

## **Food Poverty in the UK– some facts, figures and in insights**

### **Food Standards Agency**

Food poverty is the inability of individuals and households to secure an adequate and nutritious diet. It can affect those living on low incomes, with limited access to transport and poor cooking skills.

### **The Food Foundation**

Food poverty affects millions of children across the UK. Policy-makers need to step up create programmes and initiatives to ensure that everyone has enough healthy food on their plate.

The UK is a wealthy country. Yet millions of people across our nation are facing a daily struggle to feed themselves and/or their children says Anna Taylor, Executive Director at the Food Foundation think tank. “There’s an idea that rich countries face an obesity problem and poor countries face a food poverty problem,” she explains. “But food poverty is a global issue — so it’s a much more complicated picture than that.”

The UK’s food poverty statistics are both worrying and depressing. The stats are linked to wages remaining low while costs go up, and individuals falling through gaps in the benefits system.

A new Food Foundation affordability report highlights that 3.7 million children in the UK are likely to be unable to afford a healthy and balanced diet, as defined by the government’s Eatwell Guide. It also notes that the poorest households in the UK — those earning less than £15,860 — would have to spend 42% of their disposable income to meet the dietary recommendations outlined in the guide.

### **The Big Issue**

Up to 14.5 million people were in poverty before the pandemic, the Government estimates, when taking housing costs into account. With the UK population currently at nearly 67 million, that’s one in every four or five people.

But the economic impact of the pandemic has pushed another 700,000 people into hardship, according to the Legatum Institute. That includes 120,000 children. This means more than 15 million people are living in poverty in the UK – 23 per cent of the population.

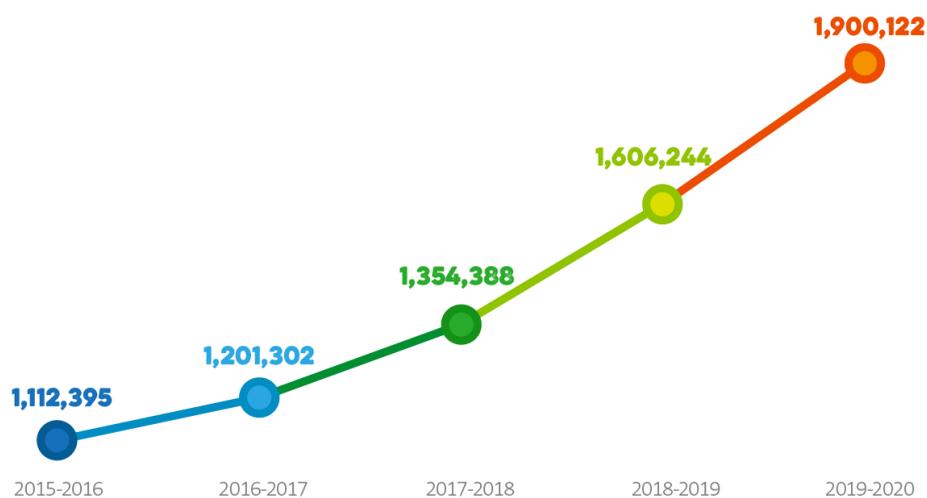
### **Eco and Beyond**

The official government poverty measure is a European standard. If your income is 60% less than your country’s median income you are classed as in poverty. It’s thought that 7.3% of the UK population are in poverty. This translates to 4.6 million people living without enough food on a daily basis.

Food poverty is increasingly common because food is often in the ‘flexible’ budget. Rent, electricity and water bills are usually fixed, but there’s wiggle room for the food budget. Families often have to choose to go without food in order to pay these other bills.

## Trussell Trust

In the last five years, food bank use in our network has increased by 74%



## Primary Reasons for Referral to Trussell Trust food banks in 2019-20

