

**Oversight and Governance**

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Select Committee Review – Food Justice

Wednesday 30 October 2019
12.30 pm
Warspite Room, Council House

Members:

Councillor Mrs Aspinall, Chair
Councillors Mrs Bridgeman and Tuohy.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

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Tracey Lee

Chief Executive

Select Committee Review

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by Members.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect of items on this agenda.

3. Chair's Urgent Business

To receive reports on business, which in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

4. Select Committee Review Plan (Pages 1 - 2)

5. Food Justice Motion (Pages 3 - 4)

6. Witnesses

7. Background Information

- 7.a. Healthy Food Basket Published Paper (Pages 5 - 14)
- 7.b. Submission to House of Lords Food, Poverty, Health and Environment Committee (Pages 15 - 44)
- 7.c. The State of Hunger - Trussell Trust Report (Pages 45 - 76)
- 7.d. Overview of New Home, New You (Pages 77 - 78)
- 7.e. Feast of Fun 2019 (Pages 79 - 98)

SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW PLAN

Overview and Scrutiny

**SELECT COMMITTEE TOPIC****FOOD JUSTICE****Raised by -**

Councillor Penberthy – Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development

Purpose of Review

To investigate the extent and causes of hunger in Plymouth and make recommendations about what can be done to tackle it.

Select Committee Membership

Councillor Mrs Aspinall (Chair)
Councillor Tuohy
Councillor Mrs Bridgeman

Process

Methodology/Approach	Initial evidence session to be held in the Council House with invited witnesses, presentation from officers and relevant paperwork.
Sources of Information/Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Food Basket Published Paper • The State of Hunger – Trussell Trust Report • Overview of the New Home New You (NHNY) programme • Response to the submission to House of Lords Food, Poverty, Health and Environment • Feast of Fun 2019 Report
Consultation Exercises	N/A
Witness/Expert Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Plymouth • Food Plymouth • Dig for Devonport • New Home, New You/Grow Cook Share • CaterEd • Plymouth City Council • Transforming Plymouth
Site Visits	N/A
Resource Requirements	Will be met through existing scrutiny resources.

Post Review

Reporting Process	Report to Cabinet and update under announcements at Full Council.
Anticipated Completion Date	By end of October 2019

Draft Report Deadline	21 October 2019
Meeting Frequency	3 – 4 hour Select Committee one-off meeting
Dates of Meeting(s)	30 October 2019
Further Information	

MOTION ON NOTICE

City Council 24 June 2019



FOOD JUSTICE

The Council **notes** that there are 8 million people in the UK who have trouble putting food on the table according to the UN. Over 500,000 people used food banks in the UK last year. The Trussell Trust alone distributed over 1.3m three-day emergency food supplies of people in crisis in the financial year 2017-2018. 3m children are at risk of hunger during the school holidays. Around 10% of the NHS budget goes on treating diabetes and up to 1 million people live in food deserts in the UK.

The Council further **notes** that in Plymouth,

- Plymouth Foodbank has reported year on year increases in the number of people (adults and children) receiving a food parcel over the last 4 years. In 2018/19, the foodbank provided food parcels to 8,509 recipients, including families with children.
- Over 26,000 meals were given out by the city's soup runs in 2018 – this has increased each year for the last six years with more women and children using the service than ever before.
- 14,000 people in Plymouth had Diabetes in 2016 with the number expected to grow by 6% each year.
- Our Cities of Service volunteer programme, Grow, Share, Cook has given over 40,000 free meals to over 3,000 individuals. The project delivers free fruit and vegetables at people from disadvantaged households and people at risk of developing type 2 Diabetes due to diet.
- 1 in 5 (Plymouth's recently adopted Child Poverty Action Plan) includes specific actions to increase take up of free school meals.

The Council **recognises** that the Government's commitment to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals) which apply internationally and domestically, through Goal 2, commits governments to ending hunger by 2030.

Therefore the Council **resolves** to:

- 1) **Commit** to food justice in Plymouth by nominating a Cabinet Member with responsibility of delivering food justice;
- 2) **Request** the Leader to write to the relevant minister (following the appointment of a new Prime Minister and any related Cabinet reshuffle) to ask the government to enshrine its existing commitment to U Sustainable Development Goal 2 into domestic legislation;
- 3) **Ask** the Scrutiny Management Board to establish a Select Committee to investigate the extent and causes of hunger in Plymouth and make recommendations about what can be done to tackle it; and
- 4) **Work** with existing partnerships in Plymouth to develop and implement a Food Justice Action Plan to eliminate hunger in Plymouth.

Proposed by Councillor Chris Penberthy by email 17 June 2019

Seconded by Councillor Sarah Allen by email 17 June 2019

Dated: 17 June 2019

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NUTRITION IN DEPRIVATION

Deprivation and healthy food access, cost and availability: a cross-sectional study

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Keywords

food deserts, food retail mapping,
healthy food access, healthy food basket survey,
socio-economic inequalities in food retail.

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Abstract

Background: Food access, cost and availability have been identified as determinants of dietary choice. It has been suggested that these are socio-economically patterned; however, the evidence is inconclusive. The present study investigated whether differences exist with respect to healthy food access, cost and availability between areas of contrasting deprivation.

Methods: An ecological, cross-sectional study was conducted in two of the most and two of the least deprived wards in Plymouth. Food retail outlets (FROs) ($n = 38$) were identified and mapped using Geographic Information Systems to assess 'physical access', by foot, to food retail provision. Healthy food basket (HFB) surveys were conducted ($n = 32$) to compare the cost and availability of 28 healthy food items between the more and less deprived areas.

Results: Areas of poor access to food retail provision were identified in both study areas, with a higher number of households in the more-deprived areas being affected than in the less-deprived areas, after accounting for car ownership levels. Median [IQR] HFB availability was lower in more-deprived than the less-deprived areas (48%, [39–71%] vs. 75%, [68–82%]; $P=0.003$), and in convenience stores than supermarkets (54%, [43–72%] vs. 78%, [72–96%]; $P=0.001$). Descriptive summaries revealed negligible differences in total median HFB cost between the more-deprived and less-deprived areas (£55.97 versus £55.94) and a larger cost difference between convenience stores and supermarkets (£62.39 versus £44.25).

Conclusions: Differences were found with respect to healthy food access, cost and availability in areas of contrasting deprivation. These appeared to be related to FRO type rather than deprivation alone.

Introduction

The 'food environment' has been implicated as a critical determinant of food choice ⁽¹⁾. If UK diets matched nutritional guidelines, almost 70 000 premature deaths from chronic noncommunicable diseases could be prevented annually ⁽²⁾. This is particularly pertinent to low socio-economic groups (LSGs) as a result of the documented social gradient in the nutritional quality of the diet, with studies reporting that those on the lowest incomes consume more salt, sugar and saturated fat, and

less fruit and vegetables ⁽³⁾. However, dietary choice is multifaceted and complex because of influences from a range of biological and societal factors ⁽⁴⁾. Increasingly, research has focused upon the influence of the food environment on dietary choice, suggesting that food access, cost and availability may be important determinants of the nutritional quality of the diet ⁽⁵⁾.

Food access refers to physical access to food retail provision ⁽⁵⁾ and is dependent upon geographical location and resources such as transport accessibility ⁽⁴⁾. The Geographic Information System (GIS) is considered useful for

assessing food retail access ⁽⁶⁾ as a result of its capacity to map and spatially analyse data ⁽⁷⁾. Availability refers to the types of food retail outlets (FROs) in a geographical area, as well as the foods that they sell ⁽⁸⁾. Previous research has measured the availability and cost of healthy food items using Healthy Food Basket (HFB) surveys ^(9,10), which have been found to have sufficient sensitivity to discriminate well between stores ⁽⁹⁾.

It has been suggested that food access, cost and availability are socio-economically patterned, with research from the USA finding that lower income areas have lower access to healthy foods ⁽¹¹⁾. Specifically, it was observed that the FROs in these areas offered lower healthy food availability, at the same time as also charging higher prices ^(12,13). Areas where it is difficult to purchase healthy food items at a reasonable price are referred to as 'Food Deserts' ⁽¹³⁾. The existence of Food Deserts is widely accepted in the USA ⁽¹⁴⁾, however, is vigorously debated in the literature elsewhere ^(13,15).

In the UK, a comprehensive review of the evidence concluded that 'Food Deserts do exist in the UK, although only for individuals who do not or cannot shop outside of their immediate locality, and when the locality itself has poor retail provision of healthy foods' ⁽¹³⁾. It has previously been shown that deprived areas have reduced access to shopping facilities ⁽¹⁶⁾, which has been attributed to the rise of large, out-of-town superstores that tend to favour car owners ⁽¹⁷⁾. Because those individuals from LSGs are less likely to own a car ⁽¹⁸⁾, this supports the existence of a social gradient regarding healthy food retail provision. However, a more recent systematic review contradicted this finding, concluding that unsubstantial evidence exists to suggest that food access is socio-economically-patterned in the UK ⁽¹⁴⁾. Research into the relationship between the food retail environment and dietary intake is still underdeveloped in the UK ⁽⁵⁾ and therefore the evidence remains inconclusive.

It is clear that more UK-specific research is needed regarding healthy food provision in the food retail environment. Therefore, the present study aimed to explore whether the level of deprivation affects the access to, as well as the cost and availability of, foods representative of a healthy diet.

Materials and methods

Study design

This exploratory ecological cross-sectional study investigated healthy food retail access in areas of contrasting deprivation in Plymouth; a South West UK coastal city. FROs were identified using primary and secondary data sources, and were mapped using GIS to determine areas of poor physical access, by foot, to food retail provision.

Healthy food availability and cost were assessed and compared using a HFB survey. All data were collected during 1 week in May 2016, aiming to minimise seasonable variations in food availability and cost.

Food retail outlets

In line with previous research, the food retail environment was investigated and compared at the electoral ward level ^(19–21). The Indices of Multiple Deprivation Electoral Wards Rank ⁽²²⁾ was used to identify two of the most and two of the least deprived of the 20 wards in Plymouth, and these were grouped to form two areas of contrasting deprivation. Electoral wards are aggregations of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), which vary in size to maintain an average population of 1500 residents ⁽²³⁾. Identified wards in the present study included St Budeaux and Honicknowle, ranked the third and fourth most deprived wards in Plymouth, respectively; and Plymstock Dunstone and Plympton St Mary, ranked the two least deprived wards. The more-deprived area comprises 24 LSOAs and has a total population size of 28,173 ⁽²⁴⁾, whereas the less-deprived area, comprising 21 LSOAs, has a population size of 25,173 ⁽²⁴⁾.

Food retail outlets were consecutively sampled from an extensive list of all identified FROs in the four wards, generated using secondary data sources including Local Authority databases, Google Maps and Yell.com, as well as websites of major food retailers and symbol groups (e.g. Premier). In line with other studies, 500 m was considered to be a reasonable distance to travel to FROs by foot ⁽²¹⁾ and thus FROs within 500 m of the ward boundaries were included in the study because residents on ward boundary edges would still have access to these FROs ⁽¹⁹⁾. Included FROs were superstores (25–60 000 square feet), supermarkets (3–25 000 square feet) and convenience stores (<3000 square feet), as defined in the UK by the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) ⁽²⁵⁾. All other FROs were excluded as a result of the observation that food shopping in England is most commonly completed 'under one roof' ⁽²⁰⁾.

To validate the secondary data sources used, all identified FROs were verified visually or by telephone contact because primary data collection in the form of field work has been identified as the 'gold standard' for verifying the food environment ⁽²⁶⁾. As a result of some identified discrepancies between the classification of FROs on Google and the retailers' own websites, the researchers re-classified FROs in accordance with the IGD definitions. The definition of a convenience store is well-established ⁽²⁷⁾; however, because of practical limitations, store managers were relied upon to verify the classification between supermarket and superstore. From this, the 39 verified

FROs were identified and invited to participate in the research. Consent to conduct in-store data collection was sought by postal letter and nonrespondents were followed-up in person.

ARCGIS, version 10.4⁽²⁸⁾ was used to map the spatial coordinates of all 39 verified FROs, and to create 500-m geographical buffer zones around each. Areas within the ward which fell outside of these zones were considered to have poor physical access, by foot, to food retail provision. Census datasets relating to car ownership were also incorporated at the LSOA level⁽²⁹⁾. This was to enable a visual appraisal of the percentage of households without car availability, which are located in areas identified to have poor physical access, by foot, to food retail provision.

Healthy food basket survey

Cost and availability of 28 healthy foods were measured using a HFB survey (Table 1); an adaptation of the previously validated Healthy Eating Indicator Shopping Basket⁽³⁰⁾ (HEISB). The intention was to use a range of products representing a healthy, balanced diet and therefore the adaptations were designed to better reflect the composition of the Eatwell Guide⁽³¹⁾ and the South West UK locality of the study. An adapted version of food item descriptions and a list of acceptable substitutions⁽⁹⁾ were used to reduce the risk of systematic error during data collection. The costs of food items were recorded according to the cheapest own-brand product available in the sizes specified⁽⁹⁾. If this information was unavailable, the price-per-kilogram of product was recorded, along with the product weight, to enable the price-per-unit to be calculated. In line with previous research, promotional prices were not recorded⁽¹⁰⁾. Informed, signed consent was sought from FRO managers prior to conducting the surveys.

Statistical analysis

Data were inputted into EXCEL (Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA, USA) in duplicate, and cross-checked for consistency by another member of the research team to improve the inter-rater reliability. All data analysis was conducted by deprivation level (more-deprived, less-deprived), by FRO type (convenience store, supermarket) and by FRO subtype (more-deprived convenience stores, more-deprived supermarkets, less-deprived convenience stores, less-deprived supermarkets) categories. No superstores were identified in the study areas.

Consistent with methodology from similar studies⁽⁹⁾, to enable price comparisons between the HFB items across the FROs, varying product sizes were standardised

Table 1 Differences in availability of healthy food basket items (%) by deprivation level and food retail outlet type

Food item (<i>n</i> = 28)	Deprivation level		Food retail outlet type	
	High (<i>n</i> = 20)	Low (<i>n</i> = 12)	Convenience store (<i>n</i> = 25)	Supermarket (<i>n</i> = 7)
	Stocked, <i>n</i> (%)*	Stocked, <i>n</i> (%)*	Stocked, <i>n</i> (%)*	Stocked, <i>n</i> (%)*
Brown rolls	13 (65)	13 (65)	18 (72)	7 (100)
Potatoes	19 (95)	19 (95)	24 (96)	7 (100)
Brown rice	4 (20)	4 (20)	5 (20)	3 (57)
White rice	20 (100)	20 (100)	25 (100)	7 (100)
Pasta	20 (100)	20 (100)	25 (100)	7 (100)
Weetabix	18 (90)	18 (90)	22 (88)	7 (100)
Wholemeal bread	15 (75)	15 (75)	20 (80)	7 (100)
Apples	16 (80)	16 (80)	21 (84)	7 (100)
Bananas	14 (70)	14 (70)	19 (76)	7 (100)
Grapes	12 (60)	12 (60)	16 (64)	7 (100)
Orange	10 (50)	10 (50)	14 (56)	7 (100)
Orange juice	19 (95)	19 (95)	24 (96)	7 (100)
Broccoli	10 (50)	10 (50)	14 (56)	7 (100)
Carrots	12 (60)	12 (60)	17 (68)	7 (100)
Cucumber	14 (70)	14 (70)	19 (76)	7 (100)
Lettuce	13 (65)	13 (65)	17 (68)	7 (100)
Onions	20 (100)	20 (100)	25 (100)	7 (100)
Peas	18 (90)	18 (90)	23 (92)	7 (100)
Peppers	13 (65)	13 (65)	18 (72)	7 (100)
Tomatoes	19 (95)	19 (95)	24 (96)	7 (100)
Semi-skimmed milk	20 (100)	20 (100)	25 (100)	7 (100)
Skimmed milk	14 (70)	14 (70)	19 (76)	7 (100)
Low-fat yoghurt	12 (60)	12 (60)	16 (64)	7 (100)
Lean beef mince	3 (15)	3 (15)	2 (8)	6 (86)
Chicken breast	13 (65)	13 (65)	16 (64)	7 (100)
Salmon	6 (30)	6 (30)	8 (32)	7 (100)
Baked beans	20 (100)	20 (100)	25 (100)	7 (100)
Low-fat spread	10 (50)	10 (50)	14 (56)	7 (100)

*Category consists of groups: 'in-stock', 'out of stock, awaiting delivery', 'not stocked but first substitute available', 'not stocked, but second substitute available'.

to the specified unit in the substitution list. For those items without a weight, average weights for these items were determined, using values from three supermarket websites. As a result of the small number of stores that stocked the full HFB, a full HFB cost was calculated by deprivation level and FRO type using median prices-per-item.

A Mann–Whitney *U*-test was conducted to determine differences in percentage HFB availability between deprivation level and FRO type. A Kruskal–Wallis analysis of variance was also conducted to determine differences in percentage HFB availability between FRO subtype. Dunn's pairwise comparison with Bonferroni adjustment provided post-hoc analysis⁽³²⁾. Statistical analysis was

conducted using EXCEL (Microsoft Corp.) and SPSS, version 22.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA) ⁽³³⁾. $P \leq 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the School of Health Professions Bachelor's Degree Ethics Subcommittee. To minimise the risk of reputational harm, FRO data remained anonymous throughout the study process.

Results

Food retail outlets

Thirty-eight FROs were confirmed within the study areas. Of these, 32 consented to participate in the HFB survey, five declined and one was closed for refurbishment at the time of surveying. The proportion of the total number of FROs is higher in the more-deprived areas than the less deprived areas [$n = 23$ (61%) versus $n = 15$ (39%), respectively], with a higher proportion of convenience stores to supermarkets, both in the more-deprived areas

[$n = 19$ (83%) versus $n = 4$ (17%), respectively] and less-deprived areas [$n = 10$ (67%) versus $n = 5$ (33%), respectively]. The six nonparticipants of the survey were equally matched in terms of deprivation level and FRO type.

Access

All identified FROs are shown in Fig. 1, including 500-m geographical buffer zones. Areas outside of these buffer zones were considered to have poor physical access, by foot, to food retail provision. The percentage of households without car availability in these identified areas of poor access ranged from 13% to 46% in the more-deprived areas and from 4% to 22% in the less-deprived areas.

Healthy food basket survey

Descriptive summaries revealed negligible differences in median HFB cost between the more-deprived and the less-deprived areas (£55.97 versus £55.44). However, a larger cost difference was found between convenience stores and supermarkets (£62.39 versus £44.25). Subgroup

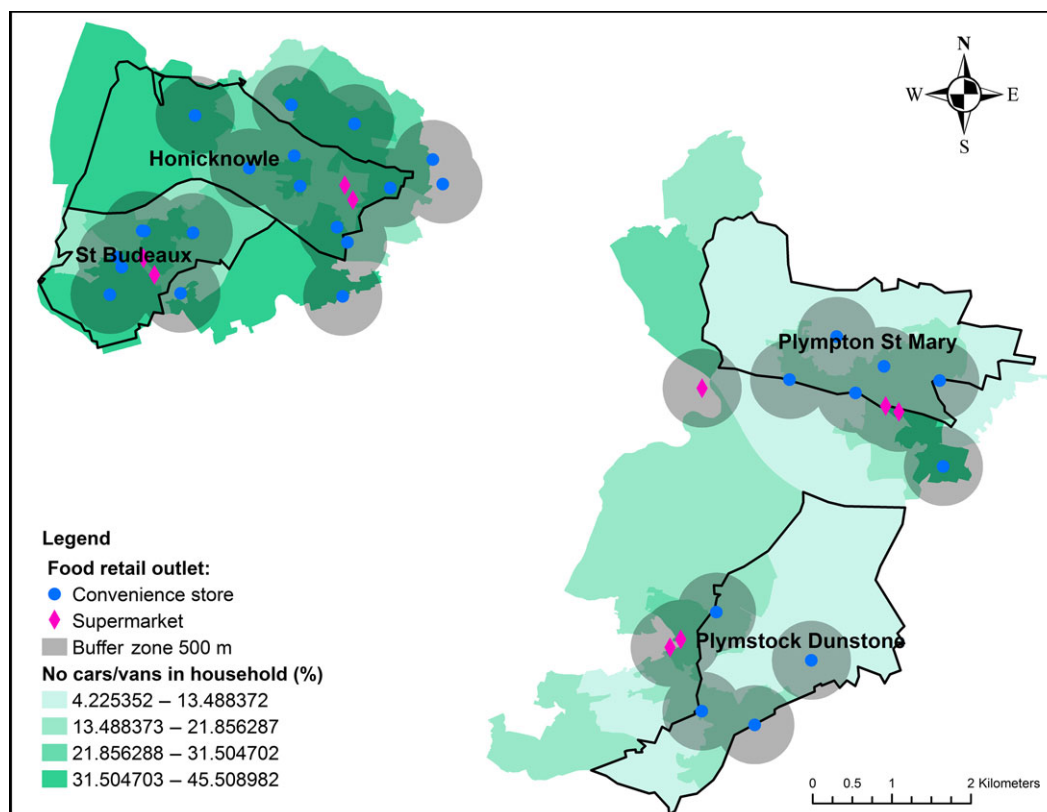


Figure 1 Geographic Information Systems mapping of food retail outlets in the more-deprived areas (Honicknowle and St Budeaux) and the less-deprived areas (Plympton St Mary and Plymstock Dunstone). Areas outside of the geographical buffer zones indicate poor physical access, by foot, to food retail provision, and car ownership data showing the percentage of households without car availability by Lower Super Output Area.

analysis found that the median HFB cost was lower in both convenience stores and supermarkets in the more-deprived areas than in convenience stores and supermarkets in the less-deprived areas (£60.15 and £42.30 versus £63.60 and £45.48, respectively).

Across the 32 FROs surveyed, four (13%) stocked all 28 HFB items, whereas 21 (66%) stocked at least half of the HFB. Median [IQR] HFB availability was lower in the more-deprived areas compared to the less-deprived (48% [39–71%] vs. 75% [68–82%]; $U=195.000$, $P=0.003$), and in convenience stores compared to supermarkets (54% [43–72%] vs. 78% [72–96%]; $U=153.500$, $P=0.001$). These data are reported in Table 1. Median HFB availability differed by FRO subtype ($H^2 = 16.272$, $P = 0.001$), with the largest difference identified between convenience stores in the more-deprived areas and supermarkets in the less-deprived areas ($P = 0.018$). Differences in availability were also found between convenience stores in the more-deprived areas and convenience stores in the less-deprived areas ($P = 0.044$), as well as between convenience stores in the more-deprived areas and supermarkets in the less-deprived areas ($P = 0.047$).

Discussion

The present exploratory study investigated whether deprivation level affects healthy food access, cost and availability. Areas of poor physical access, by foot, to food retail provision were identified in both study areas. However, within these areas of poor access, local data show that more households in the more-deprived areas did not have access to a car or van compared households to in the less-deprived areas⁽²⁹⁾ (Fig. 1). Previous research has failed to demonstrate socio-economic patterning regarding the access to healthy food retail provision⁽³⁴⁾; however, those living in the more-deprived areas are less likely to have access to a car⁽²⁷⁾. Despite their use of taxis⁽¹³⁾ and online food shopping⁽³⁵⁾, individuals without car access are significantly more likely to travel home from food shopping by foot⁽³⁶⁾. Therefore, they are likely to be particularly susceptible to changes in the local food retail environment regarding the provision of healthy food. Interestingly, the more-deprived areas contained more convenience stores and fewer supermarkets than the less-deprived areas⁽⁹⁾. Because less individuals in the more-deprived areas had access to a car or van⁽²⁹⁾, this suggests a heavier reliance upon convenience stores for those living in more-deprived areas.

In terms of the cost of healthy food, it was expected that convenience stores would charge more on average for the full HFB, and this is supported by the existing literature⁽¹³⁾. Therefore, it was surprising that negligible differences were found in the cost of healthy food

between the more and the less-deprived areas. Although this aligns with findings obtained in the study by White *et al.*⁽¹³⁾, it contrasts with other studies reported in the literature. Dawson *et al.*⁽⁹⁾ found that healthy food cost less in less deprived areas, whereas Cummins and McIntyre⁽¹²⁾ found that it cost more. An explanation for this finding is that cost data were only obtainable for in-stock items, therefore causing a bias towards the FROs that had higher availability and corresponding lower costs. Previous studies have also encountered difficulties in comparing the cost of food baskets^(9,13,21), with Beaulac *et al.*⁽¹⁴⁾ attributing the mixed findings to the low methodological quality of the studies cost comparisons. As such, findings relating to HFB cost in the present study, and indeed other food basket surveys, should be interpreted with caution. Despite this, the findings from the present study suggest that the average cost of healthy food is comparable between areas of contrasting deprivation; however, it clearly identifies considerable differences in the cost of healthy food between convenience stores and supermarkets. Considering the higher proportion of convenience stores in more-deprived areas, this suggests a social gradient in the cost of healthy food.

The differences found in HFB availability between ward deprivation level were expected. On average, availability was lower in the more-deprived areas compared to the less-deprived areas. Specifically, wholegrain carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables, low fat dairy products, lean meats, oily fish and low fat spread were less frequently stocked in the more-deprived areas (Table 1). This finding is in accordance with previous research⁽⁹⁾ and is important because it suggests that residents of deprived areas could struggle to eat healthily⁽³⁷⁾, thereby increasing their risk of noncommunicable diseases⁽³⁸⁾. However, findings from a larger study by White *et al.*⁽¹⁵⁾ contradict this, countering that healthy food availability is not socio-economically patterned but, instead, is associated with store type. It is plausible that the findings from this small scale local research are a result of the high prevalence of convenience stores in the most-deprived area, which were found to have a lower availability of healthy foods compared to supermarkets. This finding is undisputed in the literature⁽³⁹⁾ and, in previous research, has been attributed to the lower demand for healthier and more perishable foods in deprived areas⁽¹⁵⁾.

It was interesting to find that the more-deprived areas contained more convenience stores and fewer supermarkets than the less-deprived areas. This indicates that there is the potential for convenience stores to influence the food retail environment in deprived communities, where it is suggested that larger retailers avoid trading as a result of lower levels of disposable income in these areas⁽⁴⁰⁾. Despite finding that convenience stores offered a lower

provision of healthy foods, anecdotal evidence collected found that some convenience store retailers were willing to stock healthier food items. One store ordered wholemeal bread upon customer request, whereas another stocked competitively priced, fresh produce variety packs suitable for single household customers. These observations highlight the potentially pivotal role that convenience store retailers could play in enhancing healthy food provision in deprived areas, although they also indicate that some stores could benefit from additional education and support to replicate this. Because households in the more-deprived areas appeared most likely to depend upon these stores, these promising anecdotal findings warrant further investigation. However, it should be recognised that there is little incentive for improving the availability of healthy foods if there is no demand⁽⁴¹⁾ and so this recommendation would need to be considered within the wider determinants of food choice⁽⁴²⁾. Community and public health dietitians promote the importance of a healthy diet within their local communities, and so they would be appropriately placed to lead this partnership with convenience store owners.

The present study provides a unique insight into the food retail environment in areas of contrasting deprivation in a South West UK coastal city. However, because of the specific locality of the four study areas, the generalisability of the findings to other areas may be limited. Strengths include the thorough identification and mapping of FROs, in addition to the comprehensive assessment of HFB availability, which further validates the previously developed HEISB tool⁽³⁰⁾. However, methodological limitations are inherent in all research, and the present study was no exception. First, the ecological and cross-sectional design of the study was unable to differentiate cause and effect from simple association⁽⁴³⁾. Second, the linear ARCGIS assessment of distance is somewhat oversimplistic. Mapping of the walking, driving and public transport routes would have generated the most comprehensive depiction of the food retail environment, although this was beyond the scope of the present study. Finally, the approach taken to compare the cost of HFB items has resulted in some being disproportionately adjusted, consequently reducing the validity of these findings. Despite the highlighted limitations, the findings from the present study will help to inform research regarding the physical and social determinants of food choice, which is an area of key importance for public health professionals.

Recommendations and future work

This exploratory research provides a better understanding of inequalities in healthy food provision, and offer insight

into why individuals from LSGs can fail to adhere to nutritional recommendations⁽⁴⁴⁾. The largest scope to make a difference lies in areas where individuals are most reliant upon their local food retail environment, which itself offers poor healthy food provision⁽¹³⁾. This highlights an area where public health specialists, public health dietitians and policy makers may have the largest impact. Interventions to increase healthy food provision could be achieved through partnership-working with convenience store retailers, building on the previous successes of Change4Life⁽⁴⁵⁾. Such initiatives could include the redesign of store layouts to ensure prominent positioning of healthier foods and the introduction of legislation to increase the display of healthier foods at the point of sale and on in-store communications. Additionally, store owners could be encouraged to increase their provision of less-perishable healthier food items⁽⁴⁶⁾. It would be interesting to develop this research further, to explore the extent to which the access to, as well as the cost and availability of, healthy food influences consumer dietary choice. This could complement research investigating both the influence of the retail provision of unhealthy food⁽⁴⁷⁾, and the density and location of fast food outlets, on dietary choice^(48,49).

Conclusions

Differences were found in healthy food access, cost and availability in areas of contrasting deprivation. These appeared related to FRO type rather than deprivation alone, with convenience stores consistently demonstrating lower healthy food availability than supermarkets, and at a higher cost. Future interventions to improve the access to, as well as the cost and availability of, healthy food should concentrate upon the more-deprived communities. Partnership-working between public health professionals and convenience stores could be pivotal in this process.

Transparency declaration

The lead author affirms that this manuscript is an honest, accurate and transparent account of the study being reported, that no important aspects of the study have been omitted and that any discrepancies from the study as planned (and registered with) have been explained. The reporting of this work is compliant with STROBE⁽⁵⁰⁾ guidelines.

Acknowledgments

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This is evidence collated by Dr Clare Pettinger but with the assistance of members of the Food Plymouth partnership

- I) What are the key causes of food insecurity in the UK? Can you outline any significant trends in food insecurity in the UK? To what extent (and why) have these challenges persisted over a number of years?

The main two issues/causes are ECONOMIC and SOCIAL

The re-emergence of 'hunger' as a social reality and political concern in the UK is controversial (Dowler & Lambie-Mumford, 2016). Evidence suggests that 8.4 million individuals in the UK are 'too poor to eat' (Taylor & Loopstra, 2016). 'Food poverty' hits the poorest of society hardest (Goode, 2012), with food insecurity involving a cluster of problems, with clear divergence apparent in understanding its characteristics and realities for those at risk (Hamelin et al 2009). There is no universally accepted definition of food insecurity, but the most commonly used is: "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (e.g. without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies)" (Taylor and Loopstra, 2016).

The effects of food insecurity on health in the UK are worrying when we consider the extent of inadequate and unfair food access. The Trussell Trust (2019), the UK's main network of foodbanks, reports that provision of emergency food supplies is at an all-time high with 1.6 million parcels being delivered between 2018 and 2019 (and this only represents about half of the foodbanks in the UK – the other half is provided by the Independent Food Bank Network). The proportion of people accessing foodbanks and other emergency food aid providers (such as soup runs), is not a sophisticated measure of food insecurity, as it only provides a 'proxy measure'. The evidence suggests that 17 times more people may be experiencing food insecurity than actually accessing foodbanks (Taylor and Loopstra, 2016). A recent analysis of food insecurity data from UK national surveys suggests an 18% increase in food insecurity among low income adults between 2004 and 2016 and a national prevalence of over 20% (Loopstra et al., 2019). This is all supported by the recent UN rapporteur Philip Alston's report, highlighting that austerity policies have pushed families and individuals into poverty:

"Although the United Kingdom is the world's fifth largest economy, one fifth of its population (14 million people) live in poverty, and 1.5 million of them experienced destitution in 2017 (UN, 2019).

Money for food is a flexible item in the budget of low income households. This means that the quantity and quality of food purchased and consumed by families is the first to suffer at times of financial hardship such as an unexpected bill or cut in work (Conversation 2014). Financial vulnerability is a massive driver of food insecurity. Given the sensitivity of food insecurity to changes in income and employment status (Loopstra and Tarasuk, 2013; Leete and Bania, 2010) there is no doubt that the recent period of austerity and welfare reforms in the UK (Portes and Reed, 2018; de Agostini, Hills and Sutherland, 2014) has contributed to a '*crisis of food access for many households*' (Fabian Commission, 2015). Low income and benefit delays are thought to be responsible for driving increases in emergency food aid use (Burnett et al 2016) which relates to national welfare reform and benefit sanctions and roll out of universal credit. A recent Plymouth based survey has shown that food insecurity is reported to be highest among individuals claiming universal credit (and other benefits including child tax credit, support allowance, and housing benefit) Allerton et al 2019 – student dissertation accessing n=229 social housing residents (findings available on request).

However, food insecurity is more than just an economic issue, it is also driven by social determinants. We live in a multi-media global era where social isolation is an increasingly common experience for people of all ages (Krivo et al 2013, p197), regardless of social position. The many challenges of social exclusion and isolation are irrefutable, not least in terms of vulnerability, mental health issues, drug-alcohol abuse, chronic/acute health which can impact life expectancy and can lead to disempowerment, low motivation, reduced opportunity, and lack of personal support strategies and networks (Pettinger et al 2018).

LOCAL PLYMOUTH INSIGHTS (The Plymouth Soup Run) Lyndsey Withers (volunteer)

The Plymouth Soup Run, a local emergency food provider, reports serving 10,860 meals from January to May this year, a 40% increase on 2018 (Withers, 2019).

Economic poverty is a massive driver of food insecurity. The clients of the Plymouth Soup Run have diverse and complex needs, but what unites them is poverty. This impacts on their food security principally through having insufficient funds to buy food but also issues of inadequate food storage and cooking facilities in low quality housing (or none at all for homeless people). The Plymouth Soup Run has been supporting homeless and other disadvantaged people in the city for over 20 years. In recent years we have seen a steady increase in demand of 8-10% year-on-year. It is expected that over 25,000 meals will have been served by the end of 2019, being equivalent to an average of 70 per night. The number of unique individuals seen in a year is probably of the order of 1000. These are mostly single adults and thus not a complete picture of food insecurity across age groups or family structures.

2) What are some of the key ways in which diet (including food insecurity) impacts on public health? Has sufficient progress been made on tackling childhood obesity and, if not, why not?

The integral relationship between diet, health and income is well known (Caraher & Furey, 2018). Food poverty manifests itself as the dilemma of putting food on the table, alongside the long-term effects of food poverty, including the habitual consumption of poor nutritional quality foods to the extent that lower income consumers are compromising food and nutritional quality to satiate hunger. Food insecure adults are more likely to have depression and anxiety, suffer from mental health disorders due to nutritional deficiencies and inadequate nutrient intakes (Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk, 2008), and higher healthcare usage and costs than food secure adults (Tarasuk et al., 2015). Further health consequences include an increased risk of diet-related diseases, as outlined above. As an independent predictor of worsening health, food insecurity, therefore represents a real challenge for public health.

In general, the UK population does not currently consume the right balance of food recommended for either a healthy or a sustainable diet (Harland *et al* 2012). The UK *National Diet and Nutrition Survey* continues to report high consumption of free sugars, salt and saturated fat and low intake of fruit and vegetables (PHE, 2016 a, b). These data are also clearly socio-economically patterned. An 'unhealthy' dietary pattern is strongly associated, and causally linked, with a number of chronic, complex conditions, such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, some cancers and type 2 diabetes (BMA, 2016).

Economically and socially marginalised groups have been shown to make poor 'food choices' (Pettinger and Whitelaw, 2012), which are often affected by 'externally imposed limitations' (Attree, 2005) – such as poor access to healthier foods and an adverse food environment which limits food choices (e.g. high density of fast food outlets favouring high salt, fat sugar food items), making this a complex and nuanced subject area. The food experiences of harder-to-reach adults, however, vary widely with individual circumstance (Burnett et al, 2016). So, understanding the factors driving such vulnerable (socially excluded) group's eating habits is crucial (Sprake et al, 2013) to improving food practices and dietary intake, and informing health education and wellbeing, because these groups tend to have more food-related health problems than the general population (Evans and Dowler, 1999).

Obesity, which has reached pandemic levels in the UK, is known to be highly correlated with low income (Kim & von dem Knesebec, 2018) as well as higher high sugar, fat and salt intake. Obesity is a highly complex 'systemic' problem (Butland et al, 2007); factors that significantly influence obesity include genetics, behaviour, culture and the environment.

Childhood obesity continues to be an issue, and although levels have more recently plateaued, we are still seeing figures that suggest 1 in 4 reception children and 1 in 3 year 6 children are overweight or obese (NCMP, 2018). Children growing up in food insecure households have poorer health and education outcomes than children from food secure households (Kirkpatrick et al., 2010; Faught et al., 2017). Despite the recent publication of two chapters of a Childhood Obesity Strategy (Cabinet Office, 2017 and 2019), and a glut of historical obesity related guidelines and recommendations (see below NICE guidelines) there is still insufficient progress being made to tackle childhood (and adult) obesity levels, which continue to rise. This is due to the complex multi-factorial nature of obesity, which requires multi-level 'systems leadership*' strategies, which are currently not being fully realized or consistently executed.

LOCAL Plymouth Insights (Public Health Team)

Healthy life expectancy and healthy eating levels within the Plymouth population are significantly lower than the England average (Nnoaham, 2015). Within Plymouth there is a strong strategic focus on priorities which relate to health inequalities, the Thrive Plymouth programme in

particular gives us a very strong hook on which to place many policies that relate to obesity.

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/publichealth/thriveplymouth/aboutthriveplymouth>

The most recent focus of the Thrive Plymouth 10 year Inequalities programme (year five) was 'People connecting through food' which saw Public Health work very closely with Food Plymouth partnership to build cross-sector activities to support better food (and nutrition) across the city

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/publichealth/thriveplymouth/peopleconnectingthroughfood>

Obesity Evidence

NICE guidance

Managing overweight and obesity in adults – lifestyle weight management services (Public health guidance) <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph53>

Managing overweight and obesity in children and young people – lifestyle weight management services (Public health guidance) <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph47>

Obesity: working with local communities (Public health guidance)

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph42>

Obesity: identification, assessment and management of overweight and obesity in children, young people and adults (CG189) <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG189>

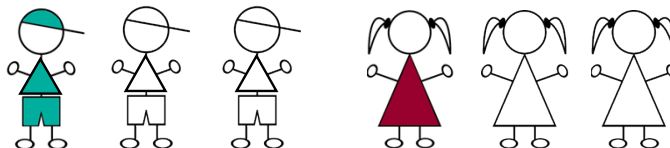
Clinical Commissioning Policy: Complex and Specialised Obesity Surgery, NHS Commissioning Board, april 2013 <http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/a05-p-a.pdf>

Prevalence of excess weight among children

One in four (24.5%) children in Reception is overweight or obese (boys 24.5%, girls 24.6%)



One in three (33%) children in Year 6 is overweight or obese (boys 35.2%, girls 30.7%)



PLYMOUTH'S NATIONAL CHILD MEASUREMENT PROGRAMME (NCMP) REPORT 2017/18

*Local political leadership, public engagement and cross departmental working such as housing, economic and environmental regeneration, strategic planning, education, transport, children and young people's services, can present real opportunities to be innovative in our approach to addressing unhealthy weight.

3) How accessible is healthy food? What factors or barriers affect people's ability to consume a healthy diet? Do these factors affect populations living in rural and urban areas differently?

Our food system is distorted by inequalities in access (Lang, 2015) and it fails the people most in need. There is a well evidenced disparity in equality of access to healthy, sustainable and affordable food. Food access, cost and availability have been identified as important determinants of dietary choice and these are socio-economically patterned; however, the evidence for 'food deserts' in the UK remains inconclusive. A small Plymouth based study has shown differences between areas of contrasting deprivation with respect to healthy food access, cost and availability. These appeared to be more related to Food Retail Outlet type rather than deprivation alone (Williamson et al 2017).

Abundance of snack food availability in the UK is also known to influence preference for less healthy food choices (Pettinger et al 2007) which relates closely to the way that food is marketed and retailed (involving food industry partners – more on this later). Similarly, density of fast food outlets is known to influence the 'obesogenic environment' (PHE, 2018). There is also evidence of more hot food takeaways in deprived areas in the UK (Turbott et al 2018) and children who spend time in deprived neighbourhoods tend to eat more fast food and have higher BMIs. There remains, however, minimal evidence that actually quantifies the correlation between school's environment and obesity amongst pupils.

To further support the disparity issue of affordability influencing access to healthier food, the UK Government's Eatwell Guide outlines a diet that meets population nutrient needs. However, there are several indicators that low-income households in the UK may be struggling to follow the Eatwell Guide, including differential nutrient intakes and diets, increasing food bank usage, and higher childhood obesity statistics in deprived areas (Scott et al 2018).

Education is also an important issue to mention here, as it is influenced by the wider social determinants relating to (food) poverty. Awareness and knowledge of food and nutrition is one aspect of this. Contrary to popular belief, people who are experiencing food poverty are not ignorant of what they should eat as part of a healthy diet or even where to buy affordable food. The most important factor for having a healthy diet is access to affordable healthy food (Conversation 2014). Evidence shows that people do know about healthy eating (eg knowledge of 5aDay and/or 'healthier foods'), but they do not always have the (financial) means to follow healthy eating guidelines (due to low income, or family circumstances) – see Scott et al (2018).

Historical evidence has highlighted a cooking skills transition (Caraher et al, 1999) reporting on the state of cooking in England, noting that cooking skills play an important part in healthy eating as a vehicle for lower-paid people to achieve a healthy diet and is an essential life-skill. This evidence and subsequent policy review (Caraher and Seeley, 2010) led to an attempt to improve the 'cooking in schools' policy (DfE, 2014) to make it compulsory for all children, (School Food Plan, 2015) but this has not been delivered with consistency since inception. But more recent evidence suggests that if we want a food system that is fair, equitable and nourishing, we must look outside the kitchen for answers (Bowen et al 2019) because the expectations around a woman (or man)'s ability to put (healthy) food on the table is unfair and unjust. Similarly, suggesting that people are not eating healthily because of a lack of cooking skills, is highly simplistic. Often people who access emergency food aid, for example, are suffering from such extreme personal/family crises, that their circumstances prevent them from being able to cook (or they have minimal equipment to do so, e.g. in emergency housing, with no fridge or only a kettle, whereby cooking capabilities are compromised) (Provide Devon, 2019)

Food poverty in rural areas shows similar trends to urban areas (ie proxy measure indicate increased household food insecurity, particularly amongst certain population groups, such as families with young children, older adults and persons with disabilities), but the issues at play are slightly different. People living in rural areas, often have issues with transport (fuel costs) thus their physical/economic access to supermarkets/food retail outlets to purchase healthy foods becomes compromised. Similarly, rural areas have less concentrated access to emergency food aid providers (although most food banks have rural 'satellite' sites) meaning further compromise in times of urgent short term need. 'Heating or eating'? Is a question often associated with people living in rural areas when considering how to prioritise their often very tight household financial outgoings.

4) What role can local authorities play in promoting healthy eating in their local populations, especially among children and young people, and those on lower incomes? How effectively are local authorities able to fulfil their responsibilities to improve the health of people living in their areas? Are you aware of any existing local authority or education initiatives that have been particularly successful (for example, schemes around holiday hunger, providing information on healthy eating, or supporting access to sport and exercise)?

The social safety net has been badly damaged by drastic cuts to local authorities' budgets, which have eliminated many social services, reduced policing services, closed libraries in record numbers, shrunk community and youth centres and sold off public spaces and buildings. The bottom line is that much of the glue that has held British society together since the Second World War has been deliberately removed and replaced with a harsh and uncaring ethos (Caraher and Furey, 2018).

The Public Health Transition (following the public health white paper, 2010, which devolved public health services to local authorities) has partly driven these funding cuts, which has resulted in local authority driven public health delivery programmes/campaigns becoming massively compromised.

Despite this fact, Plymouth has been leading some pioneering food/health related activities, such as Thrive Plymouth 4-4-54 (see previous section Nnoaham, 2015) which has focused on 4 behaviours (diet, smoking, alcohol and physical activity) to improve health outcomes in relation to inequalities in the city. This has seen a very strong collaborative bond created between Plymouth City Council Public Health Team and Food Plymouth (the local Sustainable Food Cities award winning food partnership) to drive activities that support the promotion of healthy sustainable and affordable food.

Specific projects of note in Plymouth

Plymouth is home to a pioneering cooperative School Meals service **CATERed**

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/schoolseducationchildcareskillsandemployability/catered>

CATERed champions local seasonal produce from suppliers local in the region. As an official partner of Plymouth's Flavour Fest – the South West's largest foodie show, Sea Food Festival and many other events they bring free children's workshops to the city. Giving children from across the city the chance to experience new tastes and new foods, they also give them the recipes and talk to the parents about how easy these recipes can be produced at home. They produced a recipe book that is available free on loan at the local library but also can be downloaded from their website.

This year CATERed have expanded the family cookery lessons at our schools & supported schools communities by hosting lunches for the elderly residents from local homes. At these events they have ensured that the equipment used can be found in homes so making the recipes as easy as possible for families to cook together to produce home-cooked meals. More and more the cookery workshops are being held for families to attend together. This approach has increased the parents awareness of the goodness in CATERed's school cooked lunches but also how easy cooking from scratch can be and have many more benefits it brings the family.

CATERed's flagship holiday hunger project 'Ed's Summer Food Tour' has been going since 2015 and has now grown to 3 days every week in August with their partnership with Plymouth Libraries, every Tuesday and Thursdays they head out to local open spaces with freshly made meals (at least 600 per week) to give away to the children of Plymouth families and on Wednesdays they deliver 600 meals to the 12 libraries in Plymouth for their Lunch at the

Libraries events. 'Lunch at the Library' meant more families were able to feed their children for free while enjoying the great range of activities and services available through their local library.

These events would not be possible without CATERed's amazing staff giving up some of their holidays to prep, cook and serve the lunches. Catering Managers and Catering Assistants across the company feel passionately that the children they see every day during term time struggle to get meals in the holiday.

CATERed work closely with the companies they use and by phenomenal donations we receive from suppliers and others businesses so that the tour can happen. They also supported many small groups by helping them with free lunches for their free holiday activities also helping groups such as 'Transforming Plymouth Together' by giving ingredients and cooked meals that we delivered to their summer holiday clubs in August. In total CATERed produced nearly 9,000 meals in August 2018! Helping families and children from across the city. This year with all the different areas they have supported the total meals produced by CATERed during this summer is just over 19,000.

Fit and Fed

In May 2019, the government declared funding to support holiday hunger programmes across the UK to be run (a tender/competitive process was set up for cities to apply)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/free-meals-and-activities-for-50000-children-over-2019-summer-holidays>

Plymouth successfully secured funding via this award to run a series of holiday hunger activities across the city. 'Fit and Fed' has run this summer (2019) supporting families around healthy eating and engagement in sport activities <https://www.plymouthssp.co.uk/news/21141/pcc-fit-fed-holiday-programme> and an evaluation of this programme will follow the work undertaken and should be available early next year.

5) What can be learnt from food banks and other charitable responses to hunger? What role should they play?

There is nothing more fundamental and emotive than food, nothing more undignified as not having access to what your neighbour has because you cannot afford or access it and/or having to access it through charity (Caraher and Furey, 2018). Although providing an essential response to short term crises, delivery of emergency food aid does little to tackle the underlying causes of food poverty and insecurity, at best it helps about one or two out of the ten who are food insecure (Loopstra and Lalor, 2017). Users of Food Banks have been shown to be disproportionately low income, vulnerable and disadvantaged with the majority of users suffering from benefit-related problems or in low income jobs (Prayogo et al, 2017). Although there are suggestions emerging that the clients using foodbanks are more diverse than this (accurate data is currently unavailable).

Charities should not be expected to fill a gap not currently being met by government. The fundamental social issues around poverty need to be urgently addressed (at systems/political level). There is a danger that if we become too used to foodbanks being part of the solution that in the UK we will see a similar picture to what is seen in the US. The 'institutionalization' of food banks is highly political and food security expert Andy Fisher has written about this detail <https://www.bighunger.org/> showing the sinister side of food corporations 'sponsoring' food poverty. This is not a positive outcome and should not be seen as a solution.

The nutritional quality of food offered by emergency food aid is known to be poor. Individuals who rely too heavily on food banks (and other emergency food aid offers) may suffer nutritional deficiencies because so much of the produce is processed rather than fresh (Guardian 2015). Trussell Trust food parcels have been nutritionally analysed and do meet most of the nutrient needs for their three-day emergency offer (Hughes and Prayogo, 2018) - although they do come out as being high in sugar (known to be detrimental to health). In Plymouth, the soup provided by the soup run is making an important contribution to the overall daily food intake and nutritional intake of service users (but would not be adequate as the only source of food) (Withers, 2019). It is donations of other food items (e.g. pasties, cakes, biscuits, crisps etc) that leads to less 'healthy' food being consumed (high salt, fat and sugar).

Emergency food aid providers serve a vital emergency (Short term) function for people in need. Their remit, however, is to meet these emergency short-term needs, not necessarily to attempt to address long-term requirements for tackling hunger and/or supporting healthy eating (although many are also engaged in activities such as cooking, budgeting etc to support their clients). Therefore, there is no onus on charities to supply healthy foods and in fact it is difficult for them to do so, since they do not necessarily have the infrastructure to storage facilities to manage perishable goods. There is a disparity between the short-term nature of the function of Food Banks and the way in which they are now being used.

Of particular note, The Trussell Trust is in the process of developing a strategic plan that will set out both their vision (to combat hunger) for the future and also their five-year plan for how they might progress towards that vision. They are calling this process 'Network for Change'. Throughout this process they are looking at the problem they're trying to address;

Plymouth insights:

Eunice Halliday (OBE) of the Plymouth Food Bank (Oasis Centre)

offering trussell trust food parcels and also offering education, skills and advice at centre
Link here: <https://plymouth.foodbank.org.uk/> 8,791 three-day emergency food supplies given to people in crisis last year

Such responses can provide an indicator of need in quantitative and qualitative terms – how many people are hungry, their demographics, foods and other products sought, and collateral needs (e.g. housing, health, financial and other advice; social connections). They can provide a source of information on trends in and drivers of food insecurity. They can provide a means of reaching people affected by food insecurity to offer them holistic support that reflects the complexity of their needs. Such responses should ideally play a role of meeting short-term needs but it is clear that some of the clientele draw on support for long periods of time. This highlights the importance of collateral support to help people achieve change towards more sustainable solutions to their needs. Charitable responses can play a key role by acting as a bridge to link clients to other appropriate services. Close collaborative working among services, such as the Plymouth Soup Run has with partners, creates the relationships that support timely and appropriate referrals and/or alerts to identify and support those in need.

I think there is a distinction between (1) Crisis and (2) Chaotic/sustained poverty. Crisis being caused by sickness, bereavement, fridge/freezer breaking down - which would result in 1 - 2 visits to the food bank. The other chaotic/sustained poverty - which is the repeat visitors attending more than 3 times in a year or regularly attending the soup run/other free/subsidised food providers. These are the just about managing people in our society.

Crisis use of the food bank will always be required as it cannot be predicted or prevented.

Chaotic/sustained poverty is the area which could be resolved by government policies, in part. This would relate to:

- reversing the benefit freeze, benefit system reacting to policy quicker for example the severe disablement premium which gvt has said will be given back to claimants and back paid a long time ago but has not been implemented.
- Benefit sanctions, PIP assessments and recoupment of ancient loans have changed vulnerable people's circumstances at a time when they are unable to withstand reduction in income. Often the sanctions are the result of the claimants own vulnerabilities such as going to A&E for an emergency and missing an appointment.
- Insecure tenancies and lack of rent control which means vulnerable people often at the mercy of unscrupulous landlords. Often these landlords don't repair their properties leading to the vulnerable tenants having out of pocket expenses such as replacing clothing or personal care items due to damp/water damage. Lack of rent control means the local housing allowance does not keep pace with rents which continue to rise meaning vulnerable people having to pay top up rents from the money intended for food.
- Young persons lower rate of benefits when they are not protected from higher rents and bills
- Poverty premium - people of lower disposable incomes having to pay for the privilege of paying bills monthly.
- Debt/finances and the way people are able to get into financial difficulties so easily. For example not allowing Brighthouse/Wonga etc.
- Homelessness, rise in homelessness is coming from universal credit 5 week delay alongside the reduction in support services for mental health. Many mortgage lenders and renters insurance companies make it a requirement that buy to let owners do not rent to benefit receivers making it difficult to find housing if you are on low income. In addition the change to universal credit means a much larger section of the low income population will be classified as on benefits.

- Job market - zero hours contract and poor working conditions, the big supermarkets and gradually making it more and more difficult to work there. They will say they are paying the minimum wage but they have achieved this by reducing the quality of working conditions i.e. removing night shift premium, removing staff benefits packages.

What I would say is that there is no typical person who comes into the Food Bank. In my experience some people coming into the food bank would say they haven't eaten for several days but in reality they have consumed a few calories through sugary drinks or small snacks. What they actually mean is they haven't had a 'meal' or access to a meal for several days. Sometimes they have some food in the cupboard but they don't have a range of cupboard - i.e. they have some cereal in the cupboard but might not have any dairy, meat, fish or fresh food.

In terms of people donating to Food banks, what do they get out of it? I believe that people want to help their local community because they no longer know which of their neighbours might be struggling, and for all of us we are only two pay checks away from being in difficulty. This makes people want to ensure food banks continue to survive, but many would wish that the government would stop using them as an alternative to taking action themselves on the issues listed above.

Organisations like to collect food rather than money, it can be easier to handle at an event. It is also more photogenic for facebook etc.

In terms of what role should the Food Banks play?

Surplus food use - the Trussell trust food banks are set up on the basis that they are only going to deal with ambient stable food. This is based on a nutritionally balanced diet, assessed by a dietician and you can have a healthy diet from the food supplied. However small amounts of fresh food such as bakery and fruit & veg are good for people's diets. Therefore Food Banks shouldn't be expected to be a dumping ground for waste food but can have a role in ensuring good quality surplus food isn't going to landfill, and a wider ranged diet is available to those in need.

Food banks and other food providers need to be supported by the food system - i.e. within Plymouth we are considering a food hub where donations of fresh surplus domestic food could be handled in a hygienic/legal way to allow them to reenter the food chain. We also have DCFA (Devon and Cornwall Food Action) and they are working with Fareshare to handle this from a commercial perspective. The use of surplus allotment or garden produce could be facilitated by this food hub.

Some food banks run healthy cooking courses and budgeting courses to help people move towards cooking their own food.

In my opinion this is where the government could have an impact on food insecurity and the way the food system enables or disables people from accessing food.

6) What impact do food production processes (including product formulation, portion size, packaging and labelling) have on consumers dietary choices and does this differ across income groups?

It is widely recognised that the environment in which we live affects many of our food-related decisions, often unconsciously (Butland et al, 2007), and that the obesogenic environment is likely to have a disproportionately greater impact on those who are deprived (PHE, 2017).

‘Portion distortion’ is well evidenced as being an important driver determining poorer food choices, and the sizes of portions have increased over the years in parallel with rises in overweight and obesity (Young & Nestle, 2007). This is particularly the case for fast food companies, but also food retailers, who offer clever marketing (eg BOGOF). Consumers are at the mercy of the advertising and marketing bodies and much has been written about the manner in which marketing is done (favouring ‘bottom line’ over human health). To those on low incomes and/or with poor food and health literacy, large portion sizes appear to be better value for money. It has been estimated that such upselling can result in the average person consuming an additional 17,000 calories per year (RSPH & Slimming World, 2018). The use of reduced portion sizes to influence health has been identified as an effective method for reducing overall calorie consumption (Marteau et al 2015) although more research is needed on the mechanisms at play.

Food labels are not necessarily used and understood in the same way by all groups. There is evidence that their use is greater among those with an already greater interest in food and health (Grunert et al, 2010). There are issues with lack of consistency around labelling (eg traffic light system) and their adoption by different food producers. This causes issues with interpretation, particularly affecting those lower income consumers, who might have literacy issues.

Food packaging is also a real issue, especially in light of the recent drive to reduce single use plastic (climate emergency). Consumers, particularly those on lower income who have no control over their choices, are at the mercy of food retailers to take responsibility to reduce their single use plastic use in food products. This needs more radical legislative guidance so that consumers can be supported in their shopping practices.

Product reformulation is about altering a food so that its nutritional profile (especially macro-nutrients) is altered without the need for an individual changing their food behaviours. It does not rely on individual behaviour change (which is evidenced to be very difficult to achieve and maintain). Some suggest that reformulation is the only feasible approach because behaviour change interventions are ineffective (Winkler, 2018) but with foods it is technically difficult. An example of a current reformulation programme is ‘sugar’, organised by Public Health England (PHE, 2018b). This programme has already been estimated to have achieved approximately 2% reduction of sugar in its first year, less than the stated aim of achieving a 5% reduction in that timescale (PHE, 2018b). PHE is working on other reformulation programmes (eg salt) and has (controversially) set up a calorie reduction programmes as part of their ‘whole systems’ approach to obesity (<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2019/07/25/health-matters-whole-systems-approach-to-obesity/>). However, reformulation should be one part of a large scale systemic approaches, one that is more holistic, and includes upstream measures around sustainability and food security, and the role of all aspects of the food supply chain, not just those of the retailer, manufacturer, retailer or consumer.

7) What impact do food outlets (including supermarkets, delivery services, or fast food outlets) have on the average UK diet? How important are factors such as advertising, packaging, or product placement in influencing consumer choice, particularly for those in lower income groups?

Food outlets hold enormous power within the food retail chain, whether over food manufacturers, producers and/or food consumers.

Influences on food choices are many and varied (Pettinger et al 2004) and the obesogenic environment itself is complex and hard to define (Kirk et al, 2010). We know food preferences and resulting overweight and obesity levels are higher in children from poorer neighbourhoods, and it is concerning to see more fast food outlets on average in many of these deprived areas (Tedstone, 2015). But the causal pathway between overweight and density of fast food outlets is still contested in the literature (Mackenbach et al 2018; Turbott et al 2018) so more research is needed.

Price promotions have been shown to influence quantities of foods and drinks purchased which are not offset on subsequent occasions (Martin et al, 2017; Hawkes, 2009). Likewise, the positioning of products within the retail environment (e.g. point of purchase and end-of-aisle placement) has been linked to greater sales, particularly for high fat salt and sugar foods and drinks (Martin et al, 2017; Cohen & Lesser, 2016; Hawkes, 2009). There is no doubt that the food environment, (which includes marketing, advertising and promotions), influences us in our food choice behaviours (Butland et al, 2007), and this influence can potentially be modified by stronger and more radical political leadership in the form of legislation around marketing and advertising.

8) Do you have any comment to make on how the food industry might be encouraged to do more to support or promote healthy and sustainable diets? Is Government regulation an effective driver of change in this respect?

Yes – regulation (but in the form of more radical legislation) is badly needed. The food industry need to be taking more responsibility for promoting healthy and sustainable diets, even if this compromises their 'bottom line'! There needs to be a (transformative) culture and mindset change, however, one that favours health and the planet. This is not an easy feat! It is now well evidenced that the Public Health Responsibility Deal (which was a voluntary process) was ineffective (Knai et al, 2018), due to the complexity of the system(s) involved, suggesting that reliance on voluntary agreements alone is likely to have limited impact.

There have been some successes where mandatory actions already taken have been shown to be effective. The recently imposed levy on sugary drinks, for example, has resulted in an 11% reduction in sugar per 100mls (manufacturer branded products & retailers own products only). This compares with a 2% reduction in sugar per 100g in manufacturer branded and retailers own brand products in the first year of the voluntary sugar reformulation programme (PHE, 2018b). Planning regulations around newly emerging fast food/take away outlets in city centres also needs work, and evidence is often contested on the value of this (sending the wrong message to consumers!)

Ideally food needs urgent attention in relation to regulation. Debates still exist around whether tax/levies are appropriate, however, as they can be regressive (thus affecting poorer people relatively, who pick up the cost). Strong (collaborative) leadership is required around regulation, that will also permit it to be aligned with subsidies on healthy options like fruits and vegetables, thus reducing their cost.

9) To what extent is it possible for the UK to be self-sufficient in producing healthy, affordable food that supports good population health, in a way that is also environmentally sustainable?

If unchecked, it is predicted that by 2050 current dietary trends will cause significant damage to the environment (*e.g.* biodiversity loss and increased pollution), as well as increased ill health (*i.e.* higher prevalence of chronic non-communicable disease). The implementation of solutions to address the tightly linked 'diet–environment–health' trilemma is, therefore, a pressing global challenge (Tilman & Clark 2014).

There is increasing food demand for the growing human population, from an already challenged food system that is stressed by the degradation of global ecosystems (Frey & Barrett 2007). The UK has a target to reduce GHGe by 80% from 1990 levels by 2050 (UK Government 2008). Government has also recognised the pressure on the availability of water for use in agriculture and the need to reduce this impact (DEFRA 2006). Optimising land use for food production, such as reducing the amount of land required for the rearing of meat, would have a positive environmental impact in a range of ways. In order to achieve climate change–related targets, and mitigate the harsh effects of climate change, agriculture and food production methods need to change, as well as dietary intake patterns (Bajzelj *et al.* 2014; MacDiarmid *et al.* 2012).

It is suggested that a more sustainable diet can be achieved by reducing meat (red and processed meat in particular) and dairy products in the diet, and replacing these with appropriate plant-based proteins, such as beans and pulses, and plant-based dairy alternatives; an eating pattern that aligns with recommendations in the Eatwell Guide (PHE 2016). There is growing evidence of the link between the consumption of large amounts of red and processed meat and poor health outcomes (Cross *et al.* 2007; Kontogianni *et al.* 2008)). This may be related to the high saturated fat content of animal products, high salt levels in processed meats and to the displacement of fruit and vegetables and cereals by high meat consumption (Scarborough *et al.* 2012). There are, of course, important nutritional implications for meat reduction, such as potential mineral (*e.g.* iron or zinc) depletion (Millward & Garnett 2010), highlighting the need for nutrition professionals in advising on dietary changes (BDA, 2018).

An extensive discussion paper by Garnett (2014) argues that a sustainable *and* healthy diet is possible, and that low environmental impact dietary patterns can be consistent with good health and dietary recommendations. Analysis by the Carbon Trust concluded that the dietary pattern recommended by the Eatwell Guide now 'shows an appreciably lower environmental impact than the current UK diet' (Carbon Trust 2016). The UK, therefore, needs to shift its focus from livestock and dairy production, in favour of more plant based commodities.

One Blue Dot (BDA, 2018) is a practical toolkit that has been co-designed to support (nutrition) health professionals to help consumers make healthier and more sustainable food choices. But delivery of such large-scale dietary change requires a cultural mind-set change that goes beyond what is possible at individual behaviour change level.

'Self-sufficiency' – what does this mean? In light of the UK's potentially leaving the EU (31 Oct 2019?) the political climate is fairly urgent in relation to food and our situation in the UK. According to a series of recent briefings, Brexit represents the biggest shake-up of the British food supply since the Second World War. It has been seen to present both threats and opportunities, and not surprisingly, therefore, it has prompted prodigious activity among 'policy influencers' (FRC, 2018-19). It is presently uncertain what is going to happen in terms of farming, agriculture and production of national food items. But what is clear is that in order to achieve a more stable and less 'unequal' food system consultations need to occur across the different levels of the food chain. This is presently being attempted via the National Food Strategy review (2019), so there is a hope that things might change moving into the future... ..

10) Can efforts to improve food production sustainability simultaneously offer solutions to improving food insecurity and dietary health in the UK?

We need to be considering a food system that is based on values where individual health, the health of the society (social system) and ecosystem health are of equal importance (Carlsson et al 2019). Such as “systems perspective” helps to see and articulate food systems as a complex network of actors and factors (Norberg and Cumming, 2008) interacting with the three ‘sustainability domains’. Thus, the implicit values at stake are that we nourish our populations in a way that does not compromise future generations, so there is a clear need for solutions to more sustainable production of food in the UK to reflect the interrelationship between human diets and the environmental, social and economic impacts of such diets. This is a ‘Right to Food’ issue

So, people, as active citizens, need to be consulted along the way, at each stage of the process. Creative approaches to reach traditionally marginalized communities can engagement (Pettinger et al 2017, Flint et al 2017) by fostering, empowerment, connection and a sense of agency and equity. This can lead to improved health outcomes, and wellbeing, life-skills etc). See final section of this evidence.

11) How effective are any current measures operated or assisted by Government, local authorities, or others to minimise food waste? What further action is required to minimise food waste?

Waste/surplus distribution is NOT a solution to food insecurity problems, this is a false claim that can lead to increases in inequality and loss of dignity (Caraher and Furey 2018)

Food waste needs to be tackled at all stages of the food chain, from farm to fork. There are many charities who operate to re-distribute waste/surplus food to those in need within the food system. For example, FareShare UK operate nationally to make use of surplus and waste food. More locally, The Devon and Cornwall Food Action (<https://devonandcornwallfoodaction.org/>) group receive surplus (end of shelf-life) food that is re-distributed at a reasonably large scale to charities. But commodity flow is inconsistent (presenting difficulties for charities to manage donations)

Local Plymouth insight (activities for food waste prevention)

- Devon and Cornwall Food Association (DCFA) – Charitable redistribution of food.
- The Real Junk Food project – using surplus food and producing pay as you feel café offer
- Billy Ruffian's – Plymouth's new community owned craft brewery – which will be using waste products from craft bread making in its brewing processes.
- Plymouth Food Waste Partnership's Food Waste collection for Plymouth proposals (Plymouth currently has no food waste collection) This started with proposed 'Pedal Bins' commercial food waste collection scheme using electrically assisted cargo bikes on the Barbican – this includes international links with Scandinavia.
- Food Plymouth is working towards Sustainable Food Cities 'Lowering the Eco-Footprint of the Food System' action
- Composting workshops at Union Corner featuring Nicky Scott and Devon Composting Network.

Soup Run teams benefit from food donations mainly from supermarkets and food outlets, plus some via intermediary distributors of surplus food. The Soup Run depends on voluntary effort to collect surplus food, often with tight time windows for collection and uncertain levels of supply. This can create problems in predicting and managing donations as part of the total food provision on any one occasion. What would really help would be a central depot in the city, where all food surplus/waste were taken. This would provide a single place to collect, cutting down on journeys and facilitating planning to make the best use of the limited funds that we have to buy produce to achieve our aim of some balance in the food provided to our clients. However, since we operate on a very tight budget based on donations, a charge for such a service would be problematic.

12) A Public Health England report has concluded that “considerable and largely unprecedented” dietary shifts are required to meet Government guidance on healthy diets.² What policy approaches (for example, fiscal or regulatory measures, voluntary guidelines, or attempts to change individual or population behaviour through information and education) would most effectively enable this? What role could public procurement play in improving dietary behaviours?

Food is such a complex topic but strong evidence exists that UK population does not meet the does right balance of food recommended for either a healthy or a sustainable diet (Harland *et al.* 2012).

Mandatory action, despite being criticised as ‘nanny state’ is needed to produce change. For example, in the recent #notforchildren campaign (which attempted to mandate against the sale of energy drinks to children under 16 or 18yrs) the population agreed that action was appropriate (% of respondents agreed with mandating against the sale of energy drinks to children in a recent consultation (Department of Health & Social Care, 2019). Given that both poor diet and many chronic diseases are over-represented in those who are deprived, it is likely that they will disproportionately benefit from any such mandatory action - this is responsible government ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected.

Transparency, integrity, economy, openness, fairness, competition and accountability are some of the fundamental principles (and potential values) of public procurement which are useful to consider for improving dietary behaviours. There is a need however, for governments at all levels, review their food procurement strategies (Smith et al 2015) to explore more consistent definitions for greener and more sustainable public procurement practices. Public procurement policies represents an important route towards helping employees achieve a healthy intake. The public sector is a major national employer; as of March 2019, 16.5% of all people in paid work were employed in the public sector with the NHS and the Civil Service being the largest employers (ONS, 2019b). These organisations therefore have power to influence the health and wellbeing of their employees and users including through healthy food procurement as well as addressing sedentary behaviours and embedding opportunities for physical activity.

Local Plymouth insights

In Plymouth we have taken a strategic approach to the procurement of food by public organisations. We are also about to sign the healthy weight declaration which contains guidance on public procurement of food.

13) Has sufficient research been conducted to provide a robust analysis of the links between poverty, food insecurity, health inequalities and the sustainability of food production? How well is existing research on the impact of existing food policy used to inform decision making?

No from my own personal knowledge of the literature (which is extensive), although each of these elements has some robust research, there is a paucity that provides a robust enough analysis of the links between poverty, food insecurity, health inequalities and the sustainability of food production. More funding and capacity is needed, therefore, to support these research developments.

Similarly, I do not believe that existing research on the impact of food policy is considered appropriately to inform decision making. Food is a highly complex agenda, and food systems involve a complex set of interactions that work together to influence multiple outcomes, notably health, environment, and the economy, including the livelihoods of farmers and the profitability of businesses. Food policy is therefore highly challenging because there is no one single way of collecting evidence to inform policymaking. Different approaches are appropriate for different policy issues. Food policy has great potential to inform decision making, however, despite common conflicts and contradictions which often undermine each other (Parsons and Hawkes 2018).

Converting these well-known conflicts between goals, into connections that yield co-benefits requires deeper change, in which the entire system is reoriented towards meeting health, environmental and economic goals together (collaboratively). This is known as 'integrated food policy', in which processes are designed and managed differently, which is coupled with a more values driven approach to the food system (see Carlsson et al 2019). Putting a food systems approach into practice to achieve co-benefits will require cross-government and cross-sector collaboration as well as a broader framework for enabling policy. Lawrence *et al.* (2015) showed how important food and nutrition policy activities are to the redesign of the food system needed to promote healthy and sustainable diets. Food policies also need to account for how people – citizens, communities – are affected by the food system problems we are seeking to address (Hawkes 2018).

14) What can the UK learn from food policy in other countries? Are there examples of strategies which have improved access and affordability of healthy, sustainable food across income groups?

Globally, over the past several years, dietary guidelines have been emerging that incorporate aspects of sustainability to varying degrees. Qatar, for example, produced one of the first national dietary guidelines to integrate principles of food sustainability (Seed 2015). Similarly, Sweden and Brazil have taken radical steps to embed sustainability and social drivers and determinants into their national dietary guidelines [National Food Agency (Sweden) 2015; Ministry of Health for Brazil 2014].

Also successes seen in food policy developments in Finland eg

<https://www.healthydietforhealthylife.eu/index.php/news/331-finnish-food-policy-report-food2030-finland-feeds-us-and-the-world>

Mexico has success with sugar tax evidence:

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/feb/22/mexico-sugar-tax-lower-consumption-second-year-running>

Cuba has an extensive Food security policy in place <https://plataformacelac.org/en/politica/248>

In Europe there is a drive to consider sustainability of food system (influenced by Italy's slow food movement) <https://www.slowfood.com/slowsloEurope/en/topics/food-sustainability/>

15) Are there any additional changes at a national policy level that would help to ensure efforts to improve food insecurity and poor diet, and its impact on public health and the environment, are effectively coordinated, implemented and monitored?

The problems/issues are complex, and therefore solutions are complex and require multi-sector 'systems' collaboration and strong political leadership. I believe that stronger policy starts with the people – so there also needs to be more effective consultation and 'bottom up' involvement (co-production) with communities with lived experience so that their voices can form part of the policy changing and solutions.

There is evidence of the resourcefulness of people in food crisis (Douglas et al 2015). Community engagement interventions have been shown to influence health behaviours and self-efficacy (O'Mara Eves et al, 2015), with specific attention paid to social inequalities: social capital, cohesion and empowerment (Popay et al 2007).

Looking to 'bottom up' community centric initiatives are important – there is a need to tap into already existing networks to generate people powered action (already existing networks such as Sustain <https://www.sustainweb.org/> ; Food Ethics Council <https://www.foodethicscouncil.org/> ; Sustainable Food Cities network <http://sustainablefoodcities.org/> ; Food Power network <https://www.sustainweb.org/foodpower/> ; Independent Food Aid Network <http://www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk/> ; Church action on poverty www.church-poverty.org.uk ; End Hunger UK <http://endhungeruk.org/>) More creative approaches are needed that foster human connection, such approaches emphasise social action, individual justice and active participation - it is possible to 'give voice' to community members, allowing them some control over their involvement in a process of participation

Using creative arts practices to explore the inherently social dimensions of engagement with food can involve individuals in personal and community-level change through reflection, empowerment and connectedness (Gray et al, 2010). Arts based methods can reveal and give voice to a set of perspectives that are otherwise absent from research and food policy debates (Flint et al 2017). Although food is central to many health concerns, it is also a powerful 'lifestyle motivator' (Pettinger et al 2017). Creative food activities may therefore have a role to play when designing and commissioning services for individuals with multiple and complex needs. To act as a catalyst for change. More progressive solutions to social exclusion are now being sought through, for example, the 'social cooperative model' described by Villotti et al (2014). This not only addresses individual level determinants of food security and poverty (e.g. improved social abilities) but also considers wider (infra)structural factors, by offering job opportunities and skills development. Such a model fosters a 'co-production' philosophy (Slay and Robinson, 2011), seeing people as assets and tackling issues of power and transparency, which may help mitigate experiences of food insecurity (Douglas et al 2015).

There is great scope, therefore, to engage key players more effectively across the food chain, to shift the paradigm towards more relational and transformative socially inclusive food debates/action, with human connection at their heart (Cottam, 2018, p15). This is an important area of benefit, using food-based community development to enhance social and human capital and foster human connection and to facilitate a shift from a deficit to an asset-based approach (Hopkins and Rippon, 2015).

Some key policy areas for ongoing urgent action/discussion/consultation include:

Sugar Tax
Universal credit
Review of food system

- Minimum wage/guaranteed income
- Reduced working hours
- Better use of abandoned land for community food growing

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THE STATE OF HUNGER

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



CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Food banks, hunger and poverty in the UK	7
Food bank use	7
The concept and definition of poverty.....	9
The causes of poverty and wider associated factors	12
Study methodology	14
Conceptualising hunger, food insecurity, and poverty in the UK	16
Understanding hunger	16
Alternative terms to hunger	19
Conclusion.....	22
References	23
Appendix. Questions in the 10-item HFSSM and the scoring system.	29

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FOREWORD

Last year, food banks in the Trussell Trust network distributed a record 1.6 million emergency food parcels throughout the UK – a 19% year-on-year increase in demand. In a society like ours that values justice and compassion, it is an affront to us all that hundreds of thousands of men, women and children are referred to food banks.

Dealing with accelerating numbers of people referred, the Trussell Trust faces a choice: either build the best network of food banks we possibly can to keep meeting this spiralling demand; or instead address the reasons why so many people end up coming through the doors of food banks without enough money for the absolute essentials. We have chosen the latter path.

The State of Hunger is part of our commitment to that course of action. Over the next three years, this research will act as a benchmark not just for our organisation, but for government and the wider society to better understand the structural causes that sweep so many into poverty and destitution. After all, the better we understand the nature and scale of a problem, the easier it will be to fix it. Ultimately, the *State of Hunger* is a vital tool if we are to end hunger and poverty in the UK.

We are keenly aware that we cannot achieve this vision alone. If we are to end the need for food banks, we need to utilise the research and findings of a network of experts and institutions that have already provided valuable insights into UK poverty and food bank use.

In recognition of that existing expertise and knowledge, this first interim report sets out what we already know and asks a key question – what is hunger?

As an organisation that is building a long term strategy to end the need for food banks these are questions we must understand the answers to. To succeed, we are going to need to work alongside many others to achieve our goals, and we want to share those answers as widely as possible too.

But while we understand that we are just one entity that will be required to end UK hunger and poverty, we must also keep in mind what makes the Trussell Trust unique. What evidence it is that only we can add to build a national solution to poverty. That is our network of 427 food banks, over 1,200 distribution centres and tens of thousands of volunteers across the UK.

That is why the focus of our first full report, published this autumn, will focus on the experiences and demographics of the people referred to us and the pathways that they take to reach us. By understanding those pathways and how they change over the years, the Trussell Trust, central government, local councils, referral organisations and wider civil society will be better equipped to change the systems that create them – pathways that currently sweep so many people into poverty and hunger.



Garry Lemon

Director of Policy, External Affairs, and Research

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 2010s, there has been growing public concern about the worsening material position of many people living on low incomes. This concern has focussed particularly on the sharpest end of poverty - destitution (Fitzpatrick et al, 2016, 2018), along with the rise in child poverty and in-work poverty (Social Metrics Commission, 2018; Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2017). There has been frequent coverage of relevant issues such as homelessness, the use of food banks, and children coming to school hungry across mainstream media (e.g. BBC 2019a, BBC 2019b, Channel 4, 2019, The Guardian, 2019). Many parliamentary debates, inquiries and questions have also focussed on these more severe forms of material hardship.¹ However, despite this controversy and increased awareness, there has been only a limited policy response from successive post-2010 UK governments, with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into force in April 2018, perhaps the most notable exception.

Early warning of the deteriorating situation of people on low incomes facing the most severe forms of hardship often emanates from voluntary organisations providing direct support to these groups (e.g. Crisis, 2019; Brownfield, 2018). In recent years, it has been impossible to ignore the growing emphasis these organisations' reports and other outputs have placed on different manifestations of hunger. Key themes have included growing food bank use, reports of people skipping meals, facing the dilemma of whether to 'heat or eat', and adults cutting down portion sizes to make sure children have enough to eat (e.g. Perry et al, 2014; Citizens Advice Scotland, 2016; Turn2Us, 2018; Real Life Reform, 2015).

It has also been contended, or at least suggested, that the profile of people affected by the most severe forms of hardship may be changing. Hitherto there had been an understanding that British citizens, aside possibly from some long-term homeless people with complex support needs (Fitzpatrick et al, 2013), generally did not face absolute destitution and hunger. This was still said to remain the case even after the 2008 global financial crisis, as *"the welfare state provided a reasonably effective safety net during the recession"* (Hossain et al, 2011, p. 34). Longstanding concerns about destitution tended to focus on non-British citizens (refused asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants; see Lewis, 2009; Crawley et al, 2011). However, recent research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has found that over 1.5 million people faced destitution in the UK at some point in 2017, 68% of whom were UK-born without 'complex needs' (Fitzpatrick et al, 2018).

It is against this backdrop of growing concern about the experience of hunger and poverty in the UK, and the apparent widening of the section of society affected, that the Trussell Trust funded the current study. The key aims of the project are:

- To establish what we mean by 'hunger' in social policy discussions
- To develop a robust evidence base on who in the UK is affected by hunger, and what drives hunger
- To assess what lessons can be learned from different areas of the UK to alleviate hunger.

1 E.g. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2019/february/prime-ministers-questions-13-february-2019/>

One particularly important thread running throughout the project is the impact of policy changes on trends and experiences in hunger and poverty in the UK. A range of stakeholders and commentators have argued that decisions on welfare reform in particular have been central in giving rise to hunger and poverty in the UK in recent years (e.g. End Hunger UK, 2018; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2018). Destitution in the UK 2017 research showed that benefit changes, delays and sanctions were all significantly involved in triggering destitution, as were issues of debt and arrears and their recovery by public bodies including the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) (Fitzpatrick et al, 2018). As shown in more detail below, existing evidence about drivers of food bank use likewise highlight the role of key policy developments since 2011, such as benefit sanctions, the roll-out of Universal Credit, cuts in Housing Benefit, changes to disability benefits, and the freezing of benefits (e.g. Perry et al, 2014; Citizens Advice Scotland, 2016).

The links between policy changes and food bank use have been highly politically contentious, however, with the current and previous post-2010 UK governments until recently rejecting claims that their policy programmes have contributed to a rise in use (e.g. The Guardian, 2014). However, more recently the current Work and Pensions Secretary has conceded that *“The main issue which led to an increase in food bank use could have been the fact that people [Universal Credit claimants] had difficulty accessing their money early enough”* (HC Deb 11 February 2019).

There has also been recent relatively modest but significant softening of policy measures that have been identified by many commentators as contributing to ‘hunger’, destitution, and severe forms of hardship. One of the earlier examples of the change in the Government’s stance was the reduction of the waiting period for the first payment on Universal Credit from six to five weeks, from March 2018 (Department for Work and Pensions, 2017). Subsequently, the maximum rate at which ‘third party deductions’ can be made from a Universal Credit award will be reduced from 40% to 30% of the standard allowance, from October 2019. The Secretary of State also announced that the length of the longest benefit sanction will be reduced from three years to six months (BBC, 2019d). Since April 2018, a two-week run on of Housing Benefit (which is not repayable) if the claimant is transferring from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit has been in place (Department for Work and Pensions, 2017).

This is therefore a fast-changing policy landscape - where new policies are introduced and other policies are rolled out to a growing number of people. This means to track drivers over time and to effectively influence policy-making, quantitative data collection needs to be repeated frequently, at least on an annual basis. There is also a need for up-to-date qualitative data about drivers, to attain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms at play.

The *State of Hunger* aims to address precisely these needs. It is a three-year research programme, with each year culminating in an annual report. The study’s foundations were laid by the Trussell Trust in 2016-17 when a team of researchers led by Dr Rachel Loopstra of the University of Oxford conducted a pilot research project involving a survey of food bank users (Loopstra et al, 2017). The *State of Hunger* builds on this important base: the survey of people who use a food bank constitutes its central element but the study also incorporates several other methods of data collection. In particular, recognising that ‘hunger’ also exists among sections of the population who, for a variety of reasons, do not use food banks, the *State of Hunger* project team will utilise a range of secondary datasets to report on hunger and poverty amongst non-users of food banks.

This first report from the *State of Hunger* study addresses the question “what is meant by ‘hunger’ in this context?” and sets out the conceptual and measurement frameworks that will be used for the remainder of the project. In the next section we consider the context for this study, reviewing existing evidence on food bank use as well as discussing the current thinking on poverty. The following section sets out the study’s methodology. In the final section we review existing definitions of hunger and concepts closely related to it and the strengths and weaknesses of these, informed by interviews with key stakeholders. This paper concludes by proposing a measurement of hunger in terms of *household food insecurity*.

FOOD BANKS, HUNGER AND POVERTY IN THE UK

To set the broader context for the study, this section reviews existing evidence and arguments on the closely interrelated topics of food bank use, poverty, and its causes in the UK. This material provides a vital backdrop for understanding the study's approach to conceptualising and investigating 'hunger' in the contemporary UK context.

FOOD BANK USE

Since the early 2010s a substantial volume of evidence on food bank use has been generated by the Trussell Trust, academic researchers, and support organisations in frequent contact with people who use a food bank (e.g. Perry et al, 2014; Loopstra et al, 2015; Citizens Advice Scotland, 2016; Menu for Change & IFAN, 2019). Two key conclusions can be drawn from this existing evidence base: firstly, the main drivers of food bank use have remained largely consistent in the last decade or so; and secondly, the most common driver of food bank use relates to the characteristics and functioning of the British welfare system.

Since 2012/13, the Trussell Trust's statistics consistently show that the main reason why people are referred to its food banks is linked to the benefit system, with delays and benefit changes responsible for around 40-45% of cases between them. Furthermore, the vast majority of referrals related to another major reason - 'low income' - are for people receiving benefits, indicating an even greater significance of the link between food bank referrals and the benefit system (Trussell Trust, 2019a & 2019b). Other Trussell Trust research in recent years with food bank users and food bank managers paints a picture that is very consistent with this (Cooper et al, 2014; Perry et al, 2014; Loopstra & Lalor, 2017; Jitendra et al, 2017).

There is consistency between the Trussell Trust's findings and research conducted by other organisations and by academic researchers in the past five years. For example, in 2013, a Citizens Advice survey found that for 65-70% of those clients referred to a food bank the reason for referral was linked to the benefit system (Citizens Advice, 2014). Drawing on interviews with food bank managers, Lambie-Mumford (2014) and Sosenko et al (2013) similarly found that the (then accelerating) process of 'Welfare Reform' was the leading driver of food bank use, in particular benefit sanctions and administrative errors resulting in benefit delays.

Research also established a statistically significant association between benefit sanctions and food bank use (Loopstra et al 2015, 2018). Three independently conducted case studies - in Glasgow (MacLeod et al, 2018), three Inner London Boroughs (Prayogo et al, 2017), and West Cheshire (Garratt, 2017) - also found a statistically significant association between food bank use and benefit issues.

The issues with the welfare system that have been most often highlighted by these studies are:

- benefit sanctions
- interrupted benefit payments
- delays in receiving the first benefit payment
- the built-in five week wait for the first Universal Credit payment
- being incorrectly classified as ‘fit for work’
- losing entitlement to a disability-related benefit at the point of reassessment
- losing part of Housing Benefit (due to the ‘Bedroom tax’, Benefit Cap, two-child limit or non-dependent deductions) and
- being burdened with unrealistic repayments of money owed to the DWP

The groups of people most likely to need a food bank include those who have a disability or health condition, lone parents, and families with three or more children (Loopstra & Lalor, 2017). These are all groups who have been significantly affected by welfare reforms (and further policy-related income reductions for these groups were to come after the research was conducted).² Loopstra & Lalor (2017) also found that all the food bank users they surveyed had been in a very vulnerable financial position in the month prior to the survey, and a substantial proportion experienced an income shock in the three months prior to the survey. Other relevant research has found that experiencing ‘adverse life events’ such as bereavement or the loss of a job also plays a role in necessitating food bank use (Perry et al, 2014).

² Particularly the reduction in the rate of Employment Support Allowance work-related activity group and the two child limit on Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit.

THE CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF POVERTY

As the preceding section makes clear, food bank use and hunger are very closely related to poverty, particularly in its more extreme forms, and this is confirmed below in the literature and the views of key informants. We therefore review the concept and definition of poverty, in order to draw out key lessons and pointers for our approach to defining and measuring hunger. These focus in particular on the distinctions between relative and absolute poverty, the emphasis on income vs other evidence, and the role of consensus.

Historically, in the UK as in other countries, poverty tended to be defined with reference to an absolute concept of a minimum subsistence level of income to enable basic physical survival and everyday functioning. However, in recent decades the UK social policy community has shifted towards a predominantly relative conception of poverty, embedded in a particular set of social norms (Glennerster et al, 2004; Lister, 2004; Hills, 2015; Mack, 2018). The relative conception of poverty underpins the main statistical reporting of poverty in the UK, as it does across Europe (Guio et al, 2016), although absolute measures play a stronger role in the US and in international development.

The predominant focus in UK official statistics and debates has been on measures of relative income, as reported regularly in the statistical series Households Below Average Income (HBAI; DWP, 2019). These measures look at net disposable income adjusted for household composition ('equivalised'), and there is growing acceptance that the 'After Housing Costs' (AHC) version of this is a better measure than that traditionally used (Scottish Government, 2018; Cribb et al, 2018, pp.55-56). Although poverty indicators described as 'absolute' are published in this series, these are in effect the temporary imposition of a fixed threshold. This threshold is itself purely relative in origin, and fixed over a short run of years, before it is then rebased on a relative basis.³ When most people think of 'absolute poverty', however, they are more likely to be thinking about extreme poverty or destitution, lack of the most vital essentials (obviously including food), as discussed further below.

In 2010 there was a brief cross-party consensus around child poverty, following legislation passed by the Labour Government. However, this consensus subsequently broke down (Gordon, 2018; Mack, 2018; Scottish Government, 2018) as Coalition and Conservative Governments lent their support to theories challenging the meaningfulness of low-income poverty definitions (Centre for Social Justice, 2012). Although this work was substantially undermined by the sustained critique of academic and third sector organisations (Roberts & Steward, 2015; Hills, 2015; Gordon, 2018), and Devolved Administrations restored child poverty targets (e.g. Scottish Government, 2018), there has been a legacy of continued searching for modified definitions of poverty. Notable in this respect is the approach being promoted by various organisations through the Social Metrics Foundation (2018) inquiry, with their proposed measure of poverty focusing on income, but making various adjustments to get a more accurate reflection of a family's available resources, including for inescapable living costs (e.g. due to disability, childcare) and wider finances (e.g. savings, assets), to arrive at an indicator of 'poverty now'. The DWP has just announced that it will explore including this in the measures routinely reported.

³ The 'absolute' poverty threshold is 60% of median income in the base year, currently 2010/11, adjusted for inflation; see DWP (2019), p.7

Analysis of poverty has also gone beyond simply looking at income. One much-used definition of poverty in the UK is from Townsend's 1979 study, which considers poverty in terms of social exclusion:

"...Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary patterns, customs and activities." **Townsend, 1979, p.31**

This approach is relative in the sense that it is embedded in a particular societal context and era. It involves considering both resources and deprivations, set in a particular societal context, proposing a threshold at which deprivation is more likely – where deprivations mean certain needs going unmet. There will always be arguments about which needs are paramount, but there are a set of basic essentials which most people will consistently agree should be available to everyone in society (Doyal and Gough, 1984; Hill and Bramley, 1986; Miller, 1999).

This 'consensual' approach to the definition of poverty (reaching an agreement on a set of basic essentials) was pioneered in the Breadline Britain surveys of 1983 and 1990 and then refined in the Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSE) surveys of 1999 and 2012 (Mack and Lansley, 1985; Mack, 2018; Gordon, 2018). In these surveys, consumption items classed as 'necessary' by 50% or more of the public were included in a general 'living standards' survey, creating an index based on 'enforced lack of socially perceived necessities', which overcame some earlier objections to Townsend's definition (Piachaud, 1981, 1987).

Food, or the absence of it, played an important role in these widely-agreed definitions of poverty. In the PSE-UK 2012 Survey, four food-related items were identified as 'necessities', lack of which would contribute to poverty as material deprivation. Subsets of these and similar material deprivation questions, including food-related items, are included in the Family Resources Survey, the UK Household Longitudinal Study ('Understanding Society'), and the European-wide Income and Living Conditions Survey ('EU-SILC').

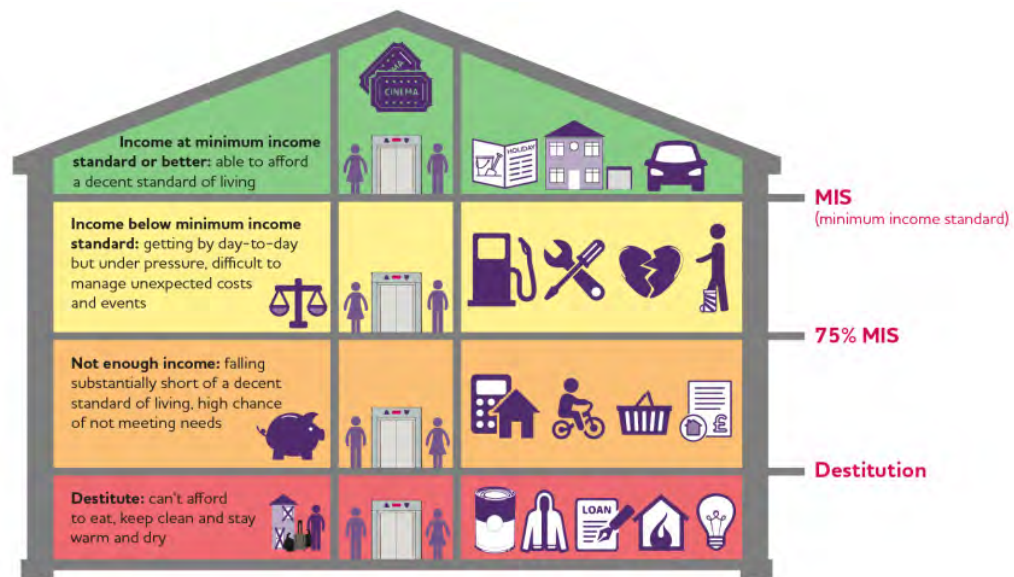
It can be argued that the consensual material deprivation approach to poverty definition is stronger as it better discriminates in practice between households who are suffering specific hardships and those who are not, compared with measures purely based on income (Gordon, 2018; Bramley & Bailey, 2018).

The 'Minimum Income Standards' (MIS) is another approach to quantifying desirable household budget levels (Bradshaw, Middleton et al, 2008; Hirsch et al, 2016). This combines 'expert' panel inputs with consensual methods involving 'ordinary' households. It is particularly useful for looking at different elements of the household budget, including 'food', where target budgets may be compared with actual expenditure for different household groups. Some have argued in favour of an expenditure-based approach to poverty measurement (Brewer and O'Dea, 2017; Tonkin & Serafino, 2017), including the UN Economic Commission for Europe (United Nations, 2017), although others differ strongly (Gordon, 2018). In practice, this is another relative measure rather similar to HBAI, but using equivalised expenditure rather than income.

Building on the consensus approach, a definition of 'destitution' was developed that followed the consensual approach but with a strict focus on the absolute essentials that people need in order to be able to live: shelter, food, heating, lighting, clothing/footwear, basic toiletries (Fitzpatrick et al, 2015, 2016, 2018). People are defined as destitute if they lack two or more of

these things or if their income is too low to cover the cost of these bare essentials. Although the definition emerged from expert deliberation, all the parameters of this definition were agreed by a clear majority of UK adults in an omnibus survey.

One way of looking at how these different approaches and definitions of poverty interrelate is the following ‘Levels of Poverty’ diagram used by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation:



Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *What is poverty?*
<https://www.irf.org.uk/our-work/what-is-poverty>

This diagram uses MIS to define the upper and middle layers, but it would also be possible to construct an alternative diagram that uses the HBAI or Social Metrics approaches to define the main poverty lines (above the destitution line). Combined material deprivation and low income could also be used to define a 'severe poverty' level above the destitution level (Bramley et al, 2018).

In looking at food bank use and ‘hunger’ we focus on a definition of poverty at the more extreme end of the poverty spectrum. Thus in this research we will explicitly establish the position of food bank users in terms of the ‘destitution’ line. We will also measure the position of food bank users in terms of other commonly used poverty lines (such as 60% of median household income AHC/BHC).

THE CAUSES OF POVERTY AND WIDER ASSOCIATED FACTORS

The literature on poverty is obviously relevant to definitions to be used in this study, but also to issues about the drivers and consequences of poverty. Poverty is demonstrably associated (correlated) with a very wide range of other social problems or disadvantages, notably in the fields of health, crime/justice, housing/homelessness, educational underachievement and employment (see for example Bailey et al, 2018). It is, however, more difficult to establish that these factors are the key drivers or causes of poverty or, conversely, that poverty is the key driver or cause of those other problems. The causal effects may work in one or the other or both directions, but often many other correlated factors may be involved and it is often difficult to tease out which are critical. It is rare to be able to conduct large-scale controlled experiments in the social sphere. However, quantitative analysis can be illuminating, especially when experiences can be sequenced in time and an appropriate range of other plausible factors can be statistically controlled for.

On health, for example, there is strong evidence that poverty both causes adverse physical and/or mental ill-health and is exacerbated by poor health experiences. However, the balance of evidence suggests that the effect from poverty to ill-health is stronger than the reverse effect, often referred to as the ‘health selection effect’ (Prior and Manley, 2018; Bramley et al, 2016; Blane et al, 1993; Manor et al, 2003; Warren, 2009). The weight of evidence on the poverty-health relationship is strong and also highlights the high social cost (in terms of NHS spending) of this relationship. This was estimated at around £30bn by Bramley et al (2016, Table 22), even though it is also sometimes argued that low-income households do not receive a share of NHS resources commensurate with their excess need (the so-called ‘inverse care law’). Clearly, poverty can contribute to ill-health through inadequate nutrition, both in the sense of insufficient food of any kind and more generally in terms of a poor quality diet, but also of great importance are the adverse effects on mental wellbeing of pervasive insecurity about income, debt, housing situation, and other factors, which can interact with insecurity about food itself.

We would highlight some other domains of disadvantage which are relatively strongly associated with material poverty. For example, housing and neighbourhood deprivation have been shown to be closely associated (Bailey et al, 2018), despite the degree of insulation of ‘housing disadvantage’ from general poverty achieved in the UK, thanks to a large social housing sector and a Housing Benefit system that (until post-2010 welfare reform) met most low-income households’ full rent (Bradshaw et al, 2008). This picture is now changing with the growing role of the private rented sector, especially for younger households (Cribb et al, 2018). With regard to the most extreme end of housing disadvantage – homelessness – Bramley & Fitzpatrick (2018) show using cohort and retrospective surveys that (past as well as current) poverty is the most important risk factor for homelessness. Survey research has also demonstrated that participation in social activities and in the employment sphere are also strongly related to material poverty, albeit that there is less evidence of poverty impacts on cultural, civic, and political participation (Bailey et al, 2018).

Partly in recognition of these wider interrelationships between poverty and other aspects of quality of life, in the 1990s and 2000s there was growing interest in the (European-inspired) agenda of ‘social exclusion’ (Room, 1995; Hills et al, 2002; Levitas et al, 2007). For some this represented an attempted broadening of the definition of poverty, while for others it

highlighted other (non-material) aspects of disadvantage (see, for example, Lister, 2004; Pantazis et al, 2006; Dermott & Main, 2018; Bramley & Bailey, 2018). This focus on social exclusion can also be linked to the now highly influential ‘human capabilities’ approach (Sen, 1992; Nussbaum, 2000; Robeyns, 2005), and the movement to measure wider forms of social progress and wellbeing alongside GDP (Stiglitz et al, 2009; Allin & Hand, 2014).

However, the UK governments post-2010 have placed less emphasis on social exclusion, although they have shown some commitment to promoting well-being and quality of life and the Life Chances Strategy, which incorporates social mobility. There has also been interest in more extreme forms of complex and multiple disadvantage, involving interacting forms of exclusion such as homelessness, substance misuse, mental ill-health, and offending (Bramley et al 2015, 2018). These issues have been seized on by some as examples of the ‘causes of poverty’ (Centre for Social Justice, 2012), but this does not emphasise the point that the groups experiencing such complex needs are relatively small in number, a few hundred thousand compared with the c. 10-12 million people in poverty, or the 1.5 million in destitution in 2017 (Fitzpatrick et al, 2018). Furthermore, there is evidence that adults with such complex needs have often experienced serious poverty in childhood or in early adulthood, as well as other forms of abuse and ‘adverse childhood experiences’.

As far as extreme material poverty and deprivation are concerned, recent quantitative and qualitative evidence in *Destitution in the UK* (Fitzpatrick et al, 2018) highlights the importance of a persistent background of low income, interacting with a range of factors including: debt and arrears (predominantly involving public bodies, housing and utilities); benefit changes, delays, and sanctions; health problems and disabilities; the precarious position of certain migrant groups; and (to a lesser extent) job loss or insecurity and relationship problems. Only a minority (1 in 6 people) found to be destitute in the UK in 2017 fell into the ‘complex needs’ category. It may be anticipated that similar patterns are likely to be found in the surveys of food bank users and other elements of the *State of Hunger* research programme.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Drawing on this context, the *State of Hunger* study uses a suite of research elements to examine the drivers of food bank use and the prevalence and experience of poverty – to the extent of lacking food – from a range of perspectives. The remainder of this paper sets out the findings of the study's **literature review**, the main function of which was to examine 'What is hunger?'. This review of literature was intended to cover definitional issues; physical, social, and political aspects of hunger; the scale of undernourishment and malnutrition in the UK; links to food insecurity; and bi-directional relationships with health problems such as poor mental health.

The conceptual framework explored in the literature review was further refined through **key informant interviews** with 16 individuals, comprising a range of experts from across academia, government, and the private and voluntary sectors covering perspectives on health, social security, social justice, poverty, food provision and advocacy, support, and advice services. The discussion in the later section of this paper outlines both our interpretation of the literature and the views of key informants on conceptualising hunger, food insecurity, and poverty.

The most critical strand of the *State of Hunger* study, that will be reported on in later outputs, is a survey of **food bank service users** across the UK. This survey builds on the recent work of Rachel Loopstra and colleagues (Loopstra & Lalor, 2017). The *State of Hunger* captures the experiences and views of over 1,000 service users, conducted across 10% of the Trussell Trust food bank network (42 out of a total of 428 food banks). The survey uses an innovative self-completion method on tablet devices and provides insights into who is more likely to fall into food bank use, and as well as collecting information about the immediate triggers of food bank use and possible longer-term background factors.

A **survey of referral agencies** is also being conducted to explore perceptions of the factors behind food bank use from this perspective, exploring referral agencies' views of general as well as specific local factors influencing food bank use, considering local needs and pressures and identifying examples of local policies and provision that impact positively or negatively on food bank use, from the perspective of statutory and voluntary organisations. An online survey has been administered to referral agencies across 10 local authorities selected as case study examples of locations affected more and less badly by welfare reform.

A modified version of the referral agency survey has also been issued as a **food bank managers survey** in those 42 food banks that participated in the service users survey. This will highlight food bank managers' perspectives on local needs and pressures and identify local policies and provision that impact on food bank use.

A further stage of the research will involve **in-depth interviews** with 75 service users (25 per year) participating in the food bank surveys. They will be selected on the basis of issues identified as key drivers of demand. These qualitative interviews are designed to provide deeper knowledge of the lived experience of people in severe food insecurity, as well as deeper understanding of the mechanisms that push people into severe hardship.

To enable the research to analyse the role of potential drivers of food bank use over time and space, but also to look beyond the experiences of those directly involved in the Trussell Trust food bank network, we are also undertaking substantial **secondary data analysis**. This involves national analysis of Trussell Trust data and analysis of external datasets, including data from

national demographic and labour market sources and key government statistical sources on benefits receipt, employment and unemployment, homelessness, and offending, as well as data from Citizens Advice and national household surveys.

As well as shedding additional light on the key drivers of the forms of hunger, food insecurity, and poverty focussed upon in this study, this data analysis also provides evidence on the prevalence of relevant forms of food-related hardship among those who have not used food banks. This allows the research to estimate the impact of poverty and food insecurity more broadly than users of the Trussell Trust food bank network. The ‘triangulation’ of the Trussell Trust’s and external data will further enable us to profile where food banks in the Trussell Trust network are found and where utilisation is highest in terms, for example, of area deprivation rates, unemployment rates, levels of long-term unemployed, and workless households with dependent children.

The next section of the paper moves on to our review of evidence on the key concepts being addressed in the research and of the key relationships between or underlying these. This review is based on a targeted review of literature and also on interviews with a range of expert key informants.

CONCEPTUALISING HUNGER, FOOD INSECURITY, AND POVERTY IN THE UK

The focus of this research is ‘hunger’ in the UK population, amongst both food bank users and those who experience hunger but for various reasons do not use food banks. But hunger can mean different things to different people; it is therefore crucial to be transparent about our understanding of ‘hunger’ in the context of this study and how we arrived at this understanding. Specifically, there is a need for clarity with respect to: the definition of the core hunger-related concept used in the study; how this concept is to be operationalised and measured; and the language used to communicate the study findings.

As noted above, this conceptualisation task has been approached through a literature review of existing definitions of hunger and interrelated concepts such as food insecurity, food poverty, and malnutrition, and through interviewing key stakeholders. We begin by reviewing the evidence on hunger before considering these alternative terms, and then setting out our conclusions on these issues of definition, operationalisation and language.

UNDERSTANDING HUNGER

In everyday language, the meaning of hunger refers to a bodily sensation arising from not eating: ‘a feeling of discomfort or weakness caused by lack of food, coupled with the desire to eat’ (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018). There is no reference here to what has caused this bodily state; it could be because one is dieting or fasting rather than because of inability to afford food. This understanding was shared by a few of the stakeholders interviewed:

For me, [hunger is] a physical response to not having enough food. [...] So, the feeling of your tummy rumbling, or pain in your stomach, or an aching. So it is, it's the physical sensation.

Voluntary sector stakeholder

Similarly, the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation defines hunger as ‘an uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy’ (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2018, p.159). In the developing world context hunger may relate to wider issues of food supply and availability as well as pervasive poverty (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2018). In contrast, organisations and researchers working in the affluent Western countries tend to interpret hunger as arising directly from poverty (Poppendieck, 1998), sometimes using the extended term ‘First World hunger’ (Riches and Silvasti, 2014). This was also the understanding among some of our stakeholders:

[Hunger means] having to or being forced to skip meals [...] hunger is one of the many symptoms of poverty and living a life without being able to meet your material needs

Voluntary sector stakeholder

Other stakeholders, whilst emphasising that the meaning of hunger depends on the context, argued that when the concept is used by charities, and particularly food banks, the link to poverty is felt to be naturally implied:

...If it's being used by the charities addressing, filling the gap... people are going to be thinking of it in terms of poverty.

Voluntary organisation

A number of organisations working with people unable to afford food use the term hunger as a means of communicating messages to the wider public, including the Trussell Trust, FareShare, Magic Breakfast, and Church Action on Poverty. Amongst some of our stakeholders, too, hunger was sometimes viewed as having an advantage over alternative concepts – such as food poverty and food insecurity - for these public ‘messaging’ purposes because it is a lay concept seen to have a helpful emotional resonance:

It's a word that the general public would understand better than [alternative concepts]

Voluntary sector stakeholder

It's what catches the eye and the ear of the politicians

Voluntary sector stakeholder

People are hungry and that would lead to a more compassionate response.

Voluntary sector stakeholder

Nonetheless it was clear from the evidence reviewed that even where the term hunger is used, it is not used as an analytical or measurement tool. In part this seemed to arise from a sense that hunger was too challenging a concept to define:

Hunger is very hard to define consistently [...] it can be used in confusing and ambiguous way.

Academic stakeholder

It's quite a subjective term. I mean would you be better saying, rather than hunger, would you be better to say something about people not having enough, the sort of daily calorie intake that people should have etc. that you measure a bit more scientifically?

Statutory sector stakeholder

Other disadvantages of the term hunger were also mentioned. For some key informants, the use of the term hunger was viewed with suspicion as deprioritising the inability to afford a nutritionally adequate diet, or implying that a lack of food is the only deprivation that people facing poverty experience:

People [who can only afford the cheapest food] might not be hungry, but they're completely malnourished, and so, getting ill, getting diabetes, obese.

Voluntary sector stakeholder

I don't think hunger actually captures adequately the misery of poverty. [...] you need more than raw materials food for that, you need a premises in which to be able to cook, you need pots, pans, seasoning, plates, somewhere to sit and eat. [...] When you start to talk about hunger, you miss all of that aspect of the experience of poverty

Voluntary organisation

Others also expressed strong reservations about the use of the term hunger on the grounds that it was an 'individualising' term that diverted attention away from structural solutions to poverty:

It [hunger] is being used to generate donations and to perpetuate a [food bank] system that is rapidly becoming institutionalised, rather than it being about what's causing the problem. [...] it's the emotional, you think about people being hungry and it's a knee-jerk reaction that comes to people's minds, you know, let's get some tins, let's get the donations in, as if that's going to solve it. Well, it's not going to solve the poverty that drives the hunger [...] it's an unhelpful term to use if you're trying to address the root causes.

Voluntary sector stakeholder

I think it [hunger] is a difficult terminology because it can be contested so readily as a personal experience [...] It can be laid at the door of poor budgeting, poor shopping skills and not being able to cook and all the rest of it, I think it's separable easily from the structures that cause it. [...] I think it [using this term] is a politically dangerous route to go down

Independent stakeholder

ALTERNATIVE TERMS TO HUNGER

The literature review also examined literature on concepts closely related to hunger – and often used interchangeably with it. Key stakeholders' opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of these alternative concepts were also explored. Predominant amongst these alternative concepts were 'food insecurity' and 'food poverty', though 'malnutrition' and 'undernourishment' also are also briefly considered below.

Food insecurity was the term that was the most commonly used internally within the stakeholders' organisations, as well as being prevalent in the international literature in particular (Riches & Silvasti, 2014). Perhaps the most frequently used definition of food insecurity comes from a report to the American Institute of Nutrition:

"Food insecurity exists whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain"

Anderson, 1990, p.1560

This refers essentially to the social and economic problem of lack of food due to resource or other constraints, not fasting or dieting or the effects of illness. This situation may cause adverse psychological and social impacts – anxiety, distress, alienation. Hunger and malnutrition are potential, although not necessary, consequences of food insecurity (Wunderlich et al, 2006).

A significant feature of the concept of food insecurity is that it offers internationally applied and validated ways of measuring levels of household food insecurity. The instrument that is probably the most commonly used in developed countries is the Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM), originally developed in the US. It collects data on food security by asking either 18 (for households with children) or 10 (for households without children) questions as part of a household survey (Wunderlich et al, 2006). Questions in the 10-item version are presented in the Appendix.

These questions provide reliable and consistent indicators of a common underlying condition, which can be aggregated into a score with thresholds for marginal, low, and very low food security. The underlying theory and statistical models have strong parallels with those used to create material deprivation-based poverty measures described above.

The term food insecurity was familiar to all of our stakeholders. By accommodating a range of experiences, food insecurity includes both the extremes of actually going without meals but also reflects the experience of not being able to afford a nutritionally adequate diet, or feeling insecure about where the next meal is going to come from:

[Food insecurity] is useful because it's a spectrum [...] I think food insecurity's useful because I think that worrying about having enough money for food is something that we need to be concerned about

Voluntary sector stakeholder

Many stakeholders pointed out that food insecurity has a clear, internationally used definition that has standard operationalisation and thus allows for robust measurement:

[It] tries to quantify a qualitative experience [...] Food insecurity links into an international language.

Independent key informant

On the other hand, the main perceived disadvantage of food insecurity as a concept was that it was viewed as a fairly technical term, used mainly by academics and researchers, with ‘food poverty’ considered rather more user-friendly, at least within the UK context:

Lay people seem to understand what it [food poverty] means.

Independent key informant

Some stakeholders stated that for this reason their organisations used food poverty as a tool for communicating with the public. However, it was also acknowledged that food poverty lacks a widely accepted definition and means of measurement, and for that reason food insecurity was generally the preferred tool for analysis:

We do use the term, food poverty, but in relation to communicating with the public. So we might use the term, food poverty, but I think, in terms of more technical documents, we would use food insecurity.

Voluntary sector key informant

A few stakeholders felt strongly that the term food poverty – like hunger - obscures the structural solution required, which should focus on resolving the underlying poverty:

You can start getting side-tracked by food poverty, period poverty, fuel poverty, because it's poverty and poverty is what drives food insecurity, and we think it's very important not to get distracted by these definitions that can take away from what are really the root causes of these problems. So we like to use the word poverty whenever possible and to bring it back to poverty.

Voluntary sector key stakeholder

We've thought a lot about the movement towards food poverty, fuel poverty, period poverty and other sorts of poverties, and we're very clear that we would say it's just poverty [...] If you say the problem is food poverty or hunger then the solution that that points to is to give people food. Whereas, if you say the problem is poverty, then the solution is obviously to give people income.

Voluntary sector key stakeholder

The last two concepts that were reviewed were ‘malnutrition’ and ‘undernourishment’, defined respectively as *‘the condition in which an individual’s habitual food consumption is insufficient to provide the amount of dietary energy required to maintain a normal, active, healthy life’* (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2018, p. 140), and *‘An abnormal physiological condition caused by inadequate, unbalanced or excessive consumption of macronutrients and/or micronutrients’* (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2018, p. 160). While some key informants felt that these two overtly scientific terms were helpful in capturing the importance of inadequate nutrition as well as insufficient calorie intake, some also pointed out that poor diet can also be prevalent higher up the income scale, for reasons unrelated to income. As such, these concepts do not have a necessary link to poverty:

They [people who can’t afford a nutritionally adequate diet] are just eating food that’s bad for them. That could be as true for people with middle/low income as high income.

Independent stakeholder

Having reviewed the existing evidence and stakeholder testimony, the concept of ‘hunger’, while a potentially useful term for engaging the public and attracting the attention of policy-makers, appears to be unsuitable as the **core technical concept** of the study. It would be exceedingly difficult to propose a definition of hunger that would not be highly contested, or confused with vernacular usage, or that would be appropriate for operationalisation and measurement.

‘Household food insecurity’ is identified in the literature and among key informants as the most suitable core technical concept for use in this study. It has an internationally accepted definition and a validated measure. It is useful for capturing a spectrum of experiences and circumstances, from not having anything to eat for a day, through skipping meals, cutting down portion sizes, not being able to afford nutritionally adequate diet, having to make trade-offs between food and other essentials, to worrying where the next meal is going to come from.

While ‘food poverty’ is a widely used term, favoured by some of the stakeholders interviewed, it also divides opinion. Legitimate concerns were raised about the logic and consequences of multiplying forms of poverty (food, period, fuel etc.). Arguably, some of these specific forms of poverty have a greater claim to objective justification as independent concepts than others, where they can be shown to relate identifiable factors other than simply low income. For example, it may be contended that households with an inefficient heating system, or with very poor insulation, which puts extra burden on the household budget relative to other households in a similar socio-economic position, are suffering from ‘fuel poverty’, given the difficulty they may face in moving out of this situation by changing their housing circumstances. But in the case of food poverty in the UK, it is clear from both the literature review and stakeholder interviews that this is by and large simply a manifestation of general income poverty rather than a distinct phenomenon.

At the same time, however, it is essential to be clear that the focus of this study is on food insecurity brought about by household-level poverty – as opposed to some of the supply chain and other wider issues that may threaten food security in developing world contexts. The research will thus use household food insecurity as its **core definition** of ‘hunger’, which is understood as ‘a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food’.⁴

4 <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx>

We propose **operationalising this definition** via application of the HFSSM. We will use the standard HFSSM scoring system to distinguish between high/marginal/low/very low food security. Those experiencing ‘low’ and ‘very low’ food security are considered by HFSSM as ‘food insecure’.⁵ The same instrument has very recently begun to be used for measuring food insecurity among the general UK population (through the Family Resources Survey), thus allowing for a coherent comparison of estimates.

In the first year of the study the official shorter (six-question) version of HFSSM was used due to the concern about the overall questionnaire length. Since the questionnaire in the second wave of the study is going to be shorter than in the first wave, there will be more scope to employ the full 10-question suite without creating ‘survey fatigue’. Results from Year 2 survey can be compared to Year 1 survey as the shorter version of HFSSM is nested within the longer version. Details of the shorter version are presented in the Appendix.

While applying these precise technical measures is appropriate for our quantitative research within this study, at the same time we recognise the need to use the more engaging terms of ‘hunger’ or ‘hunger and poverty’ when communicating findings to the wider public.

CONCLUSION

This report has introduced and set the scene for a landmark research programme being undertaken by this University-based team with the support and collaboration of the Trussell Trust, the UK’s largest provider of food banks. The main aim of the research is to explore the questions of what drives hunger in the UK, who it affects and what lessons can be learned from different areas of the UK to alleviate it. On the basis of the evidence review summarised above, we interpret ‘hunger’ in this context to refer to ‘household food insecurity’, an internationally recognised and measurable concept. The forthcoming research findings will create an annual benchmark for the Trussell Trust, Government, and other organisations to refer to in working to tackle hunger through evidence-based policies and practices, while raising the level of public understanding and discussion of hunger.

5 <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx>

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APPENDIX. QUESTIONS IN THE 10-ITEM HFSSM AND THE SCORING SYSTEM.

1. “(I/We) worried whether (my/our) food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more.” Was that often true, sometimes true, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?
2. *“(I/we) bought just didn’t last, and (I/we) didn’t have money to get more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?
3. *“(I/we) couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?
4. *In the last 12 months, since last (name of current month), did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
5. *[IF YES ABOVE, ASK] How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?
6. *In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?
7. *In the last 12 months, were you every hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?
8. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because there wasn't enough money for food?
9. In the last 12 months, did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?
10. [IF YES ABOVE, ASK] How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

To calculate the respondent’s score, responses of ‘yes’, ‘often’, ‘sometimes’, ‘almost every month’, and ‘some months but not every month’ are coded as affirmative. The sum of affirmative responses to the 10 questions in the Adult Food Security Scale is the household’s raw score on the scale. Food security status is assigned as follows⁶:

Raw score zero—High food security among adults

Raw score 1-2—Marginal food security among adults

Raw score 3-5—Low food security among adults

Raw score 6-10—Very low food security among adults

Households with ‘low’ and ‘very low’ food security are considered ‘food insecure’.

⁶ See <https://www.ers.usda.gov/media/8279/ad2012.pdf> for further technical details.

Questions marked with an asterix form the official shorter 6-item version of HFSSM. The scoring system for the 6-item version is as follows⁷:

Responses of ‘often’ or ‘sometimes’ on questions 2 and 3, and ‘yes’ on 4, 6 and 7 are coded as affirmative (yes). Responses of ‘almost every month’ and ‘some months but not every month’ on 5 are coded as affirmative (yes). The sum of affirmative responses to the six questions in the module is the household’s raw score on the scale. Food security status is assigned as follows:

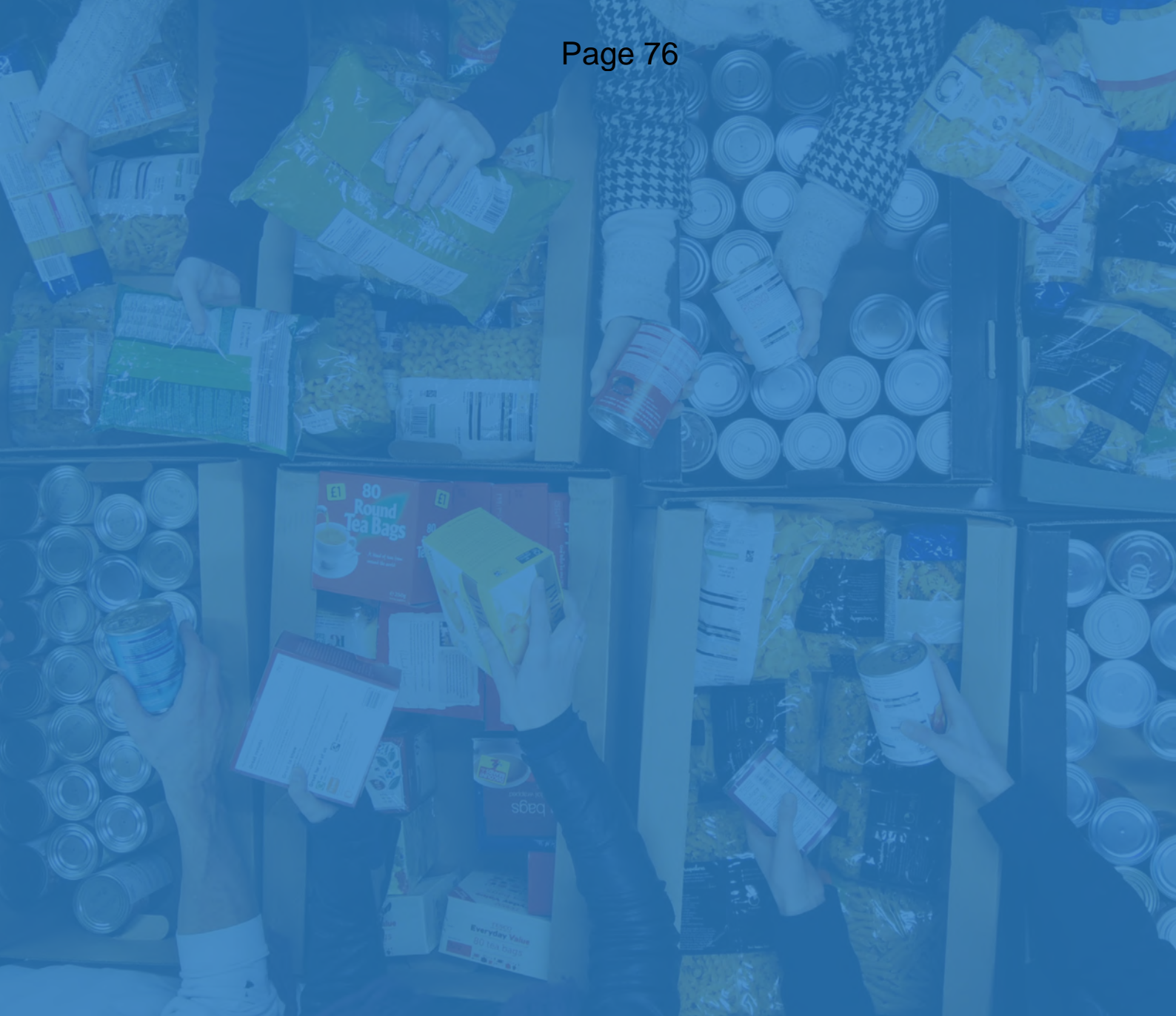
Raw score 0-1—High or marginal food security (raw score 1 may be considered marginal food security)

Raw score 2-4—Low food security

Raw score 5-6—Very low food security

Households with ‘low’ and ‘very low’ food security are considered ‘food insecure’.

⁷ See <https://www.ers.usda.gov/media/8282/short2012.pdf> for further details.



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Overview of the New Home New You (NHNY) programme

NHNY is a partnership project between Plymouth Community Homes (PCH), Plymouth City Council (PCC), and Livewell Southwest. The project supports new tenants and transferring tenants who wish to make health-related lifestyle improvements. In addition to leading on this project, PCH is a member of the Thrive Plymouth Network. The 2018/19 focus of Thrive Plymouth is 'people connecting through food.'

The project launched in October 2017 and is aimed at families and general needs single/couple tenants moving into PCH properties. NHNY is designed to support social housing tenants consider and achieve self-set health and wellbeing goals. Offering this at a time of change and new opportunity (moving home) aims to utilise the usually positive, future-looking affect that is present during the moving-in, and settling-in phase of a family's/individual's/couple's life. The first year of a tenancy is also important in terms of predicting a successful or problematic future tenancy pattern. A settled, good quality home is a vital ingredient in enabling positive mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Participation is entirely voluntary and offered at the time of tenancy sign-up. Those who sign up receive (in addition to PCH's usual welcome pack of tea, coffee, tea-cloth and other useful moving in items) a health-related 'goody bag' containing items such as toothbrush and toothpaste, vouchers for replacing smoking with e-cigarettes (where relevant) along with information about local health and wellbeing services. In addition to this they receive a fortnightly, free, delivered-to-home bag of fresh vegetables for three months, plus support and signposting to achieve their self-set wellbeing goals. These can include (but are not limited to) support with finding cost effective health and wellbeing opportunities (such as walking or cycling) or help finding a like-minded social group to make new friends. PCH has also provided free cookery sessions for those who wished to learn how to cook healthy meals using the vegetables provided as part of the project.

The programme for NHNY, drawing upon the 'behaviour system' of 'capability, opportunity and motivation' (Michie et al., 2011) involves:

- Education (provision of information to improve capability and motivation)
- Persuasion (motivational interviewing to increase motivation)
- Incentivisation (enhanced 'Welcome Pack' and fortnightly vegetable box to improve motivation)
- Training (cooking lessons to improve capability)
- Enablement (access to resources to improve capability, motivation and opportunity).

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TRANSFORMING PLYMOUTH TOGETHER

CHURCH ACTION FOR A FAIRER CITY



Evaluation Report -2019

Acknowledgements

Plymouth Feast of Fun Summer 2019 is the development of a project 'Hope4Summer' starting in Easter of 2017 working in the city to combat holiday hunger.

We would like to thank the many staff and volunteers whose dedication, enthusiasm and unwavering love made the summer possible. Without them we would not have been able to run the Feast of Fun programme and provide such a warm welcome to families of Plymouth.

We also would like to thank the staff, volunteers, parents, carers, children and anyone else who we interviewed which has allowed us to find out how valuable the Feast of Fun events were.

Thank you to The Lottery Community Fund, North Yard Trust, Virginia House, Bellafonte Trust, Councillor Darren Winter, Oasis Foodbank, South Western URC, Fare Share, specific funding received towards the Feast of Fun events across the Devonport area.

An additional thank you to work experience student Josh Grier and to the Transforming Plymouth Together Trustees for their support with these events.

Feast of Fun 2019 Evaluation Report

Executive summary

Background

This report documents the summer 2019 Feast of Fun in Plymouth. The programme was made up of almost 40 events run by 17 churches across the city providing just fewer than 2500 meals.

This document looks at the challenges that families face in Plymouth especially in the long summer holidays.

A combination of methods was used to gather data on the events and the impact of the events. During the course of the summer, informal chats were initiated with guests that led to short questionnaires being completed or on some occasions, recordings made of the parents feedback. After the events the churches were asked to complete an evaluation form where they gave feedback about their events, the numbers of guests that attended and the meals served.

Key findings of the report show that:

- The need for Feast of Fun (or similar events) in Plymouth
- The benefit of Feast of Fun to families in Plymouth
- The opportunity for churches and communities to connect
- The value for money of Feast of Fun events

The Challenges Facing Local Families

Despite being a city of economic and cultural development, Plymouth experiences rises in poverty levels. Of all local authority districts in England, Plymouth is within the 30% most deprived. The 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation report stated that 27 lower super output areas (LSOAs) in Plymouth are in the most deprived 10% in England. Out of 17,225 of secondary school population, 6,046 students and out of 22,962 primary school population, 6636 are eligible to receive school meals.

When looking at The 'Income Domain Affecting Children Index' (IDACI), neighbourhoods of Barne Barton more than eight out of ten children and in Devonport more than seven out of ten children experienced income deprivation. Further suggestions include Morice Town, North Prospect and Weston Mill was likely to have more than half of all children experiencing income deprivation.

Research has also shown that not only do children suffer significantly from household poverty but often the parents sacrifice much for their children. In households that are particularly reliant on free school meals, the parents go often without food so that their children can eat.

Feast of Fun in Action

The results have shown that there is a huge need for the provision of holiday club activities for communities. Feedback from families and church teams found that the development of community and friendship between the two was just as valued as the financial relief and nourishment provision. The opportunity for parents to bring their children to a place where there were plenty of activities or games to play and the parent can sit and relax before eating as a family together was greatly appreciated by everyone who attended.

Many families repeated visits and even visited other churches on different days when they found out about it being a collective of events. This helped to create a more positive impression of churches as hospitable and welcoming places to come.

If it were not for the dedication, passion and incredible hard work of the team of staff and volunteers from churches offering over 1100 hours, many parents and carers in the city would have found it difficult to entertain and feed their families. The hard work of 17 churches across the city worked to run almost 40 events served just under 2500 meals over the summer.

The impact of the events goes beyond simply serving a meal and guests leaving full. The subsequent relationships that have grown from the events have already begun to bear fruit such as church hall bookings, baptism enquiries and more. It is the hope of TPT that the momentum of the summer events will inspire churches to do more to support their local communities and build relationships with those in need both physically, emotionally and spiritually

Feast of Fun 2019 Evaluation Report

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the Plymouth Fairness Commission (1) in 2014, Transforming Plymouth Together (TPT) was established in a direct response to the report. Working on a number of other themes, including social isolation, financial resilience, migrant vulnerability, health inequality and modern slavery, one of the key drivers for TPT is to enable the church to child poverty in Plymouth.

Inspired by the work of other Joint Ventures who are part of the CUF Together Network (2) across the country, TPT used the similar event model to start holiday hunger events.

The Feast of Fun project has been a development of the Hope4Summer initiative started in 2017 working with a small collection of churches in the St Budeaux community to offer families the chance to come together, prepare, cook and eat a healthy meal together. These events reached



over 550 children and families took part during the summer of 2017.

The following year, in 2018, 26 events across the city were held by 13 churches and provide over 2000 meals for families and children.

For the summer of 2019 the events were rebranded as 'Feast of Fun' to allow for the development of events to happen during other holidays, not only the summer holidays. This summer programme saw churches of different denominations across Plymouth running events of free fun, activities and food.

This report is the assessment and evaluation of the Feast of Fun summer 2019 programme.

A mixed approach of data collection was used through qualitative method via interviews with parents, grandparents, carers, children, staff and volunteers

There was also quantitative data through the feedback forms that the church teams were given upon completion of the summer programme. These forms asked for numbers of meals serves, attendees as well as team members of both paid staff and volunteers.

The Challenges Facing Local Families

Of all local authority districts in England, Plymouth is within the 30% most deprived (3) With a population of over 265,000 (4) it is one of the largest cities on the south coast and the 15th largest in England. Despite being a city of economic and cultural development, Plymouth experiences rises in poverty levels, including in-work poverty or those in cycles of low or no pay. Plymouth has some of the highest level across the country of personal debt and it is the highest in the South West. (Plymouth report).

The 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation report stated that 27 lower super output areas (LSOAs) in Plymouth are in the most deprived 10% in England. These areas have a combined population of 42,828 making up 16.6% of Plymouths population (5) When looking across the county of Devon 23 out of the 160 (14.4%) postcodes in Plymouth are in the most deprived 10% LSOAS in the 2015

Index of Multiple Deprivation compared to 2 out of 73(2.7%) in Exeter and 2 out of 57(3.5%) in North Devon.

When addressing those at school age, the national average shows that 28.6% of pupils at secondary schools and 24.3% of pupils at primary schools are eligible for free school meals (FSM). However the Plymouth percentage shows that for secondary and primary schools the numbers jump to 25.1% and 28.9% respectively. In terms of actual quantities out of 17,225 secondary school population, 6,046 students and out of 22,962 primary school population, 6636 are eligible to receive school meals. The overall percentage of pupil population on FSM between 2017 to 2018, ranges from 5.3% to 74.5% however it must be noted that there are 15 schools who have over half student population eligible for FSM. (6)

It must also be noted that in many of the areas of higher levels of deprivation across the city, are higher levels of populations of children aged 0-4 years, implying that in the years following this data collection, those children are now school age.

The Plymouth Report (7) found that when looking at The 'Income Domain Affecting Children Index' (IDACI, a subset of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015), there were areas in the city that were particular for child poverty. In the neighbourhood of Barne Barton more than eight out of ten children and in Devonport more than seven out of ten children experienced income deprivation. The report further suggests other areas including Morice Town, North Prospect and Weston Mill were likely to have more than half of all children experiencing income deprivation.

Research has also shown that not only do children suffer significantly from household poverty but often the parents sacrifice much for their children. In households that are particularly hit by holiday hunger by no school meals, the parents go without food so that their children can eat. (8). Stories of this were echoed in the Plymouth Fairness Commission report that supported the suggestions that parents are under incredible strain over the summer holidays

The Benefits of Holiday Food and Activities Provision

A consequence of those experience poverty (though the following issues are not exclusively seen by those who may be commonly categorised as 'poor') find that holidays become a difficult time for the family. Most often is the added cost of feeding those not in schools for six weeks where the FSM eases some of the pressure. Some reports have suggested that an additional £30 to £45 a week is added to the food shop because of this absence. (9)

But not only is the challenge associated with feeding the children. There is the pressure for entertaining children, where many clubs or groups may close for the summer, or activities that may not may cost a lot on their individual basis but if there are families of more than one child or financially dependent activities are done several times a week, the costs add up.

The provision of food and activities that is free to attend offer a number of benefits not only to children but to the parents as well:

- Socialising and friendship building for children
- Creativity and engagement in crafts and games
- Financial respite for families
- A connection to church and church teams
- An opportunity to play and be physically active rather than staying at home.

Existing Provision



The Feast of Fun programme is a development of the Hope4Summer project, now in its third year in Plymouth. Starting with one church over Easter working with a local church to provide an opportunity for families to prepare, cook and eat together. The focus was on healthy eating but also the opportunity to come together as a family.

After learning about the need within the city, the Churches Together in St Budeaux linked together with TPT to arrange an event in each of the churches and in the community centre every week during the summer holidays in 2017. This included fun activities, games, crafts and a free meal for the children and families of the St Budeaux community. They also had the opportunity to learn about 'healthy eating' and how to make smoothies, pizza and salad and veg dips. The following year resulted in more churches getting involved and utilising resources, teams and venues to provide some space for families to go in the holidays.



St Budeaux 2017

Other provisions by local authority and non-church related groups include:

- CATERed – Big summer food tour – Every Tuesday and Thursday throughout august delivering 3000 freshly prepared bagged cold and hot healthy meals across Plymouth from 12 noon to 2pm
- Lunch at the Library - every Wednesday
- Fit and Fed – offering a number of different activities and meals across Plymouth (10)

Partnerships

In previous years, Transforming Plymouth Together has had links with some external service providers such as CATERed to support the Hope4Summer events. For summer 2019 the partnership were not as strong however the individual churches were encouraged to develop the relationships to provide activities and food for their events.

The churches involved in Feast of Fun have developed partnerships with a variety of local organisations, both charitable and commercial that provide in-kind support who include:

- Oasis Foodbank
- St Budeaux Co-op
- Bookers
- Devon and Cornwall Food Association
- FareShare

School Holiday Poverty Inquiry

On 3rd July 2019 the Work and Pensions Committee and the Education Committee came together for an evidence session to discuss the impact of school holiday hunger.



Organisations such as Save the Children have raised concerns that increasing pressure for families on low income states reasons including additional childcare costs and FSM being unavailable in the holidays. The impact of the Universal Credit and childcare work of the Work and Pensions Committee was noted to possibly aggravate the cost of childcare during holidays.

The committee made comments to explore the success of the Governments 30 hour free childcare offer to see how well it worked in reality as well. (11)

Feast of Fun in action

Based on the consultation meetings held after the 2018 programme, the churches involved were asked to run events in 2019. With the exception of one church who were unable, all the churches continued to this year's events. The TPT Development Worker established relationships with new churches resulting in 4 new churches joining in the programme.

Working on from the programme similar to the previous year, the 17 churches across Plymouth were encouraged to run their individual events how best suited them and their abilities. TPT were here to support and assist in the project development as well as assisted with promotion through social media.

There were 38 events across the city were branded as 'Feast of Fun', however through current relationships with other organisations TPT promoted other events that linked with the theme of holiday hunger.

All of the events were expected to be lunch time based, however St Pancras Church (a new addition to the 2019 programme) decided to run a breakfast time event. All other events were run over lunch though exact timings were flexible with starting between 10am – 11:30am and finishing between 12noon – 2pm.

See Appendix One for Schedule of Events

Most of the churches, if venue space allowed for it, had bouncy castles which proved hugely popular with the children. All churches offered some form of craft ranging from salt dough, drawing, painting, crown making, decorating and more.

The provision of food was dependent on the church accessibility to kitchen equipment. Again the churches were encouraged to decide their own menus resulting a variety of meals for the guests.

Churches Together in Devonport – Hot meal (roast dinner) provided by Salvation Army

St Budeaux Methodist – Cold buffet including pasta, sausage rolls, pork pies, crisps

St Pancras – Breakfast of bacon rolls, fruit, cereals, pastries

St Pancras Bus Outreach – Sandwiches, cake,

St Peter and the Holy Apostles – Hot pasta and sauce, pudding

Derriford – homemade pizza, jacket potatoes (beans, cheese, tuna, chilli)

Salisbury Road Baptist Church – Jacket potatoes (beans and cheese)

St Budeaux Baptist – rolls, cheese, ham, crisps

St Boniface Church – sausage rolls, quiche

Higher St Budeaux – Jacket potato (beans and cheese), salad

St Francis – Chips, sausage, beans, cottage pie, veg, trifle and fruit

PCC – Cold buffet of sandwiches, cake, crisps, veg and fruit



Promotion

It was important that there be a sense of community and connectivity with the events so Transforming Plymouth Together helped with poster designs to ensure a consistency for the brand. This was so that families who saw the posters or attended one event would recognise another and be more likely to attend.

This also elevated the stress from the churches to have to think about poster designs. See Appendix Two for an example poster.



METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this report and to evaluate the summer 2019 Feast of Fun programme, a number of different approaches were applied to gather the data.

Each church and team were given feedback evaluation forms to complete after the summer that included number of guests, volunteers, paid staff, meals served, donated or discounted food given as well as testimonials and stories that they would like to share.

(See Appendix Three for Feedback Evaluation form and Appendix Four for interview questions)

This data was analysed quantitatively to see comparisons from previous events and grown of overall programme.

During the course of the events, informal short interviews were conducted with guests (parents, grandparents, carers and children) as well as church staff and volunteers.

Where possible, interviews were taken from each church to ensure a comprehensive and unbiased view of the whole programme. Questions were opened ended to allow for a variety of answers and open honest opinions of the interviewees.

Some occasions resulted in longer conversations and viewpoints of the guests were relevant to the evaluation so recordings of the guests were made. These have been transcribed and included in the interview answers results.

Total number of interviews 16 parents, 15 children, 21 staff/volunteers

RESULTS

The results of the feedback evaluation forms from the churches as well as the informal interviews with guests and staff covered the following themes:

- The challenges that families in Plymouth face
- The need for Feast of Fun (or similar events) in Plymouth
- The benefit of Feast of Fun to families in Plymouth
- The opportunity for churches and communities to connect
- The value for money of Feast of Fun events

The need for holiday provision in Plymouth



Over the summer the Feast of Fun programme was made up of 38 events by 17 churches across the city where just fewer than 2500 meals as well as additional drinks and snacks were served.

Whilst there may have been observations made on an individual basis by teams running the events, it is difficult to state for definite that all of those who attended came from homes of financial poverty. Whilst many shared in interviews that they found the school holidays a financial challenge, there was also significant number of comments saying that the socialisation and emotional development of the children was just as important. It was also important to give support and provision to the adults, many of whom may be those who sacrifice their wellbeing for their children. It was clear by behaviour, conversations and interviews that the Feast of Fun events have been a 'God-send' for the families attending.

----- CASE STUDY

One highly pregnant mother who came with her young son to a number of events across different churches said that it was difficult for her to entertain her son for the whole of the summer holidays whilst her husband worked and she struggled to physically cook for the family every day whilst being so pregnant. She said that the Feast of Fun events were an opportunity for her son to play with his friends whilst she knew he was in a safe space, but also for her to meet some friends and have time to herself without having to worry about her son. She said he has so much fun seeing his friends and he would come home exhausted after playing with the other children, which she would not be able to do if she was the only one with him. Over the summer she gave birth and was still able to come along with the new baby knowing that she and her son would be fed.

All who were spoken to share their enjoyment and gratitude of the events to the community and the importance of them in Plymouth;

It's been great to have activities available for them after all the school clubs have finished because most activities stop for the summer so there's not as much for them to do. [Parent]

These events enhance the community and helps out people who are 'in the middle' and are just bubbling along. [Parent]

Whatever the weather I know the children can still do something and get out of the house. [Parent]

It's really good getting out of the house and being able to come to these events. [Parent]

They often don't have a lot of money and it costs so much to go out for the whole day so it breaks up the up the day and doesn't cost so much. Otherwise holidays are very expensive over the six weeks. [Volunteer]

Those involved in the Feast of Fun events frequently mentioned the challenges facing families during not only the summer holidays but in all holidays.

Prior to the start of the summer programme and research it was anticipated that the key challenge for families would be financially based.

It was clear that finance was a large driver:

It's a challenge to work out how to fill the days without it costing a fortune. [Parent]

I don't have the funds to constantly do stuff during the holidays [Parent]

Keeping the kids occupied for less money. [Parent]

It's hard to find cheaper things to do in the summer. [Parent]

Everything's more expensive during the summer. [Parent]

However, there are also a number of additional comments, a significant concern was the challenge of simply entertaining children throughout the whole of the summer holidays:

Finding activities for the children. [Parent]

Lots of children groups close over the summer. [Parent]

This is even more of a concern when there are larger families or where the age range of the children are larger and finding something that all the family will enjoy can be difficult:

We are a big family so finding things to do that are affordable. [Parent]

Further issues raised were those that included one parent or other family members are responsible for childcare during holidays:

Childcare is a challenge for me. [Parent]

I'm too old to look after the children but both parents are at work so it's about helping them and childcare costs a fortune. [Grandparent]

For me, being pregnant whilst my husband is at work, I find it very difficult to move around, I find it very difficult to cook an evening meal sometimes. [Parent]

Benefits for families of involvement with Feast of Fun

Food provision

The provision of food, especially quality, healthy and filling meals was greatly appreciated by the guests, especially those who provided hot meals.

Everyone left the events having been fully fed and in many cases was able to take extra food home

It was an important part of the programme that the parents, carers or grandparents felt welcomed to the meal. As observations made in 'Introduction' &



‘Challenges Families Face’, parents often sacrifice their meals to ensure their children have eaten or quickly feed their children whilst they do other things. The intention with Feast of Fun was to allow parents to sit and eat with their children together at a table. There was also an unintended result of staff and volunteers sitting together with the families helping to build the relationships between parents and children as well as families and churches.

Just fewer than 2500 meals were provided for including breakfast, lunches (hot meals and cold buffet) as well drinks and snacks as most venues provided fresh fruit. It was noted that with general conversations with parents that it was appreciated with the quantity and range of fresh fruit for the children to enjoy.

There was also the provision of additional food to take home through the Fare Share scheme that St Pancras ran. This gave families the chance to choose from a variety of breads, vegetables, fruit and salads to take home.

Financial benefits

Many of the volunteers interviewed commented that the events gave the families an opportunity to not worry about the financial cost of feeding the family. This again was important when considering that many of the parents may be sacrificing their meals for the children.

Connecting with the church family as well at these events gave the team a chance to talk about other events that the church may be running. Many events or groups run by churches are free or at a very low cost so may be the types of events that the families may find useful.



Activities

Though there was not the ability to run a large amount of physical activities or sports, there were activities that allowed the children to move. Many of the venues had bouncy castles (that were hugely popular) as well as basketball hoop, air hockey, bowling and sumo wrestling.

There were comments made that it was great to have so much to do for the children that were free. Parents said that they would often have to pay a great deal for the amount of activities that were provided for during the summer.

Socialising

Many of the families came with several siblings; there were some who came with one child so the opportunity for them to make friends and play of the summer was appreciated by the parents.

CASE STUDY

One mother came to an event because her son had Asperger's and was home schooled so didn't have many friends. She also found it difficult to find activities that he could do but was very grateful for the Feast of Fun events which he enjoyed. At the following week they attended, he was playing with a group of the children which his mother was pleased to see. She also said that he was

particular about what he ate but loved jacket potatoes so to have a proper meal of jacket potatoes was great for her to not worry about having to bring food. Due to some surplus food being cooked but not eaten at the event, she was able to take additional jacket potatoes home which she was extremely grateful for.

Support for parents

As well as entertainment and provision for children, the Feast of Fun teams were encouraged to make sure that parents were given an opportunity to enjoy the provision. Many parents commented how nice it was to be able to have a hot drink and fully enjoy it whilst the children play in a safe environment.



Volunteers

As well as the benefit to the families and children who attended the events, it was also a great opportunity for the volunteers to develop relationships with the local families in their communities.

You get to know the church family better and you get to meet people from the local community
[Volunteer]

It's nice to meet people in the community because normally I'd be at work and it brings people to church. [Volunteer]

I get a sense of accomplishment and I love crafts [Volunteer]

Many of the volunteers said that they felt that by volunteering at these events, they were reaching new people, to build relationships with their community and be able to share the love of Christ with them.

Donations

Without 'in-kind' donations, the project would not be at all possible. As an example when looking at the value of the time given by volunteers, it was shown that the volunteers gave over 1150 hours which is the equivalent of £10,360 wages hours.

We also added a cost of hall hire, which totalled £990. This means that through the kindness and generosity of volunteers and churches, almost £11,500 in time and costs was given to the project.

Funding

A total of £14,000 of funding was obtained from a number of different sources. A predominate amount was acquired by TPT through the following funders:

- The National Lottery Community Grant
- Virgina House Trust

- Bellfonte Trust
- North Yard Trust (to be used for the Stu Budeaux churches)

These were to be used for all churches who requested funding support.

Additional funding was sourced for specific areas, such as local councillors for St Budeaux Churches, URC South Western Synod for Derriford URC and further support for Devonport Churches.



Suggestions for improvement

When asked in the interviews on how to improve the Feast of Fun events, many gave the answer:

No, it's really good, we'd pay for something similar. [Parent]

No, they are great. [Parent]

Suggestions for cohesion between the churches across the city:

I would like it if these events were more joined up across the city, as there are lots of these events happening but it would be better if they were more connected. It would also be great if there were more active activities and more active things to do and maybe singing and dancing. [Parent]

Advertising more across the city. Billboards. Bus stops [Volunteer]

It could be advertised more to raise the profile of the events. [Volunteer]

Upon reflection of the programme, there are a number of further ideas that could be developed to ensure that the programmes of events are well promoted across the city. An increased use of social media was identified by many of the parents as that is how they find out about events and chat with other parents across the city. There was a suggestion of finding parenting groups on Facebook to promote the events at the beginning of the summer. Further consideration also led to plans for future events to ensure that the churches are equipped in promoting the events through their channels by giving them the right posters or flyers in the right dimensions and qualities.

There is also the huge correlation between the relationship building between both church and families but also to have a strong enough message so that one family can spread the word to another. The relationship has been shown to be a big driver to simply attending in the first place but also coming back again. Ensuring that all schools in the area of each church are aware of the events

would be extremely important as the schools will be able to reach the families in particular need who will find the events not only fun but a vital piece of survival during the long summer holidays.

Further thoughts include promoting in the local press (Herald, Plymouth Magazine, Radio Plymouth, Cross Rhythms Plymouth) as well as educational or child care provision, local shops and churches that may not be able to run an event but also help with promoting to families they are in touch with.

For some events, it was suggested that it would be appreciated if they were longer.

Maybe the events could last a bit longer than an hour and a half. [Parent]

Maybe the event could be longer because it used to be two and a half hours and so there were three different times for lunch whereas now there are only two. [Parent]

Longer hours would be good if possible. [Parent]

Winter events. [Parent]

No, they are great. [Children]

An opportunity for the future could be the collaboration or sharing of resources to save money and offer more options. One of the event leaders for the Anglo-Catholic churches offered his parachute to Derriford URC to use for the latter week of the summer which was thoroughly enjoyed by the children.

When looking at the numbers of churches in Plymouth compared with the number of churches who were involved in the summer 2019 programme, it is disappointing that not more were involved. Whilst each church will have their own reasons for being unable to host a Feast of Fun event, there is the question that must be asked of what can they offer? Perhaps they are unable to offer a full team, venue or even they are not in an area of high number of families or young children. However potential ideas include a buddying system with a church that is in an area of need where one church offers volunteers, cooks, activity providers or even financial support, which would allow for a more city wide investment from the churches and hopefully encourage more collective and supportive behaviour.

CASE STUDY

St Pancras was a new church to the Feast of Fun collective so both TPT and the church team were unsure of what to expect in numbers or best activities. They made the proposal that they would like to try a breakfast club using connections with nearby supermarkets for food donations. They utilised links with another church to borrow a bouncy castle as well as their role over the summer.

They also combined their promotion to include their bus outreach project (part funded by the Church Army) and were able to see some families in their neighbourhood twice in a week. Kier Homes had purchased a gazebo for the project which allowed them to take games and food outside to the local urban estate.

Most of the food St Pancras were able to offer was provided for by Fare Share, allowing them to offer not only breakfast but additional items such as bread, salad and vegetables to the guests. Other items were donated for by church members allowing all the church family to be able to feel they had taken part in the programme.

A further opportunity to connect with families was that the church was used as a separate initiative to provide food hampers through Devon and Cornwall Food Action. This was done on a Wednesday afternoon so the team were able to tell the families about the breakfast the following day and they saw many of the families attend. They also gave parents the chance to share their own skills and parents offered to provide face painting, craft activities or helping with child support.

Though they were unsure of exact numbers who would turn up, the Thursday breakfasts saw more than expected with over 60 attendees each week, one week reaching over 110.

Encouraged by the momentum of the Feast of Fun events, St Pancras have started a Cappuccino Church, a monthly Feast of Fun style club with free food and activities.



Conclusion

The Feast of Fun summer 2019 programme offered an assortment of activities, crafts, and food provision to families across Plymouth. 17 churches across the city worked to run almost 40 events to serve just fewer than 2500 meals.

If it were not for the dedication, passion and incredible hard work of the team of staff and volunteers from churches offering over 1100 hours, many parents and carers in the city would have found it difficult to entertain and feed their families.

Offering a warm, welcoming and enjoyable environment has resulted in many new friendships and relationships being developed. By opening their doors to their local communities, churches have had the opportunity to reach those who they may not meet usually. The events have given those in need comfort and support to show that the church is there to help.

With evidence showing that summer can be a difficult time for parents from not only a financial view (which may include both feeding their children and also entertaining them) but also from an emotional and companionship perspective. Many of the parents would not have the opportunity to have 'grown up' conversations, or the opportunity to sit with a decent meal or simply a hot drink but the Feast of Fun they had that opportunity.

The impact of the events goes beyond simply serving a meal and guests leaving full. The subsequent relationships that have grown from the events have already begun to bear fruit. Some churches have had bookings for hall hire as neighbours have discovered that there was a hall close to them, many have had some visit the church again on a Sunday, enquire about baptisms and several churches have looked to take their Feast of Fun events beyond the summer planning events for their autumn holidays.

Appendixes

Appendix One - Schedule of events



Fun for families in churches across Plymouth over summer 2019. Providing activities, games, crafts and more alongside a free meal.

Date	Time	Venue
Mon 22nd July	3:30pm – 5pm	Holy Spirit, Southway
Tue 23rd July	3:30pm – 5pm	Holy Spirit, Southway
Wed 24th July	From 10am	Holy Spirit, Southway
Thu 25th July	10am – 11:30am	Holy Spirit, Southway
Fri 26th July	10am – 11:30am	Holy Spirit, Southway
Mon 29th July	From 10am	Salvation Army Devonport
Mon 29th July	10:30am-1:30pm	St Budeaux Methodist Church
Thu 1st Aug	8:30am - 11:30am	St Pancras
Fri 2nd Aug	10am - 1:30pm	St Pancras Bus Outreach
Mon 5th Aug	From 10am	Salvation Army Devonport
Wed 7th Aug	11am - 2pm	St Peters and the Holy Apostles
Wed 7th Aug	11:30am – 1pm	PCC
Thu 8th Aug	8:30am - 11:30am	St Pancras
Thu 8th Aug	10am – 1pm	Derriford URC
Fri 9th Aug	10am - 1:30pm	St Pancras Bus Outreach
Sat 10th Aug	10:30am-1:30pm	St Budeaux Baptist
Mon 12th Aug	From 10am	Salvation Army Devonport
Wed 14th Aug	11:30am – 1pm	PCC
Thu 15th Aug	8:30am - 11:30am	St Pancras
Thu 15th Aug	10am – 1pm	Derriford URC
Thu 15th Aug	10:30am-1:30pm	St Boniface Church
Thu 15th Aug	11am- 1:30pm	St Francis
Fri 16th Aug	10am - 1:30pm	St Pancras Bus Outreach
Fri 16th Aug	10:30am - 12 noon	Salisbury Road Baptist
Mon 19th Aug	From 10am	Salvation Army Devonport
Tue 20th Aug	10:30am-1:30pm	Higher St Budeaux Church Community Hall
Wed 21st Aug	11am - 2pm	St Peters and the Holy Apostles
Wed 21st Aug	11:30am – 1pm	PCC
Thu 22nd Aug	8:30am - 11:30am	St Pancras
Thu 22nd Aug	10am – 1pm	Derriford URC
Fri 23rd Aug	10am - 1:30pm	St Pancras Bus Outreach
Fri 23rd Aug	10:30 am - 12 noon	Salisbury Road Baptist
Wed 28th Aug	11:30am – 1pm	PCC
Thu 29th Aug	8:30am - 11:30am	St Pancras
Thu 29th Aug	10am – 1pm	Derriford URC
Thu 29th Aug	11am- 1:30pm	St Francis
Fri 30th Aug	10am - 1:30pm	St Pancras Bus Outreach
Fri 30th Aug	10:30 am - 12 noon	Salisbury Road Baptist

For more information about Feast of Fun visit
transformingplymouthtogether.org.uk

FEAST OF FUN

A summer of fun for families at
Derriford United Reformed Church

Derriford Church
(United Reformed)



The light, life and love of Jesus
in our community



**A range of activities including
crafts, games, face painting, bouncy
castle and lunch.**



10am - 1pm
Thursday's in August
8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th August

Free to attend but booking advised
Email - derrifordurc@gmail.com
Call - 07795 967330



Derriford United Reformed Church
Powisland Drive
Derriford
PL6 6AB



For more information visit:
www.derrifordchurch.co.uk



**TRANSFORMING
PLYMOUTH
TOGETHER** ⊕

Derriford Church
(United Reformed)



The light, life and love of Jesus
in our community

Appendix Three - Feedback Evaluation



Feast of Fun Feedback Evaluation 2019

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in Feast of Fun 2019, providing fun & food for local children & families during the summer holidays.

1. Project Details

Name of Church/Group	
Dates and times of sessions	

2. Beneficiaries

Date of session	Children	Adults	Volunteers	Meals served (including meals taken home)

If possible do you know many of these children/parents were new to your church/family groups?

What do you think were the key benefits for the children and families who took part?

Do you have any quotes or stories from how people have benefited from your event?

3. Staff and volunteers

How many staff/volunteers helped with the project in total?		
Date of session	Paid staff	Volunteers

4. Partnerships

Did you work with any other groups or organisations (Messy Church, Supermarkets, Local Entertainers etc.) Please could you provide some details & mention how this added value to the event.

How important was it to you working as part of a collection of events across the city?

5. Food

Please give an example of a typical meal served at your holiday club.

Were you able to secure other sources of free/low-cost food? e.g. breakfast cereals, burgers/hotdogs

6. Activities

Please list any activities that you put on for the events.

7. Funding and resources

Please complete the table below to report on how you spent the grant you received.	
Total grant received	
Costs	Amount Spent
Materials and resources	
Publicity and promotion	
Food	
External providers (bouncy castle)	
Total	

8. Looking Ahead

Would you like to be part of future Feast of Fun events?

How many children/families would you plan to work with? e.g. the same/more/less

Do you have any comments or suggestions that would help to develop Feast of Fun Autumn 2019 & Feast of Fun 2020.

Thank you for completing this evaluation!

Appendix Four – Interview Questions

Feast of Fun 2019 Interview Questions

Parents:

- How did you find out about the Feast of Fun holiday club?
- Are there challenges that you as a family face during the summer holidays?
- What difference have these events made for you?
- What difference have these events made for your child(ren)?
(prompts: entertaining the children, feeding the family, etc.)
- We will be taking the findings from this summer to funders to ask for funding for Feast of Fun next year. If you had the chance to talk to a funder, what would you like to say to them?
- What would you like to see next year at these events?

Children:

- What do you like best about coming to Feast of Fun?
- Did you like the food? Have you tried anything new or different?
- What was your favourite food you've had today?
- What activities have you enjoyed? Have you learned anything new?
- What would you be doing if you weren't here?
- We will be taking the findings from this summer to funders to ask for funding for Feast of Fun next year. If you had the chance to talk to a funder, what would you like to say to them?
- Is there anything else we could do to make these events better?

Volunteers:

- Why are you helping at Feast of Fun?
- How do you think Feast of Fun helps families?
- What do you get out of helping?
- What have you most enjoyed about helping out at Feast of Fun?
- We will be taking the findings from this summer to funders to ask for funding for Feast of Fun next year. If you had the chance to talk to a funder, what would you like to say to them?
- Is there anything you would like to be done differently next year?

References

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- 2 - <https://togethernetwork.org.uk/>
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- 4 - <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Plymouth%20Report%20October%202017.pdf>
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