



FOOD POVERTY

BEYOND A BAND-AID SOLUTION

1 Dec 2017

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Outline

1. What's the problem?


- a. Facts & consequences
- b. Definition
- c. Root causes
- d. Construction

2. How do we solve it?

- a. Typical & good(?) practice
- b. Possible alternatives
- c. An income-based approach



WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



- Facts & consequences
- Definition
- Root causes
- Construction

News > Health

UK's rising use of food banks re 'unfolding public health crisis', study

New analysis finds clear growth in food bank usage but suggest previous re 'overstated' scale

Alex Matthews-King Health Correspondent | Tuesday 21 November 2017 02:01 GMT | 48 comments

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In 2014 – the year with the highest food bank use – 1 per cent of adults and 2.3 per cent of children living in emergency food Getty

The number of people turning to food banks grew by almost 14 per cent in three years, according to a new study which warned of a growing public health crisis from poor nutrition.

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UK WORLD WEIRD TECH

Food dumped on Downing Street to protest people left in poverty by the Budget

Nicole Morley for Metro.co.uk Tuesday 21 Nov 2017 4:21 pm

f t g+ e 603



The food will later be donated to a food bank (Picture: i-Images)

Tons and tons of food is to be dumped opposite the doorstep of Downing Street to protest against Universal Credit and austerity measures.

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Fruit

Five-a-day eating targets 'will be unaffordable for millions after Brexit'

Thinktank says consumption of fruit and vegetables could be hit by exchange rates, tariffs and higher labour costs



Fruit stalls and shops in Govanhill in Glasgow. Currently just 8% of children aged 11-18 eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Photograph: Murdo MacLeod for the Guardian

f t e

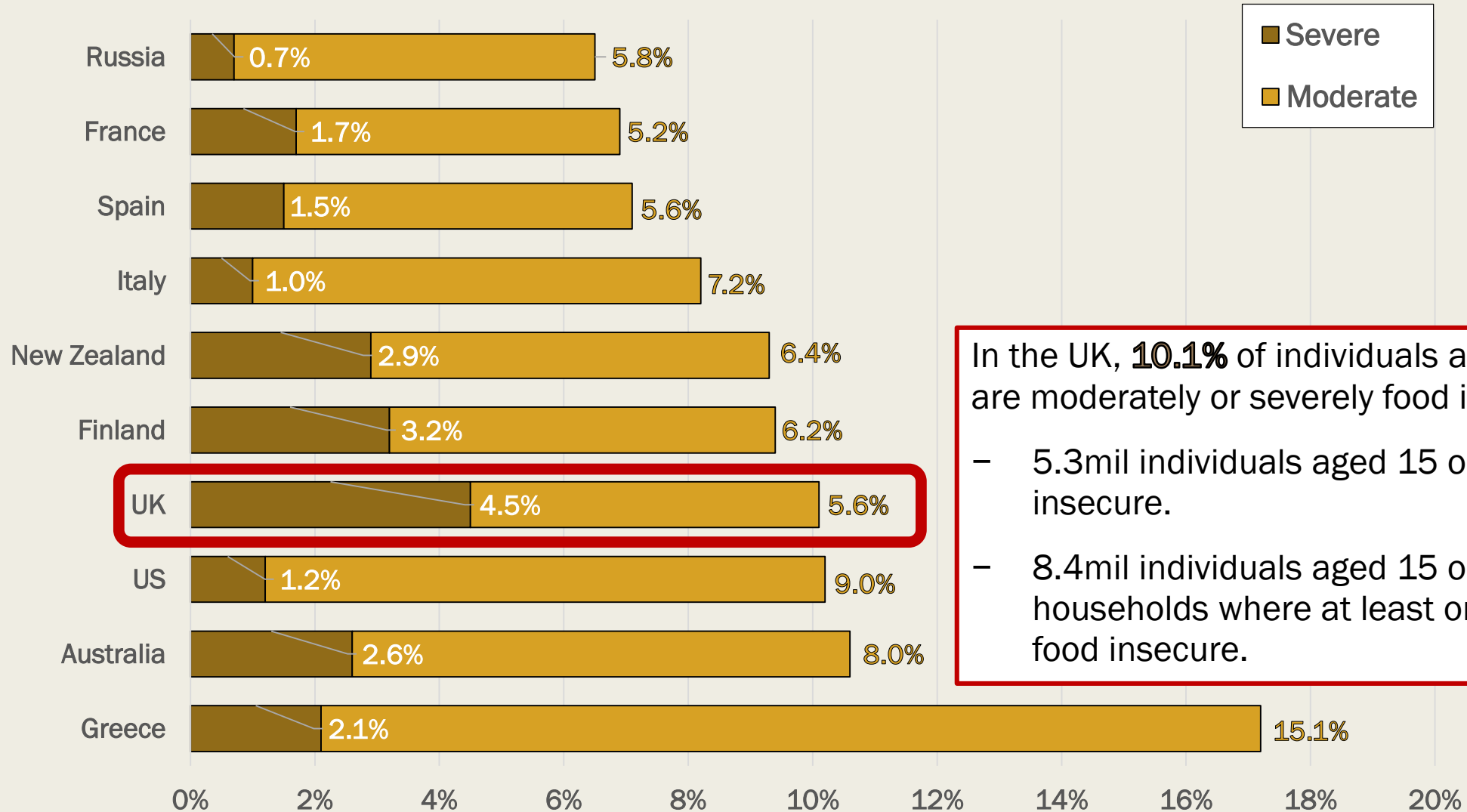
6,553 1,359

Patrick Butler Social affairs editor Monday 20 November 2017 00:01 GMT

Five-a-day eating targets for fruit and vegetables could become unaffordable for millions of low-income families as a result of Brexit-related food price rises, a report says.

The Food Foundation says that already-feeble consumption rates of healthy food in the UK could nosedive under Brexit because the triple impact of exchange rates, labour costs and tariffs could add up to £158 a year to the amount a family of four spends on fruit and vegetables.

Prevalence rate of food insecurity, 2014



In the UK, **10.1%** of individuals aged 15 or more are moderately or severely food insecure.

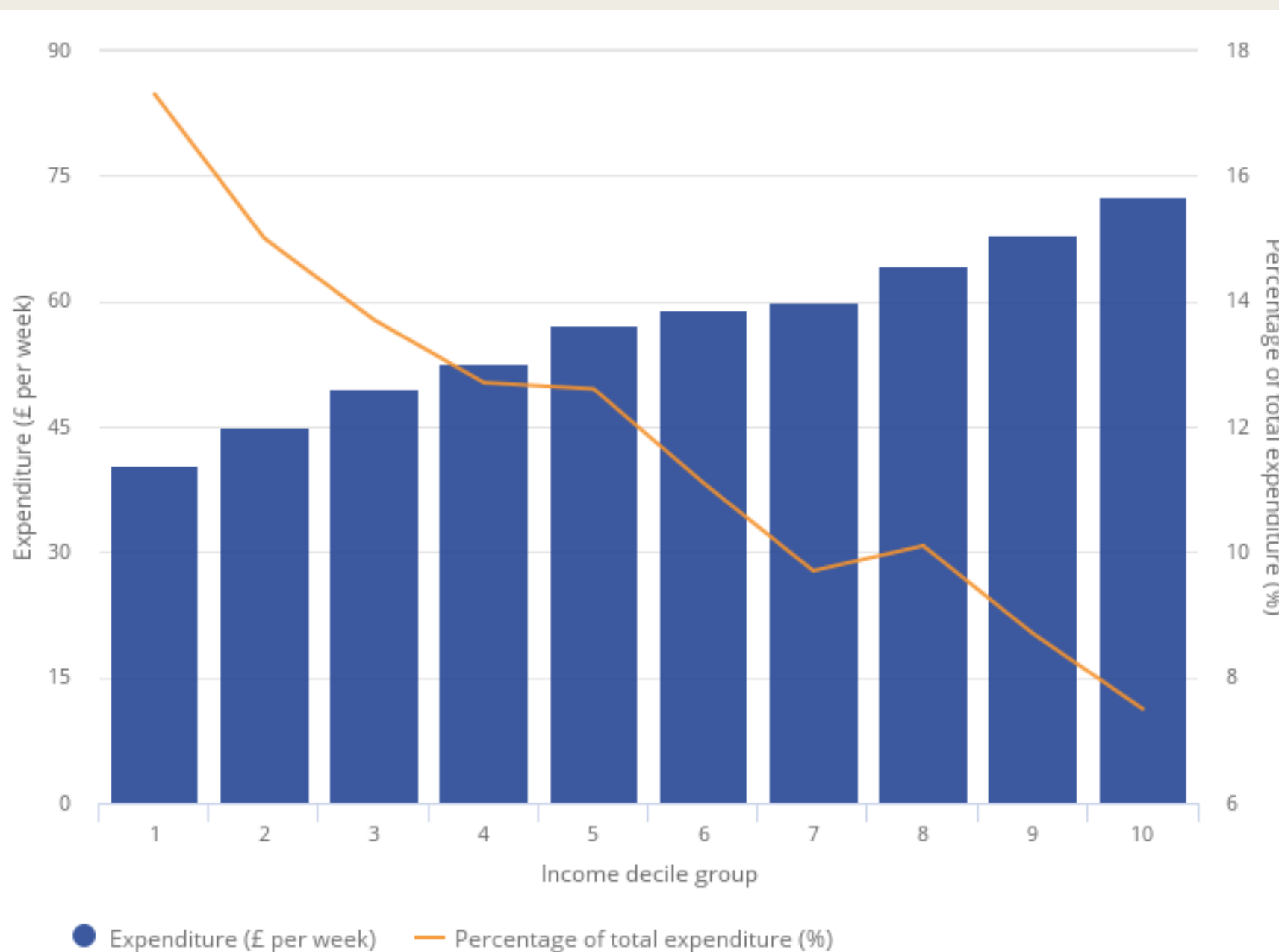
- 5.3mil individuals aged 15 or more are food insecure.
- 8.4mil individuals aged 15 or more live in households where at least one individual is food insecure.

Proportion of UK households unable to afford food basics

(ESRC, 2013)

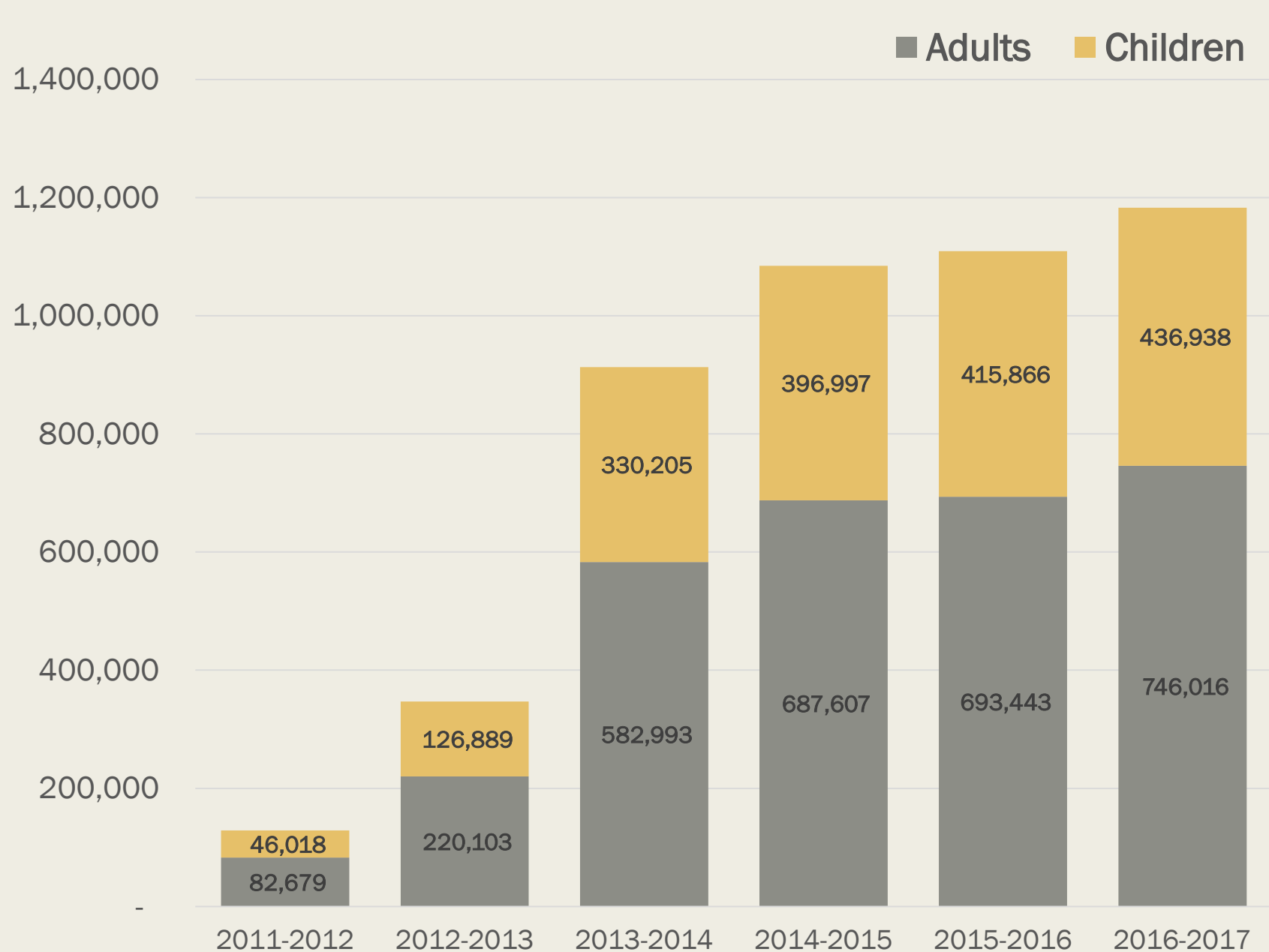
Food necessities	1983	1990	1999	2012
Fresh fruit and vegetables	n/a	6%	5%	7%
Meat, fish or vegetarian equivalent every other day	8%	3%	2%	5%
Two meals a day	4%	1%	(1)%	3%

- Over three and a half million adults (8%) and well over half a million children (4%) cannot afford to eat properly.
- More than one in four adults (28%) skimped on their own food in 2012 so that others in their households could eat.



Expenditure on food and non-alcoholic drinks (absolute expenditure and as a percentage of total expenditure) by OECD-modified equivalised disposable income decile group
UK, financial year ending 2016

(Office for National Statistics, 2013)



Number of three-day emergency food supplies given by Trussell Trust foodbanks

(Trussell Trust, 2017)

Health and food poverty

- ‘Among children, both ever being hungry and multiple episodes of hunger were associated with poorer general health but not with chronic conditions or asthma. Higher odds of chronic conditions and of asthma were observed among youth who experienced multiple episodes of hunger compared with those who were never hungry.’ (Kirkpatrick, McIntyre, and Potestio, 2010)
- ‘Children in food-insecure households had a 4% higher adjusted odds of asthma.’ (Mangini *et al.*, 2015)
- ‘Persistent food insecurity is associated with internalising and externalising problems [among children], even after adjusting for sustained poverty and other potential confounders.’ (Slopen *et al.*, 2010)

Mental health and food poverty

- ‘The relationship between household food insufficiency and respondents’ meeting the diagnostic screening criteria for major depression remained highly significant even when controlling for factors known to confer increased risk of depression and time invariant unobserved heterogeneity.’ (Heflin, Siefert, and Williams, 2005)
- ‘Overall, we find significant negative developmental effects for children with food insecurity at home; and that children experiencing an early transition from food insecurity in 1st grade to food security in 3rd grade have even larger impairments that persist through 5th grade.’ (Howard, 2010)
- ‘Food insecurity is associated with a wide range of adolescent mental disorders independently of other aspects of SES.’ (McLaughlin *et al.*, 2012)

Low-income households in the UK are increasingly unable to access or afford adequate nutritious food in socially acceptable ways.

Global

- Vulnerable international **food systems** (droughts, etc.)
- Global **economic crisis** (2007–08)
- Spike in global oil and food **prices**
- Increased use of food crops for **biofuel** production

National

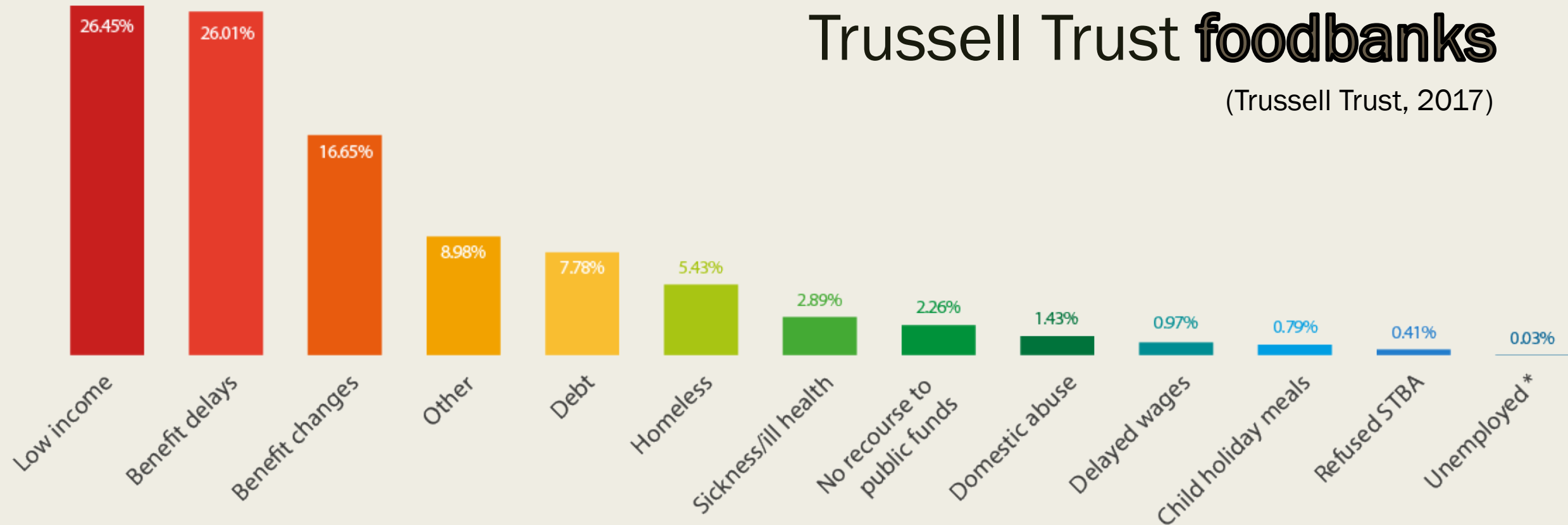
- National **economic crisis**
- Low **wages** vs. high living **costs**
- Cuts in **public sector** financing, benefits—reducing safety nets
- Changes in **tax and benefit** allocation—restricting eligibility
- Benefit payment **delays**

Family / Individual

- No **safety nets**
- Low **income**
- Poor **budgeting** skills
- Lack of **knowledge** on food preparation

Primary reasons for referral to Trussell Trust foodbanks

(Trussell Trust, 2017)



* This shows data from 1 April to 5 May 2016 when it stopped being recorded as a main crisis cause

The construction of “food poverty”

“Food Poverty”

“Food
Insecurity”

POVERTY

“Food Deserts”

“Chronic
Hunger”

Opinion | EDITORIAL

The Problem Isn't Food Stamps, It's Poverty

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD MAY 26, 2017

Food poverty
Opinion

There's a food poverty crisis in the UK.
And the government is starved of ideas

Kathleen Kerridge

As the cost of living rises and wages stagnate, for many food is becoming harder to afford. We're returning to an era where a healthy diet is aspirational



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News > Health


UK's rising use of food banks reveals 'unfolding public health crisis', finds study

New analysis finds clear growth in food bank usage but suggest previous reports may have 'overstated' scale

Alex Matthews-King Health Correspondent | 7 days ago | [50 comments](#)



HOW DO WE SOLVE IT?



Typical & good(?) practice
Possible alternatives
An income-based approach

Case study: The US Federal Food Stamp Programme

- The Federal Food Stamp programme (now known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme) is **a federal means-tested programme** that provides benefits and food for eligible low-income families.
- President Kennedy's 1st Executive Order called for expanded food distribution, and in **1961**, he announced the introduction of the FSP.
- As the major safety net in the US, the FSP is available to **all family types** (most other programmes are targeted at children, the elderly, etc.). It is the **largest US cash-based means-tested transfer programme**, with a spending of \$70.9 billion in 2016.
- Most households are inframarginal. Hence, the FSP can be treated as an income transfer (Hoynes and Schanzenbach, 2009).



Effectiveness of the FSP (1/2)

- Using data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), Ratcliffe, Mckernan and Zhang (2011) adopt an instrumental variable model to study the effectiveness of the FSP in reducing food insecurity. Their results show that receipt of the benefits **reduces the likelihood of suffering from food poverty by 30%, and reduces the likelihood of being very food insecure by 20%.**
- Nord (2011) notes that the programme runs into a self-selection bias, as the programme generally attracts more food-insecure participants into the programme more than offsetting the improvement in food security due to participation. To account for this, he uses a logistic regression model. His results show that **the ameliorative effect of SNAP on very low food security is in the range of 20%–50%.**

Effectiveness of the FSP (2/2)

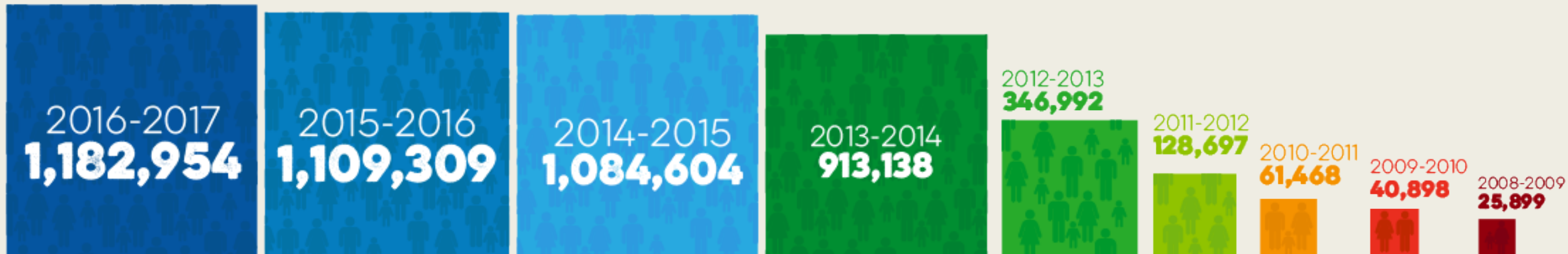
- The programme also **promotes healthy eating**. In 2014, the USDA, acting under the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive, granted \$30mil to different programmes across the country to help get healthy food for FSP recipients. Thus they can get subsidies to purchase products at farmer's markets (a huge step forward).
- According to the Coalition Against Hunger, a New York-based non-profit organisation, the adoption of the programme seems to **stimulate the economy**. They suggest that every \$1 spent in food assistance stimulates the economy by adding \$1.70 into economic activity.

Drawbacks of the FSP

- A major problem is the **stigma** attached to receiving the benefit. Recipients are sometimes labelled as lazy and having a poor work ethic. In her article, Gezinski (2011), an assistant professor at the University of Utah, indicates that the stigma shames many people into trying to hide their SNAP benefits or not applying to see if they qualify.
- Another problem is associated with **fraud**. According to Rosenbaum (2013), the USDA has cut “trafficking” (the sale of SNAP benefits for cash, which violates federal law) by three-quarters over the past 15 years. SNAP now comes in the form of an electronic debit card, like the ATM cards that most Americans carry in their wallets, which recipients can use in the supermarket checkout line only to purchase food.

Charitable provision

Increasing provision by charitable organisations in the UK, e.g. Trussell Trust foodbanks: 568,907 three day emergency food supplies given to individuals in need by the Trussell Trust between April and September 2017, 208,956 of which were given to children. (Trussell Trust, 2017)



Charitable provision



- Multiple issues with reliance on charitable provision:
 - Alternative so socially accepted forms of food provision—does not solve the issue of **food poverty as social exclusion** (Lambie-Mumford *et al.*, 2014).
 - Issues related to **access**—families do not know how it works or do not have access close to where they live (Lambie-Mumford, 2015).
 - Households only turn to food banks when they have **no alternatives left** (stigma) (Lambie-Mumford *et al.*, 2014).
 - Does not address the **underlying causes** of food poverty (Cooper and Dumbleton, 2013).
 - **Minimises the role of the state** in alleviating food poverty (Wilde, 2011).
- Important for emergency provision and possible advocacy role, but not a viable policy solution.

Information-based approaches



- Food seen as **individualist**, **not related to the broader issue of poverty**; assumption that people do not know how to eat properly (Dowler, 2002).
 - Solution: Provide individuals with information on how to cook/eat.
- Dietary knowledge has been identified as a **predictive factor for healthy eating**, and is strongly correlated with socioeconomic status and education (FSA Ireland, 2015).
- However, skills-based interventions generally have only small (though positive) effects (Worsley, 2002; Wrieden *et al.*, 2007).
 - Ignores the **structural causes** of poverty (Dowler, 2002).
 - Individuals **do not have sufficient incomes** to be able to support an adequate diet, especially in context of recent cuts to social security, strict sanctions regimes and austerity, as well as significant increases in food prices (Child Poverty Action Group, 2014; Oxfam, 2014; Wilde, 2011).

An income-based approach

1. Raise awareness

2. Boost incomes by raising the minimum wage

3. Tackle “poverty premium” costs, e.g. housing

4. Reform and expand Universal Credit

Recognise the problem... as a problem

- Establish a legal framework forcing the publication of a **strategy** and **progress** on an annual basis by the government.
- Collect **data** and monitor changes, under a **centralised** agency rather than dispersed across different departments (Chilton, 2009).
- Set up a parliamentary **commission** holding the government accountable.
- The example of child poverty under New Labour is useful (Joyce, 2014; Child Poverty Commission, 2014; Kennedy, 2014).

Enablers:

Relatively low cost.
Lack of organised
opposition lobbies.

Constraints:

Lack of political interest.
Rejection of bureaucracy
and welfare dependency.

Limitation:

Does not ensure any
concrete results.

Source: <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage>

Calculation: https://www.livingwage.org.uk/sites/default/files/Living-wage-calculations%5B1%5D_0_0.pdf

Awareness | **Minimum wage** | Poverty premium | Universal Credit

	THE MINIMUM WAGE <i>Government minimum for under 25s</i>	NATIONAL LIVING WAGE <i>Government minimum for over 25s</i>	REAL LIVING WAGE <i>The only wage rate based on what people need to live</i>
WHAT IS IT?	£7.05	£7.50	£8.75 across the UK and £10.20 in London
IS IT THE LAW?	Statutory	Statutory	Voluntary
WHAT AGE GROUP IS COVERED?	21 and older	25 and older	18 and older
HOW IS IT SET?	Negotiated settlement based on recommendations from businesses and trade unions	A % of medium earnings, currently at 55%, it aims to reach 60% of median earnings by 2020.	Calculation made according to the cost of living, based on a basket of household goods and services
IS THERE A LONDON WEIGHTING?	No London Weighting	No London Weighting	Yes - Separate higher rate for London

- Move away from a low-skill, low-paid, insecure jobs economy and stagnating wages.
- Form an **advocacy coalition** with similarly interested groups.

Premiums experienced by low-income households (income under 70% of median income)

Premium type	Examples of premiums (£ per year)	Number of low-income households incurring this type of premium (%)
Use of prepayment meters (PPM)	PPM for electric (£35) or gas (£35)	2.6m (33%)
Non-standard billing methods	Paying energy bill on receipt (£38) Paying contents insurance monthly (£9) Paying car insurance monthly (£81)	3.9m (50%)
Not switched	Not switched energy provider (£317)	5.8m (73%)
Paper billing	Paper bill for electric or gas (£5) Paper bill for landline/broadband/mobile (£23)	3.9m (49%)
Area-based premiums	Car insurance in a deprived area (£74) Difficulty accessing good value shops (£266)	5.8m (73%)
Insurance for specific items	Insurance for individual appliances (£132) Mobile phone insurance (£60)	1.8m (23%)
Access to money	Fee charging ATMs (£25) Cheque cashing services (£30)	2.3m (29%)
Higher-cost credit	Payday loan (£120) Doorstep / home collected credit (£540) Rent-to-own (£315)	1.3m (16%)



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Universal credit

'We went days without eating properly': how universal credit brought misery to Inverness

People who were never in debt before have been catapulted into crisis in trial of benefit whose rollout continues despite concerns

5,668

Amelia Gentleman

Wednesday 16 October 2017 07:19 BST



Leddie Ross has not had a payment since 16 August, and says he does not eat most days until 6pm. Photograph: Murdo Macleod for the Guardian

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This Is How You Fix Universal Credit, Chancellor


The only acceptable wait is no wait

© 26/11/2017 22:21 GMT | Updated 26/11/2017 22:21 GMT

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Nick Stephenson

Consultant, writer, UnemployedNet founder



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Reform and expand Universal Credit

- “Improve the taper.”
- Monitor and improve incomes for families with children.
- Increase the housing provision.
- In general, all working-age benefits are frozen, disproportionately affecting poor households—need to end this.

Conclusion

- Food poverty is a **complex, multifaceted** problem involving many stakeholders (government, victims, employers, retailers, NGOs, etc.) with various interests.
- Charitable provision is a band-aid solution. We need a comprehensive **income-based approach** to tackle the root causes upstream.
- Despite clear budgetary constraints within a context of austerity, investing in low-income families' food security will yield long-term socioeconomic and health outcomes that are **beneficial** not only for individuals but also for society at large.

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