

Policy Briefing

Food, Child poverty and Health

National Context

Foodbanks

- The last few years have seen rising numbers of foodbanks and emergency parcels being distributed across the UK. The Trussell Trust Foodbank Network is the largest and most high profile network of local food bank projects, but there are also a range of independent food banking initiatives.
- Since 2010 coalition government has introduced welfare reforms, including: caps on levels of entitlement, the 'spare room subsidy' being introduced to housing benefit, longer waiting periods between unemployment and benefit eligibility, and the establishment of local welfare assistance to replace the discretionary social fund.
- In 2012 UK Prime Minister David Cameron described food bank provision as emblematic of the 'big society', and in 2013 employment minister Lord David Freud argued that increased food bank use could be explained by supply of free food, rather than increased demand.
- Research commissioned by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and published in February 2014 found that:
 - need for food aid was increasing, and that there was no evidence that the growth of food banks was supply-driven
 - Visiting food banks was found to be a strategy of last resort and based on reports by providers often precipitated by income 'crises' brought on by problems with or a loss of social security payments, low income and household debt.

Nutrition and Health

- Data from the Health and Social Care Information Centre showed the number admitted to hospital with malnutrition in England and Wales had risen by 19% from 5,469 to 6,520 over the last year

Child Poverty in Blackburn with Darwen

- The Child Poverty Act of 2010 pledges that by 2020, no more than 10% of children should be living in families whose income is less than 60% of median household income (before housing costs). In 2011/12, 17% of children in the UK were in poverty according to this definition.
- In 2011, 10,390 children in Blackburn with Darwen, or 26.0% of the total, were 'in poverty', down from 26.8% in 2010.
- Child poverty is highest in Shadsworth with Whitebirk (43.7%), Sudell (40.0%), Wensley Fold (34.8%), Ewood (32.6%) and Higher Croft (32.6%). See table over page for details.
- In all but 8 wards locally child poverty is higher than the national rate of 17%

Foodbank

- Between the start of July 2013 and the end of June 2014 Blackburn Foodbank distributed 3,362 vouchers which provide three meals a day for three days for all members of a family.
- These vouchers covered food provision for 7,460 people, providing three days worth of food.
- However the vouchers were not distributed evenly through the 23 electoral wards of the Borough with the number of vouchers varying from just 2 in East Rural Ward to 586 in Wensley fold.
- The number of people for whom the vouchers provided meals also varied, from 4 in East Rural to 1,178 in Shadsworth with Whitebirk.

Foodbank, deprivation and poverty

- In Blackburn with Darwen there is a strong connection between the level of deprivation and the average number of vouchers per household in the wards of the Borough
- There is a strong link between unemployment and use of Foodbank vouchers by ward
- There is a strong association between the number of foodbank vouchers and the level of child poverty.

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Blackburn Foodbank data
July 2013 to June 2014 by
Ward

2013/14 Food Bank

Ward	JSA Rate Sep 13	Vouchers	People	Rate/resi	Rate/ Household	IMD	BEFORE HSNG COSTS	AFTER HSNG COSTS
Shadsworth with Whitebirk	7.8	436	1178	138.4	130.8	62.05	27.95%	42.75%
Audley	5.7	198	413	45.0	63.0	55.69	30.92%	44.99%
Wensley Fold	8.6	586	1135	153.8	196.6	55.27	28.61%	42.62%
Sudell	6	132	370	52.6	41.9	50.85	24.61%	38.33%
Queen's Park	5.4	182	464	68.3	73.8	47.86	26.79%	39.83%
Bastwell	5.8	77	153	19.9	36.3	47.65	30.45%	44.42%
Mill Hill	6	369	770	120.6	127.0	45.85	22.80%	35.36%
Higher Croft	4.5	185	457	58.3	59.2	42.21	21.23%	33.36%
Shear Brow	4.5	116	153	19.3	49.3	42.16	24.99%	37.21%
Ewood	4.8	410	949	137.0	135.7	40.05	25.11%	38.32%
Earcroft	4.5	43	104	24.0	22.1	38.07	16.35%	26.13%
Little Harwood	3.9	92	145	21.5	37.8	35.95	27.58%	40.84%
Meadowhead	4	98	246	42.8	39.8	31.50	18.65%	29.76%
Corporation Park	4.7	249	356	48.4	111.5	31.18	23.94%	35.71%
Sunnyhurst	4	39	76	12.3	14.6	26.96	16.70%	26.26%
Marsh House	3.6	37	86	13.4	13.3	22.12	11.15%	17.86%
Whitehall	1.8	7	11	2.7	4.0	16.32	16.16%	25.06%
Roe Lee	2.3	52	117	19.1	20.1	15.19	13.18%	20.93%
East Rural	1.1	2	4	2.1	2.4	11.12	5.19%	8.49%
Livesey with Pleasington	1.7	24	175	26.3	8.5	9.95	3.15%	5.22%
Fernhurst	1	18	61	10.3	8.1	9.53	5.83%	9.45%
Beardwood with Lammack	1.5	8	33	5.5	3.7	8.87	10.49%	16.63%
North Turton with Tockholes	1	2	4	0.9	1.1	7.63	5.23%	8.50%
Total	4.4	3362	7460	50.6	58.6			

Key

JSA rate - % of economically active residents in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance

Vouchers – number of vouchers issued by Foodbank; each voucher is for three meals for three days for all persons in the household

People - the number of people in households where vouchers were issued

Rate/Resi – the number of people (as above) divided by the number of residents in the ward

Rate/household – the number of vouchers divided by the number of households in the ward

IMD – the Index of Multiple Deprivation score for the ward

Before Housing Costs – the percentage of children living below the poverty line before housing costs

After housing costs – the percentage of children living in poverty after housing costs have been taken into account.