

Young, homeless and hungry: The impact of food insecurity on vulnerable young people



What does food insecurity mean to young people?

“Not knowing where your next meal is coming from, using food banks, not being able to provide for yourself, it’s a horrible feeling.”

Aisha, Yorkshire



Food insecurity: the facts

- **1 in 4 (26 per cent)** vulnerable young people have £20 or less of monthly income left after rent and bills, leaving them to live off £5 or less a week
- **A third (30 per cent)** of vulnerable young people often go without food for a whole day due to lack of money.
- Local welfare assistance is not reaching vulnerable young people, largely because **around half** are unaware of the financial support that is available to them.
- A national poll of a representative sample of 2000 young people also found high levels of food insecurity for the general youth population across the country – suggesting that many thousands of young people may be struggling to access the food they need, regardless of whether they have family support or not; **nearly half (49 per cent)** say they have gone to bed hungry in the last 12 months and **more than a third (35 per cent)** say they have gone a whole day without food due to a lack of money.

The drivers of food insecurity: Inadequate benefits system, low paid and unstable work opportunities, debt, high energy costs, poor cooking facilities, shared living spaces in homelessness accommodation.

We're calling on the Government to:

- 1. Strengthen the benefits system so that young people are not pushed into poverty. This includes:**
 - a. Restoring the £20 Universal Credit uplift;
 - b. Ensuring all benefits meet real living cost standards;
 - c. Removing the 5 week wait for the first payment; and
 - d. Offering the choice of more regular payments.
- 2. Increase targeted support for energy costs by extending eligibility for winter fuel payments and discounts.**
- 3. Improve access to emergency food support whilst working to remove the systemic need for food banks by supporting and developing initiatives such as social supermarkets.**



Sign the petition to stop young people going hungry:
<https://actionstorm.org/petitions/end-food-poverty>