

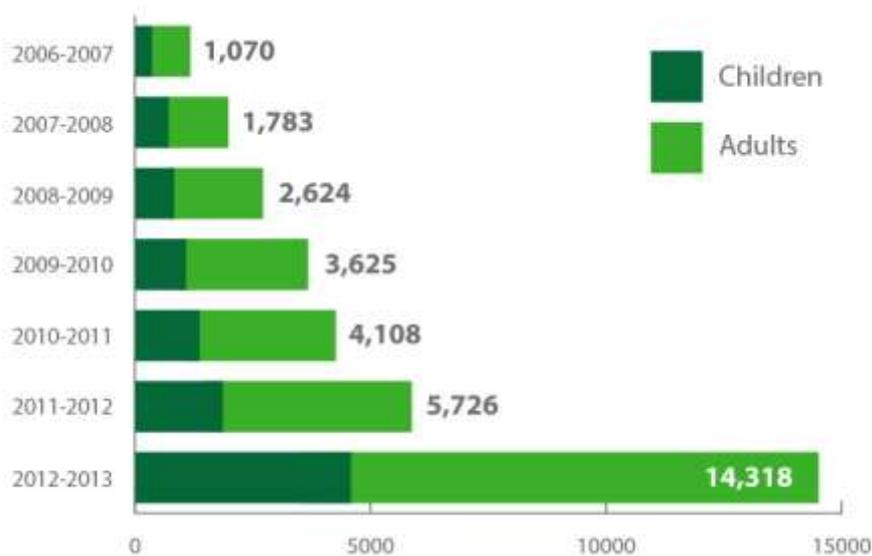
SUBMISSION FROM THE TRUSSELL TRUST

Trussell Trust foodbanks provide a minimum of three days nutritionally-balanced emergency food and support to people in crisis. Over 90% of the food given out by foodbanks is donated by the public. Every foodbank recipient is referred by a frontline professional such as a welfare rights advisor, tenancy support worker or school liaison officer. Foodbanks also refer recipients to other agencies to help resolve the underlying cause of the crisis.

Key facts

- In 2011, there was one foodbank in Scotland operating in partnership with The Trussell Trust. As of February 2014, there are 43 Trussell Trust foodbanks in 26 Scottish local authorities.
- Between 2011 and 2013, Scotland experienced faster growth in the number of foodbanks launching with The Trussell Trust than any other region in the United Kingdom.
- 56,052 people (38,704 adults and 17,348 children) have received assistance from The Trussell Trust Scottish foodbanks between 1 April 2013 and 24 February 2014.
- In the 2012/13 financial year, 14,318 people received assistance from The Trussell Trust Scottish foodbanks, 4,568 of whom were children.
- Two new foodbanks launch in partnership with The Trussell Trust every week compared to three per week in the 2012/13 financial year.
- The Trussell Trust runs a social franchise that partners with churches and communities to open foodbanks and has launched over 400 foodbanks which operate over 1,000 food distribution centres in the United Kingdom.
- Less than 5% of foodbank clients are homeless. Many are working families struggling to make ends meet.
- Foodbanks prevent housing loss, crime, debt, mental ill-health, family breakdown, suicide and children being taken into care.

Number of people given three days' emergency food by Trussell Trust foodbanks in Scotland



What is The Trussell Trust calling for?

The Trussell Trust is encouraging the UK Government to launch an official inquiry into the causes of food poverty and rising foodbank use and seeks the support of the Scottish Government to this end.

The Trussell Trust applauds the support of the Scottish Government thus far and the publication of their 2013 report on emergency food aid provision. The Trussell Trust welcomes ongoing efforts from all parties to seek creative solutions to food poverty.

The Trussell Trust urges the Scottish Government to seek assurances from the Department of Work and Pensions concerning the transparency of information relating to benefit sanctions and encourage the UK Government to review its approach to sanctions.

Why do people come to foodbanks?

Over 1,900 frontline organisations refer people in crisis to Trussell Trust foodbanks in Scotland, including statutory and voluntary bodies, churches and charities. Between April 2013 and the beginning of February 2014 the most frequent reasons for foodbank referrals included:

- Benefit delay – 30%
- Benefit change – 20%
- Low income – 17%
- Debt – 6%
- Refused short term benefit advance – 3%
- All others – 24%

Other reasons include domestic violence, sickness, debt and unemployment. The majority of people were working age families. Since April 2013, welfare reforms have impacted many people and resulted in more referrals to foodbanks as a result of benefit delays or changes. In addition, 1,565 people have been referred directly due to a refused short-term benefit advance. An increasing number of people are being referred to foodbanks because they have been sanctioned for what some frontline professionals have described as “trivial reasons”. It has also been noted that more people are using foodbanks due to the social sector size criteria.

- One in five mothers in the UK regularly skip meals to feed their children.
- Over 50% of children living in poverty in the UK are from working households and many of the people helped by foodbanks are in work.
- 13 million people are living below the poverty line in the UK.

How is Trussell Trust data collected?

Trussell Trust foodbanks operate a referral system, which means everyone who is given emergency food must be in receipt of a voucher from a registered frontline organisation. This voucher collects data such as the number of adults and children in need of emergency food and the main reason for the referral. There is also optional demographic data such as ethnicity and age. Each foodbank assimilates this data into an online data collection system. The Trussell Trust is therefore able to generate nationwide statistics.

Is the growth in foodbank use simply a question of ‘supply and demand’? Are numbers of people helped by foodbanks only growing because more foodbanks are opening?

Trussell Trust foodbanks do not give out food to anyone who turns up at a foodbank. You have to be referred by professionals such as health visitors, social workers and school liaison officers who are well placed to assess the need. The increased supply is meeting *unmet* need.

Every Scottish foodbank operating in partnership with The Trussell Trust has seen an annual increase in the demand for emergency food and, in some cases, a rise in demand of over 100% beyond previous years.

Additionally, the number of people receiving emergency food is disproportionately higher than the number of new foodbanks opening. In 2012/13 numbers helped by Trussell Trust foodbanks in the UK increased by 170% while there was only a 76% increase in new foodbanks opening. Currently, the number of people being helped by foodbanks is still increasing rapidly whilst the rate of new Trussell Trust foodbanks opening in the UK has slowed from three per week to two per week since April 2013.

How many times can people be helped?

Trussell Trust foodbanks are designed to address short-term hunger and help people out of crisis by partnering with strong networks of local agencies and charities to assist people towards sustainable living. Signposting people to local support that can help address the underlying cause of the crisis is a key part of The Trussell Trust foodbank model.

Trussell Trust foodbank clients may redeem up to three foodbank vouchers in a row, at which point the foodbank manager works with the referral agent to ensure a plan is in place to help that person break out of crisis. Longer term support is available in exceptional circumstances as agreed between the foodbank manager and referring organisation.

What is in a food parcel?

Food parcels contain a minimum of three days' nutritionally balanced non-perishable foods including tinned fruit, vegetables, meat and fish as well as pasta, cereal, UHT milk, sauces, tea and long-life juice. The Trussell Trust works with dieticians to ensure that food parcels are nutritionally balanced. Over 90% of the food given out by foodbanks is donated directly by the public.

Case Studies

Sarah*, Renfrewshire

Sarah was made redundant while pregnant, shortly after her husband had a nervous breakdown and also lost a very well-paid job. Soon, the family hit crisis point and lost their home. Sarah became too malnourished to breast feed her baby. To ensure their two children could eat, the couple skipped meals and in a two year period lost over eight stone in weight between them. The family was living on Employment and Support Allowance but a bureaucratic error in January 2013 led to a six month sanction which was only overturned when they threatened legal action. The family of four received a backdated payment after living on £50 per week during the sanctioning.

Jamie*, Glasgow

Jamie is a highly-educated manager but lost his job in 2012 when his company went into administration. He had no family support and exhausted his savings in a few months. Jamie received Jobseeker's Allowance, at £67.50 a week, but household bills exceeded that forcing him to choose between eating and heating his home. By the time he reached the foodbank, he had gone without food for four days. In a moment of desperation, Jamie had considered stealing food to survive.

The Trussell Trust is an apolitical charity that is keen to engage with politicians from all parties.

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