

Food Poverty

Group A, December 1st, 2017

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Agenda

- Definitions and methodology
- Analysis of the strengths and limitations of three existing policy responses:
 - Food banks
 - Food stamps
 - Educational programmes
- Summary and proposal
- Questions

Dual definitions

- ***Food poverty*** — Inability to access food that can comprise a proper diet. Not all about hunger, but rather about gaining adequate nutrition to “attain and maintain health”. As such, can also include issues of access, availability within communities. (Bristol, 2013)
- ***Food insecurity*** — Not simply hunger, nor is it a lack of *access* to food that can comprise an adequate diet. Results specifically from a lack of financial and other resources. Not a measure of a single day’s hunger, but rather the “episodic and cyclical” nature of hunger.
- ***Our definition*** — For our purposes, we have chosen to look at both food poverty and food insecurity. This is for three reasons: data on food poverty alone are difficult to come by; high level of overlap between the two; most closely mirrors the common conception of food poverty

Financial Crisis and Food Poverty

Table 3 Trends in proportion unable to afford meat/chicken/fish, 2003–11

Welfare regime	Country	Baseline: 2003 (%)	2007 (%)	Pre-crisis 2003/7 (%)	Post-crisis 2011 (%)	N
Anglo-Saxon	UK	4.2	3.6	3.8	8.8***	4,745
Anglo-Saxon	Ireland	3.4	1.9*	2.6	3.5	3,024
Scandinavian	Sweden	1.4	1.2	1.3	2.1	3,013
Scandinavian	Denmark	0.5	1.0	0.8	1.5*	3,023
Scandinavian	Finland	2.8	1.3**	2.0	3.9	3,006
Bismarckian	Germany	4.5	4.6	4.6	5.7	6,094
Bismarckian	Austria	2.4	4.9***	3.7	4.1**	3,064
Bismarckian	Netherlands	0.3	1.0	0.7	2.0***	3,065
Bismarckian	France	3.2	3.1	3.1	7.1***	4,828
Bismarckian	Belgium	2.8	4.0	3.4	3.8	3,023
Southern	Spain	2.4	2.9	2.6	6.5***	3,523
Southern	Portugal	14.7	3.3***	9.0	10.4***	2,990
Southern	Greece	22.6	13.5***	18.0	21.2	2,990
Southern	Italy	1.7	2.8	2.4	2.9*	4,738
Eastern	Czech Rep.	17.9	15.3	16.5	16.7	3,205
Eastern	Estonia	26.2	9.3***	15.5	27.8	2,595
Eastern	Poland	18.2	14.6**	16.0	20.4	4,684
Eastern	Slovenia	5.6	6.4	6.1	10.1***	2,626
Eastern	Slovakia	32.7	22.9***	27.6	25.9***	3,124
Eastern	Hungary	34.3	32.0	33.1	41.2***	2,984
	Sample average	6.5	5.6***	6.1	8.7***	70,344

Notes: Data Source: EQLS, 2003–2011. Significance stars refer to change in 2007 and 2011 vs. baseline year of 2003: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$.

Methodological Challenges

- Lack of universal definitions, standards of measurement
 - Inadequate international data
 - Country-specific data have different focuses
- Hard to differentiate from simple poverty
 - Nutritious foods cost more 'per calorie' than low-nutrition foods
- Necessary to control for other economic variables
 - Food prices, commodities, utilities, transportation

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graph TD; A[Food banks] --- B[Food stamps]; B --- C[Educational programmes];
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Food banks

Food stamps

Educational programmes

Rise of Food banks (UK)

- Foodbank explosion in UK - 500,000 people reliant on foodbanks, Oxfam estimate (2013)
- Charity/volunteer run
- Not Government policy but...
 - Job centres directing people to foodbanks etc.
 - Piecemeal funding - £2.9 million
- A 'policy' or a gap in policy?



UK Stakeholder Map

High power

Department
of Work and
Pensions

Other Gov
Departments

Politicians

Local
Councils

Media

Food Bank
providers

Low power

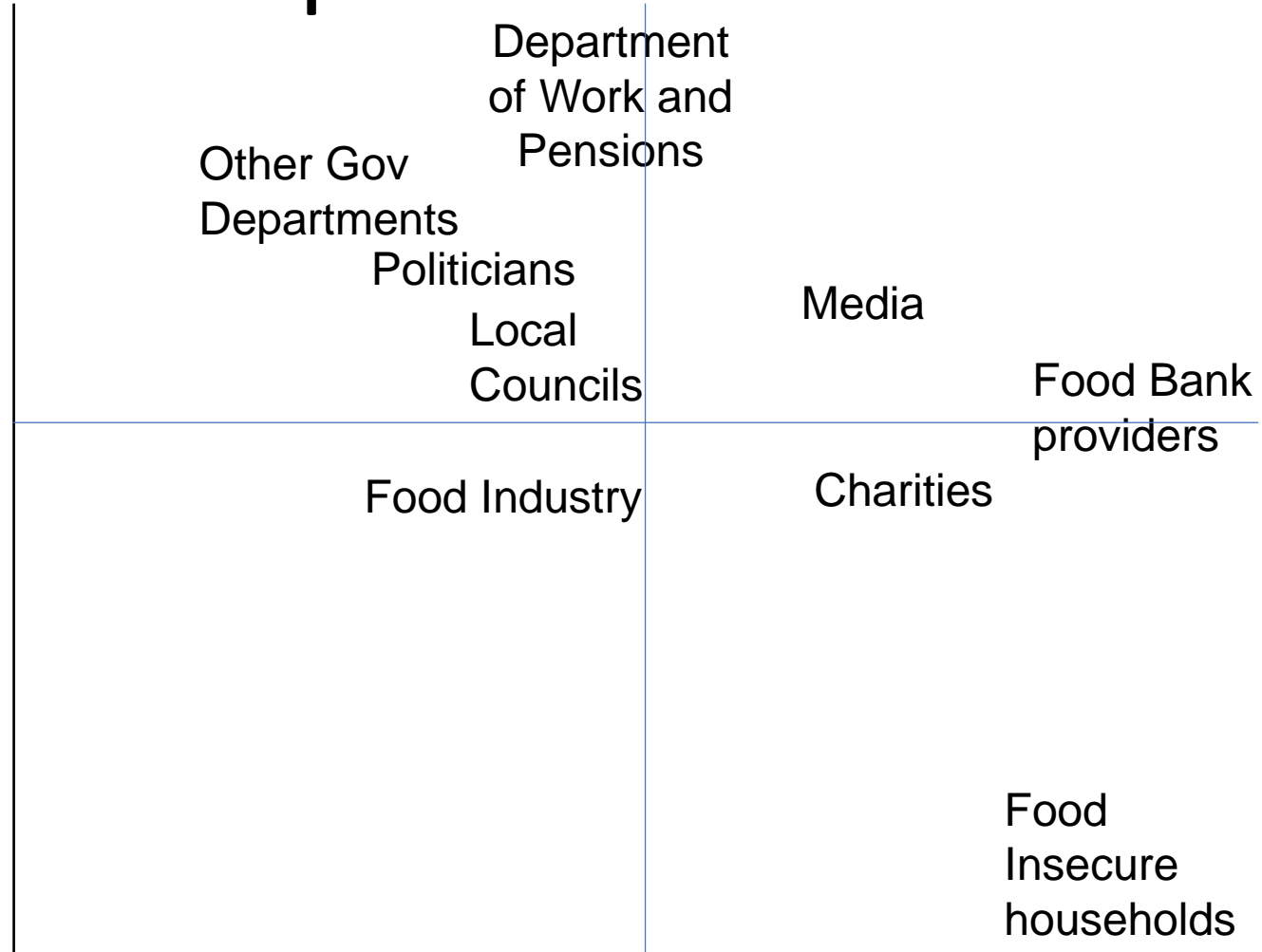
Food Industry

Charities

Food
Insecure
households

Low interest

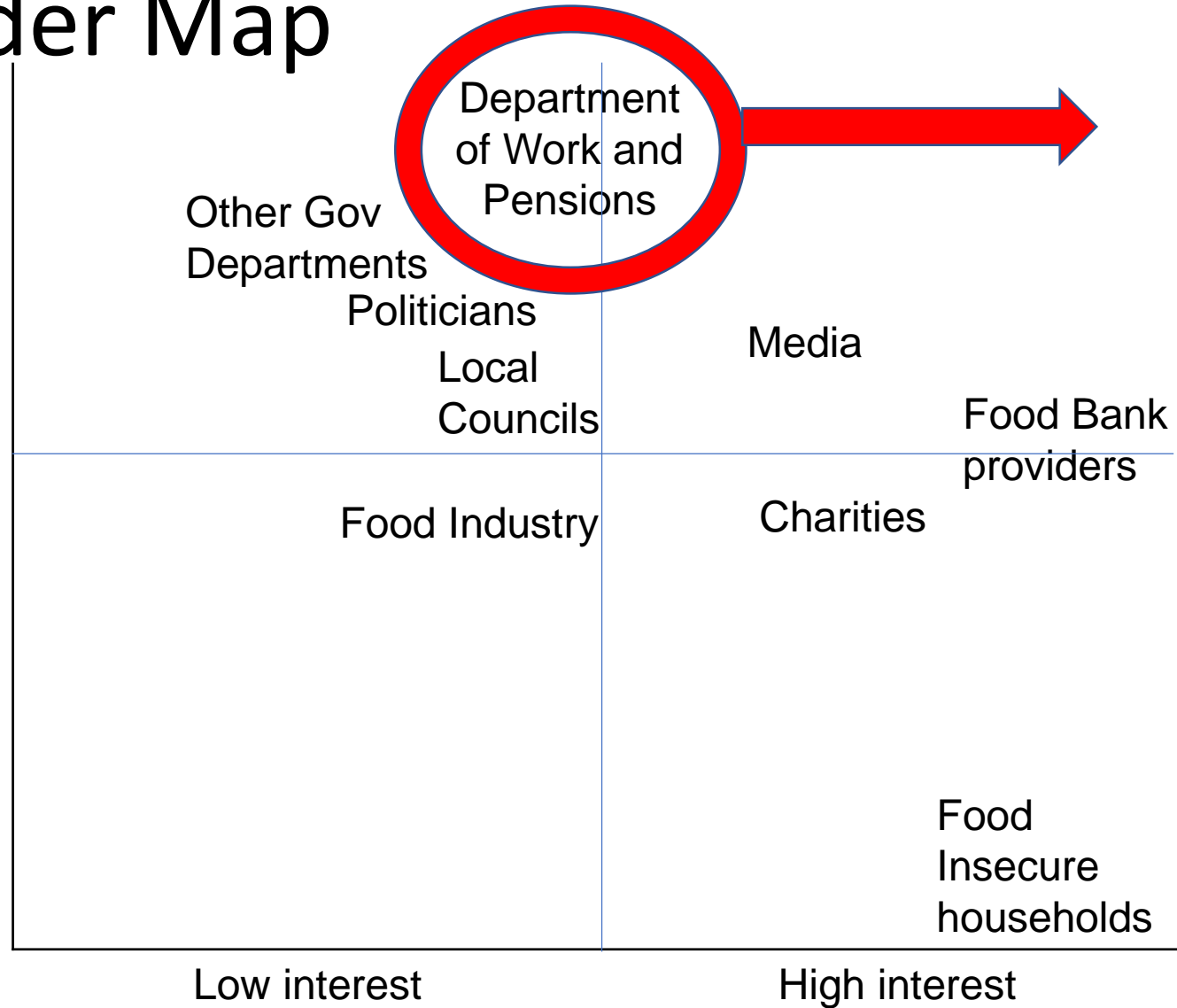
High interest



UK Stakeholder Map

High power

Low power



Food banks users – unrepresentative

- Not a reliable proxy for food insecurity.
- Canadian - annual national surveys of food insecurity (Loopstra and Tarasuk 2015)
 - Major differences to foodbank user 'sample'
 - Less were dependent on welfare
 - More were employed or homeowners



Food banks – accountable? Safe?



Proposal: a Rights based system

- UN right to ‘highest standard of health’ could be basis for government responsibility
- Need accountable government structures
 - Department for food insecurity?
 - Or create new responsibility – based on national survey



Food banks

Food stamps

Educational programmes

Food stamps: definition

- This policy relates to **means tested food vouchers** for people on no or low incomes
- People are typically given either vouchers or electronic cards that can only be spent on food, usually with some restrictions (e.g. no alcohol, cigarettes)
- This is a **redistributive policy** that is effectively provided by a range of private sector companies (i.e. the stores people choose to redeem their food stamps at, as well as the electronic cards that money is loaded onto)
- In some cases, recipients are required to meet **behavioural eligibility criteria** such as proving they are actively searching for jobs or that they are employed (Immervoll) or passing a drug test

Comparison: UK vs. USA

USA

- The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, provides food-purchasing assistance
 - It is a central element of the US social safety net and has been available nationwide since 1975
 - Current SNAP uptake rates are at all time high
 - In practice, many households combine SNAP and cash to buy food
 - In order to determine eligibility, household income and assets are taken into account

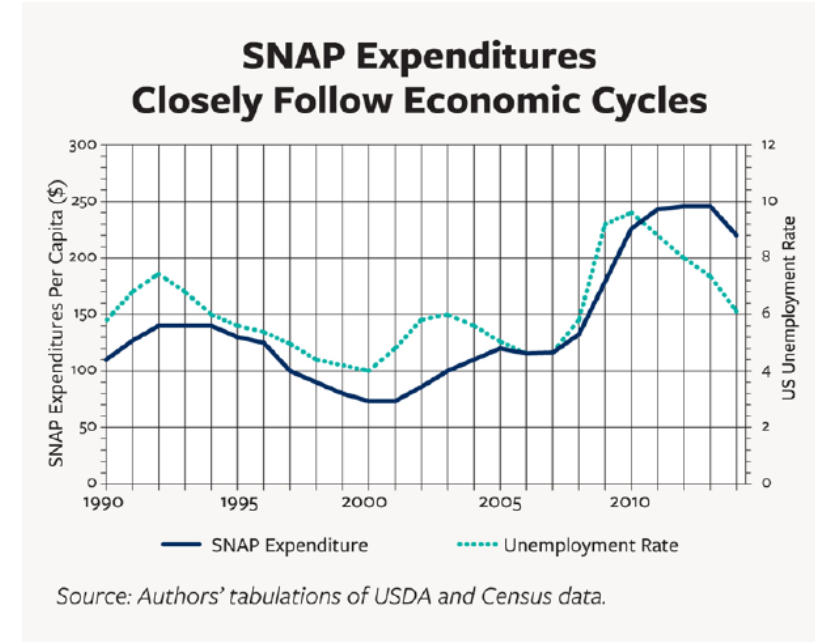
UK

- Pregnant women and parents with a child under four years old may be eligible for **Healthy Start vouchers** to help buy some basic foods:
 - This is a means-tested scheme providing vouchers to spend with local retailers:
 - From November 2016, Universal Credit became a qualifying benefit for Healthy Start
 - All pregnant women under the age of 18 are eligible
 - Pregnant women and children over one and under four years old can get one £3.10 voucher per week. Children under one year old can get two £3.10 vouchers (£6.20) per week
 - This can be spent on milk, fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables or infant formula

Analysis: impact of food stamps in the USA (1/2)

- **Economic impact:**

- SNAP expenditure closely follows economic cycles
- SNAP plays the role of an automatic stabiliser
- Hoynes and Schanzenbach (2009) found that households react to cash transfers and food stamps similarly
- SNAP is the second most effective US programme (after EITC) in lifting people out of poverty
- Can act as a stimulus during an economic downturn
- Given the general wage stagnation/decline in jobs available for low skilled workers, there is an increasing need for a social safety net to supplement earnings to enable families to maintain incomes



Analysis: impact of food stamps in the USA (2/2)

- **Impact on children:**

- Studies show that food stamps have had a positive impact on infant health by reducing low birth rates (Stanford study)
- Foetal Origins Hypothesis: receiving adequate nutrition during pregnancy will prevent the body from invoking irreversible biological mechanisms based on the assumption that it will be nutrition deprived

- **Impact on overall health:**

- There is an observable “food stamp cycle” whereby the calories and nutrition declines over the course of the month (Shapiro 2005, Hastings and Washington 2010). Some studies link this to unhealthy coping strategies such as fasting and bingeing
- There is fairly consistent evidence that SNAP reduces food insecurity (see studies on comparing the same families pre and post SNAP)
- SNAP participants consume, on average, fewer fruits and vegetables than non-SNAP participants and are more likely to be obese. However, it is not clear if the relatively poorer nutrition reflects SNAP or poverty and its influences

Limitations and potential modifications

Limitations

- Since all households purchase food, there is a risk of the **development of a secondary market** in food stamps (Cave). However, in the US fraud rates are declining
- There is a degree of **paternalism** implicit in these schemes and it ignores the degree to which people might have poor life or budget management skills (Cave)
- Some people who are eligible do not apply for various reasons, including the complexity of the programme and the fact that they might not know they are eligible. People who are elderly, eligible non-citizens, or those who are working are the least likely to participate in SNAP
- Some poor people live in **food deserts** and may not have sufficient access to fresh, nutritious food. In addition, some people may still choose to purchase unhealthy foods, leading to a problem with nutrition
- Strict eligibility criteria can make food stamps costly and complex to administer. However, this may also boost electoral support for the programme
- Some critics argue that food stamps **redistribute too much money to the private sector** (for example, in the USA Walmart takes in c. 18% of the total US outlays on food stamps)

Potential modifications

- Distribute benefits in shorter timeframes (e.g. weekly) to prevent people from running out of food
- Provide people with more support for purchasing certain types of healthy foods
- Raise awareness of the programme

Food banks

Food stamps

Educational programmes

Educational/behavioural responses:

Definition

- Nutrition guidelines
 - Aim: increase availability of fruit and vegetable and provide more lower fat school meals and snacks
 - E.g. school meals and snacks (Cullen 2007), school health programs (Perry 2004)
- Regulation of food and beverage availability
 - E.g. limit access to and availability of unhealthy foods from vending machines and other food sold in school campus (Cullen, 2006 & 2007)
- Price intervention
 - Incentives for healthy food (Tak, 2010)
 - Not many studies discovered controlling unhealthy food i.e. through tax (Jaime, 2009)

Comparison: UK vs USA

USA

National

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-ED)**
 - Provide educational programs and conduct social marketing campaigns that increase the likelihood that people eligible for SNAP will make healthy food choices within a limited budget.
 - Plan Shop Save and Cook class series
- **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)**
 - Aim to improve low-income families their nutritional wellbeing
 - Educational programs focus on four areas 1) diet quality and physical activity 2) food resource management 3) food safety 4) food security
- The National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program must follow the **US Dietary Guidelines**
 - Lunches must provide one-third of nutrient needs and breakfast one-quarter
 - 31 million children in 100,000 schools across the country every day. Half are children from low-income households, many of whom also eat breakfast at school.
- **School-based physical education programs**
 - Carol M White Physical Education Program provides grants to LEAs and community-based organizations (CBOs) to initiate or enhance physical education programs

UK

National

- **Health, exercise, nutrition for the really young (HENRY) (2015)** involves local public health departments, NHS trusts and children services
 - Practitioners training to work with young families
 - Preventive and targeted group programs to help parents adopt a healthier family lifestyles
- **National curriculum support**
 - Support materials and training for schools to implement nutrition and cooking aspects

Local

- **Free school meals (Bristol)**
 - 13,300 pupils out of 48,900 enrolled (27%) were entitled to FSM and 11,500 pupils (24%) were claiming.
- **Food plan (Leicester)**
 - Joint up effort with nursery, adult social care, young people services, food banks and business to tackling different aspects of food poverty e.g. cooking class, support food and drink manufacturing firms, food hall as focal point to provide fresh food

Analysis: impact of Educational programmes (1/2)

- Improvement on food security status
 - The number of lessons completed by compared 15,846 individuals who had completed 6+ lessons in EFNEP to 300 individuals who had terminated prior to graduation. (Dollahite et al, 2003)
 - Participation was significantly associated with the degree of change in food insecurity score.
- Improvement on food consumption behaviour and dietary intake
 - Burney et al (2002), compared Tennessee EFNEP participants with nutrition education and collected food receipts with those without education or collected food receipts
 - The intervention group that collected receipts saved approximately \$10.00 a month and the uneducated control group spent an average of \$5.52 more on food per month.

Analysis: impact of Educational programmes (2/2)

- Financial impacts
 - Promotes resource management behaviors, in combination with SNAP benefits, can help families make their food last until the next paycheck and SNAP benefits arrive. (Kaiser, 2015).
 - short-term interventions can change attitudes and increase financial savvy related to purchasing healthy foods. (Rustad et al, 2012 ; Dollahite et al, 2014)

Limitations and proposed modifications

Limitations

- Challenges of measuring effectiveness
 - Evidence of effectiveness is limited, and no studies of cost-effectiveness were identified. (Jaime, 2009)
 - the self-selection bias of needier households into the program i.e. SNAP-ED, EFNEP
- No clear link between knowledge gain and behavioural changes
 - Freeman et al (2003), Bullen et al (2004): all participants (school children) understood differences between healthier and healthier food and drinks, but this could not modify their behaviour

Proposed modifications

- Better research evidences
 - tailored nutrition education (Hawkins 2008; Eyles, 2009)
 - Understand behaviour constructs, learning style, preferred media for target audience
 - Meta analysis: Promising strategy to improve dietary behaviour among all adults in long term (>6m)
- Develop multi-strategy nutrition education interventions (Meiklejohn et al, 2016)
 - statistically significant impacts on anthropometric and dietary intake measures

Summary

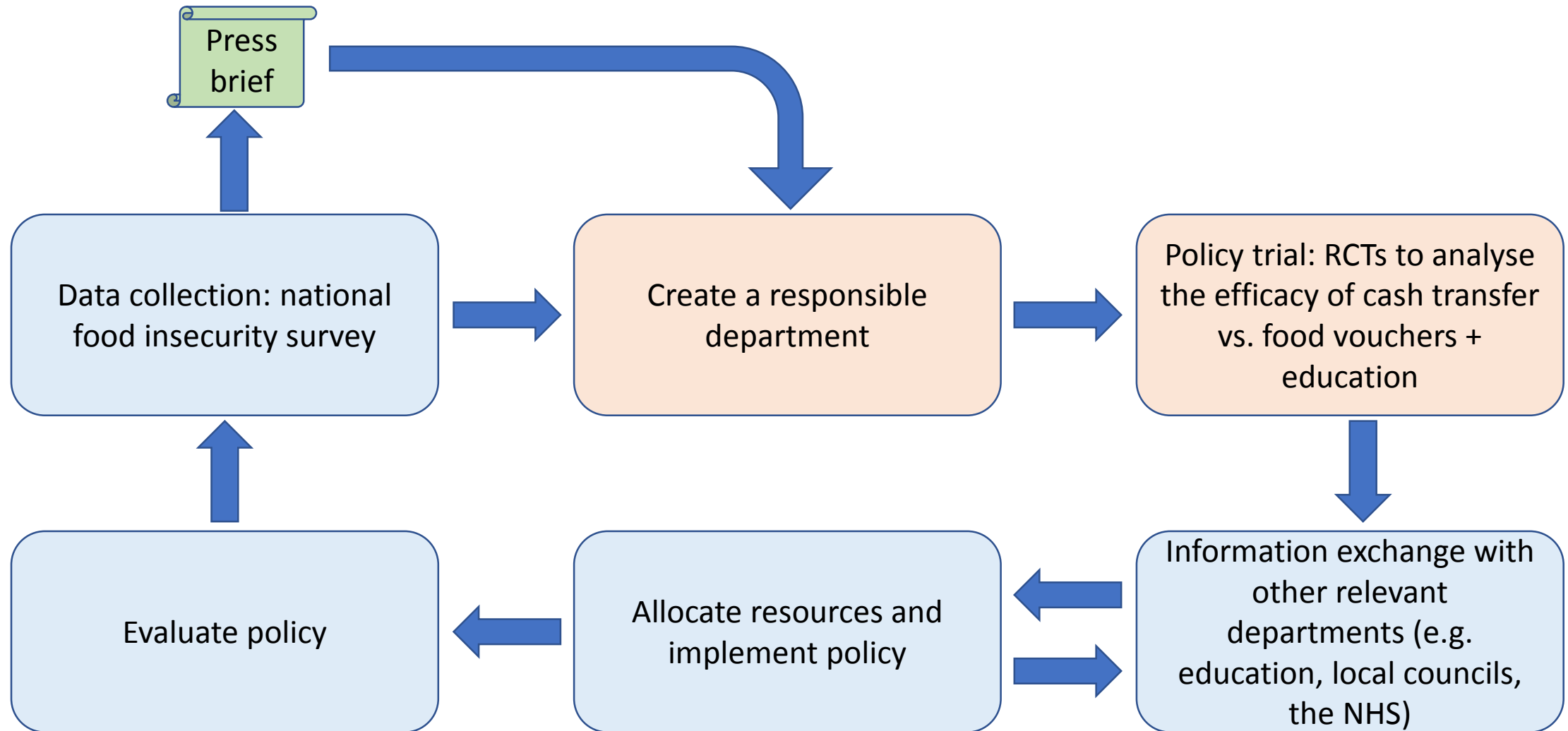
	Food banks	Food stamps	Educational programmes
Key benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides emergency response to acute need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Money must be spent on food, thereby also improving foetal and child health• Measurable reduction in food insecurity and poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some studies showed people purchased more healthy foods for cooking and improved their finance management skills improved
Key limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not accountable• Not representative of the food insecure population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People may continue to consume unhealthy foods• In practice, does not reach the entire food insecure population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncertain link between knowledge building and behavioural change
Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accountable government department responsible data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create incentives for people to purchase more healthy foods• Raise awareness of programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct more relevant research on the efficacy of educational programmes• Incorporate educational component into food policy

Key:

One-off step

Re-occurring step

Implementation process



Key readings

Rights-based approaches to addressing food poverty and food insecurity in Ireland and UK: Elizabeth A. Dowler and Deirdre O'Connor <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953611005545>

[Niamh O'Connor](#), [Karim Farag](#), [Richard Baines](#), (2016) "What is food poverty? A conceptual framework", British Food Journal, Vol. 118 Issue: 2, pp.429-449, <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-06-2015-0222>

The Future of SNAP? Improving Nutrition Policy to Ensure Health and Food Equity
https://gspp.berkeley.edu/assets/uploads/research/pdf/snapbrief_final.pdf

Interventions Designed to Increase Adult Fruit and Vegetable Intake Can Be Effective: A Systematic Review of the Literature <http://jn.nutrition.org/content/135/10/2486.short>

David, O & Geiger, B.B (2017) **Did Food Insecurity rise across Europe after the 2008 Crisis? An analysis across welfare regimes.** Social Policy and Society, 16(3), pp.343-360.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/social-policy-and-society/article/did-food-insecurity-rise-across-europe-after-the-2008-crisis-an-analysis-across-welfare-regimes/7653DE7F968E28B327AE3DA124AAB39D>