

Ending the need for food banks: consultation on a draft national plan

October 2021



RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:

<https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Individual

Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Phone number

Address

Postcode

Email

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response with name

Publish response only (without name)

Do not publish response

Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

No

Responding to this Consultation

We are inviting responses to this consultation by 25 January 2022.

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space (<http://consult.gov.scot>). Access and respond to this consultation online at <https://consult.gov.scot/housing-and-social-justice/ending-the-need-for-food-banks>. You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of 25 January 2022.

If you are unable to respond using our consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form to:

Tackling Food Insecurity Team
Scottish Government
2J North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

Or email: foodinsecurityteam@gov.scot

Handling your response

If you respond using the consultation hub, you will be directed to the About You page before submitting your response. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form included in this document.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy: <https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.gov.scot>. If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so. An analysis report will also be made available.

Comments and complaints

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to the contact address above or at foodinsecurityteam@gov.scot

Scottish Government consultation process

Consultation is an essential part of the policymaking process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all our consultations online: <http://consult.gov.scot>. Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis for every consultation. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.

Ending the need for food banks: consultation on a draft national plan

1. This draft national plan outlines the Scottish Government's vision and approach to ending the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity. It sets out what we are currently doing and what more we intend to do, alongside others, to achieve this.

We are publishing this in draft format to initiate conversations with frontline organisations and people with direct experience of poverty so together we can refine the content before publishing a final plan. The draft has been prepared in consultation with a steering group on ending the need for food banks which includes food bank networks and people with direct experience of using their services, alongside other organisations that are working towards a shared vision of eradicating poverty.

Consultation questions are included at the end of this document with a focus on helping us to identify further practical action that can be taken at all levels to deliver this vision. We are inviting responses to this consultation by 25 January 2022.

Challenge

2. Insufficient and insecure incomes drive household food insecurity which results in people having to compromise on food and other essentials. A rising cost of living and the loss of income support through the cut to Universal Credit and loss of furlough are likely to further increase financial hardship. The Scottish Government has limited power to challenge this.

For many frontline organisations, providing a referral to a food bank is often the simplest and quickest route to supporting someone who is experiencing financial hardship. While the compassion of volunteers across Scotland is commendable, food parcels are rarely able to meet dietary, social and cultural needs and preferences. Food banks are not an appropriate or long term response to poverty, and where they are the first or only port of call opportunities to strengthen income and prevent future hardship are often missed.

Vision

3. Everyone has a sufficient and secure income to be able to access food that meets their needs and preferences. Where financial hardship does occur, coordinated local responses prioritise access to emergency financial assistance and money advice alongside access to holistic support services. Where help to access food is needed, this is provided in a way that maximises dignity and reduces future need. Delivering this in practice will take leadership and action at all levels across Scotland.

Aim of the national plan

4. This plan seeks to (a) present a summary view of action underway to prevent poverty, and (b) set out what more we intend to do using the powers that we have to end the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity.

Our activities are underpinned by a human rights approach in which we prioritise action that prevents poverty and promotes cash-first responses alongside holistic support services where needed.

National and international policy alignment

5. Ending the need for food banks aligns with our national mission to eradicate poverty, our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan and our Good Food Nation ambition. This is linked to our National Performance Framework Outcomes on poverty and human rights.

This will contribute toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal commitments on ending hunger, eradicating poverty and ensuring good health and wellbeing. It also contributes to our commitment to realise the right to food as part of the right to an adequate standard of living.

Policy background

6. In 2015, the Scottish Government established an Independent Working Group to provide advice on how best to respond to and tackle the causes of food insecurity. The Group's [Dignity Report](#) contained 19 recommendations and a set of Dignity principles which were broadly accepted.

Significant progress has been made across the board, including on measuring food insecurity, integrating this within the national performance framework, promoting fair work, improving the value of social security, protecting the Scottish Welfare Fund, and supporting community food organisations to evolve their responses.

7. The primary driver of food insecurity and the need for food banks is insufficient and insecure incomes, and evidence suggests these are increasing. The UK Government has failed to use their reserved wage-setting powers to ensure household incomes keep pace with the cost of living. Rather than providing a safety net, their approach to delivering social security fuels destitution. The DWP's Family Resources Survey indicates that prior to the £20 uplift, 43% of households receiving Universal Credit experienced low or very low food security. Based on Trussell Trust estimates, a further 115,000 people in Scotland are 'very likely' to skip meals as a result of the cut. Flawed UK Government supports have provided little protection from the increased income shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic and EU Exit, and over the last 18 months we have subsequently seen hardship and hunger soar. The latest data suggests that around 8% of households are now worried about affording food.¹

8. In Scotland, we have sought to do all we can with the powers we have to protect low income households – both by mitigating the impact of UK Government action and by delivering enhanced support that is grounded in dignity and human rights. Our [Statement on Food Insecurity and Poverty](#) details our human rights approach in which

¹ Scottish Health Survey 2020 (Jan 2021) [Scottish Health Survey – telephone survey – August/September 2020: main report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

we prioritise action that prevents poverty and promote cash-first responses alongside holistic support services where needed. In 2020-21 we invested £2.5 billion in support to low income households, including nearly £1 billion to directly support children.

9. We continue to be guided by experts, including people with direct experience and frontline organisations who have clearly articulated that food banks are not a sustainable or long term response. The research and recommendations from the [A Menu for Change partnership project](#) restated the importance of adequate and secure incomes, improved access to cash and advice in a crisis, and delivering holistic public services which treat people with kindness and respect; this informed our pandemic response. The Social Renewal Advisory Board outlined further recommendations to ensure everyone can access nutritious, culturally appropriate and affordable food, to put us on a firm footing for recovery and renewal from the pandemic.²

10. During the pandemic, different sectors and services came together right across Scotland to ensure that people were able to access food and other essentials. Building on the strength of these relationships, we have a strong foundation to design out the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity. There is no shortage of strong local examples to draw from, including North Lanarkshire's referral gateway, Dundee's Fairness Commission, Moray and Argyll & Bute's Flexible Food Fund, and Glasgow's City Food Plan. This national plan brings together the action underway and sets out what more we will do to end the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity.

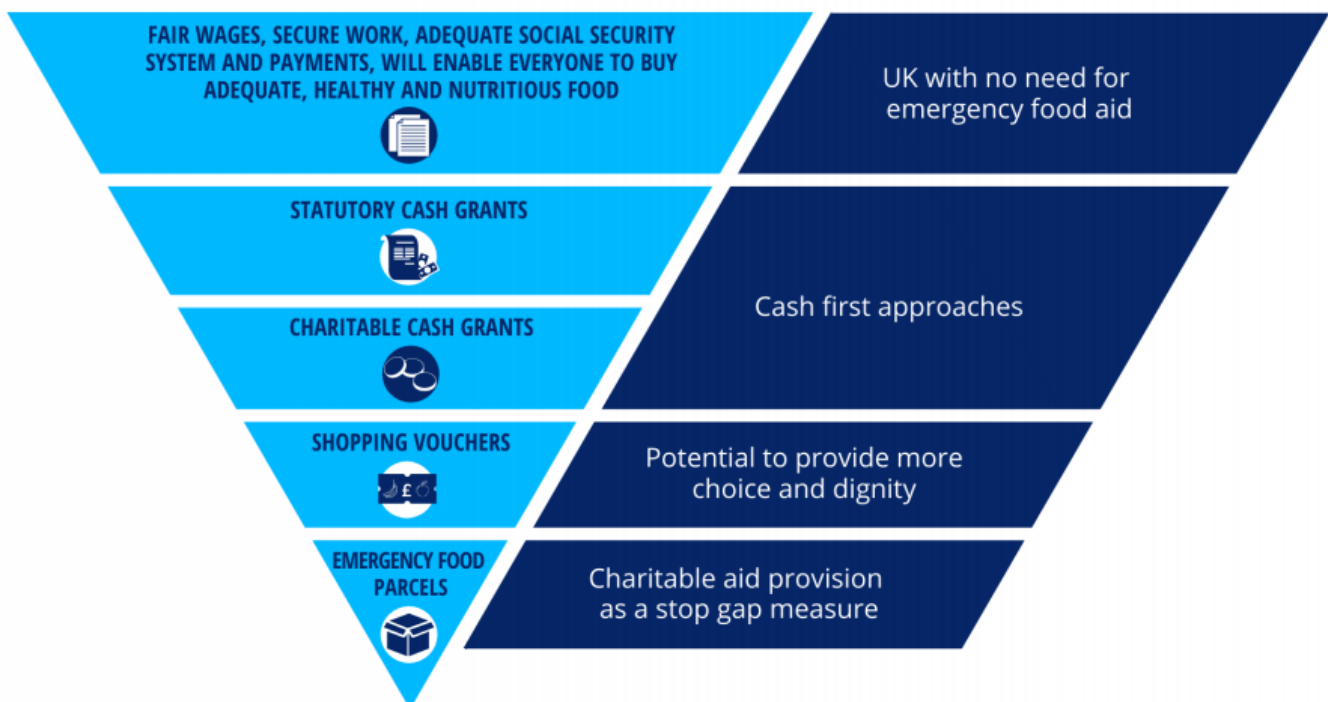
² Social Renewal Advisory Board, If Not Now, When? (Jan 2021) [If not now, when? - Social Renewal Advisory Board report: January 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Scottish Government approach

11. In line with wider action on poverty and informed by human rights, the Scottish Government's approach is weighted toward prevention with cash-first and dignified support in place where needed.

- **Prevention** – strengthening incomes from fair work, social security and reduced cost of living to make sure everyone has enough income to afford food that meets their needs and preferences
- **Response (where emergencies/crises arise)** – supporting joined up local responses to hardship that seek to make food banks the last port of call by promoting emergency financial assistance and money advice first alongside holistic support services. Where help to access food is required, this is provided in a way that maximises dignity and reduces future need.

Diagram 1: Independent Food Aid Network's hierarchy of responses



Action underway and what more can be done

12. The below table summarise action underway to prevent and respond to food insecurity, and what more we intend to do using the powers we have to prevent poverty and end the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity.

Through the consultation questions below, we are seeking further suggestions on the practical actions the Scottish Government and others can take to end the need for food banks. We will consider these views in developing a final version of this plan which we intend to publish in 2022

Table 1: Overview of action to end the need for food banks

Action underway	What more we plan to do
<p>Prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Work • Social Security • Cost of living <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Welfare Fund and other discretionary supports • Money advice • Cash-first referral leaflets • Dignified food access 	<p>Prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore Minimum Income Guarantee and Universal Basic Services • Actions linked to our new Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan • Strengthen the protection of human rights, including the right to food <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in cash-first partnership work to make food banks the last port of call • Pilot the use of shopping vouchers in place of food bank referrals • Develop shared values between national food insecurity funders on access to emergency financial assistance and holistic support • Work with the Trussell Trust and Independent Food Aid Network to support their food bank transition and exit strategies

Action underway

13. We have made eradicating poverty a national mission. In 2020-21 we invested £2.5 billion in support to low income households, including nearly £1 billion to directly support children. The below summarises action underway to prevent poverty and respond to food insecurity.

Prevention – Fair work

Our Fair Work Plan outlines our approach to improving incomes through work and includes our commitment to promote the real Living Wage. Our Gender Pay Gap Action Plan has over 60 actions to tackle the root causes of the gender pay gap and advance economic equality for women. Through our new Parental Employability Support Fund we are supporting parents to access and progress in work and increase their incomes.

In June 2021 we wrote to the UK Government requesting that they transfer employment powers to the Scottish Parliament to enable us to make the changes required to transform workplaces and tackle poverty. Powers over employment law would enable us to create fairer workplaces, increase wages, reduce insecure work and therefore shift the curve on poverty.

Prevention – Social security

We are continuing to use the powers we have to maximise income from social security through our new social security system that is founded on the principles of dignity, respect and the recognition of social security as a human right.

This includes our Scottish Child Payment, which provides £40 ever four weeks for every eligible child under 6 and will be rolled out to under 16s by the end of 2022. We have committed to doubling the Scottish Child Payment and introducing £520 bridging payments in both 2021 and 2022 for those eligible for free school meals on the basis of low income.

We have introduced the Best Start Grant to provide early years assistance, replacing and expanding the UK Government's Sure Start scheme in Scotland. For a first child, this provides over £600 more support over 3 payments than Sure Start and we do not put a cap on the number of children that are eligible. We have also increased the value of Best Start Foods payments to £4.50 a week, and eligibility will be increased later in this Parliamentary term. Together, the Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods will provide more than £5,300 of financial support to families by the time their first child turns 6.

Nearly 700,000 existing disability and carer benefit clients are being moved from the Department of Work and Pensions to Social Security Scotland, this includes Child Disability Payment which was piloted in July and will be rolled out in November 2021. It has been co-designed with stakeholders and people with lived experience of the social security system to ensure the values of dignity, fairness and respect are embedded. Adult Disability Payment will replace Personal Independence Payments in Scotland and will be rolled out by Summer 2022. We have proposed a new way of making entitlement

decisions to ensure that the criteria are fairly applied, this will mean decisions about entitlement will be holistic and person-centred.

The Scottish Government continues to raise serious concerns with the UK Government regarding welfare cuts, policies that are making people poorer and causing hardship, the failures of Universal Credit to provide an adequate safety net and the No Recourse to Public Funds policy. Eighty-five percent of benefit spending remains with the UK Government including income based benefits and state pensions. We have mitigated the impact where we can, including through Discretionary Housing Payments to help people affected by the Bedroom Tax. Where possible, we have worked with the Home Office to ensure that some access to devolved benefits has been permitted for those restricted by No Recourse to Public Funds.

Prevention – Reducing the cost of living

Access to advice services such as our [Money Talk Team](#) maximise household incomes and help people to get the best value on goods and services. In the first two and half years of operation, the service has helped put over £31 million into the pockets of more than 16,000 low income households, averaging £1,900. We intend to develop an Advice Services Strategy that will identify how advice funding can best be used to support priority groups, such as low income families and to support the advice sector with high quality specialist advice and training. This includes supporting models which embed advisers in non-traditional settings – such as GP surgeries and schools. We have already committed to expand holistic support in these settings over the next 2 years. We have also invested £1 million in the Affordable Credit Fund to help enable social lenders, such as Community Development Finance Institutions and Credit Unions, provide access to affordable credit for low income households.

The universal expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to 1,140 hours for all 3 and 4 year olds, and for 2 year olds who stand to benefit most is freeing up household income for other expenditure and helping parents to access employment.

Free school meals provide an average saving of £400 a year for each child, and we have committed to expanding eligibility to all primary pupils. As part of this we have already ensured that during the holidays households eligible on the basis of low income receive a direct payment, voucher or meal – this is in addition to providing two further £100 Pandemic Support Payments to eligible households in Summer and Winter 2021. We have also rolled out our £20 million Get into Summer activities programme, ensuring that children and young people have opportunities to socialise and reconnect. Our support to Young Scot provides further activities and discounts through their [National Entitlement Card](#). We are also increasing the School Clothing Grant to at least £120 per primary school child and £150 per secondary school child. The Student Awards Agency Scotland provide free tuition fees and bursaries to help with living costs, for those students studying higher education in colleges and universities in Scotland.

The Scottish Government have now delivered 100,000 affordable homes since 2007. We have a new commitment to deliver 100,000 more affordable homes with at least 70,000 in the social rented sector by 2032. Our Council Tax Reduction scheme can reduce liability by up to 100% and has on average saved around 500,000 recipients over £700 a year. We will provide an additional £130 Pandemic Support Payment by

the end of October for every household who received Council Tax Reduction in the month of April – an investment of up to £65m, expected to benefit over 500,000 households.

Our commitment to tackling fuel poverty is underlined by legislation, and by the end of 2021 we will have allocated over £1 billion since 2009 through energy efficiency programmes to make homes warmer and cheaper to heat. We are delivering over 36,000 devices through our Connecting Scotland programme which aims to eradicate digital exclusion in Scotland, with over 17,000 families with children and 4,000 young care leavers supported to date.

Response – The Scottish Welfare Fund and other discretionary supports

The [Scottish Welfare Fund](#) provides discretionary local welfare assistance to households experiencing financial hardship. Food continues to be the most commonly awarded Crisis Grant item, with nearly 160,000 awards made in 2020-21 totalling £12.6 million. We have guaranteed the budget for the Scottish Welfare Fund and committed to reviewing its purpose and operation to make sure it works as well as possible in all parts of the country. This review will include examining the funding, promotion, take-up and accessibility of the Fund.

Discretionary Housing Payments are used to support tenants, including those who are affected by the UK Governments welfare cuts, who are struggling with their housing costs where Universal Credit or Housing Benefit does not cover the cost of their rent and living expenses. Around £82 million support has been provided in 2021-22 – up from £73 million budgeted at the beginning of 2020-21.

£10.9 million of this budget is used to mitigate against the damaging impact of UK Government welfare cuts including the Benefit Cap and changes to the Local Housing Allowance rates. The other £71 million is used to mitigate the Bedroom Tax helping over 70,000 households in Scotland to sustain their tenancies.

This is an important tool used by councils to safeguard tenancies and prevent homelessness and poverty.

People with No Recourse to Public Funds are excluded from many mainstream supports in place to respond to financial hardship and can subsequently be at greater risk of destitution. We have provided funding to the British Red Cross to provide vital crisis cash support, as well as advice and advocacy through a network of partners to those most at risk of destitution in Scotland, including those who may be otherwise ineligible for government support due to hostile Home Office policy. This links to the commitments outlined in our strategy, [Ending Destitution Together](#).

Local authorities were allocated over £70 million flexible funding during the pandemic to tackle food and financial insecurity, which bolstered existing supports and provided further discretionary financial assistance. This was underpinned by [national guidance](#) which provided a strong steer in favour of cash-first and wrap around support to meet whole needs. Activities delivered include emergency income, emergency food, emergency fuel, income maximisation, other activities to support wellbeing targeted support to marginalised groups and the strengthening of partnership approaches. The [learning from this work](#) is shaping the further action we plan to take, as detailed below

Response – Welfare and Debt advice

The Scottish Government continues to support the free welfare advice sector with over £3 million allocated to front-line projects based in Citizens Advice Bureaux and to agencies such as Shelter and Child Poverty Action Group which support front-line advisers dealing with complex housing, benefits and money issues.

This year we will also distribute over £7 million to providers of free debt advice through Scotland's share of the debt advice levy. Alongside funding for the Money Talk Team, this provides a total of £12 million support for money advice services.

We have provided funding to the Improvement Service to explore the option of a future advice funding model based on national/local partnerships, and learning from this work will be incorporated into a future advice strategy for Scotland.

Response – Cash-first referral leaflets

In order to make it easier for frontline workers to refer someone experiencing hardship to income-strengthening support rather than a food bank, the Scottish Government have provided funding to the [Independent Food Aid Network](#) to develop cash-first referral leaflets. This approach was championed in Scotland by the A Menu for Change Partnership Project and has now been rolled out in 17 areas with plans to cover a further 8 local authorities over 2021-22. We are working with partners to maximise the impact of the tool through earlier intervention points, including through Jobcentres.

Response – Dignified food access

The Scottish Government has funded [Nourish Scotland and the Poverty Truth Community](#) over the last 5 years to facilitate a Dignity Peer Network, deliver workshops and develop tools and resources on how to engage with the Independent Working Group's Dignity Principles on a practical level. This has supported hundreds of organisations to evolve their practice and to adapt to the public health restrictions in place during the pandemic. Through funding to [FareShare Scotland](#), we have also supported hundreds of community organisations to access high quality surplus food with an emphasis on community development and access to wider services.

We provide direct funding to community and third sector organisations responding to food insecurity through our Investing in Communities Fund and COVID response and recovery funding streams. We also provide funding for wider support and representation through community food networks and Public Health Scotland who run [Community Food and Health Scotland](#).

What more we plan to do

14. Further to the below initial actions, this consultation seeks your views on the practical actions the Scottish Government and other actors can take to end the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity.

Prevention – Minimum Income Guarantee and Universal Basic Services

The Scottish Government has committed to beginning work to deliver a Minimum Income Guarantee, to help ensure that everyone in Scotland can live healthy, financially secure and fulfilling lives. We have met our commitment to engage with stakeholders within the first 100 days of this government to start considering how it can be delivered, and have invited cross-party and expert representatives to form a Steering Group to progress delivery. This work will also incorporate the idea of Universal Basic Services, which by ensuring people have access to the provision of basic services – such as childcare of the NHS for example – contributes to ensuring a minimum standard of living.

Prevention – Strengthen the protection of human rights, including the right to food as contained within the right to an adequate standard of living

In taking forward the recommendations of the National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership, the Scottish Government will bring forward a Human Rights Bill to give effect to a wide range of internationally recognised rights in Scots law. Our Bill will incorporate into Scots law, as far as possible within devolved competence, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This includes a right to adequate food, as an essential part of the overall right to an adequate standard of living.

Response – Invest in cash-first local partnership work to make food banks the last port of call

Strengthening partnership working between sectors and services can improve the effectiveness of existing local responses to financial hardship, including by increasing access to emergency financial assistance, money advice and holistic support services to help make food banks the last port of call. We have convened a Steering Group on Ending the Need for Food Banks which will guide investment in cash-first partnerships, applying learning and good practice examples from the pandemic response and looking at the success of similar interventions elsewhere.

What this will likely look like in practice is the preparation of a locally shared ambition to end the need for food banks as the first port of call, meeting whole needs and preventing future crisis. This will mean food banks, money advice services, local authority officers including those from the Scottish Welfare Fund and public health teams coming together to identify the best response for their local area and agreeing short, medium and long term actions to deliver it. This approach draws on the learning of the A Menu for Change partnership project, the Independent Food Aid's cash-first referral leaflets and early insights from the Trussell Trust's pathfinders project.

Response – Pilot the use of shopping vouchers in place of food bank referrals

Frontline services often report that where someone is experiencing immediate hardship, a referral to a food bank is the most practical way to support them to access food. We will pilot the use of shopping vouchers as an alternative option, building on the Independent Food Aid Network's initial research.

The pilot will initially focus on advice providers within the Citizen Advice Scotland network. The reason for this is that money advisers are one of the main referrers to food banks, and co-location of voucher support may also help to increase the take up of money advice and referrals to emergency financial assistance. The views of people with direct experience will inform delivery and next steps.

As this is a crisis response, it would need to operate alongside existing income-boosting responses and should not replace referrals to the Scottish Welfare Fund or the provision of money advice which will be needed to prevent future hardship.

Response – Develop shared values between national food insecurity funders on access to emergency financial assistance and holistic support services

We will work with other national funders, including the National Lottery Community Fund, Robertson Trust and CORRA Foundation to develop shared values linked to this national plan that help to further prioritise action that reduces the need for food banks.

This will draw on the learning and experience of established organisations as well as those that have recently established or pivoted towards food aid responses since the onset of the pandemic. It will emphasise the importance of further integrating income-boosting and holistic support services within responses, and include practical support to transition away from emergency food approaches.

Response - Work with the Trussell Trust and Independent Food Aid Network to support their food bank transition and exit strategies

The two largest food bank networks in Scotland, the Trussell Trust and the Independent Food Aid Network, have outlined a shared ambition to end the need for their services. We will work alongside them, their members and people with direct experience of accessing food aid to provide practical assistance in developing transition and exit strategies – including by learning from the Trussell Trust's Pathfinder Programme.

Targeting and equalities

15. Some groups are at higher risk of experiencing financial insecurity and are therefore more likely to experience difficulty affording food, fuel and other essentials. This includes:

- People who have no recourse to public funds, in particular asylum seekers
- Younger people
- Disabled people
- Lone parents
- Minority ethnic households, including Gypsy / Traveller communities
- Younger parents (under 25)
- Families with children under 1
- Larger families
- People living in households on low incomes
- People living in the most deprived areas

16. At a population level, prevalence of food insecurity is distributed equally between men and women. However, evidence suggests that there are differentials within high prevalence groups, for example lone parents have a higher than average prevalence and are more likely to be women, and single-adult households have a higher than average prevalence and are more likely to be men.³

17. In recent [guidance to local authorities on tackling financial insecurity](#), the Scottish Government summarised the issues likely to be faced by those with protected characteristics and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. This guidance provides examples of tailored support put in place to reach these groups and encourages an intersectional approach.

18. An intersectional approach is important because some households will experience a combination of barriers to accessing food and other essentials, and the supports in place to prevent and respond to this. For example, people in the most deprived areas may have a low income and limited access to transport to access affordable food, people with No Recourse to Public Funds may not be eligible for some statutory supports, and minority ethnic communities such as Gypsy / Travellers may be less likely to access mainstream support.

19. Through our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, we have identified six priority family groups where children are more likely to live in poverty and put in place targeted action. The Scottish Government is also working with trusted partners to increase access to supports, including MECOPP, Govan Community Project and the British Red Cross, with action integrated in to our [Framework for supporting Gypsy / Traveller communities](#) and [Anti-Destitution Strategy](#)

³ Further insights on prevalence can be found through the Scottish Health Survey: [Scottish Health Survey - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#), and the Family Resources Survey: [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2019 to 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Measuring impact

20. This plan seeks to drive change in practice. The intended outcomes of this plan and associated actions are that we will have:

- Designed out the need for food banks as primary response to food insecurity
- Increased access to income-boosting services and holistic support
- Improved household financial resilience
- Improved household wellbeing

21. We will measure change by:

- Continuing to undertake a national measurement of food insecurity through the Scottish Health Survey and the Family Resources Survey
- Partnering with national food banks to monitor impact on number of food banks and parcel demand, and with community food networks to understand wider impact on other types of charitable food aid provision.
- Commissioning independent evaluation of funded activities that seek to improve local referral pathways, both from the perspective of frontline practitioners and people seeking support, and disseminating local good practice examples.
- Exploring the integration of food insecurity measurement in the evaluation of income-boosting measures like the Scottish Child Payment and through exploration of a Minimum Income Guarantee.

Definitions

- *Food insecurity*

The Scottish Government uses the language of 'food insecurity' because it captures the full range of experiences ranging from worry regarding ability to afford food through to compromising on quality and quantity of food and experiencing hunger. We draw from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's definition and from the work of Professor Elizabeth Dowler which recognises the social dimension and importance of being able to access food in ways which are common to a society.

- *Food bank*

Food banks are charitable or community organisations that distribute food parcels to people experiencing financial hardship. The two largest food bank networks in Scotland are the Trussell Trust and the Independent Food Aid Network. These networks represent many but not all food banks. Many community food and other organisations also integrate access to food and emergency food parcel provision alongside their wider activities.

- *Cash-first*

The Scottish Government uses the term 'cash-first' as shorthand for access to emergency income (such as through the Scottish Welfare Fund and other

discretionary supports) as the primary response to food insecurity. In order to prevent future hardship, this should be delivered alongside money advice services (including welfare rights advice and income maximisation).

- *Holistic support services*

The Scottish Government uses the term 'holistic support services' to mean a joined-up approach to delivering services across sectors that is centred around wellbeing through meeting the whole needs of an individual or household. This includes services that meet financial, health, social and cultural needs.

Consultation questions

22. We are seeking further suggestions on the practical actions the Scottish Government and other actors can take to end the need for food banks. The consultation will be open until 25 January 2022. We will consider these views in developing a final version of this plan which we intend to publish in 2022.

1. Do you think that the approach outlined is consistent with the vision to end poverty and the need for food banks? Is there anything else you think should be included? [Y/N/Don't Know] [Open comment]
2. Do you think that the actions underway will help to reduce the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity? [Y/N/Don't Know]
3. Do you think that the suggestions for what more we plan to do will help to reduce the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity? [Y/N/Don't Know]
4. Is there anything else that you think should be done with the powers we have at a national or local level to reduce the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity? [Open comment]
5. Do you have any views on how we intend to measure impact, and what would give you confidence that we are moving in the right direction? [Open comment]
6. Is there anything else that you think should be considered in the development of this plan? [Open comment]



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