

**Západočeská univerzita v Plzni**  
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**Bakalářská práce**

**The Phenomenon of Food Banks in Britain after 2010**

**Michal Milota**

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**Bakalářská práce**

**The Phenomenon of Food Banks in Britain after 2010**

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*Vedoucí práce:*

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracoval samostatně a použil jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

*Plzeň, duben 2021*

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## Poděkování

Tímto bych rád poděkoval své vedoucí bakalářské práce PhDr. Alici Tihelkové, Ph.D. za věnovaný čas, cenné rady a ochotu při psaní práce.

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# 1 Introduction

This bachelor's thesis deals with Britain's social issues, particularly the recent phenomenon involving the rise of food banks. The topic of this thesis was selected in order to clarify the situation regarding food banks with respect to the social problems in Britain.

The objectives of the thesis are to describe and investigate the reasons of the specific social situation in Britain. Food banks are organizations that respond to the situation of the community and give them support accordingly when they are in food crisis. Food banks provide three kinds of assistance, which are - food donations, food vouchers, and some even provide additional support.

Food banks are primarily concerned with donating food to people in poverty. The public gathers and donates food in many places, such as churches, schools, businesses or supermarkets where the non-perishable, in-date food is stored. Subsequently, the food that is collected is divided into emergency food parcels by more than 28,000 volunteers and then is given to people that appear in crisis.

The second type of support for people in crisis are food gift vouchers, which are based on how the person's situation is assessed by workers who are professionals, such as health visitors, staff at schools and social workers. They identify people who need their help and a food voucher is issued to them. These packages received by people in need of help are nutritionally balanced and consist of non-perishable food from their local food bank.

Food banks help people in crisis to lift themselves out of poverty and offer various other services, such as debt advice, mental health support or benefit guidance. To assist those in need, food banks rely on the generosity of their local communities. [1]

In recent years, there has been an increased number of food banks set up all over the world. Food banks are non-profit and charitable organizations that distribute food to those that are unable to purchase food. After 2010, Britain has experienced a sharp rise in the number of food banks due to the dramatic increase of food poverty. There are currently over a thousand food banks operating in the country and new ones are opened on a regular basis.

This bachelor's thesis is structured into several parts that will be outlined in the following sentences. The thesis is divided into four parts: an introduction, a theoretical part, a practical part with research, and a conclusion.

The general theoretical part will explain what food banks are, whom they help, how they work in Britain, who is the biggest operator in Britain and who are the most frequent clients. The main task in the practical part will be a research question and finding answers to it. The question is whether the sharp rise in food banks usage is related to the policy of conservative government cuts after 2008 and furthermore whether the increase in food banks use between 2010 and 2020 was due to the government's social policy. The practical part will in addition explain the situation of why people are in a critical social situation, how to reduce the fact that people have to turn to food banks, when they appear in social crisis, how is it associated with the benefit system, and why they have been developing more after 2010 than ever before. The penultimate part of the practical part will focus on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the functioning of food banks. At the end of this section, the summary will be supported by evidence. Each chapter in this section will present a brief summary at the end. The conclusion will include a summary of the research, evidence-based generalization and results.

This bachelor's thesis aims to map the phenomenon of Britain's food banks in relation to the social and economic factors that have contributed to this situation. The research presented in this thesis involved the study of newspaper articles, sociological reports (e.g. *Oxford University Report from Trussell Trust*) and books dealing with Britain's current social issues such as Kayleigh Garthwaite's *Hunger Pains*, Lisa McKenzie's *Getting by* or Jeremy Seabrook's *Cut Out: Living Without Welfare*. In some cases, the sources used are not directly academic texts, but nevertheless they add great value to this work due to their authenticity, because they were written mainly by people who move in this field or are in any way connected with it. Everything related to these topics will be explained in this bachelor's thesis and in connection with research from representatives of food banks.

## 2 Food bank

There are over 2,000 food banks in the UK that deliver food to families in need. Simply put, the definition of a food bank is a supermarket where everything is free. Food banks are available for people who struggle with not having enough money to buy food. Most of the food banks offer emergency food packages for these people with non-perishable and well-balanced food. Food banks get their food from the general public, from those who are better off than those who need it. There are donation points where people give food, which then gets to the food bank and after creating the package reaches the target recipient. Food banks mainly help people out of poverty. [2] All food banks mainly take care of the people around them and their community, as they are already located in all the most accessible places in the UK. For example, FareShare, a food-redistribution charity, delivers thousands of tons of excess food from the food sector to over 2,000 organizations such as homeless shelters, breakfast clubs for children, and women's refuge centres every day, assisting 62,200 people every day. [3]

Why there are now a large number of food banks in Britain will be explained and examined in the practical part. But it is necessary to briefly mention what are the reasons for the creation of more food banks and especially the fact that people have to go to them. In short - one of the problems is low wages with a rapid rise in the cost of living, a phenomenon of working poverty. The United Kingdom boasts high employment and is one of the 10 richest countries in the world. However, this does not mean that no one will live in poverty. Most of the large numbers of newly created job positions in the private sector are poorly paid jobs for unskilled labour; these positions are typically created only for part-time jobs or for so-called *zero-hour contract*, when it is an employment contract without fixed working hours. [4] Britain's economy produces annually ca. £2,000,000 in GDP. [5] The magazine Economist explains:

“Real wages are lower than a decade ago. The government may crow about unemployment being at its lowest since the 1970s, but pay growth is at its weakest since the Napoleonic wars.”<sup>1</sup>

Low incomes then fall on housing, which is becoming more expensive in Britain, mainly because houses are being built for more affluent investors than for poorer people. Another

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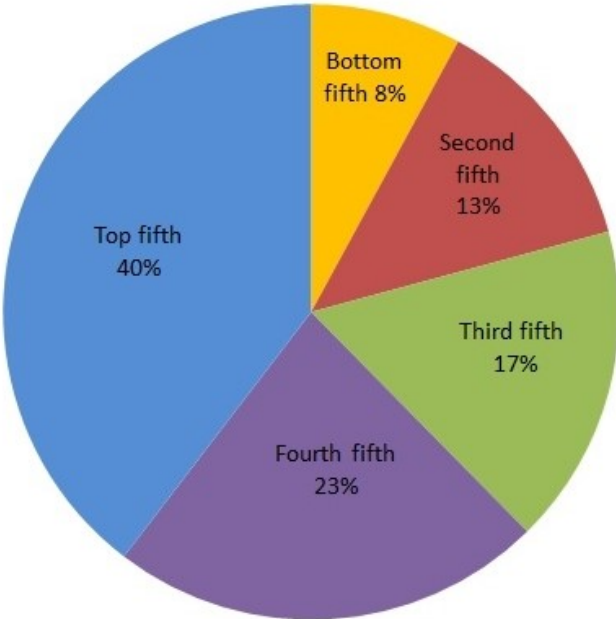
<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://www.economist.com/britain/2018/09/06/britains-unemployment-is-ultra-low-but-its-wages-are-ultra-measly>



problem is the rise in energy prices. And yet another problem concerns the government cuts, which started after 2008 and at the beginning of the Cameron government. Chapter 3.3 will explain in more detail several reasons and point to specific cases of people who have been affected by delayed benefits or so-called in-work benefits, where people work but still do not have enough money for all their needs and must receive benefits. [6]

One of the biggest problems in the United Kingdom is income inequality. In comparison to other developing nations, the UK has a very high degree of income inequality. The majority of families in the United Kingdom have net earnings that are less than the national average (£34,200 in 2018). The growth in real income for the richest fifth has risen by 4.7% and conversely poorest fifth has seen a 1.6% drop in salary. [7] That is why income inequality is also one of the circumstances affecting the operation of food banks.

In the following graph, it is possible to see how incomes are distributed among households in the UK. The poorest fifth in population receives just 8% of total income, while the richest fifth receives 40%.



**Figure 1.** How is income shared in the UK?  
Source: <https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/scale-economic-inequality-uk>

## 2.1 Food banks and their activities in Britain

The activities of food banks vary from place to place, they respond to the needs of their community and support local people in crisis. One of the largest organizations operating food banks in the UK is called the Trussell Trust and their network includes more than 1,200 food banks. Trussell Trust's network of food banks offers emergency food and an assistance to those in need. The Trussell Trust provides three kinds of assistance to support people in crisis. It includes food donations, food vouchers and eventually additional support. The following paragraphs will explain how they operate in these directions in more depth.

This paragraph will deal with food donations. The public donates non-perishable, in-date food to a number of outlets, including schools, churches, and businesses, as well as grocery donation points. More than 28,000 volunteers sort inspected food into emergency food packets, which are then delivered to those in need. [8] The public donates over 90% of the food that Trussell Trust food banks distribute. Asda, Sainsbury's, and Waitrose all encourage food bank donations in-store. Tesco has collaborated with both the Trussell Trust and FareShare to operate twice-yearly three-day collections in dozens of its stores across the country, enabling customers to contribute a foodbank item for local people in need. In July 2015, Tesco's food bank donation raised enough food to make 3.6 million meals. [9]

Food vouchers are also one of the most important types of support provided by food banks. People in need are identified by care providers such as health visitors, school teachers, and social services, who then give them a food bank voucher. This ensures that customers will receive a three-day food bank parcel from the nearest food bank, which is nutritionally healthy and non-perishable. [10]

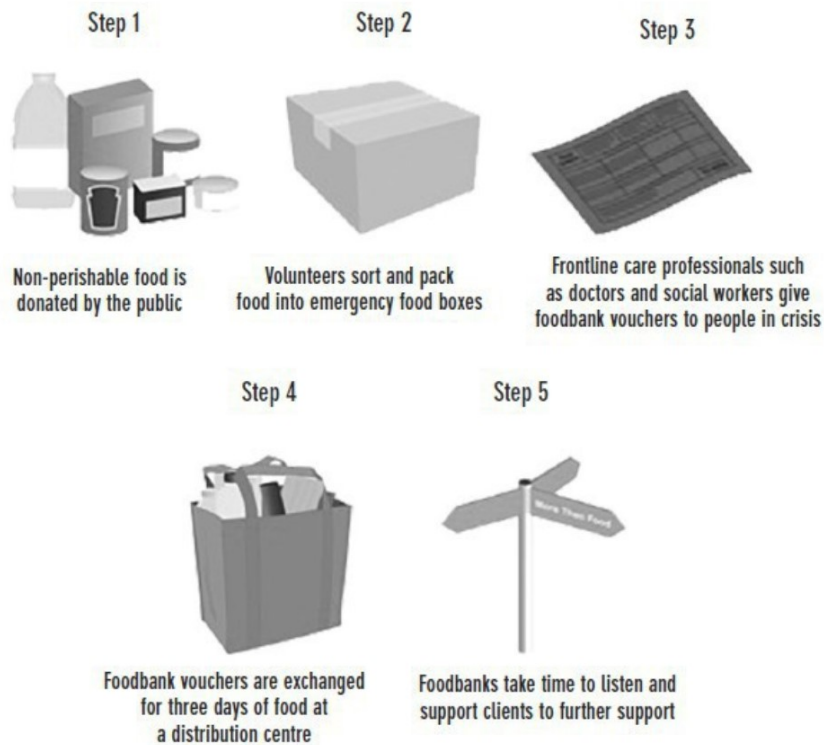
One of the services provided by food banks is additional support. The Trussell Trust's food bank network helps people break away from hunger by offering extra resources to help people overcome their crises so they will not need a food bank again. This may include topics like debt advice, mental health care, and assistance with insurance. To assist those in need, food banks depend on the assistance of their local populations. [11] Hunger in the United Kingdom is caused by a lack of funds for basic necessities. The Trussell Trust funds and facilitates food banks offer supportive and realistic assistance to individuals in need so that they can address their problems and avoid having to use a food bank again. They offer a range of services to help people get over the crisis point in the future to be able to afford essentials, like food. [12]

## **2.2 The biggest operator in Britain**

The largest of the leading food bank organizations in the UK is called the Trussell Trust and they stay at the forefront of the rise of food aid, and it is a Christian charity. This organisation was founded in 1997. In 2009, only 28 food banks were included. But the numbers have risen higher and higher since then, and in the year 2014 it was more than 400 food banks included in their network delivering food packages to around 800,000 people in 2013/14. [13]

The Trussell Trust supports a national network of food banks who work together to deliver emergency food and assistance to people who are trapped in hunger, as well as fight for reform to eliminate the need for food banks in the United Kingdom. [14] Most of the food banks are part of the Trussell Trust foodbank network. Most of these food bank networks also have various partners, and the Trussell Trust is associated with the largest ones, such as Sainsbury's, L'Oréal, Tesco or Waitrose. Of course, not all food banks belong to the Trussell Trust, some of them are independent and take care of themselves and also provide food packages. [15]

Trussell Trust is an organisation that offers three days' emergency food to help people in crisis in the UK. Social workers, health visitors or school's liaison officers help them to receive food from over 400 food banks. And how does an organisation like the Trussell Trust work? The service of a Trussell Trust foodbank is divided into five phases. The food bank procedure works as follows, as it is written in succession – food is donated, the sorted and stored, then people are tested by frontline professionals, vouchers are brought to a food bank and exchanged for three days of emergency food and finally, people are guided to the More Than Food service for additional assistance. Additional programs, such as debt and welfare advice, are being located within Trussell Trust food banks. [16] In the following figure on the next page are five stages of operation of food bank, described in detail.



**Figure 2.** The five stages in the operation of Trussell Trust foodbanks  
 Source: Garthwaite, Kayleigh. *Hunger Pains: Life inside Foodbank Britain*. Britain: Policy Press, 2016; p. 38

The number of vouchers collected by the food bank network is counted, and one person can receive multiple vouchers over the course of a year. According to the charity, the average person who uses the food banks needs two coupons a year. [17]

## 2.3 Who are Britain's poor?

In this chapter, it will be explained which people visit food banks. Most people think that only people lacking the basic means of survival visit food banks, which is the case, but at the same time food banks are visited by people who have lost their entitlement to benefits or those who simply work but do not earn enough money for basic needs.

In fact, people turn to food banks as a last resort after benefit cuts, sanctions, debt, and low pay have finally taken their toll. But there are also people who abuse food banks - they are those who are addicted to drugs and may not even be trying to find a job. There may be others who try to take food packages for children, but do not have children at all, but these are only very rare cases. [18]

The question of why people come to food banks was answered by one of the foodbank managers. Her answer was:

“Oh, it varies considerably. Some people because they've lost their job and they haven't got any benefits. Some people haven't even thought about the benefits system because they're used to supporting themselves, they're using their savings so they come [to the foodbank] when they come to the end of that and it's “What am I going to do?” We've had a few people in tears because of that. They've never had to ask for anything, they've never been on benefits and they're a bit distraught and ashamed.”<sup>2</sup> (Angie, foodbank manager) [19]

Food banks are used because of different purposes, including the bedroom tax, low-waged or insecure job, and the balancing of paying for electricity, food, and day-to-day expenses. Primary causes of referral to Trussell Trust foodbanks are gradual as they go from the most common reasons to the least frequent – benefit delays as the most common reason, low incomes, benefit changes, debts, homelessness, unemployed, sickness, domestic violence, delayed wages, child holiday meals, refused crisis loan. [20]

Delayed benefits are the most common reason why people have to go to food banks to receive food or food vouchers. A significant percentage of foodbank referrals are caused by individuals not receiving benefits to which they are eligible timewise, or by any other time lags of people receiving their welfare payments. Foodbank consumers were more likely to be struggling with long-term financial issues, such as low-wage jobs, debt accumulation, and living in places of multiple deprivation, both of which made it impossible to access nutritious, safe food. However, as benefits were postponed or sanctioned, these issues were even worse. [21]

Another reason why people have to visit food banks are benefit changes. Benefit changes apply to issues that arise as a result of a reduction in people's welfare payments, including whether benefits are halted until they are reassessed. The elimination of the Social Fund and the implementation of public welfare services, the reassessment of Incapacity Benefit claims, reforms to regulate Housing Benefit spending, and the introduction of a new benefits conditionality and sanction' scheme are all examples of dramatic improvements to the benefit framework. [22] One of the reasons why people also lose money and do not have food are

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<sup>2</sup> Available at: Garthwaite, Kayleigh. *Hunger Pains: Life inside Foodbank Britain*. Great Britain: Policy Press, 2016; p. 82

stopped benefits for some time due to circumstances. In January 2013, one mother from Gloucester confirmed that her son did not want to go to school because she did not have enough money to buy lunch for him. When the school's liaison officer checked their family, they found that they really had almost nothing to eat at home, and it was because their father had left them and their benefits had been suspended due to these circumstances. [23]

Long-term income insecurity is one of the reasons why people use food banks as well. Anyone who is struggling to pay the bills due to a lack of resources is considered as a person with low-income. Since there is no financial safety net, low-income people are more vulnerable to a seemingly minor crisis tipping them off the edge. This may include individuals who are employed or on benefits, for whom a temporary inconvenience, such as a broken boiler or the need to purchase school uniforms, will leave them unable to eat. Aside from the immediate financial crises, many people spoke of the long-term effects of surviving on a low wage. [24]

There are many reasons why people turn to food banks and “tipping points” are one of them. Food banks are not visited only by people who have persistently a poor salary. People who go through life-changing events or "tipping points," such as bereavement, work loss, or relationship breakup, can end up at a food bank. [25]

This chapter will further explain, according to various figures, which people are in poverty, depending on employment status. According to figures from the year 2012 in the United Kingdom, it describes the composition of those living in deprivation poverty based on the individual's work status. About half of those living in poverty are employed, with 39% working full-time and 13% working part-time. Unemployed people make up the second highest number of individuals in poverty, accounting for 12% of all adults in poverty, closely followed by those who are sick or disabled (11 percent). Many that are responsible for their families or home account for 10% of those living in poverty. [26] The figure on the next page shows the percentage of the poor according to their employment status.

**Figure 3.** Who are the poor? UK: 2012

Source: Breadline Britain: THE RISE OF MASS POVERTY (Chapter 3)

Employment status	Percentage of all the poor
In full-time work	39%
In part-time work	13%
Unemployed <sup>3</sup>	12%
Permanently sick/disabled	11%
Looking after family/home	10%
Retired	9%
Student	6%
All	100%

The fact that a child may also be poor in his life may also be based on the fact that he/she comes from a family that is in poverty. When a family is poor, it affects the child's chances of life overall. It is a fact that children born in poor households are more likely to experience poverty than those born in a higher-income family. Evidence shows that the primary cause of disadvantaged children being poor adults are social factors.

Intergenerational mobility in the United Kingdom has been especially low in recent years. Children's earnings are correlated with their parents' earnings to some extent in all countries, although the difference between countries is high. [27] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), headquartered in Paris, compared a son's earnings to his father's earnings across the thirty-four member countries of the organization. [28] The United Kingdom (along with the United States) has the greatest correlation, with fifty percent of the economic benefit that high-earning fathers had over low-earning fathers passing on to their sons; by comparison, the advantage passed on from father to son in the Nordic countries is much smaller, with Denmark's advantage falling to fifteen percent. Inequalities of opportunity remain profoundly rooted in the United Kingdom. According to the OECD, social context has an important effect on educational attainment. The United Kingdom (along with the United States) was again among the countries where socioeconomic history had the greatest effect on educational success, with the Nordic countries having a poorer relationship. People

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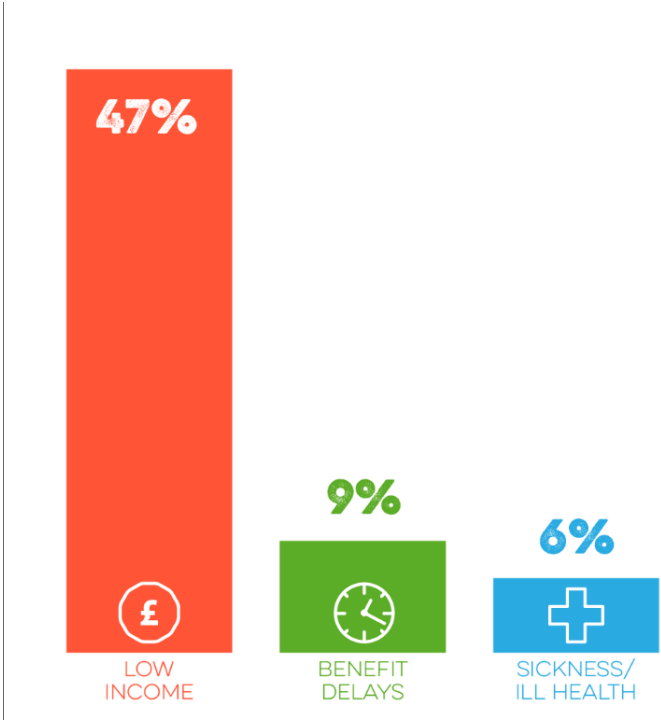
<sup>3</sup> The unemployed are those working but looking and available for work.

with higher educational credentials are much less likely to be poor; only over half of those with little or no qualifications are poor. But it is not all about education, because it is not the only reason for any of the differences in childhood poverty and the increased poverty in adulthood. [29]

People who want to visit a food bank and get some gift in the form of food must be checked by agency staff or care professionals such as social workers or police officers. [30] The Trussell Trust’s chairman, Chris Mould said regarding people who visit the food banks of their organization:

“We’re seeing people from all kinds of backgrounds turning to foodbanks. Working people coming in on their lunchbreaks, mums who are going hungry to feed their children, people whose benefits have been delayed and people who are struggling to find enough work.”<sup>4</sup>

The following figure shows the primary reasons why people need the help of food banks. [31]



**Figure 4.** Primary reasons for referral to Trussell Trust network of food banks in April to September 2020  
Source: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/mid-year-stats/>

<sup>4</sup> Available at: Lansley, Stewart & Mack, Joanna. Breadline Britain: The Rise of Mass Poverty. Britain: Oneworld Publications, 2015; Kindle edition – chapter 8, location 2934 of 5179



### 2.3.1 Circumstances of people referred to food banks

This subchapter will describe the situation and the circumstances that affect public living in Britain, given the economic situation. Most of the information and research results here will be published mainly on the basis of the Trussell Trust and their research led by Dr Rachel Loopstra.

The Trussell Trust commissioned Dr Rachel Loopstra of the University of Oxford to lead an 18-month research project. Dr Rachel Loopstra said:

"These findings show clear evidence of sanctions being linked to economic hardship and hunger."<sup>5</sup>

It is the single national report on food bank utilization ever conducted. The data gathered on ages, income levels, working environments, health, and food poverty from more than 400 households referred to food banks provides unprecedented new detail on both the backgrounds of people referred to food banks and the main drivers of food bank use. [32]

Almost half of households reported that their incomes were very unsteady, from week to week and sometimes from month to month. According to a study from the Trussell Trust, 78% were not sure that they would be adequately provided with food (they sometimes had nothing to eat, even for several days). It may in addition be related to the fact that, according to the study, 3 out of 5 households saw an increase in prices and overall spending - 25% said it was mainly due to increased food prices. [33]

Housing is also a big problem in Britain. 28% of those who reported that they were facing increased costs said that it was mainly due to rising housing costs, it is mainly rent and energy that went up in price. A situation where people do not even have the money to eat normally, despite trying to work and make money, is very demanding and can additionally affect mental health. Certain families and households were even in debt and had problems repaying. According to studies it was difficult to pay minimum monthly repayments on outstanding loans for 1 in 3 households. [34]

It is not common in the United Kingdom for people to have money for all basic needs. It is common, that work offers a way out of poverty, but low incomes and high housing costs and caring for children can still lead someone into poverty. There are 6.7 million working

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<sup>5</sup> Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-37875675>

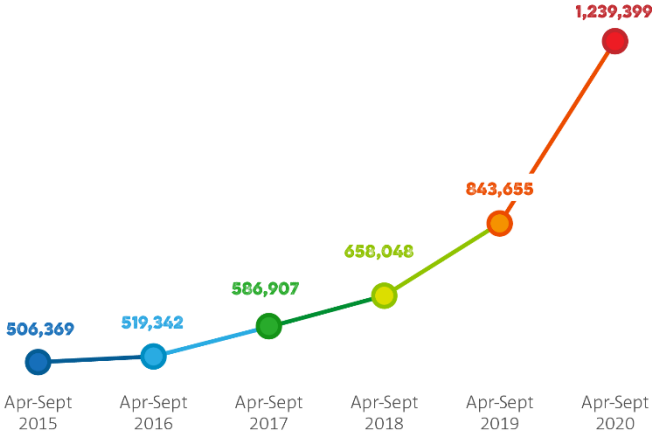
people in the UK who still live in poverty. More than half of those who are poor now live in households where they work. This phenomenon is called “working poverty” and more than half of all households in working poverty (56%) have a worker earning less than the Living Wage; for some, the problem is more about the number of hours spent than the pay. These jobs are low-wage, low-skilled, inflexible, unstable occupations that lead to in-work poverty. [35]

A large number of people included in this study further reported that their benefits they were supposed to receive had been delayed. Various of them even waited up to 6 weeks, a minority even longer and it can be very overwhelming for them. Two out of every three households have just experienced an ‘income shock’, with the majority seeing significant increases in housing or food prices. 16% of respondents did not even have any type of income in the last month. [36]

Certain people these days have to face very hard situations in their lives. One mother that was interviewed, described how hard it was for her when she had to take care of her son with very serious medical conditions. She was very surprised when she realised that her Child Tax Credits were reduced by half and without any notifications. She was very badly treated and she said that it was genuinely hard to face this situation, when she was behind her bills and there was no compassion. It was from her own words, that the system had not helped her in any way and that she had been completely ignored. She asked, how families like her can survive. [37]

### 3 Sharp rise of food banks usage in Britain

This chapter will study why food banks saw a sharp increase after 2008 and then between 2010-2020 and whether the increase in the use of food banks is linked to the government's social policy. Due to a research of The Trussell Trust the numbers (people receiving three days' food) are shown – in years 2011-2012 the number of recipients was 128,697 and in years 2013-2014 the number climbed up to 913,138. [38] Since 2010, the numbers of food bank users have grown rapidly over time. The following figure shows how the numbers of emergency food parcels distributed by food banks in the Trussell Trust network increased. [39]



**Figure 5.** Number of emergency food parcels distributed by food banks in the Trussell Trust network  
Source: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/mid-year-stats/>

In chapter 2.4.1 is explained, among other things, the fact that housing and housing costs have become more expensive has had a major impact on people living in poverty. After 2010, council tax benefits have been reduced across the United Kingdom, while rent, gas, and power prices have increased. A quarter of British families, often with children, are unable to pay rent, fuel, or food even while saving £10 per month. The number of families living in poverty will increase as the value of the pound declines and electricity costs and food prices rise. Before they fail to pay their rent, people would go without food and proper heating. In London, nearly half a million children are now living in poverty. The majority of their parents are now renting individually. When their families are evicted or simply relocate because they can no longer

afford the rising rents, the children are often forced to change schools, resulting in the loss of friends. [40]

Thanks to the Trussell Trust network of food banks are known data which show that, especially after 2010, the number of food bank users began to increase radically. Members of the government were aware of this, here are the words from 4<sup>th</sup> November in year 2016 of Jeremy Corbyn, Labour Leader:

“A million people accessed a food bank last year to receive a food parcel; only 40,000 did so in 2010.”<sup>6</sup>

The Trussell Trust distributed more than a million food packets in 2015. This is a substantial increase from the previous year. This means that Jeremy Corbyn's words were not entirely correct, because the fact that over one million food packages were issued, but that does not mean that they were issued to the same number of people. In the financial year 2009-10, 40,898 food packages were distributed, which appears to be the 40,000-number mentioned by Mr Corbyn. [41]

The number of people using the Trussell Trust's network of food banks increased since 2013, when over one million penalties were imposed as a result of reforms to the management of Jobseeker's Allowance. Foodbank use increased by 19 percent between 2013-14 and 2014-15 fiscal years. Researchers discovered that for every ten new sanctions imposed in each quarter of the year, five more adults were sent to local food banks. As the number of people sanctioned decreased, so did the number of food bank users. [42]

The following figure on the next page shows how many food parcels were donated by Trussell Trust food banks from April to September 2020. [43]

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<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-37875675>



**Figure 6.** Number of emergency food parcels given by Trussell Trust food banks in April to September 2020

Source: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/MYS2020-regional-breakdown-map-724x1024.png>

Official government statistics of the use of food banks do not exist. Here are words of Minister for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, David Heath:

"The government does not believe it is possible to keep a record of the number of food banks, nor the potential number of people using them or other types of food aid, without placing unnecessary burdens on volunteers trying to help their communities."<sup>7</sup>

Although the Trussell Trust operates the country's biggest network of food banks and is our best source of evidence, more individuals will be able to receive food contributions on an ad hoc basis from other charities, churches, and drop-in centres. [44]

<sup>7</sup> Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-37875675>

### **3.1 Influence of the 2008 crisis**

In 2008, there was a major economic crisis, which affected a large number of circumstances. The crisis varied from country to country, but it was especially serious in the United Kingdom. It mainly hit the world's banks and stock markets. Income inequality in the UK grew sharply in the years leading up to the financial crash, dropped sharply after the financial crisis, and has been relatively stable since then. [45] During the financial crisis of 2008, the word "austerity" reappeared in the national sphere, but this time with a somewhat different interpretation. After 2010, when the Conservative-led government came to power, the priority was the reduction of the budget deficit. David Cameron became prime minister and social policy began to change throughout the United Kingdom. In comparison to the post-war austerity scheme, which saw material limitations supplemented by rises in benefits, the main Cameronite recipe entailed rolling back the state and cutting Britain's public spending. The largest government cuts since World War II took place in 2010, which mainly included cuts in social security, and the government wanted to achieve around 900,000 jobs in the public sector around 2018. The problem was that government cuts hit the poorest tenth of the population, who had up to 38% reduced incomes in 2010-2015. [46]

Banks crashed in 2008, economies collapsed, and governments had to deal with the aftermath of weeks of economic instability. [47] Even though Britain was the second largest European economy after Germany at the time, they had to save the banks from public spending. As the financial crisis hit, the government declared on October 13th that it would inject £37 billion (\$64 billion) into three main banks. The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) will gain £20 billion, with another £17 billion going to HBOS and Lloyds TSB "upon effective merger", while Barclays will look for an alternative source of £6.5 billion (\$11 billion). [48]

One of the other things that was affected by this crisis in the United Kingdom was child tax credit. It is a state benefit in the United Kingdom that is open to low-wage staff. After the crisis in 2008 and the new government took office after 2010, most of the benefits were changed and reduced. Many benefits have been reduced, tightened, or eliminated after the 2008 economic recession, in an age of permanent austerity, in order to reduce the deficit since the crisis. [49]

All of this has led to a very dramatic increase in people's dependence on food banks, which has risen from 56 in 2010 to 445 in 2015. [50]

### 3.2 Government social policy

One of the main reasons why food banks began to be formed after 2010 is the fact that the government has changed. That year, David Cameron, Conservative leader, became Britain's prime minister. It signified, that the Labour Party had lost its power. His administration pursued a policy agenda informed by technocratic neoliberalism, resulting in austerity-based welfare reduction, quickly departing from his original programme of humanitarian, progressive Conservatism. The change in government and their approach to the people began to have a major impact on the living standards of poorer citizens. A large number of families and households at that time started to face debt, homelessness and dependence on food banks. [51] Part of the welfare reform was the sweeping spending cuts that the Cameron's government was dealing with, it was connected with pointing to a paternalistic view of the poor through the eyes of his government. [52]

The morally charged distinction between the worthy and undeserving poor enjoyed a revival under Thatcher's administration and survived in a muted form under Blair's, but it was only completely resurrected by Cameronite politics. A "broken" and parasitic segment of society whose feckless welfare-dependent lifestyle posed a serious threat to the country's economic well-being conservatism, with the paupers of the past recast as the current underclass. [53]

In comparison to the undeserving poor, Cameronite discourse described a group of people who were considered deserving: "working families who work hard and want to do the right thing," i.e., active, although low-income, people keeping conventional moral principles in mind. Cameron has often manipulated the disparities between the two classes in his speeches, portraying the deserving poor as strivers who are victimized by the inequity of widespread welfare [54]:

"We have, in some ways, created a welfare gap in this country between those living long-term in the welfare system and those outside it. Those within it grow up with a series of expectations: you can have a home of your own, the state will support you whatever decisions you make, you will always be able to take out no matter what you put in. This has sent out some incredibly damaging signals. That it pays not to work. That you are owed something for nothing. It gave us millions of working-age people sitting at home on benefits even before the recession hit. It created a culture of entitlement. And it has led to huge resentment

amongst those who pay into the system, because they feel that what they're having to work hard for, others are getting without having to put in the effort.”<sup>8</sup>

Cameron has been able to frame the case for the proposed welfare reforms, which were mainly aimed at the supposed underclass, by pitting the deserving poor (those working hard and finding freedom from the welfare state) against the undeserving (those feeling entitled to an idle life on state handouts).

Cameron's welfare reform placed a strong focus on hard work as a means of rising from poverty to prosperity, with the proposed public spending cuts framed as a long-overdue scheme “assisting” welfare claimants in transitioning from economic inactivity, which was primarily to blame for their plight, to a re-entry into the labour market, a change that would lead to personal freedom and a significant improvement in their financial situation. Cameron's key message was that hard work pays off in the end [55]:

“This goes to the heart to the country we are trying to build: One based on the principle of something for nothing. Where those who put in, get out ... where hard work is rewarded – where we make work pay. [...] I want lives to go in the right direction. I believe passionately in reducing poverty. And the best route out of poverty is this: work.”<sup>9</sup>

Cameron's welfare policy had a primary goal of significantly reducing disability benefit claimants by eligibility reassessment. The low pay – no pay period of transitioning to and from life on benefits was due to the versatile, seasonal nature of available private-sector employment, making it difficult for benefit applicants to transition from welfare dependency to paying work. The high percentage of food bank users who worked full-time shows a cost-of-living crisis with strong systemic reasons. [56] With the rise of working poverty in the United Kingdom, the proclamation of work as the undisputed road to prosperity needed to be reconsidered. [57]

The Cameron government was making considerable effort to get people to move from benefits to paid work and the use of benefit withdrawal as an enforcement mechanism has been used. Given the severe consequences of some of the related steps (the bedroom tax, workfare schemes) and provided the rise in poverty as a result of Cameron's reforms, the debate is whether abandoning the systemic definition of poverty in favour of a more antiquated

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<sup>8</sup> Available at: <http://conference.uaa.utb.cz/tp2015/FromTheoryToPractice2015.pdf>, p. 38

<sup>9</sup> Available at: <http://conference.uaa.utb.cz/tp2015/FromTheoryToPractice2015.pdf>, p. 39



conception embedded in the Poor Law mentality was the best option for dealing with the problems of twenty-first-century British society, including issues such as poverty, low wages, and precariousness. The civil unrest triggered by Cameron's policies since 2010 is a clear example of how counterproductive such a policy is. [58]

Britain has developed an economic model that is incapable of providing any of its citizens with a fair, collectively defined basic standard of living. [59] It is the system, not the people, that is inaccurate and poverty is much smaller in other nations with similar wealth. [60] There were two different ways to reducing inequality, each of which relied on major changes to the welfare system. The first, under Labour, provided better benefits, especially through more generous tax credits. The coalition's second tactic was to introduce harsher sanctions and lower wages with the aim of "making jobs pay." Both had a huge impact on the lives of the people living in the poverty. [61]

Conservative attempts to decrease the country's budget deficit, which was a result of saving banks from the state budget after the 2008 financial crisis, were more vulnerable in terms of income. The Cameron government's social policy, which was focused on the largest public budget cuts since WWII, has resulted in a dramatic increase in poverty, especially among families with children. While the government argued that the change would encourage citizens to work and make them become less dependent on government assistance, several of the reform's provisions were very cruel for those living in poverty. [62]

According to all this information, figures and statistics, it is clear that there is a strong link between the government cuts made after 2010 and the increase in public attendance of food banks between 2010 and 2020. Also, according to the Trussell Trust, the key factors for people being sent to food banks are benefit delays, bans, and financial problems related to the bedroom tax and the removal of council tax relief, demonstrating the crucial role of welfare policy in growing food bank use. [63]

### **3.3 Reasons for visiting a food bank**

There are many reasons why the public has to turn to food banks. The circumstances underlying these reasons, as well as examples from the lives of people who have experienced it, will be described in this chapter.

Sometimes it happens that the administration proceeds incorrectly in a process called "active job search", and a person can then be deprived of support - this is called benefit

sanctions. Those affected by this problem often have to visit food banks. As mentioned in Chapter 3.2, many people are affected by the change in the social government system - some of them have their benefits delayed. But this does not mean that people who are on benefits do not work. A large number of benefits create so-called *in-work benefits*; this means that the person concerned is working, but their payment cannot cover all their costs and thus they receive another type of assistance, such as a housing allowance. A large number of people who go to food banks are accompanied by a feeling of shame, failure or fear because they do not want others to know about it; however, the government still refuses to be responsible and argue that some food bank users abuse them. Mainly, it is not completely easy to obtain help from a food bank. [64] Members of various groups and networks of food banks comment on the situation, this is the statement on the situation from 31 May 2013 of the Head of Policy for Child Poverty Action Group, Imran Hussain:

“It’s a national scandal that half a million British people are now having to turn to food aid. It’s a problem that has quickly escalated and shows that something has gone badly wrong with the safety net that is supposed to help families in need. It is particularly concerning that more and more of the families seeking food aid are actually in work, but on poverty pay and facing cuts to their tax credits.”<sup>10</sup>

The following paragraphs will describe the different situations of people who have experienced problems with benefits and have been affected by the government's social policy.

As stated in this work, the largest number of people turn to food banks precisely because they have problems with benefits. These people have long term financial problems that accumulate up in debt. The following text from the book written by Kayleigh Garthwaite: *Hunger Pains: Life inside Foodbank Britain* shows the various cases and examples of people whose benefits have been sanctioned.

Why did people get sanctioned? <sup>11</sup>

- A man was sanctioned after he missed an appointment because he took his mother to chemotherapy.

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<sup>10</sup> Available at: <https://www.politics.co.uk/opinion-former/2013/05/31/half-a-million-on-food-aid-is-a-national-scandal/>

<sup>11</sup> Available at: Available at: Garthwaite, Kayleigh. *Hunger Pains: Life inside Foodbank Britain*. Britain: Policy Press, 2016; p. 84

- A woman had an interview which lasted longer than she expected, so she was 10 minutes late for her Jobcentre appointment and was sanctioned for a month.
- A man was sanctioned for being two minutes late, even though he had turned up 15 minutes early but was not allowed to go upstairs to see his advisor until the security guard said so.
- Another man missed an appointment after he travelled to Scotland for a family funeral for four members of his family who had been killed in a car crash by a drunk driver. He was sanctioned, even though he rang the Jobcentre to tell them he would not be there.
- A woman who went on a health and social care course the Jobcentre sent her on was sanctioned for not going to her Jobcentre appointment, even though she was on the course the Jobcentre had sent her on.

The situation of a 27-year-old woman from Albania named Klaudia will be described as a case in point. She arrived in the UK and lived only in a hostel not far from Middlesbrough. She was more or less homeless, but wanted to find an apartment. Klaudia could not speak much English and was in a poor mental condition when Kayleigh Garthwaite, who worked voluntarily at Stockton-on-Tees Food Bank, met her for the first time. However, second time when Kayleigh Garthwaite saw her year later, she was much happier and with a much better level of English. Klaudia studied, received benefits, but once her ESA payment was delayed. Klaudia also had health problems. After a few weeks, she met Kayleigh Garthwaite again and told her that she still had not received her benefits. She described how difficult it is to live without benefits at this time, when she wants to make a living and survive, but at the same time study. [65]

The second is the story of Jessica, who was 23 when Kayleigh Garthwaite met her. She came straight with the fact that she had to come to the food bank on her own and she could not take the bus because she was not able to afford it. Jessica received ESA benefits because she had mental problems that followed her first child being born dead 8 months ago and now, she was pregnant once again. At the time she was at the funeral of her dead child, her entire apartment was robbed and all the last money was withdrawn and the apartment was devastated. Jessica was sanctioned for not attending the Work Focused Interview appointment because her anxieties could not allow her to leave the apartment. Following her sanction, she sought support with her mounting debts and was referred to a food bank. [66] Jessica also described her problems to Kayleigh Garthwaite:

“I haven’t had my fridge or cooker switched on for three weeks, I can’t afford the electric. I sold the telly last week. There was no point keeping it ’cos I couldn’t afford to use it anyway.”<sup>12</sup>

Jessica received help from the food bank and said that she hoped that her difficult period would survive without health problems and, of course, her child.

There are a really large number of people affected by the government's social policy and the cuts, a really large number of them have to come to the food banks for help, but there are other reasons, such as labour market precariousness or rising housing prices.

This paragraph will explain the reasons and figures for labour market precariousness. In the last decade, the number of employees in insecure employment in the UK has increased by nearly 2 million, as employers demand more self-employed workers and rapidly hire staff on casual and zero-hours contracts. According to a study of official data undertaken by John Philpott, a leading labour market economist, more than one in five employees, or 7.1 million individuals, faced uncertain working conditions in 2016 that meant they might lose their jobs at any time, up from 5.3 million in 2006. Precarious work does not always imply low wages or working conditions, but when many employees opt for self-employment or contractual contracts, overall salaries are far lower. Work instability represented a similar danger to people's wellbeing as unemployment – and that expecting a job loss may have a bigger effect than actually experiencing it. This phenomenon, which is increasingly occurring in the UK, also has a major impact on the mental health of the person concerned. [67]

### **3.4 Reduction of the food banks usage**

It is known that there are large gaps in the social security system and there are considerable differences in British people's incomes. This is the reason why a large number of people can pool their experience related to the use of food banks and emergency food aid. There are a large number of studies dealing with this topic. A few groups and organisations deal more specifically with this issue.

Research published by Oxfam, Child Poverty Action Group, Church of England and The Trussell Trust named “Emergency Use Only” interviewed 40 food bank users at seven food

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<sup>12</sup> Available at: Available at: Garthwaite, Kayleigh. Hunger Pains: Life inside Foodbank Britain. Britain: Policy Press, 2016; p. 89

banks of the organization Trussell Trust across the United Kingdom. A few research interviews were added and supported by data from more than 900 food bank recipients. [68]

Research and key results:

- There was an “acute income crisis” by a great amount of people and it was something, what happened and it reduced with a big difference their income and food banks were last help, that could have helped them not to end up without food.
- There are numerous reasons why people appear in an income crisis – it can be sudden loss of income, changes in family or housing problems. The biggest problem by the people interviewed was linked to benefits – they had to wait for them, then there were sanctions and additionally problems with ESA<sup>13</sup> or further missing tax credits
- Information dealing with the various crisis payments and the lacking awareness of them was additionally an inconvenience.
- As a result of sanctions, 19-28% of users had their benefits stopped or reduced, and then 28-34% had to wait for benefit claim, which was postponed indefinitely.
- Thanks to a research, information has been found that deals with the other consequences. A minority of the people interviewed stated that they had problems with illness with mental health. Additionally, a number of them had problems in their relationship, they were not able to work they had lost their job. It is going to be more difficult for people to visit food banks in the future due to the embarrassment that the people feel when going.

Food bank users and who were interviewed had to say that it was sometimes very embarrassing or shameful when they had to use the food bank, but it was their last chance for them to live a normal life, and to try and live a better life without feeling totally lost, when they were in a financial crisis. These food banks are not only trying to ensure that people who are hungry, and need something to eat, but also to improve the system in the country as a whole and avoid such disparities between people's incomes, and also for the system to be a little more

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<sup>13</sup> Employment Support Allowance; Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/what-youll-get>

considerate towards people in need of help. Research and key findings were presented to the All-Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry into Hunger and Food Poverty to debate this topic. [69]

The objective of their effort is to improve access to short-term benefit advances for people waiting for benefits by increasing awareness, then they want to simplify the claim process and one of the objectives is to collect data to improve support needs.

Recommendations for the government:

- Reform sanctions policy and practice
- Clarify communications concerned with sanctions
- Increase access to hardship payments
- Mitigate the impact whilst a sanction is being reconsidered
- Address issues for Housing Benefit
- Improve ESA (Employment and Support Allowance) – claimants should not be without incomes
- Sustain and improve access to emergency financial support
- Improve access to appropriate advice and support

There are people who deal with this topic in more depth, one of them is Rachael Orr, Head of Oxfam's UK Poverty Programme, and her thoughts are that food banks are the last help in crisis of people in need, but this could be prevented by simple policy changes that could significantly reduce food bank use. It is not possible to help people individually, but instead provide to those people a safety net that could help them when they appear in crisis.

One of those people is Alison Garnham, who is Chief Executive of Child Poverty Action Group. Her opinion is that food banks were not on the rise because of the easy choice, but because people did not have money to buy the food, and the reason is in claiming and payment of benefits. Those people are not protected by the system, but they are left with almost nothing to live on.

Politicians need to commit a reform in their system to help those families in order to get short-term advances of benefit payments. The system should be more helpful for people in crisis and not force them into relying on emergency food aid. Through their research, the Trussell Trust wanted to point out that the system should focus more on ensuring that there are not such great differences between people, especially in social security. When people are hungry, they have nothing to eat, then due to the financial crisis, it can grow into housing problems and

mental health problems in general, and therefore pointed out that the anti-poverty bodies dealing with this topic make changes in the welfare system. [70]

### **3.5 Covid-19 pandemic and food banks**

The pandemic that erupted in early 2020 over Covid-19 (coronavirus) has had a major impact on food banks as well. People who have previously had problems with their life situation and money have been and continue to live in poverty. But this crisis gradually began to affect more and more people who had no problems before.

Demand for food banks has risen sharply in the first two weeks as lockdown began in Britain on 23 March 2020. The network of these food banks, of which there are approximately 1,200, reported that 50,000 people were asked for help from food banks in a week to get the package. It is a big problem for people who have children in the household. As from the point of view that the lockdown started and therefore neither parents could work or they had to be with the children at the home office and the employers did not pay full salaries. Numbers show that households that include children have increased interest in food banks. The delivery of food packages for children has more than doubled in the last two weeks of March compared to the same period last year. Food banks recorded a 59 percent increase in use for emergency food assistance between February and March, according to estimates published by the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN), which is 17 times higher than the same timeframe a year earlier.

People who work in food banks and help people in need have said that the government needs to increase support for people who are in real crisis. In their view, it would not be possible for them to sustain an extensive onslaught and demand. They even called on the government to increase subsidies such as the payment of benefits for families with children and the abolition of benefit limits. The government has introduced emergency measures since the beginning of the pandemic, but food banks suggest that, for example, a £ 20 per week increase in universal credit will not be enough for individuals and families in need of help. [71]

There are reports that there was a record spike in the need of food banks at the start of the coronavirus crisis. According to the Trussell Trust, there was a 81% increase in the first half of 2020; they had to deliver many more food packages and 122% more packages to children compared to the current period of 2019 across the UK. The reason is primarily a reduction or loss of income and late payment of benefits. In this situation, it is additionally very difficult for food banks to issue all the packages needed, but they are accepting any help so that they can

still help people in poverty, especially now in times of crisis. That is why a coalition of various organisations and food banks across Britain is calling the government for increased support for those in crisis, for those people it is not enough only to receive food from food banks, but they need the support from government as well. The coalition is additionally trying to ensure that, in general and not only during the coronavirus epidemic, all people should have enough money for what they need in life, because not only during coronavirus but as well in general over the last 5 years, more and more people are asking food banks for help. They furthermore call on the government to treat everyone with dignity and not to forget anyone. They want the government to join forces with organizations and anti-poverty groups. Then they emphasized that the government should create a Coronavirus Emergency Income Support Scheme, which should support individuals and families facing a serious financial risk in these days. [72]

The coalition of those groups has suggested a temporary package, which should include benefits to assist families in raising children, then to extend the suspension of benefit deductions to cover advance payments, any limits on benefits and the support of two child-policy, because this scheme should be beneficial for everyone and the last thing is to ensure local authorities in England, that should provide effective support to individuals and families in crisis. [73]

All those who are interested in this topic, and in any way related to food banks during the pandemic, are fighting for the measures taken by the government to be sensible and considerate, given that those who do not have enough money to meet their basic needs can turn out very badly. They suggest to the government measures that will not be completely devastating for specific citizens. It is important for people in crisis to have certain income and not just depend on food and packages from food banks. Various measures have taken place and people have been much better off, but it has been found that more and more children need this help and that children should as well be protected from poverty and their benefits increased. People have to turn to the authorities for help and it is found that the overall support is simply not yet completely sufficient. This is what Chief executive of The Children's Society Mark Russell said at the times of crisis [74]:

“We want the government to give councils the investment they need, so they can be there to help during these unprecedented times and far beyond. Without it



even more families will have nowhere to turn and could end up facing hunger, extreme poverty and even destitution.”<sup>14</sup>

There should be no major differences between people in support. The package that the government would issue for families with children would be very necessary, because they are at their worst when they lose income during a pandemic, but they still have to pay for housing and food.

Here, we can also see a report from one of the directors of food banks, called Thomas Lawson, who is the Chief Executive Officer at Turn2us<sup>15</sup>. He said the following:

"Food banks across the country have been providing critical support to people in the face of the growing income crisis that we are experiencing as a country. The coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated this and is driving even more people into financial crisis. Our own recent survey shows that one in every eight people cannot afford enough food to feed themselves. Their family incomes are only going to continue to drop. What people need is a Coronavirus Emergency Income Support Scheme, so they have the income they need to put food on the table. The government must make the safety net catch everyone who falls into hardship. Anyone who slips through is a damning indictment of our society."<sup>16</sup>

### **3.5.1 Marcus Rashford MBE**

Recently it has been impossible not to notice how certain personalities have been helping during a pandemic. One of the most successful football players and a representative of the United Kingdom, Marcus Rashford, playing for Manchester United, is as well interested in social problems of the people living in the United Kingdom. He became a political activist during the pandemic. He was awarded by Queen Elizabeth II. for his help and work for people in need, he helped with the delivery of food for vulnerable children. In addition to being a member of the English football team, he received an MBE<sup>17</sup> degree for his activity. He received

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<sup>14</sup> Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/press/food-banks-report-record-spike-need-coalition-anti-poverty-charities-call-for-lifeline>

<sup>15</sup> Turn2us is a national charity that helps people in financial hardship to gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and support services.

<sup>16</sup> Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/press/food-banks-report-record-spike-need-coalition-anti-poverty-charities-call-for-lifeline>

<sup>17</sup> MBE – Member of the British Empire

this title during his birthday decorations, where he was rewarded with key helpers for their efforts to fight during the Covid-19 pandemic. [75]

Marcus Rashford became an ambassador of FareShare<sup>18</sup> in March 2020 during the pandemic. FareShare released an urgent Covid-19 call for donations, food, and volunteers at the onset of the coronavirus epidemic, in preparation for the pandemic's effects on vulnerable populations. As lockdown and various measures began to be implemented, FareShare had to prepare for complications and anticipate that there would be more interest in their services.

FareShare's work is to reduce hunger in the country's most disadvantaged populations, including assisting to vulnerable children at risk of hunger during the summer vacation. Marcus collaborated with FareShare and made many major financial contributions to ensure that needy children will continue to receive food from FareShare, while also urging his millions of fans to contribute and support the charity. Marcus Rashford has raised enough money to enable FareShare to distribute over 12.3 million meals for children and families and he raised awareness of child hunger in the United Kingdom. FareShare and Marcus Rashford cooperate and help to tackle childhood hunger in the UK. [76]

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<sup>18</sup> FareShare is the UK's longest running food redistribution charity.; Available at: <https://fareshare.org.uk/what-we-do/our-history/>

## 4 Conclusion

Food banks have been a big trend in the UK for the last 10 years. They are being approached by more and more people in financial difficulty, to whom they provide food packages and other types of assistance, such as financial advice. The purpose of this bachelor's thesis was to shed light on the situation and examine whether there is a connection between the social policy of the government and the growth of food banks between 2010-2020. Thanks to the books and newspaper articles studied, it was possible to explain many of the phenomena that are associated with this topic.

The bachelor's thesis provided the information about the character and purpose of Britain's food banks, about their largest operator in the UK, as well as about what kind of people seek them out. Furthermore, the aforementioned increase in food banks after the global financial crisis after year 2008 and the subsequent change of government in 2010 in the United Kingdom and its impact on the growth of food banks are examined. By mentioning the specific examples of people whose lives were affected by issues with benefits in chapter 3.3, originality is added to this bachelor's thesis. Furthermore, the thesis also mentions the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on food banks. At the end of the bachelor's thesis, in chapter 3.4, a brief summary is provided of the views of groups and organizations created by food bank operators in order to reduce the use of food banks.

As mentioned in chapters 3.1 and 3.2, banks in Britain had to be rescued after the 2008 crisis, and the government decided to rescue them from public funds; subsequently, its social policy was radically changed to include substantial benefit cuts to motivate people to work. However, this had a dramatic impact on the part of the public reliant on benefits. People who were in a poor financial situation were even more severely affected and this led to deepening poverty. There are, of course, other reasons, such as the precariousness of the labour market, where people in the UK are becoming more and more employed for shorter periods of time and positions being paid less. The fact that people in Britain are in a worse financial situation is also affected by rising housing prices and associated costs, where people are not able to pay for everything while satisfying their basic living needs. As a result, a large part of Britain's population has been affected by benefit cuts and by the welfare reform. Some members of the public were in such a situation that they were unable to feed their children, let alone themselves, and accumulated debt.

Appendices have also been added to this bachelor's thesis, showing, for instance, a specific story of a person who had to visit a food bank, or an example of what may be included in a package from a food bank.

The work on finding out whether the government had an impact on the growing demand for food banks in Britain has definitely proved interesting and illuminating. It has helped me to understand the people who find themselves in a similar situation, but also enabled me to gain a deeper insight into life in Britain in general.

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## 7 Abstract

The bachelor's thesis entitled *The Phenomenon of Food Banks in Britain after 2010* deals with the question of whether the increase in food banks between 2010-2020 was caused by the government's social policy. The thesis describes specific examples of people living in poverty, in a social crisis, have problems with the payment of housing and related costs, and then have to turn to food banks for help to meet their basic living needs. The work also highlights the views of people who work for food banks. The bachelor's thesis is divided into two main parts. The first part describes what food banks are, how they work, what they offer, their development, who is the largest operator in the United Kingdom, and why people need to turn to food banks for help. The second part deals with the government's social policy and whether it is associated with the growth of food banks. This part also includes specific examples of clients who found themselves in a situation where the food bank was their last hope and then proposals from food bank companies to reduce the use of food banks. In the second chapter, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the situation in Britain is also discussed. In conclusion, the connection between the government's social policy and the growth of food banks between 2010 and 2020 is confirmed.

**Keywords:** food banks, poverty, social crisis, benefits, housing crisis, government's social policy, Covid-19

## 8 Resumé

Bakalářská práce s názvem *Fenomén potravinových bank ve Velké Británii po roce 2010* se zabývá otázkou, zda nárůst potravinových bank mezi lety 2010-2020 byl způsoben sociální politikou vlády. V práci jsou popsány konkrétní příklady lidí žijících v chudobě, nacházejí se v sociální krizi, mají problémy s placením bydlení a nákladů s tím spojených a musejí se poté obracet s prosbou o pomoc na potravinové banky, aby naplnili své základní životní potřeby. V práci jsou zvýrazněny i pohledy lidí, kteří pracují pro potravinové banky. Bakalářská práce je rozdělena na dvě hlavní části. První část popisuje to, co potravinové banky jsou, jak fungují, co nabízejí, jejich vývoj, kdo je největší provozovatel ve Velké Británii, a proč se lidé musí na potravinové banky s žádostí o pomoc obracet. Druhá část se zabývá sociální politikou vlády a tím, zda je spojená s nárůstem potravinových bank, konkrétní příklady klientů, kteří se ocitli v situaci, že potravinová banka byla jejich poslední naděje, a nakonec návrhy ze společností potravinových bank ke zredukování využívání potravinových bank. V druhé kapitole je na konci také rozebraný vliv pandemie Covid-19 na situaci ve Velké Británii. V závěru je potvrzeno propojení mezi sociální politikou vlády a nárůstem potravinových bank mezi lety 2010-2020.

**Klíčová slova:** potravinové banky, chudoba, sociální krize, dávky, krize v bydlení, sociální politika vlády, Covid-19

## 9 Appendix



### Josh's Story

After a troubled childhood, the food bank welcomed Josh when his life went downhill.

Source: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/what-we-do/real-stories/josh-story/>



### Marcus Rashford's work with FareShare

Source: <https://fareshare.org.uk/marcus-rashford/>





### **What's in a food parcel?**

#### **A typical food parcel includes:**

- Cereal
- Soup
- Pasta
- Rice
- Tinned tomatoes/ pasta sauce
- Lentils, beans and pulses
- Tinned meat
- Tinned vegetables
- Tea/coffee
- Tinned fruit
- Biscuits
- UHT milk
- Fruit juice

Food banks will also provide essential non-food items like toiletries and hygiene products where they can.

Source: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/emergency-food/food-parcel/>

## **Nine in 10 councils in England see rise in people using food banks**

**Local authorities reveal devastating toll of coronavirus on households who have struggled to keep a roof over their heads**



Photography source: Wesley Hall Community Centre food bank in Leicester, used everyday by locals for supplies and a hot meal. Photograph: Fabio De Paola/The Guardian

A rise in the use of food banks and an increase in family disputes requiring mediation has been seen across most of England, according to new research that uncovers the pressures on families during the Covid crisis.

Most local councils in England have also reported increased numbers of people needing help for homelessness, with warnings that many poorer households will face “disaster” unless emergency support is extended well beyond the pandemic.

More than nine in 10 district councils, which represent cities, towns and urban areas across England, have reported an increase in food bank use in the past year. Two-thirds reported an increase in mediations in family breakdowns.

Many also saw a rise in demand for help in dealing with disputes between landlords and tenants, according to a survey by the District Councils’ Network (DCN). It has prompted concerns that the evictions ban, put in place during the pandemic and recently extended, is not giving vulnerable households complete protection.

During 2020-21, 85% of English councils said they had seen an increase in claims from homeless households for temporary accommodation, while almost all councils (93%) had seen an increase in demand for help with paying council tax.

The survey reveals that the many pressures on vulnerable households created by the pandemic are also having a knock-on impact on local authorities, many of which were nearing breaking point even before the Covid crisis emerged.

There have already been concerns that almost half a million private tenants who pay more than half their income on rent could be at risk of eviction when the ban ends. Senior figures across local authorities are worried that a further crisis in rough sleeping will emerge when the eviction ban ends at the end of May. Nearly three-quarters of councils anticipate a rise in rough sleeping, and almost nine in 10 districts expect an increase in homelessness.

Some parts of England saw dramatic increases in food bank use during the pandemic. In Bradford, three times as much food was distributed from 21 sites during the peak of the demand, compared to pre-Covid levels. Other recent research has suggested that one in five UK schools have set up a food bank since the start of the pandemic. More than a third of teachers said their school delivered food parcels to pupils' homes.

Councils, including the DCN which represents 187 district councils in England, are calling for an increase in the local housing allowance, which is used to calculate the amount of housing benefit tenants can claim. They are also warning that extra council tax support and extra grants may be needed, with council tax increasing across England this year and unemployment set to rise.

Giles Archibald, the leader of South Lakeland district council and the DCN's Better Lives spokesperson, warned that the survey findings revealed "the devastating toll of coronavirus on households who have struggled to pay the bills, put food on the table, and keep a roof over their heads".

"The government has stepped in and provided much-needed additional support for families," he said. "But while this has been welcome, there are serious concerns that if many measures do not continue, many families will be unable to get by. District councils, who have been on the frontline fighting coronavirus, will continue to do everything they can to support households facing hardship.

"However, this needs to be backed up with the continuation of many welfare measures brought in during the pandemic, and support for councils to lead the local effort to create jobs and support families across our towns and cities. Without this many families could face disaster."

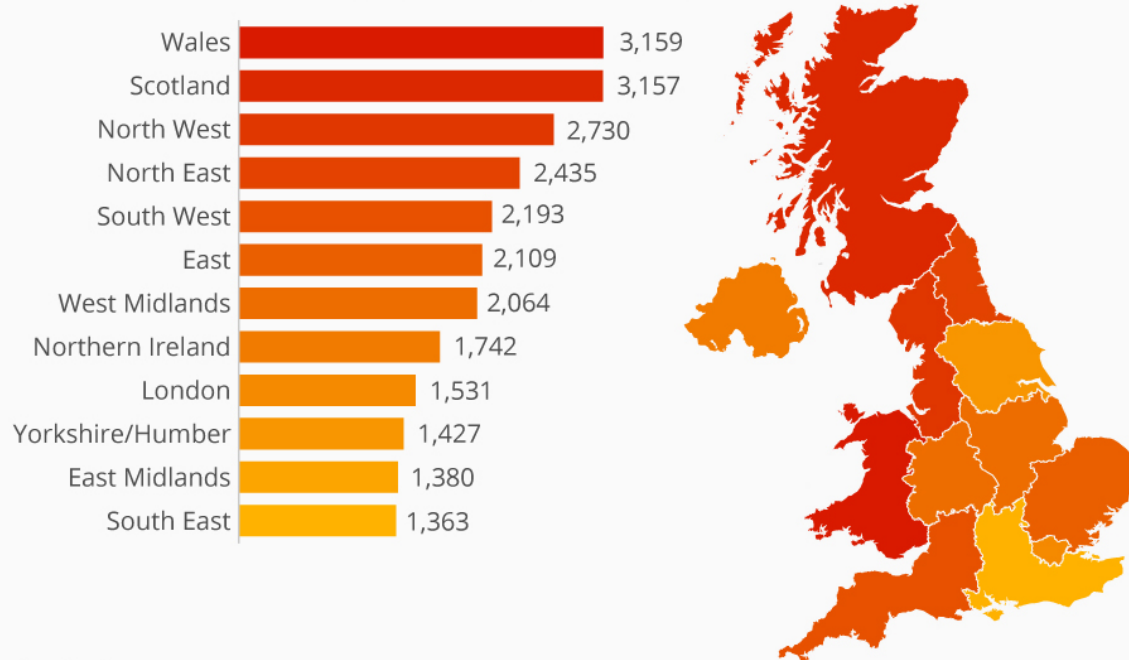


**The Trussell Trust – Stop UK Hunger – Logo**

Source: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/>

**The places most dependent on foodbanks in the UK**

Number of three-day emergency food supplies given per 100,000 population in 2017/18\*



\* by Trussell Trust foodbanks  
 @StatistaCharts Source: The Trussell Trust



**The places most dependent on foodbanks in the UK**

Source: <https://www.statista.com/chart/14092/the-places-most-dependent-on-foodbanks-uk/>