of referral by GPs, social workers, and Citizens Advice is still in place, as is the standard of three days emergency food aid in a food parcel distributed to a person in need. Since 2017, the rollout of Universal Credit has had a significant impact on a continued rise in demand.



Keith Taylor MEP visits a foodbank in Ashford.

TABLE 1 THE CHANGE IN FOODBANK USE ACROSS THE SOUTH EAST BETWEEN 2017 AND 2018

COUNTY	NUMBER OF EMERGENCY FOOD PARCELS HANDED OUT				%CHANGE 2017-2018
	APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2017	END OF YEAR 2017	APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2018	END OF YEAR 2018	
BERKSHIRE	5639	10594	6214	12428	17.31%
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	1027	2054	1878	3756	82.86%
EAST SUSSEX	12009	24018	14183	28366	31.22%
HAMPSHIRE	10736	21748	11174	22348	2.76%
ISLE OF WIGHT	2212	4814	2050	4100	-14.83%
KENT	8784	17631	9025	18050	2.38%
OXFORDSHIRE	2579	4522	2971	5942	31.40%
SURREY	7584	14331	8688	17376	21.25%
WEST SUSSEX	5415	11641	6614	13228	13.63%
TOTAL	56532	108952	62797	125594	15.27%

CASE STUDY: PRESSURE ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Austerity and cuts to public services continue to have a dramatic impact on people, particularly those receiving social care and children. A recent investigation found over 1,000 residents of care homes had died over the past five years from malnutrition, dehydration or bedsores²⁴.

Councils are also struggling with a huge rise in demand for child protection services, with the number of children in care or on child protection plans up by 12,000 and 23,000 respectively²⁵. It is no surprise that 2018 saw the first bankruptcy of a council since 2000, in Northamptonshire²⁶. Earlier in the year, a series of stress tests of council finances by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism found Surrey, Somerset, Norfolk and Lancashire Councils were also facing extreme pressure²⁷. Further Councils have since been identified as being at risk in Worcester²⁸ and East Sussex²⁹.

This normalisation of food poverty is a deep source of concern, particularly due to the ongoing uncertainty over Brexit. Negotiations over the diplomatic and legal settlement, together with the political drama surrounding it, have seen the UK government put little resources or effort into domestic policy – on top of that, there is no suggestion there is a genuine will to address the causes that lie behind people being forced to rely on emergency food aid.

The main operator of food banks in the UK continues to be the Trussell Trust, who run 428 food banks. On top of this, research from IFAN found there are at least 801 independent food banks, run by an assortment of voluntary and faith organisations. There are even more providing some form of emergency food aid, leading IFAN to conclude over 2,000 independent organisations are providing emergency food aid in the UK, with as many as 2036 food banks³⁰.

As we saw in 2017, some foodbanks are now providing other items, such as toiletries, nappies and sanitary products. This practice has only become more common. The Trussell Trust lists the typical additional items as:

TOILETRIES – DEODORANT, TOILET PAPER, SHOWER GEL, SHAVING GEL, SHAMPOO, SOAP, TOOTHBRUSHES, TOOTHPASTE, HAND WIPES

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS – LAUNDRY LIQUID DETERGENT, LAUNDRY POWDER, WASHING UP LIQUID

FEMININE PRODUCTS – SANITARY TOWELS AND TAMPONS

BABY SUPPLIES – NAPPIES, BABY WIPES AND BABY FOOD.

Source: The Trussell Trust

It is important to recognise that foodbank use represents some people in crisis, but not all of those who are experiencing crisis. Moreover, people and families in crisis are the tip of the iceberg in terms of long-term food insecurity and poverty. For many of these just-managing families, an unexpected bill, a period of ill health, or loss of work can tip them over into crisis, homelessness and possibly a long period of time in temporary housing.

WHY ARE PEOPLE USING FOODBANKS?

The latest data from the Trussell Trust show that, when taken together, **Universal Credit and benefit changes and delays are the main reasons for people needing emergency food aid.** On its own, Low Income is the single biggest driver of foodbank dependency, followed by Debt.

LOW INCOME

This remains the single most common reason for needing emergency food aid. Unemployment is low but people in jobs are struggling to get enough money from those jobs. The rise of insecure and low paid work in the 'Gig Economy' has replaced 'dole-claiming unemployment', with under-employment now far higher than in 2008³¹.

TABLE 2 THE CHANGING FACTORS LEADING TO FOODBANK RELIANCE

IN 2018	IN 2017
LOW INCOME: 31%	LOW INCOMES: 27%
BENEFIT DELAYS: 22%	BENEFIT DELAYS: 25%
BENEFIT CHANGES: 17%	BENEFIT CHANGES: 18%
DEBT 9%	DEBT 8%

Source: The Trussell Trust

There were around 1.8 million people on 'zero-hours'-type contracts in the UK in 2018. They worked 25 hours a week on average compared to 36 hours for workers on more secure contracts. While research shows these arrangements do appear to suit some people, just over a quarter said they wanted more hours³². The UK is still experiencing poor wage growth, ranking poorest of the nine 'advanced' G20 economies³³.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission published an analysis looking at the cumulative impact of tax changes and welfare reforms. They found the poorest households in society lost around £2,000 - £3,000 in income a year from the changes. This was even worse for black and minority ethnic communities, particularly Bangladeshi families who lost £4,400. Single parents lost £5,250 on average and families, where one adult and one child had a disability, lost £6,500³⁴.

BENEFIT DELAYS AND SANCTIONS

Benefit sanctions and delays continue to be a source of insecurity forcing vulnerable people to rely on emergency food aid. Research published this year found benefit sanctions were 'ineffective' and were pushing people into low-level crime in order to survive^{35 36}. A national scheme to help reduce the number of sanctions was scrapped early in 2018, although the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee recommended a series of reforms to mitigate the sanctions regime and its impact on the vulnerable^{37 38}.

Due to the way the statistics are compiled, it is difficult to pull out a clear number for people who have been sanctioned in the South East. The available suggests there have been around 30,000 Universal Credit Sanctions since 2015 while the number of Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions have fallen as people have been moved on to Universal Credit. Nationally, there have been almost 450,000 sanctions against Universal Credit claimants since 2015³⁹.

Concerns about the impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears have been borne out. An investigation by BBC Panorama found arrears doubled for people claiming Universal Credit⁴⁰. The average arrears were £662.56 for people on Universal Credit, compared to £262.50 for people on Housing Benefit. In areas which have had Universal Credit for a longer period of time, people are at increased risk of falling into debt⁴¹. A report for Guildford Council earlier this year said they were expecting a rise in homelessness due to Universal Credit⁴².

BENEFIT CHANGES

The most significant benefit change in 2018 has been the continued roll-out of Universal Credit. The system has come under repeated criticism from across civil society, with groups as diverse as the Red Cross⁴³, the National Union of Students and the Church of England, highlighting the damage it is doing to communities. In December, the House of Lords expressed their fears that 745,000 people currently receiving Employment Support Allowance (ESA) might lose money⁴⁴. The Department for Work and Pensions also stopped the payment of a £10 'Christmas Bonus' to Universal Credit claimants – these payments were a common feature of the benefit system in recognition of the extra costs associated with the Christmas period⁴⁵.

The 'two-child limit' has been of particular concern for its impact on larger families. Research commissioned by the Church of England found a disproportionate number of Muslim and Jewish families would be affected by the limit⁴⁶.

The Benefit freeze, in place from 2016, is another ubiquitous part of the benefit system. Around 10.4 million households will lose around £150 next year⁴⁷. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimates these families will be losing around £800 a year by the time the freeze is scheduled to finish in 2021, and that 500,000 more of them will be living in poverty⁴⁸.

FIGURE 1 NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THE SOUTH EAST CLAIMING UNIVERSAL CREDIT AUGUST 2015 TO JUNE 2018

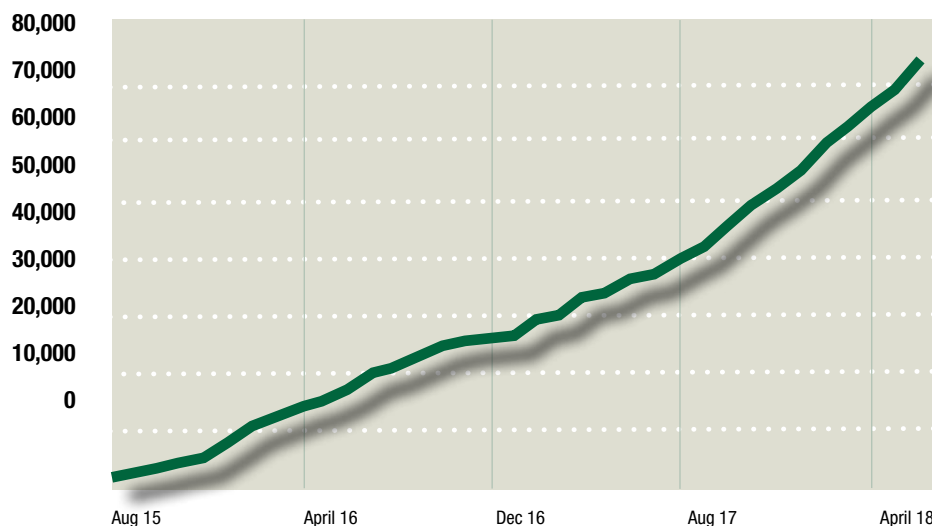
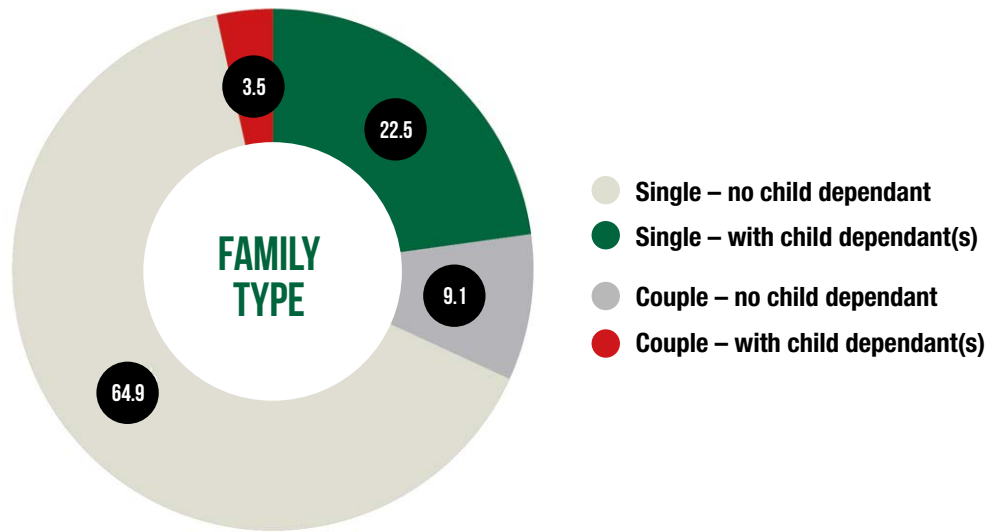


FIGURE 2 PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN THE SOUTH EAST CLAIMING UNIVERSAL CREDIT WHO WERE RECEIVING PAYMENT BY FAMILY TYPE AT JUNE 2018



DEBT

Around eight per cent of people were referred to Trussell Trust Food Banks due to debt. However, it is safe to assume that a much greater proportion of emergency food parcel recipients have debt issues. Increasing household debt has become a major concern, with credit being used to prop up personal finances to a greater level than before. In 2017, UK household spent on average £900 more than they earned – with most of this being financed through debt. This is the first time a deficit in household finance has been recorded since the 1980s⁴⁹. The National Audit Office estimated that 8.3 million households are unable to pay off their debts and loans, with the charity Stepchange noting most of their clients were now renters and the under 40s⁵⁰.

Even public services, such as councils and the NHS, are aggressively using bailiffs to pursue unpaid debts from people who cannot afford to pay. In 2016, 2.3 million outstanding debts were passed on to bailiffs by councils⁵¹. Wealden District Council recently defended its policy of using bailiffs to recover debts from 232 residents and issuing a further 2,368 with liability orders⁵². The Isle of Wight had the sixth highest rate of personal insolvencies in England and Wales⁵³. The impact of living in debt can be devastating to mental health, according to the Money Advice Service⁵⁴.

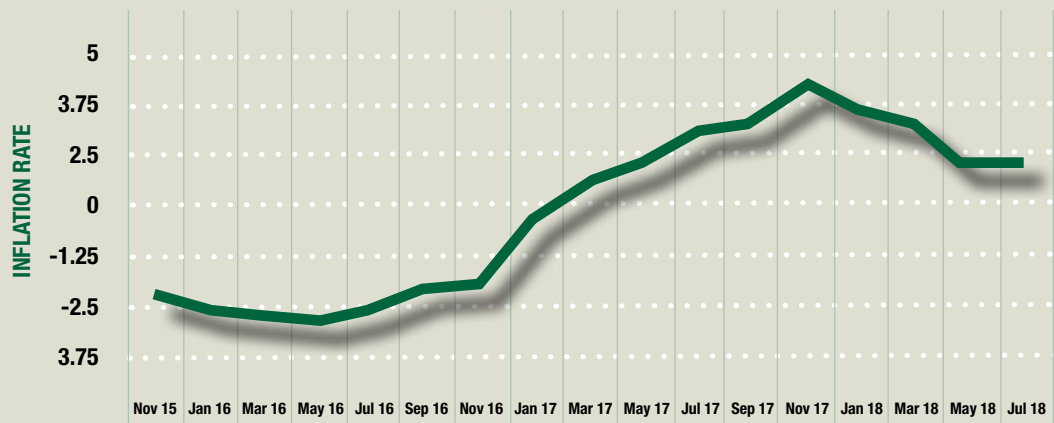


Images from The Trussell Trust

FOOD PRICES

Food price inflation has continued to rise since 2017, albeit at a slower rate than in 2017. Prices are also still higher than in 2013⁵⁵. The cold weather at the start of the year and long, hot summer has also had an impact on food prices, raising inflation to around 2.5 per cent in August with some predicting food price rises of up to 5 per cent⁵⁶. There are still concerns about the impact of Brexit on food prices and food supply, with the Lords Select Committee publishing a report, which found the rise in food prices would be greater than that predicted by ministers⁵⁷.

FIGURE 3 INFLATION RATE FOR FOOD IN UNITED KINGDOM (UK) FROM MAY 2015 TO AUGUST 2018



Source: ONS, www.statista.com/statistics/537050/uk-inflation-rate-food-in-united-kingdom



Photos: Dinkum, Gisela Francisco and Stefan Kühn. Wikimedia Commons.

FOODBANKS IN THE SOUTH EAST

BERKSHIRE

FOODSHARE, MAIDENHEAD

“ We’re seeing more working people coming to the foodbank. These are self-employed people and those on zero-hours contracts.

Lester Tanner,
Co-Manager

Foodshare Maidenhead has seen a seven to eight per cent rise in families coming to the food bank since last year. Within those numbers they have seen increased numbers of larger families, meaning the number of people using the foodbank has gone up more than the number of households. Universal Credit has been introduced but is not fully rolled out; they are expecting further increases in demand when that happens.

The active outreach the foodbank does means they have seen more people from the South Asian, Muslim and Eastern European communities in the town. They have also been able to increase the amount of food handed out from three days to five day’s worth.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

AYLESBURY FOODBANK, AYLESBURY

“ This recession has gone on for so long that the people they might have been able to borrow off have run out of money.

Heather-Joy Garrett,
Co-ordinator

Aylesbury Food Bank moved to larger premises in September and has now become a charity in its own right. It continues to see a rise in demand for its services. In the first year Aylesbury Food Bank opened, it gave out 745 food parcels, this rose to 1,292 in the last financial year, and has already reached the 1,200 mark in December this year - with another four months to go.

Volunteers are seeing an impact from Universal Credit, which is estimated to account for 10 to 20 per cent of the cases they see. On top of this, more people are falling foul of delays, including those who struggle to fill in online forms or have been refused short-term allowances. By the time people are on Universal Credit, they’re in debt, Heather-Joy Garrett, the Co-ordinator, explains.

In one case, a young woman in supported housing was moved from ESA to full sickness benefit, due to the severity of her condition. From being notified of this, she was left for eight weeks without money. Fortunately, she had a support worker who was able to act as an advocate for her.

“My preferred future is to become redundant, but I don’t see it yet,” Heather-Joy Garrett says on the future of the charity.

WEST SUSSEX

CITIZENS ADVICE, WEST SUSSEX

“ It is a more and more complex scenario for people; rising costs, income stagnating, changes to benefit and no buffer.

Lee Furlong,
Client Services Manager

Citizens Advice (CA) covers a diverse area of West Sussex. This includes Crawley and Worthing, which are more urban, and more rural Mid Sussex and Horsham. There are seven Bureaus, plus about 12 outreach projects across West Sussex.

According to Lee Furlong, Client Services Manager at Citizens Advice, they are primarily seeing people because they are in food crisis, generally on the back of a bigger crisis or issue. Working with food banks enables CA to work on the root causes.

They have issued just over 750 food bank vouchers, which is a 17 per cent increase on last year. June and July saw the full roll out of Universal Credit, and they have seen a 41 per cent increase in people coming to them compared to the July to September period in 2017.

However, Lee is quite clear that Universal Credit is not the only issue. “It is a more and more complex scenario for people; rising costs, income stagnating, changes to benefit and no buffer,” he says.

CA is now providing more budgeting support and digital support to help people access benefits. This means helping people prepare for a transition to universal credit rather than waiting for them to turn up in crisis.

“In terms of the food bank vouchers, we will continue to see the numbers increase and we wouldn’t expect that to change,” says Lee.

EAST SUSSEX

BRIGHTON AND HOVE FOOD PARTNERSHIP, BRIGHTON AND HOVE

The Brighton and Hove Food Partnership works on a number of food poverty projects and works closely with foodbanks across the city. Their three-year action plan on hunger in the city set out 84 actions for organisations to take. By June 2018, good progress had been made on 49 of these, with 29 showing some progress. Only six actions had seen little or no progress made. These actions cover priorities aimed at tackling the underlying causes of food poverty, supporting vulnerable people, ensuring people are able to cook, and ensuring a good level of emergency and crisis support. The areas that have proved most challenging include issues around people with acute health and care needs, housing, and the real living wage⁵⁸.

Across the City, the partnership estimates that 16 foodbanks distributed 315 food parcels a week in 2017, a rise from 298 in 2016. Seven out of ten food banks reported an increase in demand from vulnerably housed people and three out of ten from people sleeping rough. Six out of ten food banks reported an increase in demand from people with mental health issues. Five out of ten food banks reported an increase in demand from both large families and single parents. Four out of ten food banks reported an increase in demand from people in work.

At least half the reason people come to the foodbanks are benefit-related.

Helen Star-Kedde,
Development Officer

TABLE 3 WHO IS ACCESSING EMERGENCY FOOD AID IN BRIGHTON AND HOVE AND WHY?

The Brighton and Hove Food Partnership examined who was accessing emergency food aid and why. The ten foodbanks reporting on this saw increases in people:

IN INSECURE HOUSING (7/10 FOODBANKS)

WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION (6/10 FOODBANKS)

IN LARGE FAMILIES AND/OR SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS (5/10 FOODBANKS)

IN WORK (4/10 FOODBANKS)

WHO WERE REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS, OR STREET HOMELESS (3/10 FOODBANKS)

WHO ARE YOUNG AND/OR DISABLED (2/10 FOODBANKS)

According to Helen Starr-Keddie, Development Officer at the Food Partnership, at least 50 per cent of the reason people come to the foodbanks are benefits-related. They have been working with the Job Centre over the past few months to encourage them to start making referrals again.

According to surveys of foodbank users in Brighton, women, black and minority ethnic people, older people and disabled people are all more likely not to have enough money to afford basic living costs. Further work in focus groups found that black and minority ethnic people struggle to access culturally specific food, such as halal meat and vegetables used in traditional cooking, as few places stock these foods and tend to charge a premium for them. Transport costs are also quite high, which means people living in areas that have few or no shops face extra financial burdens.

One foodbank did report a drop in demand. This is because a food hub was opened by the Real Junk Food Project. Here people can buy cheap food which has been linked to fewer people attending the foodbank.

HAMPSHIRE

FRIENDS OF THE HOMELESS, FAREHAM AND GOSPORT

"I wish I had better news," starts Phil Rutt, Chairman of the Friends of the Homeless Trustees.

Friends of the Homeless has seen continued growth in numbers using their services. Phil Rutt estimates this rise at around 10 per cent. The reasons behind this growth are unclear, as Universal Credit was only just rolled out as of the end of November. "We have absolutely no idea of what effect that [Universal Credit] is going to have."

The organisation itself has new premises in Gosport and continues to be able to raise the donations and recruit volunteers to support their work.

““ We have absolutely no idea of what effect that [Universal Credit] is going to have.

Phill Rutt,
Chairman of Trustees

KENT

NOURISH FOODBANK, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Demand is increasing at Nourish and in the last year, the foodbank fed well over 5,000 people, according to Olga Johnson, Nourish Co-Chair. The most common reason is benefit changes, with Universal Credit having been fully rolled out, and a rise in issues related to people being refused personal independence disability payments (PIP) and having to appeal decisions.

However, the most concerning change is the rise in cases of domestic violence. This is now 16 per cent of their referrals (around 300 households) and something she describes as 'very worrying.'

Holiday hunger has also been increasing. They ran a holiday hunger scheme last summer and had 140 families that they did six-week breakfast bags for. This has expanded to the Christmas period, where they support 150 families during the holidays.

““ [The rise is the number of referrals related to cases domestic violence] is very worrying.

Olga Johnson,
Co-Chair

OXFORDSHIRE

NORTH OXFORDSHIRE FOODBANK, KIDLINGTON

The North Oxfordshire Foodbank has also seen a rise in people coming to them. Many of them have issues with Universal Credit, but they are also supporting people with a range of issues including rough sleeping, illness, and long-term difficulties with benefits.

In their experience, Universal Credit is quite complex for people to get on and stay on. Most of their clients are people with children, from babies through to older children. Crisis, which has an office in Oxford, sends an advisor on housing and benefits every Friday. This is because the local council is no longer providing this type of advice.

““ Universal Credit is beginning to kick in.

Melvina Fawcett,
Organise

The foodbank itself continues to be supported by several local charities, who provide its core funding. North Oxfordshire Foodbank's giving base has built up around a network of schools, churches and other organisations.

SURREY

ST. MATTHEW'S FOODBANK, REDHILL

“ There is a whole level of people in our society who are completely cut off who either can't get work or work for zero hours and their plight is getting worse and worse.

Rev. Andrew Cunnington

The St Matthew's Redhill Foodbank has seen 'enormous' growth in numbers this year. Between January and June 2018, they had distributed the equivalent to the whole of 2017 in emergency food aid – around £24,000 worth. They have relaxed the rule on only giving food on three occasions because it is taking more time for people to sort out their situations. Universal Credit is still not fully rolled out and they are expecting further rises in demand when it is.

“All we see is an increase in the number of people coming to us,” explains Rev. Andrew Cunnington. One of the new things they are seeing is statutory agencies being less and less able to cope with people's needs and having to turn to voluntary organisations where they would not have before. The local voluntary sector has established a network to better work together.

The church has been approached about expanding its services to become a one-stop shop to include Citizens Advice, housing, and benefits. But the church doesn't feel able to fulfil this role and wants to focus on providing the foodbank. They have recently developed a link with the local Co-op society and have received £9,000 from their community fund to help expand their capacity.

CONCLUSION

In the five years since the original **Hungry Christmas** report, foodbanks have become institutionalised across the South East – reflecting an ever-worsening national picture. Many foodbanks are being forced to build on extra services, such as baby goods and advice services. One of the warnings from the original report was that an institutional system of foodbanks, like the one in Canada, would mean a failure on the part of politics and civil society to repair the welfare system. There is every sign that this situation has already developed and radical action must be taken

“If we are all still doing this in 20 years, we will have failed. The country will have failed itself,” **John Marshall, Milton Keynes Foodbank** (Hungry Christmas, 2013)⁵⁹

The figures point towards a significant and consistent year on year rise between 2017 and 2018 but to more dramatic increases in Buckinghamshire, East Sussex and Oxfordshire. The issues that push people into crisis can be complex but the common underlying causes, such as benefit sanctions, food prices, and unemployment, have shown little improvement. At the same time, there is a sustained rise in the spread of insecure and casualised work, such as zero hour contracts and the continued cuts to benefits and public services.

With charities and NGOs raising concerns about the negative impact Universal Credit and austerity⁶⁰ is likely to have on domestic violence survivors⁶¹, the increase in domestic violence-related referrals in Kent makes for particularly uneasy reading.

As post-Brexit Britain faces increasing economic turmoil, inflation and the ‘biggest squeeze on living standards since records began’ at the same time as the Universal Credit programme continues to fail and wages stagnate, it is clear the South East’s foodbank crisis is unlikely to be resolved soon. It’s notable that, where Universal Credit has already been rolled out, foodbanks have experienced an increase in demand ranging from 16% to 100%.

Foodbanks are an essential lifeline to people across the region but their continued ubiquity risks allowing the symptoms of systematic government policy failure to be repackaged as commendable charity.



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