The Winter Ahead:  
the outlook for low-income households

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Overview

• We came into this series of crises in bad shape
• The cost of living is hitting hardest at the bottom
• Government action is required
We came into this series of crises in bad shape
Deepening poverty in the UK pre-pandemic
Who has poverty been deepening for?

- Lone parents: sharp upward trend after 2010
- Large families (3+ children): sharp upward trend after 2010
- Disabled: steady upward trend
- Workless: steady upward trend from a very high base
- Ethnic minority backgrounds: overall high risk (18%), but risk and trajectory varies for different ethnic groups.
Social security is a key driver

Destitution & deep poverty line vs basic benefit rates

- £ per week
- £0, £25, £50, £75, £100, £125, £150, £175, £200, £225, £250, £275, £300, £325, £350

- 1 adult <25
- 2 adults both <25
- 1 adult
- 2 adults
- 1 adult, 1 child
- 1 adult, 2 child
- 1 adult, 3 child
- 2 adults, 1 child
- 2 adults, 2 child
- 2 adults, 3 child

- Basic UC+CB
- Destitution
- Very deep poverty

JRF
JOSEPH ROLINTREE FOUNDATION
We entered this series of crises in bad shape

- Analysis is pre-pandemic. Since then...
  - Deepening debt and arrears during the pandemic
  - Universal Credit increased then cut
  - Cost of living crisis
The cost of living is hitting hardest at the bottom
7m households going without essentials

Three quarters of low-income households are going without more than one kind of essential – like food, a warm home or toiletries.
Not heating or eating

- 5.2m hungry or skipping meals
- 2.3m both
- 3.2m can’t afford to heat their home
Disproportionately struggling

- Households who are subject to deductions from their benefits
- Black, Asian and Mixed ethnicity households
- Working age households (especially young ones)
- Large families and lone parents
- Those struggling with loneliness or mental health
Government action is required
Government support package

- Government support package:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council tax</td>
<td>£150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Bill Support Scheme</td>
<td>£400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of payment for means-tested benefit recipients</td>
<td>£650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of payment for pensioners</td>
<td>£300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of payment for disabled people</td>
<td>£150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Support Fund</td>
<td>£1.5bn since October 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 month Energy Price Guarantee</td>
<td>Average user will pay £2,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- But there’s still a gap for people on means-tested benefits:

  £450 on average this year
Immediate priorities & longer term reform

- **People need help this winter**: Bring forward uprating of benefits
- **Do not cut benefits**: Uprate in the usual way in April 2023 (with prices, not earning)
- **One off support payments are not a substitute**: when inflation subsides prices won’t fall
- **Reform Universal Credit**: so people can *at least* always afford the essentials
Thank you!
Cost of Living
Innovation and coordination between Council and CVS
Helen Starr-Keddie
#CostOfLivingCrisis
Cash-First Approach

- Community hub
- Local discretionary funding scheme
- Children's Centre vouchers
- Free school meal vouchers in the holiday periods
- Food access service
- Household support fund
Supporting the Community

- Parking permits
- Central food hub
- Children’s Centre pilot
- Food access commission
FOOD SOS
Harvest Festival Food Donation Plea
Get involved now
BHFOOD.ORG.UK/FOODSOS
#FOODSOSBTN

DESIGN + ILLUSTRATION BY
STUDIOEVERETT.COM
Brighton & Hove Cost of Living Crisis Campaign
Meeting the shortage of surplus food and donations

Sam Dyer, Cambridge Sustainable Food

#goldfoodcambridge
Context

- Austerity mark 2, ongoing, In Feb 22 76% of hub visitors said the rise in food and energy prices meant that they were finding it difficult to afford food and pay their bills
- People not necessarily feeling it so much yet - energy cap, mild autumn.
- Pandemic strengthened local partnerships, networks and services and highlighted inequalities - eg ethnicity / access to culturally diverse foods
- City Council support ongoing

“To speak with other people so I don't feel socially isolated.”
Response: Building on existing work

- Food Hubs x 8, 21200 visits 21/22
- Food Distribution centre: CoFarm, Grow a Row, donations, surplus 204 tons
- Christmas: Seniors Meals (250 to sheltered Housing ‘21)
- Hampers: 650 expected to families - partnership project City Council, CSF CIC, Cambridge City Foodbank]
- Existing Alliance meeting monthly (27 orgs)

“It means I don’t have to steal food.”
Response: Building on existing work

- CAB direct referral: 70% of referrals had a long term health condition or disability. Income gain outcome for those referred was £38,517.
- In total over 70 businesses and organisations have supported the programme.
- Warm spaces: City Council 4 x community spaces - Breakfasts.
- Funded 38 warm spaces projects with £1k grants can be spent on food costs for meals, food parcels etc.
- COL Roadshow - advice on debt, Health, Household Support Fund, Utilities, Healthy Start Vouchers.

"My kids don't sleep hungry"
A city wide appeal to help frontline community food services and projects to buy ingredients and slow cookers for those in Cambridge hit hardest by the cost of living crisis.

- Matched funded 10k CCC
- Raised £25k
- 13 orgs

"I can’t pay all bills and rent with benefits so this is my main source of food.”
Call on Government

- Over 30 local voluntary sector organisations and public bodies signed a statement of concern
- Presented to Shadow Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Daniel Zeichner

“Our member organisations are experiencing a perfect storm of increases in the numbers of people seeking help with food, often people who never expected to find themselves in this position ... We feel that the voluntary sector is plugging gaps in state provision for vulnerable households and worry that we will not be able to cope with rising demand”
Building Local Capacity

Chris Nottingham
Blaenau Gwent Food Partnership
chris.nottingham@taicalon.org
Public Services Board accountable to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015)

Objective:
Generational change whilst working on problems of the present
National Support for Food Partnerships

Yesterday (Monday, July 11th), Jane Hutt, Minister for Social Justice chaired a Cost of Living Summit during which she announced a series of intervention packages, including financial support for cross-sector food partnerships in Wales.

This funding from Welsh Government is worth £3 million and will support the development of cross-sector food partnerships. The funding will also strengthen existing food partnerships that help build resilience in local food networks through the co-ordination of on the ground, food-related activity; help tackle the root-causes of food poverty; develop citizen action; maximise the effectiveness of projects and ensure that resources are targeted at areas of greatest need.

Keep up to date with Welsh Food Policy news:
www.foodsensewales.org.uk
Outlook in Blaenau Gwent

A resident in Blaenau Gwent has a 15 year shorter life expectancy than someone living 5 miles away in Monmouthshire.

Child measurement survey showed 19.8% 4 to 5 year olds reported as obese, an 8% increase from pre-pandemic levels

Housing Association issuing 10’s of food bank vouchers a day, previously 10 a week

84% increase in Trussell Trust Food Bank use since Covid
Comparing the crises

‘It don’t feel the same (as covid support).... It’s like having a lead weight around our neck and we’re getting pulled down and down and down’”

Claire in Tredegar comparing Cost of Living Crisis to Covid-19 Pandemic
Building local capacity

• Partnership plays a key role in administering Local Authority funding

• Evidence of spending money well led to Health Board funding

• Supporting bids for small pots of funding
Local woodland group funded to start a food growing project

- Produced Blaenau Gwent’s first ever veg box – delivered to a food insecurity project
- Provided low cost veg boxes in the community – able to accept Health Start cards
Healthy Start booster program

- Strengthened partnership with Early Years social services Flying Start program
- Developed links with local retailers
  - Next iteration will be less prescriptive
Fareshare Cymru, some weeks struggles to meet demand. Partnership network has a good quality food through LA funding.

Building in support and frontline knowledge with signposting and partner organisations to deliver ‘more than’ food

Working with the Housing Association to reduce tenant stigma of accessing surplus food provisions
Housing Association reach in the community

- Well connected in the community
- Infrastructure available to deliver on additional resources
- Frontline staff work with a range of tenants that could benefit from food support
Warm places and food

- Welsh Government funding
- Libraries on board and proving popular – another opportunity for frontline signposting
- Mutual aid network once again delivering
Finally

Blaenau Gwent Food Partnership is an ally, supporting the network to build capacity, access funding and spend money well.

Being hosted by a housing association has helped bring in further resources regards tenant outreach – recommend all food partnerships developing strong links with local housing associations.

Similarities in the Covid response require redoubling of partnership working to collaborate with other service providers.