

Policy, inequality and the cost of living crisis

13th December 2022



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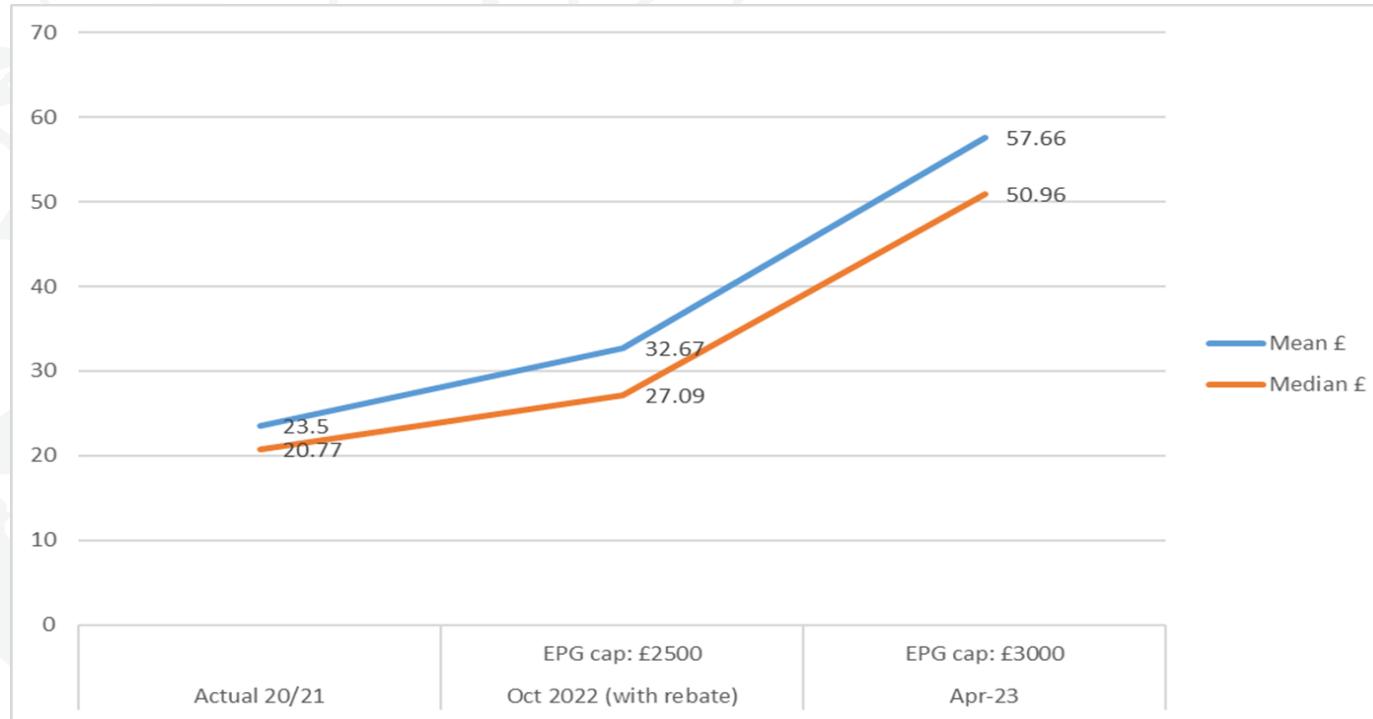


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Fuel poverty and the cost of living crisis

Antonia Keung and Carolyn Snell
School for Business and Society
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Cost of domestic energy/fuel: projections



Source: Own analysis of LCFS 2020/21 weighted data

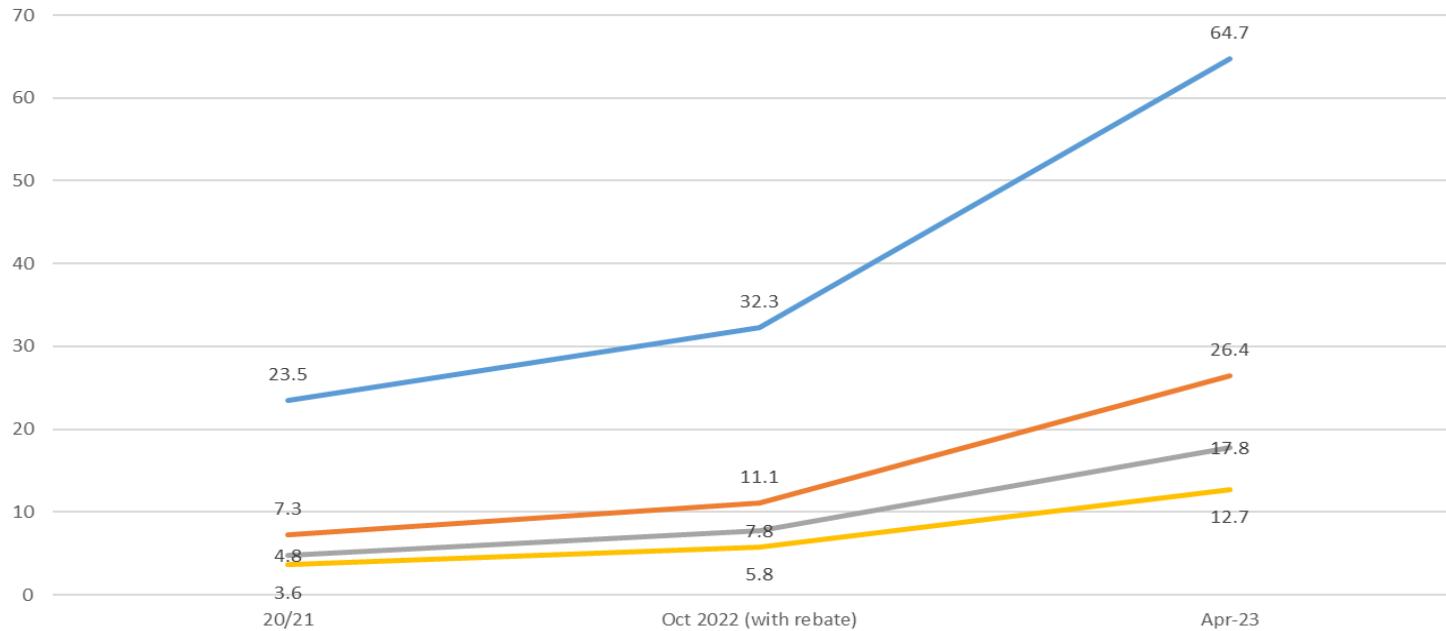
Fuel poverty in 2022/2023: projections



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% of households spending over 10% -30% net equivalised income (AHC) on energy/fuel

—> 10% net income after housing costs —> 20% net income after housing costs
—> 25% net income after housing costs —> 30% net income after housing costs



Source: Own analysis of LCFS 2020/21 weighted data



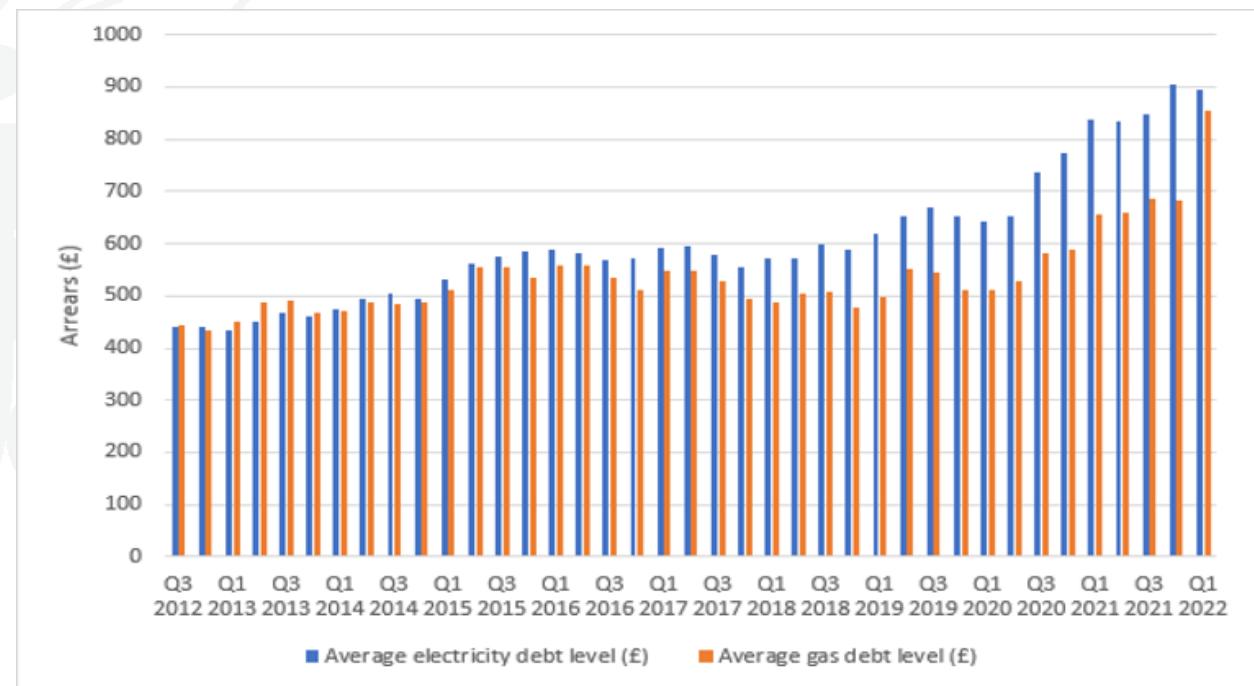
Fuel poverty in 2022/2023: projections

	Actual 2020/21	Apr-23 EPG cap: £3000 CoL payment applied
% of households living in poverty AHC only	29%	27%
% of households living in poverty AHC and AEC	32%	34%
Average poverty gap AHC and AEC	Mean £95 Median £81	Mean £109 Median £92
Number of households living in poverty AHC and AEC	8.9m	9.4m
Number of people living in poverty AHC and AEC	19m	20.5m

Source: Own analysis of LCFS 2020/21 weighted data

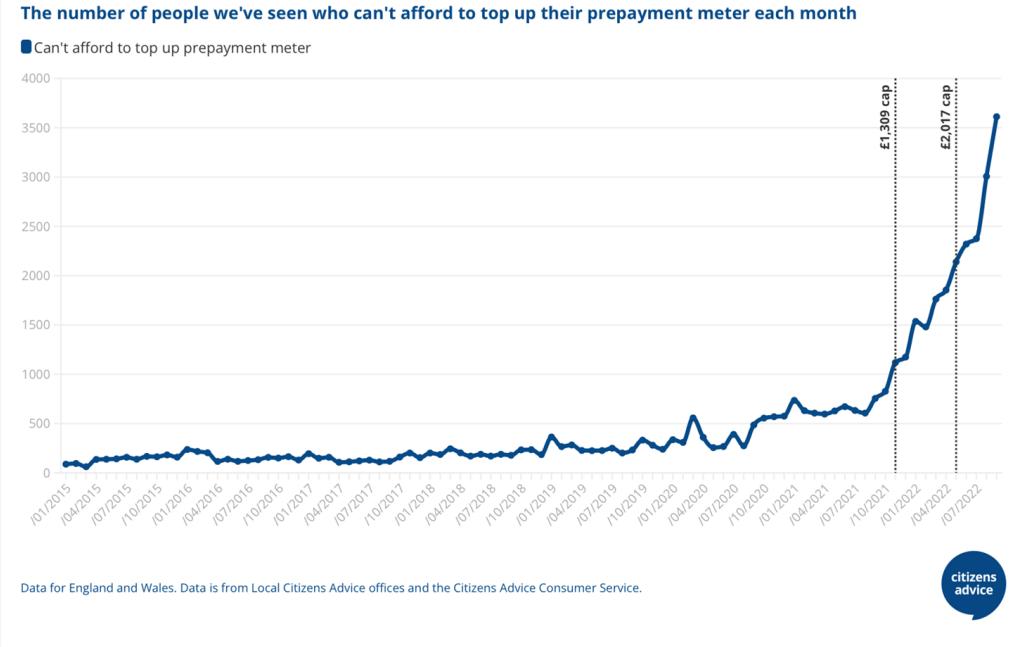
Other indicators of fuel poverty - debt

'...unfortunately, a lot of my neighbours have trouble paying for their electricity...the prepayment metres go off every morning for the people who are into debt... So it's just kind of a reminder that if people are struggling to pay for their electricity' '(BWHCTcjs)



Other indicators of fuel poverty - self disconnection

'...unfortunately, a lot of my neighbours have trouble paying for their electricity...the prepayment metres go off every morning for the people who are into debt... So it's just kind of a reminder that if people are struggling to pay for their electricity' '(BWHCTcjs)



The effects of fuel poverty

- Impact of living in poor housing conditions
 - An increased likelihood of respiratory illnesses
 - Increased use of health services: Liddell found infants in fuel poor households had a 30% greater risk of admission to hospital
 - Poor housing conditions has a substantial impact on the mental health of children and young people (UN 2023, Marmot Review 2011)
 - Linked to reduced educational attainment and attendance (conversely, energy efficiency interventions lead to improved attendance and attainment).
 - Infants from fuel poor homes also found to have lower weight gain
- Impact on mental health
- Impact on social relations and social inclusion
- Strain on other household finances - ‘heat or eat’, debt

Experiencing high energy costs

'I mean, we've even got to a pointfriends have bought me coal for my birthday, because they know the situation. Now...a, I find it embarrassing, and b, it is my birthday present. It's like, I'm getting coal'

I've arranged with the [provider] that my electric doesn't go off at all even though I pay through a top up meter, it's not meant to go off at all but it does...I have a daughter that's on a feeding machine...she's fed every night for 12 hours

'when you see people, you talk to them, you have a chat about various things...the topic at the moment is 'What is happening? Can you survive? Why is it so expensive?' So, this is normal conversation where it used be, 'Hey, how are you doing? I haven't seen for you a long time'. You start talking about the price [of things]'

Addressing fuel poverty

- Policy interventions can make a substantial difference:
 - Improve housing: e.g. energy efficiency improvements
 - Reduce bills: e.g. social tariffs/discounts
 - Protect/raise incomes: e.g. uprate benefits

Food insecurity research

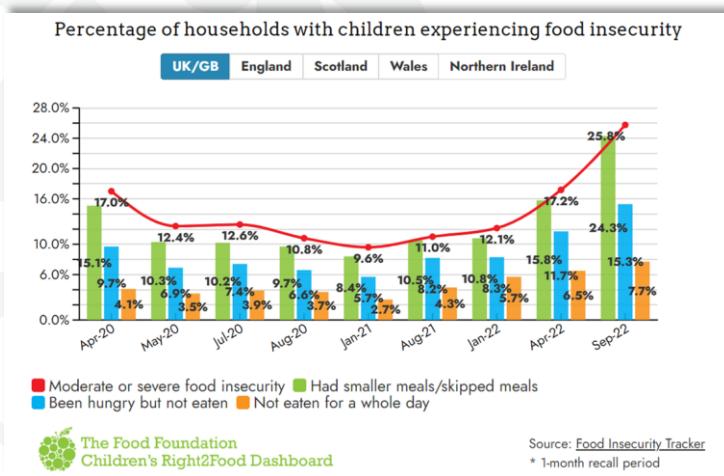
Professor Maria Bryant
Health Sciences and the
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Food insecurity themes

- Families and children
- School food
- Community Food assets

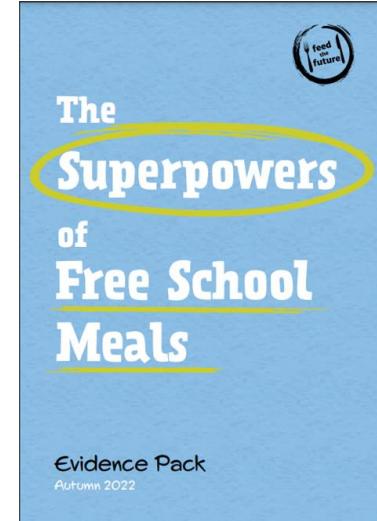
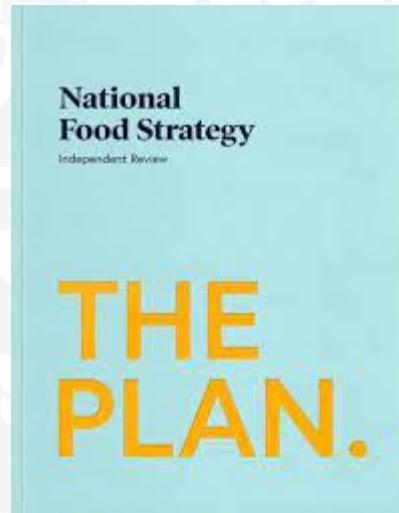


Annual CPI inflation rate for all foods and non-alcoholic beverages



Source: [ONS, Consumer price inflation tables](#)

School Food



School Food

FSM eligibility criteria • FSM auto-enrolment • FSM allowance • HAF Programme



The Food Foundation



A Yorkshire-based review of the implementation and impact of the Holiday Activities and Food programme

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OCTOBER 2021

 FixOurFood

Open access

BMJ Open Are free school meals failing? Exploring the relationship between child food insecurity, child mental health and free school meal status during COVID-19: national cross-sectional surveys

Tiffany C Yang ¹,² Madeleine Power ¹,² Rachael H Moss ¹,² Bridget Lockyer ¹,² Wendy Burton ¹,² Bob Doherty ¹,² *1* University of York, *2* The Food Foundation

Abstract The aim of this study is to better support health and well-being of children and young people by understanding the relationship between child food insecurity, child mental health and free school meal status during COVID-19. This study used two nationally representative cross-sectional surveys of children and young people aged 5–18 years in the UK. Data were collected in August–September 2020 and January–February 2021, with the intention of examining the impact of COVID-19 on the free school meal programme.

Background Free school meals (FSMs) are provided to eligible children and young people in the UK. They are intended to support the nutritional needs of children and young people from low-income families. The government has introduced a new system of FSMs since September 2013, which entitles all children in primary and secondary schools to receive a free meal.

Strengths and limitations

- Demographic and socioeconomically representative sample with wide range of ages of children.
- 218 000 households of food insecurity and mental health issues.
- Parents can have their child complete the survey and different responses among younger children.
- Adolescents were not included by age, though food insecurity may be experienced differently between that of younger and older ages.
- We were unable to differentiate between ethnicity and gender.

Conclusion Findings suggest that child food insecurity is rising.¹ In this decade, the Trust for Social Change reported a 30-fold increase in the number of emergency food parcels distributed across the UK.



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The Department of Health Sciences



FSM Allowance Information

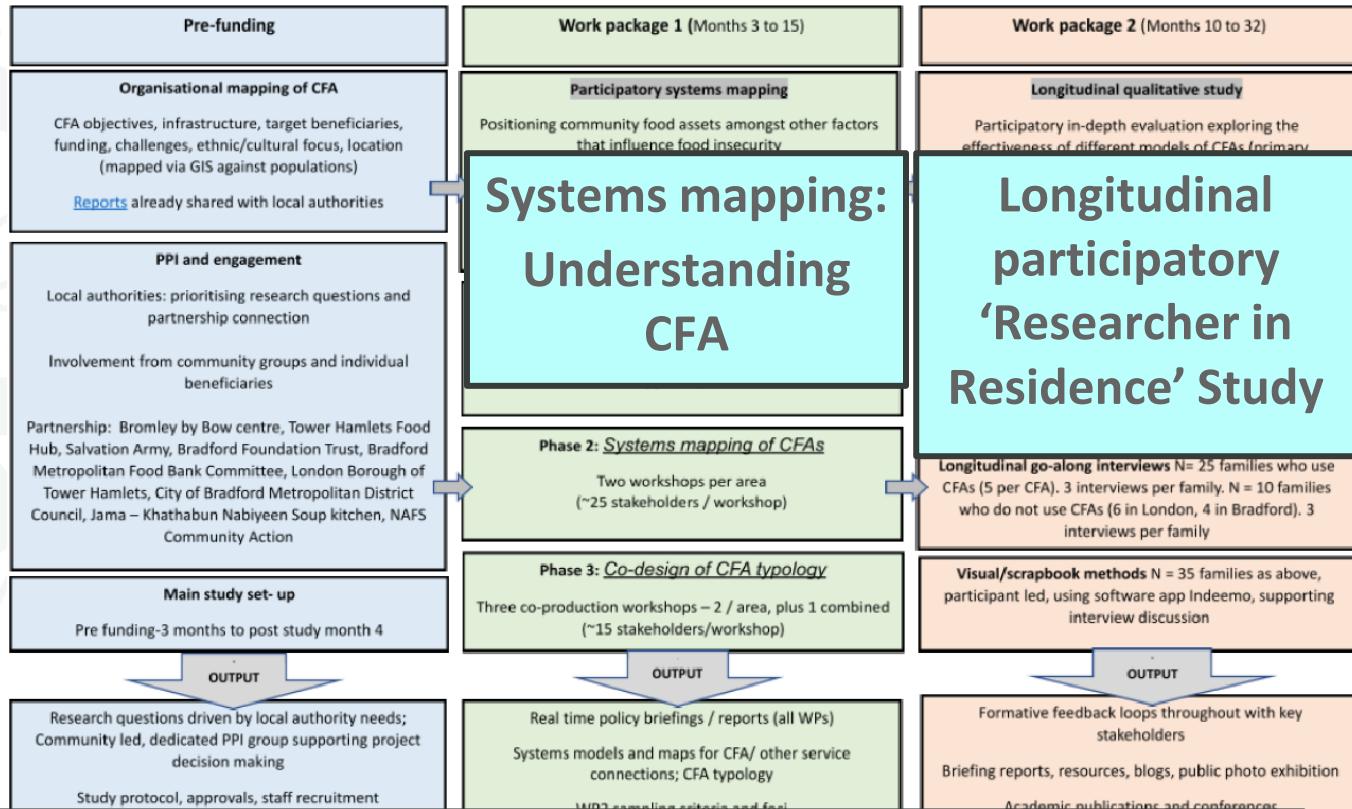
AUTOMATIC AWARD FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS INFORMATION SHEET – AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2022

- You have received a letter because we know that you are a parent/carer with child/children who may be at nursery or school. You do not appear to have a current Free School Meal award for your dependants and we think you may be entitled to one. We will run a data matching exercise using pupil records and housing benefit data to identify the children who might be entitled to a free school meal.
- The data matching exercise does involve the processing of your personal data, but we process this information because it is in the Council's legitimate interests to do so and it means that we can help families and schools get the services they need.
- We will use your surname, National Insurance number and your date of birth so that we can check if you qualify for free school meals. When we use your information, the government's electronic free school meals checking service gives us a simple reply – YES or NO. This is how we check to see if you qualify for free school meals.

Community food assets

NIHR PHR
Co-lead: Dr Laura Sheard

Role of CFA to reduce reliance on emergency food



Maximising impact

Defra and local gov real time policy briefings • Public facing events • Actionable toolkits

Critical approaches to food charity

• ESRC & Wellcome Trust



LSE British Politics and Policy
November 28th, 2012

Exploring the ethical complexity of charity

0 comments | 13 shares Estimated reading time

A thumbnail image showing a person's hands holding a small object.



Hundreds of thousands use food banks on a monthly basis. Maddy Power argues that food charity facilitates public spending cuts and employs elaborate monitoring to monitor fraud, legitimating the classic deserving/undeserving divide. Food insecurity is individualised, obscuring the systemic issues that need of charity.

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt did his very best to paint his Autumn Statement as progressive, benefits and the state pension in line with inflation, the handful of extra funding for

Article

Disciplinary and pastoral power, food and poverty in late-modernity

MADDY POWER

University of York, England

NEIL SMALL

University of Bradford, England

Abstract

Using a Foucauldian perspective, we explicate the systems of power which shape the lives of women in or at risk of 'food poverty'. We develop a theoretical framework of power for analyses of contemporary food poverty, which we apply to data from focus groups with women on low incomes in two cities in the north of England. Our data underlines the repressive power of the state as well as the broader chronicity of state surveillance. We argue that, while disciplinary and pastoral power may characterise the majority of food banks, alternative logics of mutual aid are evident within some food aid providers. We underline the power of governmental discourse in constituting gendered subjectivities and find that the most potent form of coercion is derived from self-regulation. The article closes by exploring possibilities for praxis via discursive resistance.

Key words

food banks, food poverty, Foucault, gender, power

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FOREWORD BY KATE PICKETT

HUNGER, WHITENESS, AND RELIGION IN NEOLIBERAL BRITAIN

MADDY POWER

The book cover features a large orange background with white text. The title is split into three main sections: 'HUNGER, WHITENESS' on top, 'AND AN INEQUALITY OF POWER' in the middle, and 'RELIGION NEOLIBERAL BRITAIN' on the bottom. The author's name 'MADDY POWER' is at the bottom left.

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All in it Together? Community Food Aid in a Multi-Ethnic Context

MADELEINE POWER¹, BOB DOHERTY², NEIL SMALL³, SIMON TEASDALE⁴ AND KATE E. PICKETT⁵

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Abstract

This paper derives from a study of community food aid in a multi-ethnic, multi-faith city in the North of England. The paper begins to make sense of the diversity of types of food insecurity assistance, examines the potential exclusion of certain groups from receipt of food aid, and explores the relationship between food aid providers and the state. Faith-based food aid is common in the case study area, particularly among food bank provision to the most 'destitute' clients. While food aid is adopting service responsibilities previously borne by the state, this does not imply an extension of the 'shadow state'. Rather, it appears reflective of a pre-welfare state system of food distribution, supported by religious institutions and individual/business philanthropy, but adapted to be consistent with elements of the 'Big Society' narrative. Most faith-based providers are Christian. There is little Muslim provision of (or utilisation of) food aid, despite the local demographic context. This raises concerns as to the unintentional exclusion of ethnic and religious groups, which we discuss in the concluding sections.

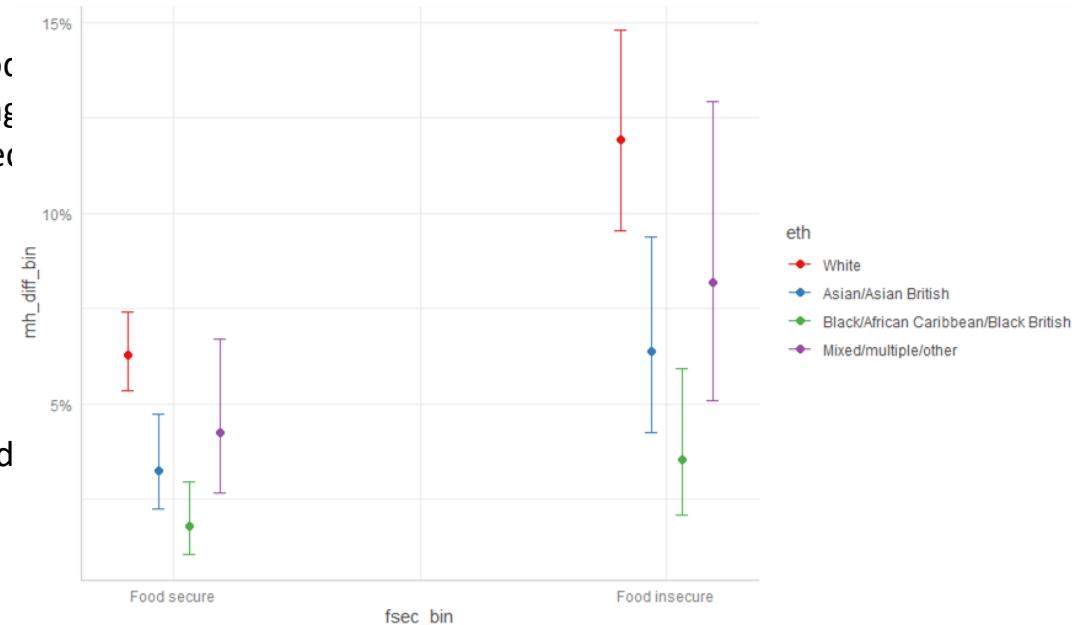
Introduction

Food insecurity in the United Kingdom (UK) has apparently increased dramatically since 2008. Local communities across the UK have responded

Food for Thought

Food insecurity, ethnicity and mental health

- Family Resource Survey 2019-2020
- Positive relationship between experiencing food insecurity and increasing levels of anxiety among all ethnic groups; greatest increase was observed among those identifying as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
- Across all ethnic groups the probability of a respondent reporting a longstanding illness affecting their mental health was twice as high among those who were food insecure compared to those who were food secure.



Team & Key Partners

Research Team:

Kate Pickett - University of York

Laura Sheard - University of York

Bob Doherty - University of York

Claire Cameron - UCL, London

Carol Dezateux - QMU, London

Amir Sharif - University of Bradford

Harry Rutter - University of Bath

Wendy Burton - University of York

Jayne Woodside - Queens, Belfast

Ariadne Kapetanaki - University of York

Annie Connolly - Food Foundation

Grace Gardner - University of York

Jack Garry - University of York



Department
for Education



We are family
BORNINBRADFORD



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



The Food
Foundation



GENIUS
School
Food
Network

Social Security Scrutinised

Dr Ruth Patrick, University of York
ruth.patrick@york.ac.uk / @ruthpatrick0

www.largerfamilies.study
www.changingrealities.org

Inadequacy of social security systems

- Systemic issues around benefit inadequacy; austerity era ‘reforms’; design issues with Universal Credit [in crisis before the crises]
- Shortcomings with packages of support provided during first pandemic and now cost of living crisis including; i) temporary nature; ii) flat rate payments; iii) refusal to dismantle problematic features of current regime (benefit cap, two-child limit; iv) underpinning narrative (on left and right).
- Policy approach embeds and entrenches insecurity (by design)



Real-time evidence

The uncertainty around any benefits increase is deeply concerning and worrying. I **have simply come to the end of any cutbacks I can make.** As someone living on legacy benefits that has not seen any increase in recent years, the current situation is having a severe impact the the mental and physical health of both my daughter and myself. **We are now living in the dark, unable to buy washing powder to wash our clothes & surviving on very basic food that does not need cooking if possible.** Without a proper increase in line with living costs I don't know how we are going to get through. (Erik W)



Real-time evidence

I have just tried to draught proof our lounge with a roll of bubble wrap. Filled in holes in the gas meter cupboard that had a breeze blowing through and covered the letterbox. I hope it will be a bit less cold in there now. **The forecast is below freezing day and night several times next week which I am dreading.** (Lili K, 3rd December)



Real-time evidence

I know it sounds daft saying you don't have that extra possibly £100 a month or whatever it would be, if you got it for another child, it makes a big difference...my little one'll be like "Oh can we go to shop?" And it's like "No, we've got stuff at home." But now we really don't have stuff at home, you know what I mean?...**I'm obviously at home on my own and I'm sat in the living room and I've got a blanket over me, there's no heating on because I don't see the point; it's cold and my coat's wet, and me trainers, so they could do with drying, but I don't want to put it on and heat the whole house just to dry my coat and trainers, do you know what I mean?**

(Angela, single mum, three children, affected by the two-child limit)



Brief reflections

- The extent and nature of contemporary crisis/es should not detract from endemic, everyday crisis that households face (and have for some time)
- We need to be alive to the dangers of the fragmentation of poverty, combined with the institutionalisation of charitable support (especially as regards design of policy solutions)
- Those with lived experiences have a unique and vital contribution to make in building the case for a decent and compassionate social security system, on which we can all depend.



The urgent call for change

Christmas is fast approaching! It was tough during the pandemic but this year with the rising cost of living it is going to be the toughest yet. As a single parent living on legacy benefits alone I can hardly afford to feed the two of us basic everyday food and essentials. So this year there is no option but to **go without a traditional christmas meal and stick to something quick and easy to cook to avoid using too much electricity.** As for presents there will be a few basic items of clothing and toiletries for my daughter as there is no money for anything more. Then there is a christmas tree that will no longer twinkle with lights, so this year will be very plain and simple for us but we will try to make the most of what we do have. I know there are millions of families that will be living like this or even worse but until there is real change in society and the governments help for people in these situations, not due to their own fault but due to unforseen circumstances or ill health this is all we can do. **To all families living in these unacceptable conditions we will be thinking of you all and wish you a happy christmas. Make the most of what you do have as change and fairness are surely not too far away.** (Erik, 1 December)



Pressures on mental health



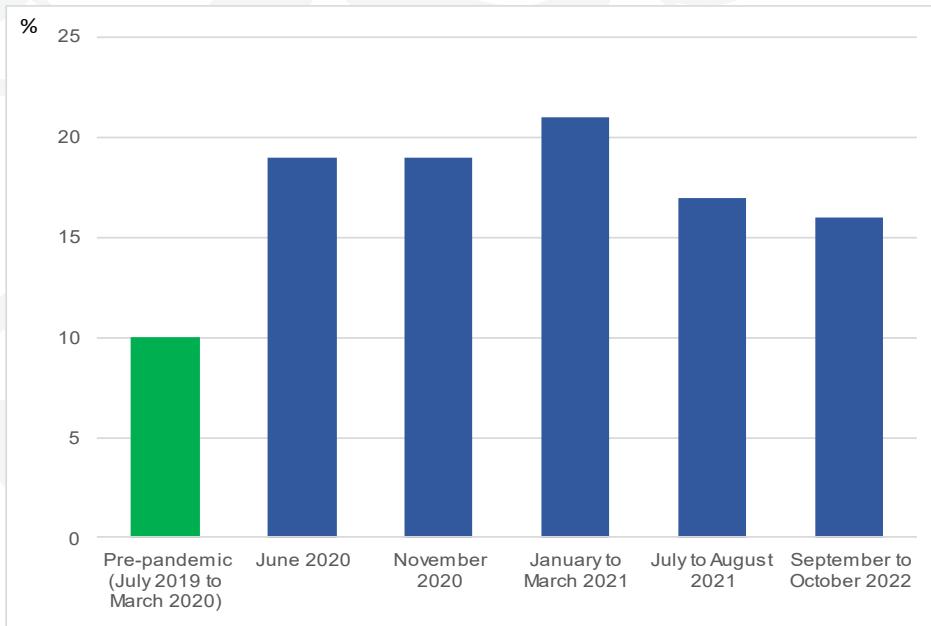
Professor Kate Pickett
Department of Health Sciences
University of York

The mental health pandemic

- World Health Organisation ranks depression as the leading cause of ill health and disability worldwide
 - in 2017, 300 million+ living with depression
 - Precipitous increase since 2005
- As a very unequal country, UK has a high prevalence of mental ill health, 1 in 5 adults
- In Bradford, a doubling of clinical rates of depression among mothers during Covid



Mental health and the cost of living crisis (ONS data)



- 1 in 6 (15%) with clinical levels of depression
- High rates:
 - Long-term sickness
 - Carers
 - Disabilities
 - Most deprived areas
 - Young adults
 - Women



Money and Mental Health Policy Institute report

- More than half of UK adults felt anxious, depressed, filled with dread or unable to cope **due to worries about finances**
- One in six (17%) with suicidal thoughts, half (49%) among those in debt
- Repeated contact by creditors triggering suicidal thoughts
- Calling for action to reduce pressure on those who have fallen behind on payments



The Changing Cost of Living Survey

- How people's mental health changes *in real time* as their financial circumstances change.
- September 2022 → 250 people in UK & 250 in France

	Sep	Oct	Nov
Managing financially			
Quite difficult	113 (46.1%)	119 (50.6%)	105 (46.3%)
Very difficult	40 (16.3%)	39 (16.6%)	42 (18.5%)
Clinical depression	53 (22.4%)	53 (22.6%)	46 (20.3%)
Clinical anxiety	53 (22.4%)	53 (22.6%)	46 (20.3%)



Through the winter...

- Key question: do depression and anxiety increase as income goes down:
 - Are higher incomes generally associated with lower depression & anxiety scores
 - For individuals, do their anxiety and depression scores improve as their personal income increases

<https://rpubs.com/danielnettle/ccol>



The York Cost of Living Research Group

For news, events, blogs:

<https://www.york.ac.uk/policy-engine/cost-of-living/>

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 - [@ruthpatrick0](#) - Dr Ruth Patrick
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