

MARCH 2023

MOUNTING PRESSURE: SURGE IN DEMAND FOR FOODBANKS



SURGE IN DEMAND FOR FOOD BANKS

People and communities across the UK are struggling with rising living costs, and more people than ever are turning to food banks for help. This unprecedented demand is pushing many food banks to breaking point. Food banks rely on the generosity of their donors to create balanced, nutritious emergency food parcels, which are distributed to adults and children in crisis. With the lasting impact of the pandemic and increasing costs of fuel, energy and food, demand for food banks is greater than ever. This comes at the same time as a downturn in donations where many are forced to watch their spending. Nationally, between April and September, more than 320,000 people used Trussell Trust food banks for the first time and 1.3m food parcels were distributed. Almost all Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) members reported an increase in demand between October 2021 and July 2022

WHO IS BANKTHEFOOD

BanktheFood uses technology for good. With the cost of living crisis, food banks have become a lifeline for many. Yet often they're inundated with one item while lacking other essentials. To help solve this, BanktheFood's free app 'pings' users a list of items urgently needed by their local food bank straight to their phones, at the most crucial time, when they arrive at the supermarket.

Shoppers can download the free app, follow their local food bank, add an extra item to their shopping basket, and leave it at the donation station after passing the tills. The food bank will be alerted to the anonymous donation, ensuring they know exactly which items are waiting for them, so they can collect them immediately if needed. Getting the right supplies is essential for food banks; it helps provide families with a balance of essentials, saves the time of volunteers trying to source the right items, reduces the need for excess storage and helps prevent food from going past its use-by date.



WHAT FOOD BANKS TOLD US...

There are a huge number of media stories highlighting the pressure felt by food banks. BanktheFood reached out to its network of food banks on 22 Feb 2023 with a series of questions about the challenges they are facing.

Out of the 300 food banks approached, 124 responded from across the country. This report outlines what food banks told us.

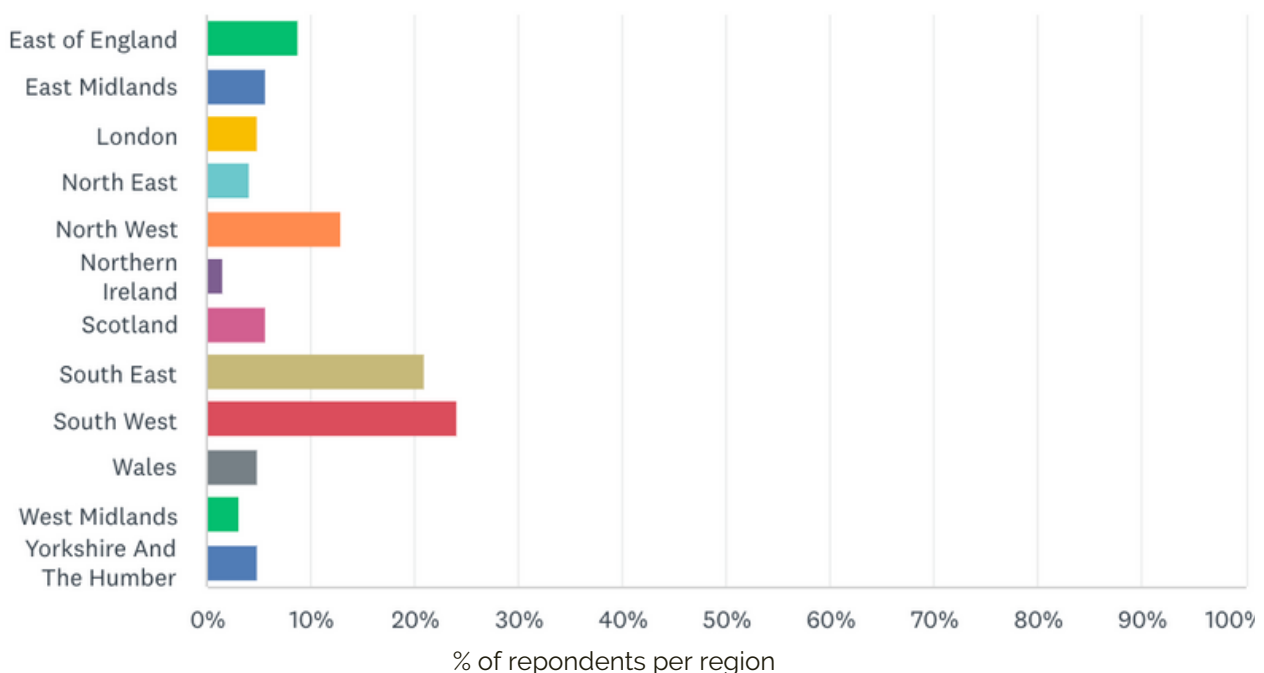
The survey was conducted using SurveyMonkey, and open for responses from 22 Feb until 6 March 2023.

"We have seen a large increase in food bank referrals, but at the same time, we are seeing a significant drop in the food being donated." Middlewich & District Foodbank

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In what region is your food bank based?

Answered: 124 Skipped: 0

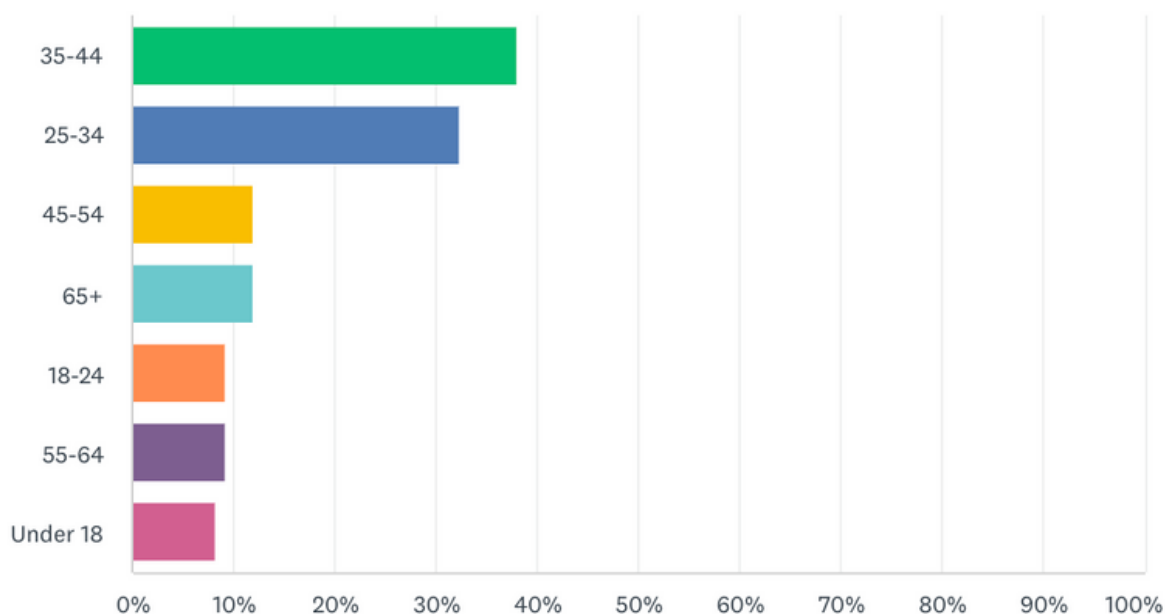


AGE GROUPS SEEKING SUPPORT

“Increase in clients, having to buy in food which is sometimes not available, financial donors may stop supporting us if financial climate worsens.” Wells Vineyard Church, an independent food bank

Which age group have you seen the biggest increase using your services ...

Answered: 108 Skipped: 16



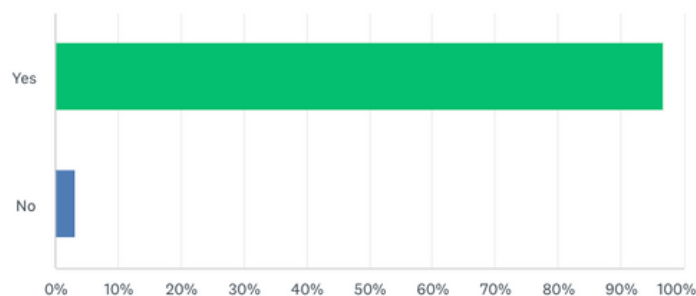
97% OF FOOD BANKS HAVE SEEN AN INCREASE IN PEOPLE NEEDING THEIR HELP



For the last year, we have heard from food banks who have been talking about the pressure the pandemic and cost of living crisis have been putting on people in their communities. Therefore it was no surprise when 97% of the food banks we spoke to reported seeing an increase.

Has there been an increase in demand for your services in the last 12 months?

Answered: 124 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	96.77%	120
No	3.23%	4
TOTAL		124

“Our numbers have increased from around 50 food parcels per week to around 63 weekly on average. Donations have decreased slightly; therefore the remainder has to be made up with our cash donations. We are helping more families than last year, also more professionals such as nurses.” The Gate, an independent foodbank

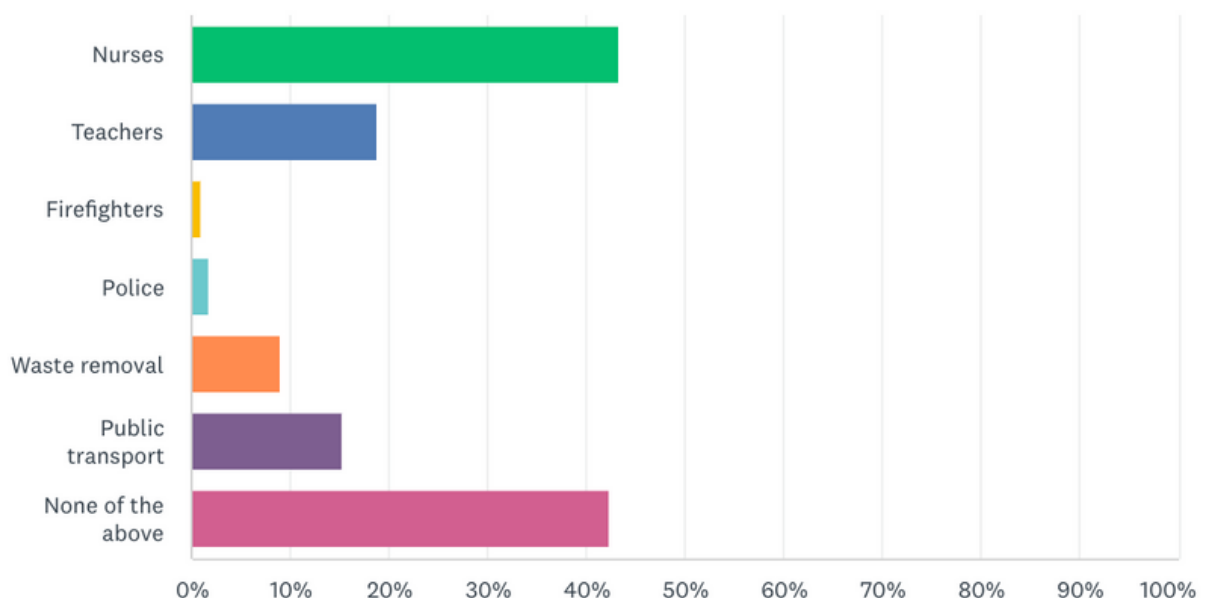
WHO IS SEEKING SUPPORT

43% of food banks surveyed reported an increase in nurses and teachers (19%) among the rising number of people seeking support for food insecurity in the UK

- Based on news reports, we asked if there had been an increase in those working in public services.
- Not all food banks collect data on occupation

Have you seen an increase in people using your services, who work in ...

Answered: 111 Skipped: 13



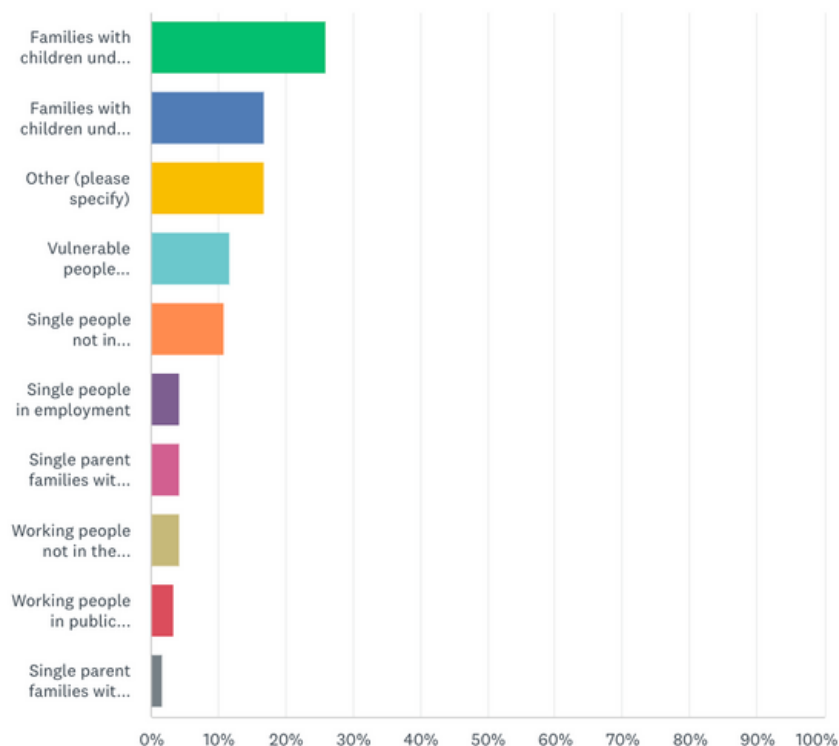
INCREASE IN GROUPS ACCESSING FOOD BANKS

1 in 4 food banks have seen the biggest increase in service usage amongst working families with children under 12.

"Demand from clients has increased by 55 per cent compared to a year ago."
Faversham Foodbank

If you have seen an increase, in which group have you seen the biggest increase in?

Answered: 119 Skipped: 5



CONCERN OVER SUSTAINABILITY

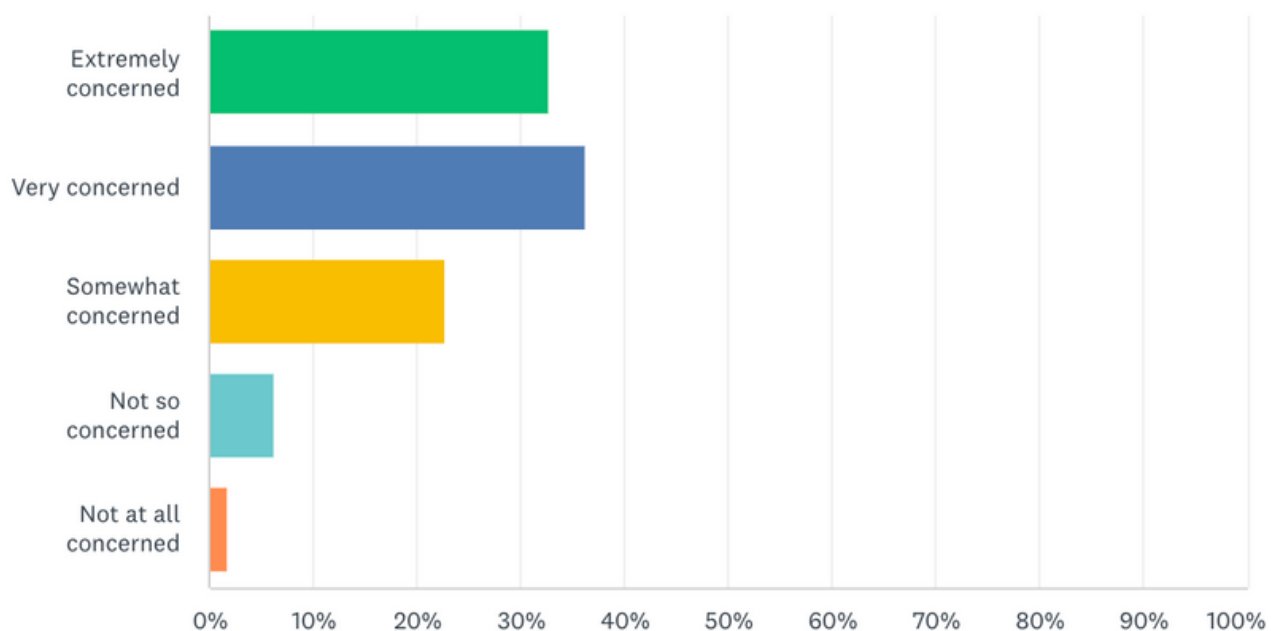
92% of food banks in the UK have concerns about their ability to continue to support those who need help, with one third expressing 'extreme concern'.

"We find new people turning up weekly, our clients come from all walks of life"
The Lauder Larder

"We are seeing people coming into the foodbank having to make impossible decisions. Do they skip a meal or have the heating on? Or do they leave their jobs because they can no longer afford to get there and back? We have seen an increase in full-time employed people accessing our services not just for food support but for financial support, too." Blackburn Foodbank

How concerned are you about the cost of living crisis and your ability ...

Answered: 110 Skipped: 14



TINNED FOOD BEING DONATED LESS

Food banks report the most significant reduction in donations has been tinned food (40%) and personal care items (18%) e.g. deodorant, toothpaste and feminine hygiene products.

"We are seeing an increase of working and retired people needing our food bank, and usage is increasing monthly. The food donations remain around the same each month, but we are feeding more and more people, which puts a strain on our stock. Many of our clients are concerned when the cap on utilities goes up again or is removed." Isle of Wight Foodbank

Which items are being donated less in the last 12 months?

Answered: 109 Skipped: 15

