

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership

Detailed Report of Findings from the Survey of People in Food Poverty

August 2020

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Part 1: Why are people struggling to afford food?

Introduction

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership surveyed people who have been in receipt of emergency food parcels and people who considered themselves ‘struggling to afford food’. This was in order to learn more about what was happening in Brighton & Hove and understand better how to support people in food poverty.

The following analysis is derived from **230 responses** to this survey. 161 responses were from food parcel recipients and 65 responses are from people struggling to afford food who had not yet needed emergency support.

The survey was distributed via a text, email and paper copies through the Emergency Food Network, via 42 providers of Emergency Food and networks of community organisations in July 2020.

Barriers to accessing food

219 respondents

Participants were asked:

“Since lockdown began on the 23rd March, has there been anything (apart from lack of money) that has made it hard for you to get food?”

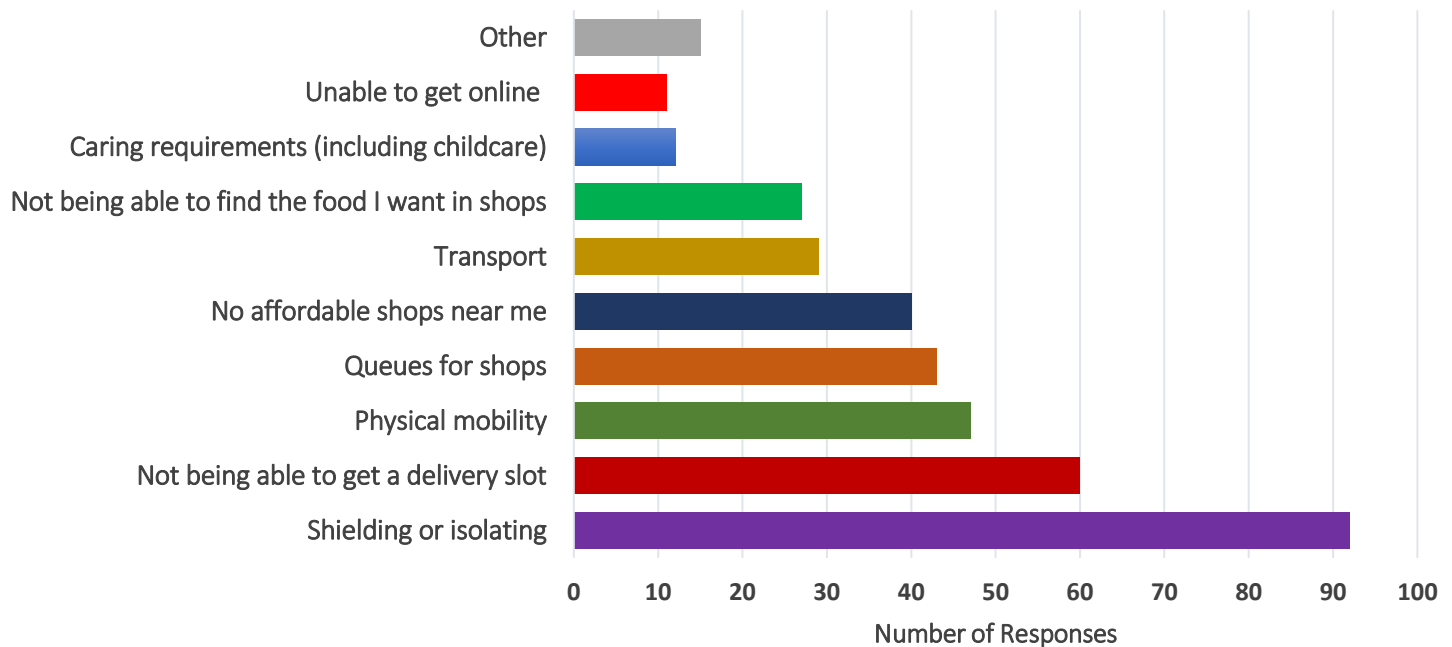


Figure 1: Barriers that prevent respondents from being able to access food. Note, participants could select multiple answers.

38, or **17%** had not experienced anything, apart from lack of money, that had made food access difficult for them.

42% said not being able to leave the house due to shielding or isolating, **27%** said not being able to get a delivery slot, 47 people or **21%** said physical mobility. This ties in with the high numbers of people with long-term health conditions needing to access emergency food.

15 people gave 'Other' responses, whereby respondents could input other things that had made it hard to get food but that were not listed as options. These included:

- Not being able to speak English;
- Not having access to a kitchen;
- Food that is needed due to dietary requirements being out of stock (there is a nuance shift from the option given to select finding food that you want);
- Rising food prices and the fact that shopping online was too expensive and doesn't offer the opportunity to purchase reduced goods;
- Pregnancy and ill-health (including mental health conditions such as depression);
- Shop access - one respondent said they were working full-time as an essential worker based in an office, but that because they weren't a health worker they didn't have the same food access opportunities; another said that PAs/carers from the direct payment scheme weren't provided with IDs to allow them to shop in supermarket priority times and so were refused by supermarkets
- 4 responses were to the effect that they simply didn't have the money/funds.

Accessing food

225 Respondents

Participants were asked:

“Which of the following are essential to you when accessing food?”



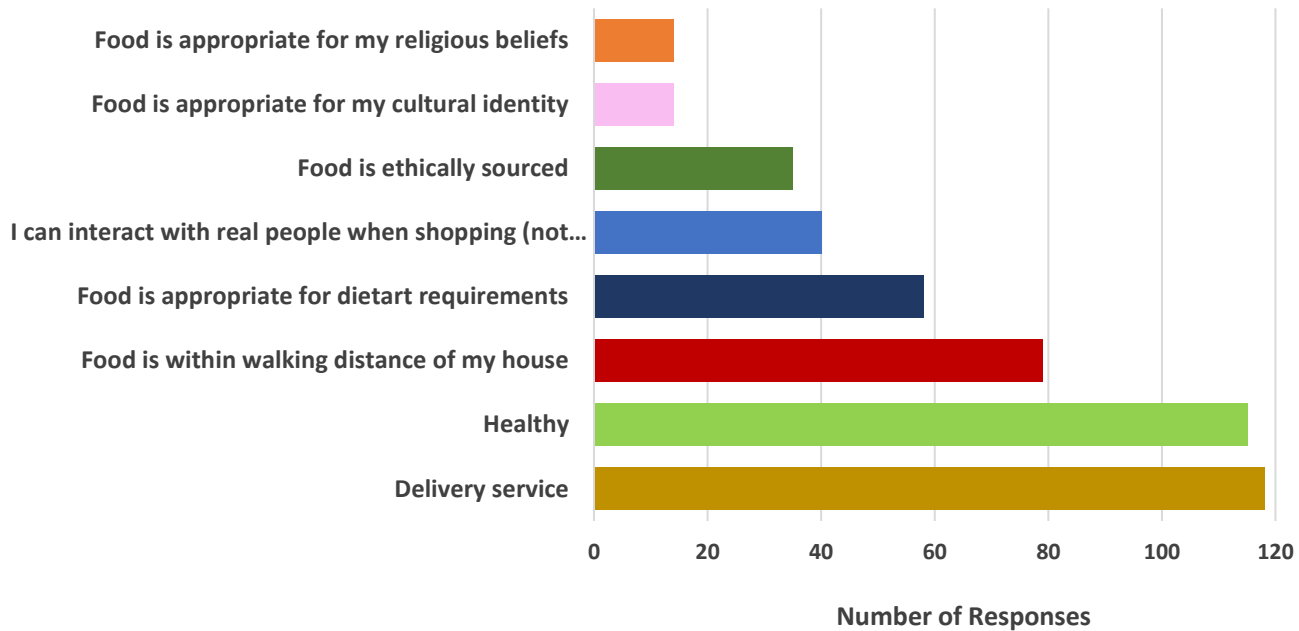


Figure 2: Essential to people when accessing food. Note, participants could select multiple answers.

A **delivery service** was **very popular** with **52%** of respondents asking for this, as was **'healthy' food** at **51 %**.

Of the 35 respondents from a BAMER background:

- 66% said that food being healthy is essential to them (23 of 35)
- 54% said that a delivery service was essential to them (19 out of 35)
- 29% said that food being appropriate to their dietary requirements is essential (10 out of 35)
- 25% said that food being within walking distance from their house was essential (9 out of 35)
- 20% said that food being appropriate to their religious beliefs was essential (7 out of 35)

People with a disability were similar to the main responses but wanted delivery slightly more:

- **59% wanted a delivery service**
- 51% wanted healthy food
- 30% wanted food appropriate to dietary requirements
- 30% wanted food with walking distance

7 people gave other responses. The relevant 'Other' responses included:

- Two mentions of food being appropriate for diabetes;
- A mention of delivery being essential only in lockdown;
- A mention of long dates (presumably shelf-life) as essential;
- And one person said that it's essential that the *"quantity is enough to feed my children and the cost is within budget. Healthy food is important but unaffordable more often than not."*



Dietary Requirements

If respondents selected “the food is appropriate for my dietary requirements”, they were asked what these were. Please note, that many people responded to this with the dietary requirements of their household, not just themselves, and some people may have several dietary requirements themselves.

In terms of medical requirements, the following were mentioned and their frequency in brackets: **Diabetes** (10), **Celiac disease** (4), **Cholesterol** (1), **IBS** (1), **Ulcerative colitis** (1) **Stomach condition** (1), **Migraine associated vertigo** (1), **Autism** (1), **Disabled child with sensory needs** (1), and **Fodmap diet via hospital** (1).

In terms of belief-based and other diets, the following were mentioned: **Vegetarian - including trying** (14), **Halal** (3), **Vegan** (2), **Pescatarian** (1), **Paleo** (1).

In terms of specific foods and food groups, the following were mentioned: **High fibre** (1), **High potassium** (1), **High magnesium** (1), **High sodium** (1), **Avoid gluten or gluten free** (5), **Avoid wheat** (4), **Low sugar or sugar free** (3), **Low or no carb** (3), **Lactose/dairy free** (3), **Low or no red meat** (2), **Less oil** (1), **Low fat** (1), **Low dairy** (1), **Soya free** (1), **Oat free** (1) **No nuts** (2), **Avoid herbicides and pesticides** (1), and the following specific foods (cheese, onions, citrus, chilli, yellow pepper, courgette, aubergine, mushrooms, olives, onions, peppers/capsicums, cucumber, seeds, seeded fruit, eggs, caffeine).

Essential Food & Drink Items

Participants were asked what they consider to be the top 5 essential food and drink items that they could not do without each week in their own words – we have listed the fifteen most included items below, alongside their frequency.

- **Milk** (112)
- **Bread** (83)
- **Vegetables** (75)
- **Fruit** (69)
- **Meat** (37)
- **Eggs** (36)
- **Pasta** (36)
- **Cheese** (31)
- **Coffee** (27)
- **Tea** (24)
- **Potatoes** (21)
- **Cereal** (19)
- **Fish** (19)
- **Juice** (18)
- **Rice** (17)



Fruit and Veg consumption

Participants were asked the following question:

“We are all being encouraged to eat plenty of fruit and veg. Is there anything that would help you to eat more?”

Summary of responses from those ‘Struggling to afford food but not in receipt of a Food Parcel’

People were keen for there to be more **readily-available ideas** on how to use them:

“More tastier ideas”

“Ideas to make it more tasty or with meal ideas”

“More public education of healthy plant-based diet and recipes”

“Recipe ideas on how to use it all up, how to be efficient with meals, save money and not waste food”

“Good and healthy juicing recipes”

“Description of exotic fruit as not everyone knows how to serve them same for veg”.

Several people said they would eat more if it was **more affordable**, with one person saying

“Price - money controls what I purchase. I would shop differently if money wasn't an issue”.

One person pointed out that **the cost per person is higher** for fruit and veg when living in a **single-person household**, *“I live on my own and bigger packs are often cheaper. So loose is good but sometimes costs more.”*

Two people mentioned **prepared fruit and veg**, with one saying that it would be *“easier and quicker”*, and another explaining *“If the fruit and vegetables were fresh looking and didn't need a lot of preparation because my hands are full of arthritis, so chopping up is a big problem for me”.*

Responses from People Who Had Accessed Emergency Food

People **want a variety** of fruit and veg.

“Try to vary the types of given fruits and vegetables each week so we don't feel bored sometimes to use them and we can get multiple nutrition that are important to our health”

However, whilst people would like to eat a variety, several felt held back because they didn't know how to use certain foods. **Recipes and ideas** were requested by several people.

“I don't know how to use some of the vegetables, e.g. chard, celeriac, Swede as we never had them in our culture. recipes need to be developed according to the cultural food habit with the same ingredients”

“Recipes for making kale and broccoli more palatable”

“Recipes using Veg and fruit more creatively”

“ideas for tinned fruit”

“smoothie ideas”

21 people explicitly mentioned that **affordability** of fresh fruit and vegetables restricted their ability to eat it.



“We love fruit and veg but rarely can afford them. Especially fruit”

“I would love options for more affordable Fruit & Veg Boxes”

“We love fruit and veg but can’t always afford it, if it was more affordable we would eat it every day”

Accessibility and the **quantity in food parcels** – if they don’t have money for food and the food they receive in a parcel doesn’t include fruit and veg, then they can’t eat it.

Hunger

225 Respondents

Participants were asked:

“Since lockdown began on the 23rd March, did you (or anyone in your household) ever reduce the size of your meals or skip meals because you couldn’t afford enough food?”

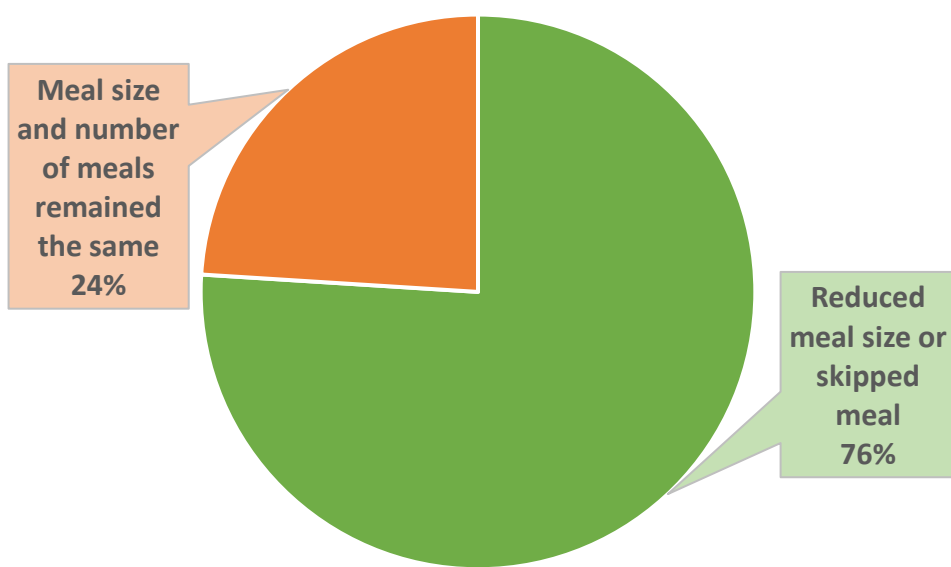


Figure 3: Percentage of respondents who had reduced the size of their meal or skipped a meal since 23rd March 2020 due to not being able to afford enough food.

171 people or **76%** said **yes**, and 54 people or **24%** said **no**.

Of the 35 BAMER respondents, 66% said yes. 81% of these had accessed a food bank.

80% of people with a disability said Yes, 71% of these people had accessed a food bank



Demographics

223 Respondents

Note: the following questions were taken from the Brighton and Hove City Council's 2015/2016 Equalities Monitoring Form, which can be found at https://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/article/inline/REVISED%20About%20You%20Equality%20Monitoring%20Apr15_0-1.pdf : age, gender, sex assigned at birth, ethnic origin (simplified), sexual orientation (asexual added based upon feedback), limitations because of impairment, impairment types, carer status, and Armed Forces service.

223 out of 226 respondents completed the question asking if they would be happy to answer the Equalities Monitoring questions. 169 or 76% said yes, and 54 or 24% said no.

Age

167 Respondents

Participants were asked:

“What age are you?”

(not including two who gave invalid answers - 'Retired' and 'male').

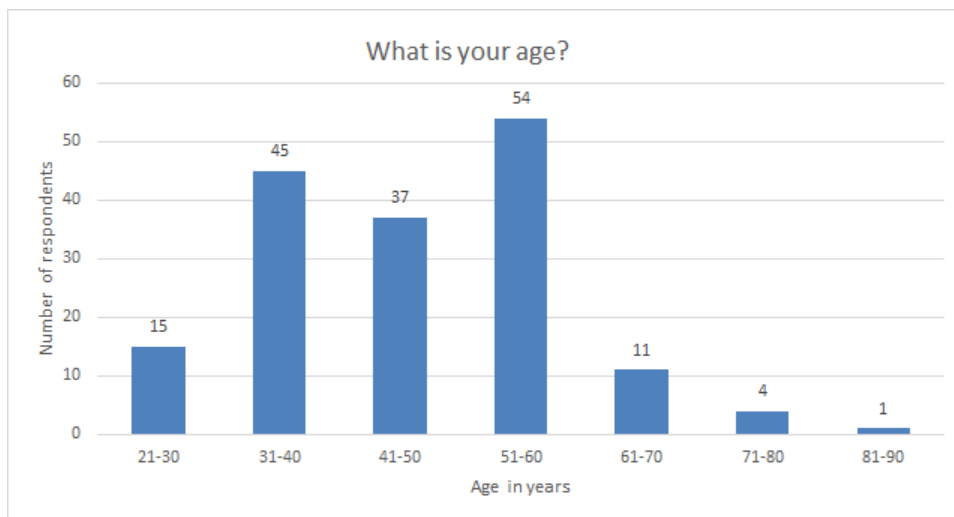


Figure 4: Age distribution of respondents. Please note that two invalid answers were given: 'retired', and 'male'.



Gender

169 Respondents

Participants were asked: “What gender are you?”

103 or **61% said female**, 65 or **39% said male**, and 1 said other which they specified as **non-binary**.

Sex Assigned at Birth

169 Respondents

All **169 respondents** that answered identified as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Ethnicity

166 Respondents

Participants were asked: “How would you describe your ethnic origin?”

They were given the following options: Asian, Black, White, Mixed, or Other (please specify).

131 (**78.9 %**) said **White**, 12 **Mixed (7.22 %)**, 9 (**5.4 %**) said **Asian**, 6 (**3.61 %**) said **Black**, and 8 (**5%**) said **Other** (specifying the following: Arab (4), Berber (1), Nubian (1), Oriental (1), White Other (1)).

The 2011 census found the ethnic composition of Brighton and Hove to be 89.1% white (80.5% white British, 1.4% white Irish, 7.1% other white), 4.1% Asian (1.1% Chinese, 1.1% Indian, 0.5% Bangladeshi, 1.2% other Asian), 3.8% mixed race (1.5% mixed black/white, 1.2% mixed white/Asian, 1.0% other mix), 1.5% black and 0.8% Arab

From the 2011 census one out of five Brighton & Hove residents (53,351 people, 19.5%) are from a BME background. Although statistically there isn't much difference of the number of White British adults in our survey in comparison to Brighton & Hove Census data, when you look at it closely it appears that we have a very low incidence of White other. There are higher incidences in Asian, Black and Arabic communities.

	Census	Survey	Difference
White British	80.5 %	78.9 %	-1.6
Mixed	3.8	7.22 %	3.42
Black	1.5	3.61 %	2.11
White Other	8.5 %	0.6 %	-7.9
Arab	0.8 %	2.4 %	1.6
Asian	4.1 %	5.4	1.3
Other	0	1.87 %	-1.87



Sexuality

159 Respondents

Participants were asked:

“Which of the following options best describes your sexuality: Heterosexual/Straight, Lesbian/Gay woman, Gay man, Bisexual, Asexual, or Other (please specify)?”

126 (79%) said Heterosexual/Straight, 18 (11%) said Gay man, 7 (4%) said Bisexual, 3 (2%) said Asexual, 3 (2%) said Lesbian/Gay woman and 2 (1%) said Other and specified: “normal” and “no sex”.

Religion or belief

163 Respondents

Participants were asked: **“What is your religion or belief?”**

62 (38%) said Christian, 62 (38%) said I have no particular religion or belief, 9 (6%) said Muslim, 7 (4%) said Atheist, 5 (3%) said Agnostic, 5 (3%) said Buddhist, 1 (1%) said Jain, 1 (1%) said Jewish, 1 (1%) said Pagan, 0 said Hindu, 0 said Sikh, and 10 (6%) said Other (and specified “Catholic” (2), “Spiritual” (2), “Roman Catholic” (3), “Jehovah’s witness”, “Humanist”, and “none”).

Health problem or disability

165 Respondents

Participants were asked: **“Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?”**

67 people or 41% said yes, a little, 61 people or 37% said yes, a lot, and 37 people or 22% said no.

Of 128 people (76%) who said either yes, a little, or yes, a lot, 125 responded to the next question with a type of impairment (participants could select multiple answers), as can be seen below:

81 (65%) said Mental Health Condition 64 (51%) said Sensory Impairment, 62 (50%) said Long-Standing Illness, 50 (40%) said Physical Impairment, 12 (10%) said Learning Disability/Difficulty, 5 (4%) said Autistic Spectrum, 6 (5%) said Other Developmental Condition, and 7 said Other (specifying: Asthma (2), GERD/gastroesophageal reflux disease (1), Pregnancy (1), and one person saying they were very tired at all times post-covid.19).

In the 2011 census, 16.3 % of residents in Brighton & Hove say their day-day activities are affected by ill-health and disability.



Carer

168 Respondents

Participants were asked: “Are you a carer?”

34 or 20% said yes, and 134 or 80% said no.

Of those who said yes to being a carer, 33 responded to the question:

“Who do you care for?”

10 (30%) said partner/spouse, 9 (27%) said child with special needs, 7 (21%) said parent, 6 (18%) said other family member, 2 (6%) said friend, and 3 (9%) said other (specifying: two children, a child with health issues, and one saying they were a community carer).

Armed forces

167 Respondents

9 respondents selected yes to signify that any of the following apply to them:

- “You are currently serving in the UK Armed Forces (this includes reservists or part-time service, e.g.: Territorial Army)
- You have ever served in the UK Armed Forces
- You are a member of a current or former serviceman or woman’s immediate family/household”.

Living arrangements

225 Respondents

Respondents were asked for their post-code, and the breakdown by area/first four digits of postcode can be seen below:

	BN1 unspecified	3
Seafront/Old Steine to North Laine	BN1 1	2
Seafront area between Old Steine and Brunswick	BN1 2	5
Dyke Road	BN1 3	5
Brighton station/North Laine to Roundhill	BN1 4	5
Westdene/Withdene	BN1 5	1
Preston Park/Surrenden/London Road Station	BN1 6	6
Hollingdean	BN1 7	12
Hollingbury/Patcham	BN1 8	4
Moulsecomb/Coldean	BN1 9	10
Queen's Park	BN2 0	15
Kemptown	BN2 1	15



No longer in use?	BN2 2	1
Elm Grove/the Level	BN2 3	9
Bevendean	BN2 4	22
Whitehawk/Marina	BN2 5	18
Woodingdean	BN2 6	11
Ovingdean	BN2 7	1
Saltdean	BN2 8	1
Hanover	BN2 9	22
	BN3 unspecified	1
Brunswick	BN3 1	6
Hove (seafront)/Brunswick	BN3 2	2
Hove	BN3 3	11
Kingsway/Portslade	BN3 4	2
Aldrington	BN3 5	4
Between Toads Hole Valley/West Blatchington/Westdene/Preston	BN3 6	8
Hangleton/West Blatchington	BN3 7	2
North Hangleton	BN3 8	6
Ditchling	BN6 8	1
Hurstpierpoint	BN6 9	1
Lewes	BN7 2	1
Lewes	BN7 9	1
Peacehaven	BN10 7	2
Downside/Eastbourne	BN20 8	1
Eastbourne/Hampden Park/Willingdon	BN22 7	1
Pevensy	BN24 5	1
Between the western lawns and Southwick	BN41 1	3
Portslade	BN41 2	2
Shoreham	BN43 5	1

Household Composition

Adults Reliant on Participant for Food

221 Respondents

Participants were asked:

“How many adults there are in your household, beside yourself, that are reliant on you for food?”

The responses ranged between 1 and 6 adults.

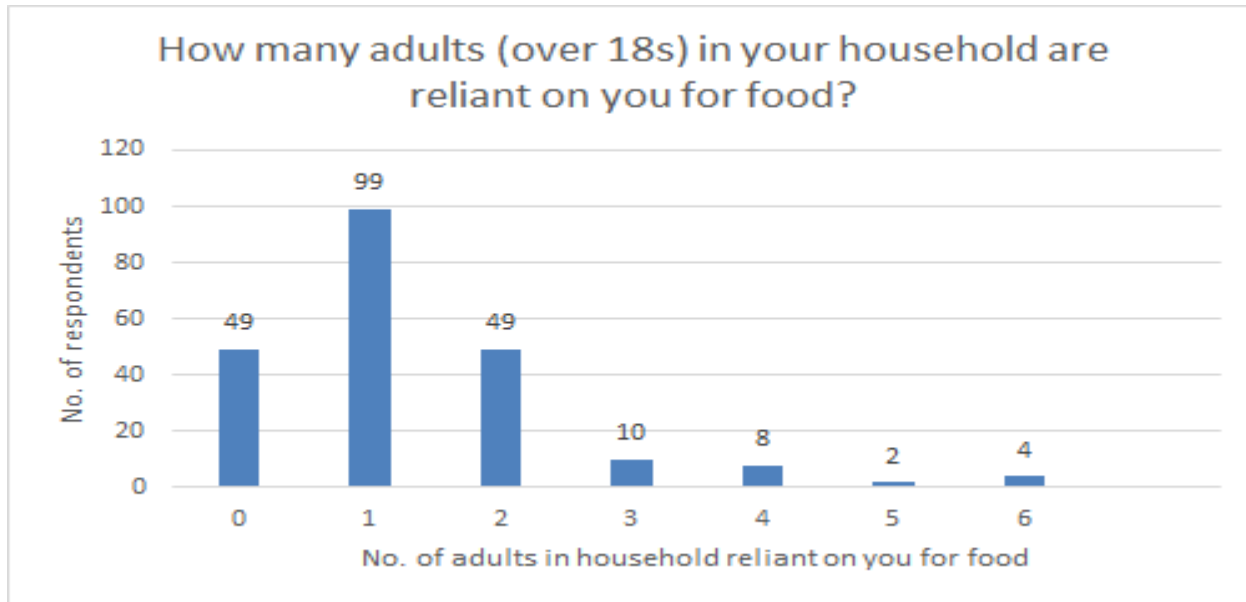


Figure 5: Number of adults reliant on respondent for food in their household.

Children Reliant on Participant for Food

226 Respondents

Participants were asked:

“How many children there are in your household that are reliant on you for food?”

The responses ranged between 1 and 6 children.

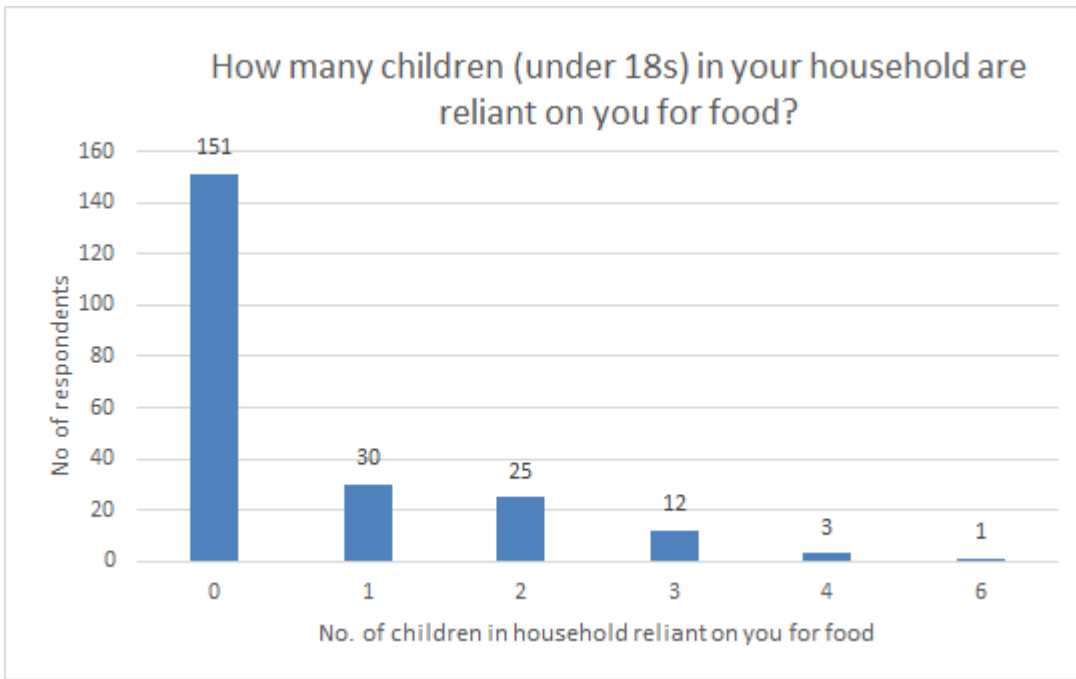


Figure 6: Number of children reliant on respondent for food in their household.

This means that 71/226 (31.4 %) people have children/family. In comparison to the average statistic of 24.5 % of Brighton & Hove households with dependent children.

Employment Status

220 Respondents

Participants were asked:

“What is your current employment status? ”

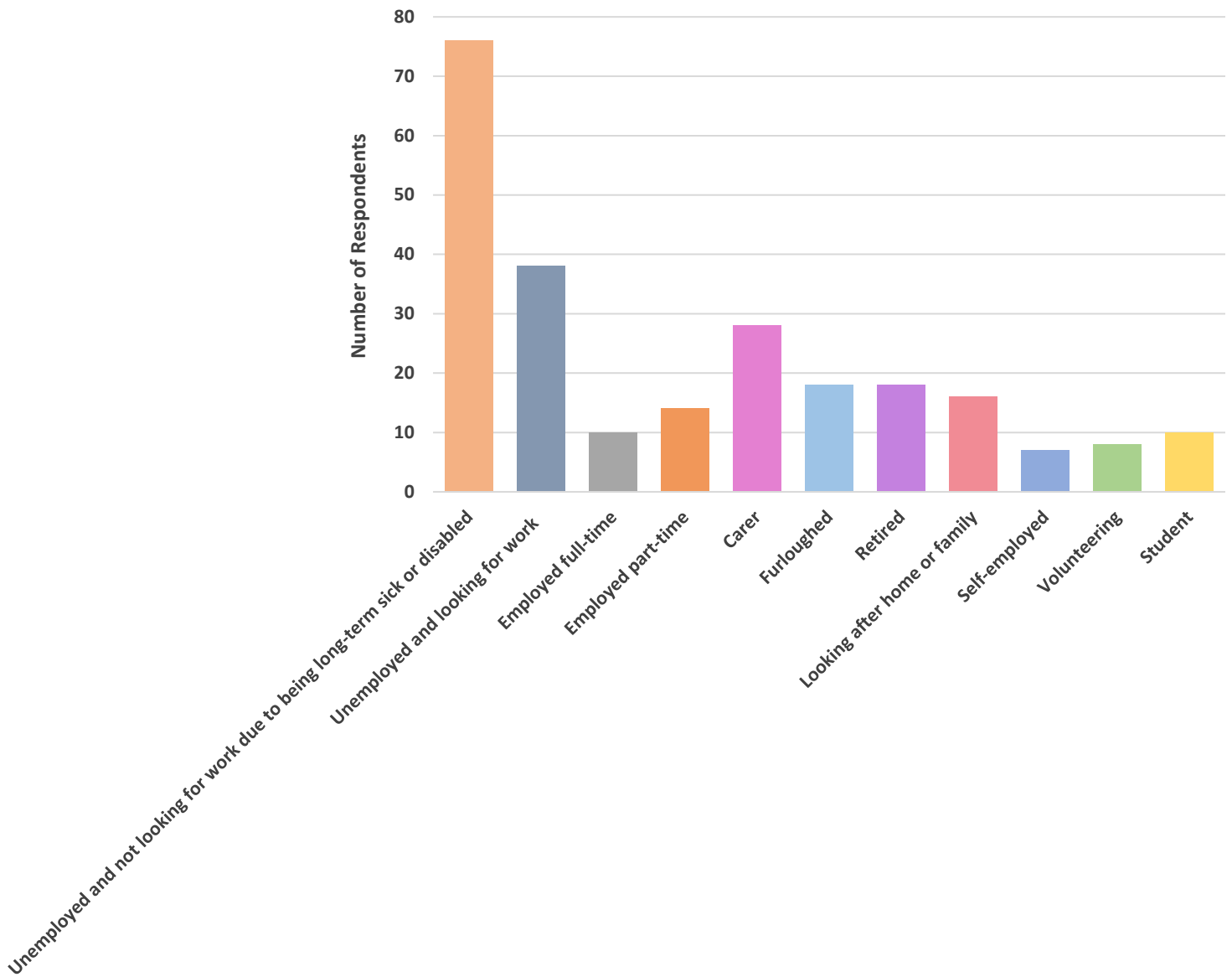


Figure 7: Employment status of respondents. Participants could select multiple answers.

35% (76) selected unemployed and not looking for work due to being long-term sick or disabled.

17% (38) selected unemployed and looking for work.

13% (28) selected carer.

5% (10) said they were employed full-time.

8% (18) selected furloughed.

8% (18) selected retired (although 1 respondent selected both retired and employed full-time).

7% (16) selected looking after home or family.

6% (14) said they were employed part-time.

5% (10) selected student.

4% (8) selected volunteering.

3% (7) selected self-employed.

Additionally, 6 respondents (3%) selected 'Other'. These responses were: on benefits; disabled; pending review; signed off by doctor; on ESA and PIP; and sickness.

Household food budget

215 Respondents

Participants were asked:

“After you have paid all of your bills, including your rent, approximately how much money do you have each week to buy food for your household?”

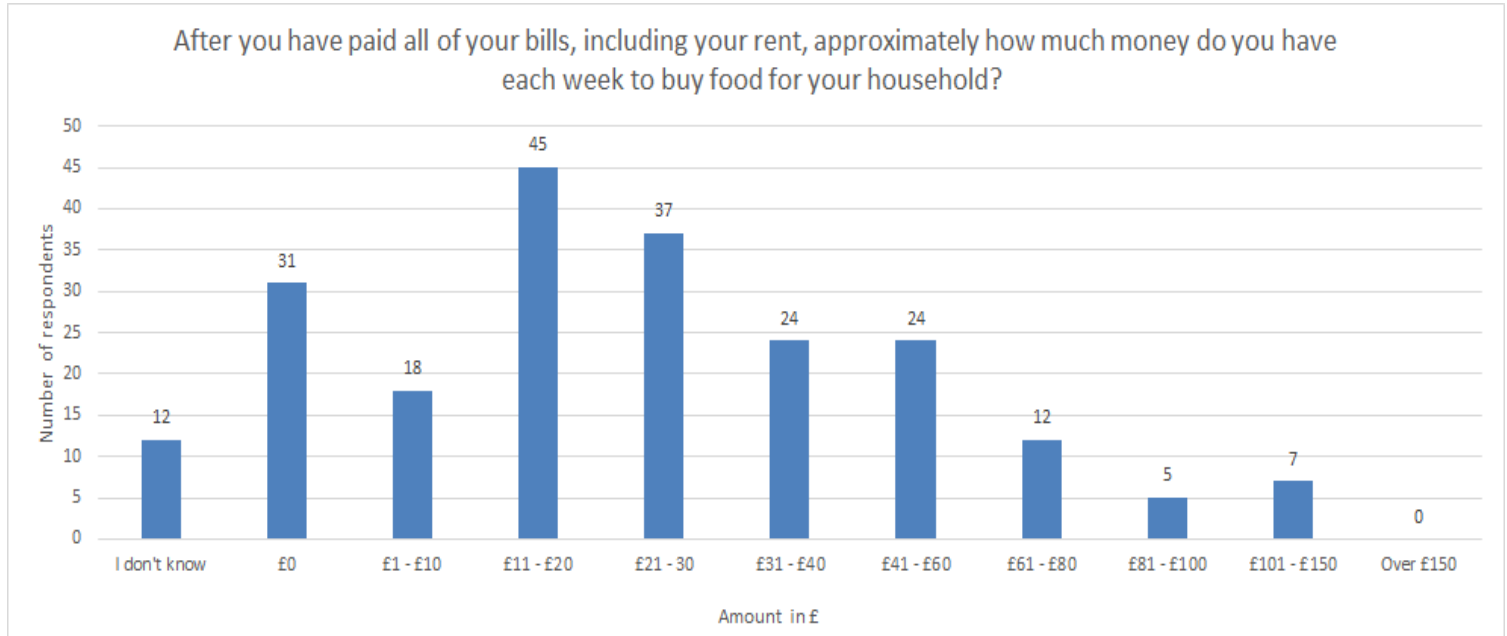


Figure 8: Money participants have left each week to buy food after paying bills and rent.

People **without kids** had an **average weekly food budget** of **£16.66 per person**, with an **average household budget** of **£25.60 a week**. Households **with children** have an **average weekly food budget** of **£8.53 per person**, but a **household budget** of **£36 per week**.

BAMER household had an average budget of £34 per week to spend on food.

Households with a disability had an average budget of £27 per week

In 2017/18 government survey the amount that an **average household** spent on all **food** and drink, including alcoholic drinks and **food** eaten out was **£45.31 per person per week**. This is an average of £60.60 per household per week.

As you can see from the above budget, being able to buy all your food needs for £8.53 per person or £16.66 is simply impossible with today's prices.

Part 2: Food Parcel Recipients

Emergency Food During the Pandemic

219 respondents

Participants were asked:

“Have you received a free food parcel from a food bank/food hub since the 23rd March?”

161 people or **74%** said yes, and 58 people or **26%** said no.

Comments from People Struggling to Afford Food but Not in Receipt of a Food Parcel

- One person noted that the **cost of food has increased since lockdown**, saying that “A lot of food packets have been **reduced in size** but **price increased** making it more difficult for people”. Another pointed out that for many in Brighton, cheap supermarkets offer the only affordable option, saying “These issues that were here before Covid-19 and there are real problems to access fresh, healthy and affordable food. Only cheap supermarkets are affordable, no local markets and shops. Fish has become a real luxury.”
- One person struggling to afford food explained that they felt **too embarrassed** to seek food help in their area, saying “I have not asked for food parcels locally, as it would be too embarrassing with people whom you know, especially if you volunteer locally. I have managed with just my own supplies of tins, etc. and pasta and soup when low. I can call relatives to go to a supermarket if essential food required, but do not like to ask them to go very often, as they have their own work and families to deal with.”
- Someone who has accessed food discusses their experience as someone in need of help who has dietary restrictions, saying “I have used the real junk food project. I feel very **self-conscious** when talking about **dietary restrictions** as someone in need. It really puts me off. I feel ashamed / **embarrassed** as I then have to **refuse things** that are offered that **aren't suitable**.”
- One person said they were forced into food poverty due to a 10 week wait for their first Universal Credit payment “Having to **wait ten weeks for my first Universal Credit payment** due to the way the system has been designed to calculate eligibility for payment based on the date in the month when employer files details to HMRC, not the last day of work/first day of unemployment, **plunged me into food poverty**. Thankfully I had a well-stocked kitchen and kind friends who gave me food. Nonetheless, I did **run out of fresh and frozen food** and had to survive on dry & tinned food for last two weeks which I had to **ration** to make it last until I received my first Universal Credit payment. I **prioritised feeding my cat** and used my last money to buy (cheap) cat food and had to ration that so the cat had enough to eat too.”
- Two people went into detail around how their health issues have impacted on their daily lives and thus by extension on their access to food, saying:



*“Since Lockdown, I've experienced considerable **mobility problems**. Unfortunately, the affliction is to my feet: I hate discussing problems with others, but the bottom line is Fibromyalgia-- a day spent in 'normal' activities can leave me so fatigued that I can barely move; this **narrows my field of choice** in ways that I would have never considered.....I cannot write any more.....”*

“I hadn't received anything from any food organisation, yet I'm disabled on PIP high rate both for care due to Fibromyalgia which is now everywhere and arthritis and depression which I suffer from all the time, no breaks. Also, high rate for mobility as walking, standing and moving around is very difficult for me to. I have to use a motor scooter and or an electric mobility chair if I need to use public transport as I don't drive anymore. My husband is older than me and he too receives Attendance Allowance High rate and also is a pensioner. He had to go out and do all the shopping, thus leaving me alone for long periods of time when I was suffering badly from depression”.

- One person said **“we appreciate the support we get from food banks”** and another said **“Started in late June happy with service”** suggesting that a few people that selected ‘no’ to having received a food parcel since March 23rd ought to have selected yes.

Food Bank Suppliers

Many skipped or did not know the name of the food bank that supplied their food, but those that did named the following providers:

BHCC	9
BHFP	5
Balfour	2
Bevendean	10
BMECP	6
Brighton and Hove City Mission	1
Brighton and Hove Mutual Aid	1
Bristol Estate	1
Brighton Table Tennis Club	6
Chomp	2
Community hub	2
Craven Vale	10
Hangleton	1
Hassocks	1
Hollingdean	5
Java cafe	5
Kemptown	2
Newham	1

One Church	1
Pankhurst	1
Phoenix	3
Purple kitchen	1
Safehaven women	1
Salvation Army	7
Turner Children's centre	1
Time To Talk Befriending	3
Voices in Exile	4
Whitehawk	5
Woodingdean	4
Just said Brighton	3
Just said Hove or holland road hove	2
Just said Brighton and Hove	3
Said Brighton Hub or Brighton food bank	3

Where to Access Food

158 Respondents

Participants were asked:

“If your current emergency food provider could no longer supply food, would you know where to access food?”

The 161 people that said yes to having received a food parcel were asked if they knew how they would access an alternative if their current food parcel provider was no longer providing food. Of them, 158 answered, with 123 or **78% saying no** and 35 or **22% saying yes**.

Food Parcel Quantities

158 Respondents

Participants were asked about the amounts in their food parcels received since the 23rd March 2020. 158 answered, and of them: 104 or **66%** said they generally contained **about the right amount of food**, 41 or **26%** said they contained **too little food**, and 13 or **8%** said they contained **more food than they needed**.

Food Waste

Participants were asked if there was any food in their parcels that they did not use, the key points drawn from responses were:

- One person said it was **customised**, so they only **chose things they would use** – this seems to be the **ideal**, as many foods are essentials to some and completely undesirable to others, however it clearly takes **time and resources** to be able to make food parcels customisable; **relying on volunteers** and **donated or surplus foods**, this isn't often possible.
- Items that people **didn't use** included **tins** that they didn't like or had too many of; things not suitable for their **dietary requirements, intolerances and allergies**; **ready-made meals with no labels** as to what it was; things that they had leftovers of from the previous week e.g. teabags; vegetables that were said to be unfit for consumption were mentioned by two people; and **dated food** was mentioned.
- Several people said that food that they didn't eat was either **given away to neighbours, family, or friends**; others **left it at the centre** and one person **donated unwanted food to a food bank**.
- In answer to a general 'any other comments' question, one person suggested "*Option with delivered food e.g. Tesco's to **hand back items that not needed/wanted/wrong/damaged either on delivery** or sometimes at next delivery and be good to do this with foodbank as well to stop wastage or accumulating food in storage that not able to consume.*"

Reasons for Needing Emergency Food

159 Respondents

Participants were asked:

"What would you consider to be the reasons that you have needed emergency food?"

Respondents could select multiple reasons to enable the responses to reflect that it's commonly multiple factors that contribute to the need of emergency food. This is clear by the fact that those 159 respondents provided a total of 456 responses – meaning the mean number of responses was approximately 3 per person. The highest number of selections by individual respondents were 9.



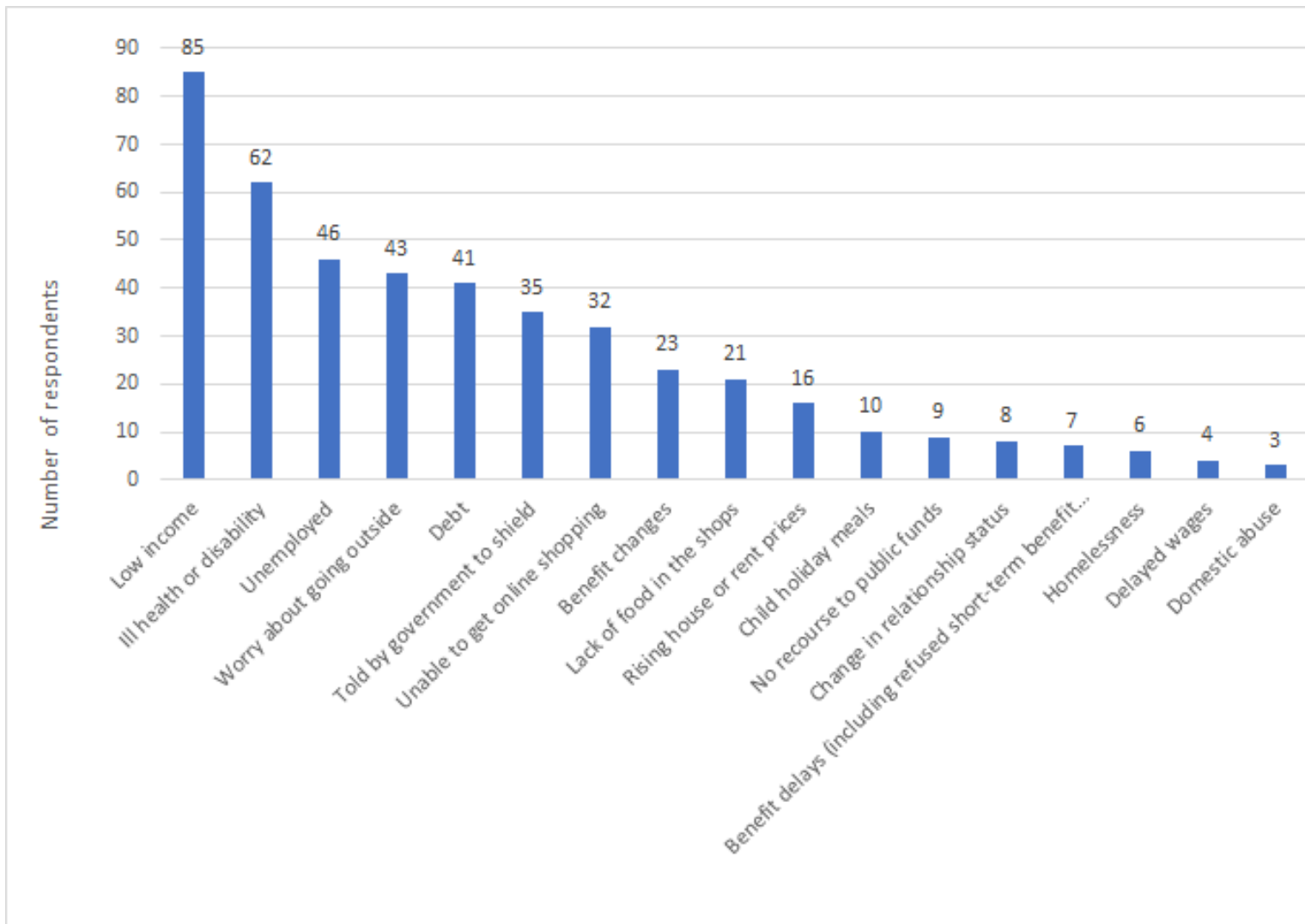


Figure 9: Reasons for emergency food use.

Responses for people from a BAMER background:

- 52% due to ill health or disability (vs 39% above)
- 48% due to low income (vs 53% above)
- 36% worried about going outside (vs 27% above)
- 36% due to being unemployed (vs 29% above)
- 28% due to debt (vs 26% above)
- 24% lack of food in shops (vs 13% above)
- The rest were similar to the broader answers but BAME were slightly higher on shielding (24% vs 22%), online shopping (16% vs 20%) and benefit changes (8% vs 14%).

Responses for people with a disability or long-term health condition

- 41% due to low income, otherwise broadly the same as above



Feedback About Emergency Food

Participants were asked:

“Do you have any feedback about emergency food parcels you have received? (Please consider the things that you liked about the food/service, and the things that you would improve”

A number of key points from the responses are:

- People were **generally very happy** with what they had received and were **very grateful** for the service.
- Numerous people specifically mentioned the **helpfulness and kindness** of the people they had encountered when using foodbanks, [*“using a food bank is sadness, but I was made comfortable by the people in there” “Very respectful and compassionate staff”*] and people were especially thankful to the people who had been delivering their parcels – the opportunity to see a **friendly face** and to have someone ask “how are you?” was appreciated and reassuring in an uncertain time. [*“more than just receiving food, talking to someone who is caring is so important to me.”” It was really nice to see the lovely people who brought our food on Fridays after being in doors for over 4 months”” I really appreciated X calling to see what we needed, and the smiling face of the man who delivered. My husband has dementia and it really made a difference to us both.”*] Another person said that receiving the food had helped them emotionally *“It is helping me emotionally because I’m not worried about what to eat”*.
- Several people mentioned the terms **“lifeline”** and **“godsend”**: *“Their help is the lifeline I needed during these hard times. I used to go days without food but now I eat regularly.”*
“I was so hungry some days till I received help I’m disabled vulnerable person I don’t go out my mum use to get me some food with friends each week but she is unwell too “
“really helped us feed our kids through all this”
“I asked for help at the beginning as I could not go out to work do had no money coming in and was too anxious to go out . They were very helpful and prompted I was very grateful it got me out of a whole”
- Some respondents were particularly appreciative of the delivery service, with one person saying they were **relieved it could be delivered** as they have been unable to collect when referred in the past. Another respondent said that they appreciated the delivery as to them this meant they could *“not be embarrassed by having to pick it up”*, demonstrating the stigma that some people experience around accessing food help.
- Several respondents commented on the size and contents of the boxes. Given the large number of food banks and newer hubs that were established in the crisis, and that a lot of food is sourced from donations and surplus, it’s unsurprising that **comments around content varied highly** (some said there wasn’t enough food, while one person said *“the amount of food you get is unreal”*; some said there was a good, balanced selection and nutritious foods, whilst others said their parcel was of low nutritional value).
- Some said that they received **enough food but a lot of it was often unsuitable** (e.g. contained wheat and dairy which they couldn’t eat, or included meat when they’d said they were vegetarian), one person



mentioned receiving dated food, one commented on the randomness of items making it **difficult to create meals**, and several commented on the **absence or low amount of fruit and vegetables**.

- Several people returned unsuitable food, gave it to their neighbour, or some even donated food they didn't want to food bank donation points.

Any Other Comments

Participants were then also asked if they had any other comments and the following were drawn from their responses:

Thank you

*"Just to say **a big thank you** to the people of Brighton & hope for the help though this hard time."*

*"I think they've done a **wonderful job** with the food parcels and I know that they've helped me and my daughters out so much during this hard time and we're **very grateful.**"*

"Nice to know there's help out there"

*"I'd **love to thank the volunteers**, the food providers, and all the staff who are on the front it would be a very stressful for us which could lead depression and mental health problems."*

"Thank you for helping me and my two children"

One person was inspired by the generosity they received and hopes to support the provider of their parcel in the future [*"That I may become self - sufficient to support BMECP for them to render this philanthropy to others in the future"*].

Suggestions

*"Option with **delivered food** e.g. Tesco's to **hand back items** that not needed/wanted/wrong/damaged either on delivery or sometimes at next delivery and be good to do this with foodbank as well to stop wastage or accumulating food in storage that not able to consume."*

*"if I could make a change it would be to **add enough for household amount in veg add greens and more veg and fruit milk** thank you so much"*

Comments about experiences



*“What **a fantastic job** everyone was doing. I never thought I would be in this situation or that I would have been so ill with the virus.”*

“Generally, not enough assistance for those on a low income but not in receipt of benefits - my rent and bills are so high that I don't have any money left over, but these things are not taken into account when applying for benefits so I'm not eligible, but am still in emergency need at the moment. My situation has been exacerbated by an abusive relationship ending last year which left me with lower household income and debt as a result of financial abuse, plus worsening health affecting my ability to work long hours, plus the lockdown meaning that I can no longer earn overtime which I had been relying on, and there not being any other work/second jobs to take on.”

Part 3: Responses to questions to develop new models for food box and meal schemes

We gave participants the following short explanation as background to the food box and meal questions which came after:

“We are looking at setting up a new project, where members could buy food that is low cost, local, healthy, and sustainable.

We want to better understand what sorts of food boxes and meals people might be interested in receiving weekly, and whether they might be able to pay an amount towards the cost.”

For the fruit box, veg box, and tinned/dry good box, participants could select multiple options to allow people to express an interest in both customisation and non-weekly deliveries, if they wished.

Generally, the data suggests that an **element of flexibility is desirable** to some people, in terms of both **customisability** and **frequency**.

Fruit box

224 Respondents

141 people (**63%**) said they would be **interested** in receiving a ready-made fruit box each week, 53 (**24%**) would **only be interested if they could customise it**, 45 (**20%**) would be **interested but not every week**, and 20 (**9%**) would **not be interested**.

The graph below shows that of 204 people (91%) who expressed an interest in the fruit box and responded to



the question about paying towards the cost, a total of 76 (37%) people were either **unsure** whether they might be able to **pay towards the cost** or said they were **unable to pay towards the cost of the box**, meaning that 128, or **63%** of those interested, said they **might be able to pay towards the cost**.

Based on the graph below and using cumulative frequencies, 6 people might be able to pay up to £12 (the estimated cost of a potential box), 13 might be able to pay up to £10, 21 might be able to pay up to £8, 56 might be able to pay up to £6, 103 might be able to pay up to £4, and 128 might be able to pay up to £2.

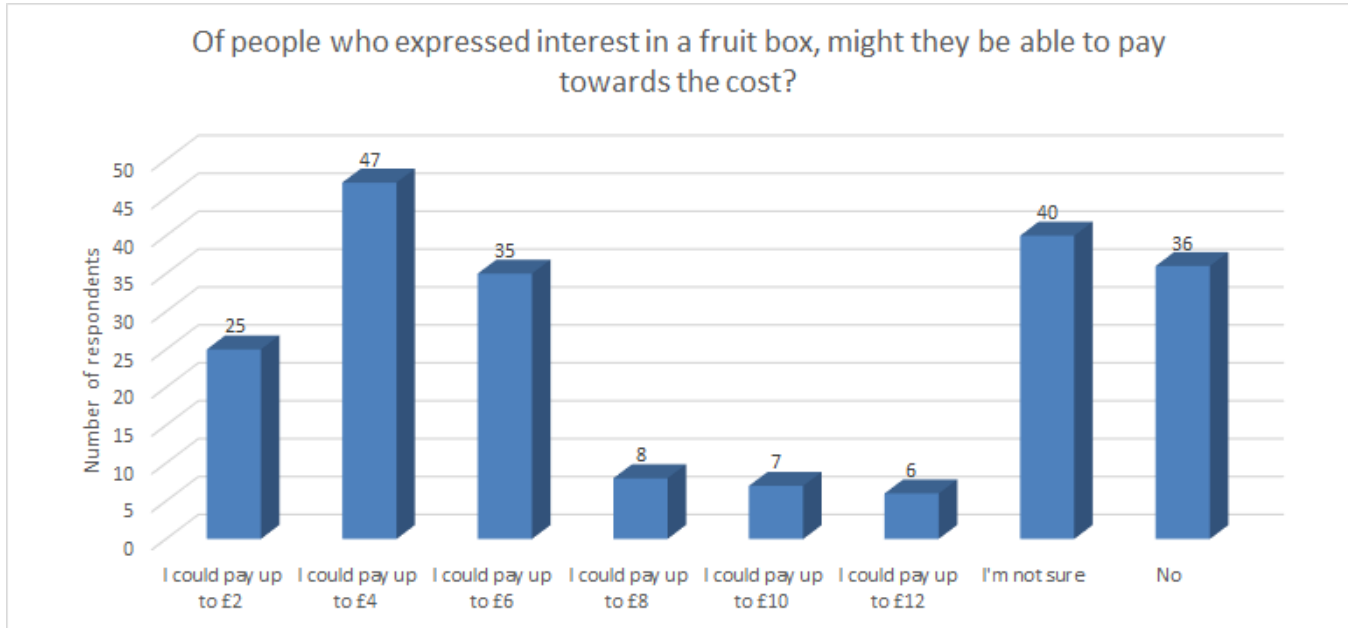


Figure 10: Amount of those interested in a fruit box that could pay towards the cost.

Vegetable Box

225 Respondents

122 (54%) said they were interested in receiving a ready-made vegetable box each week, 64 (28%) said they would be interested if they could customise it, 46 (20%) would be interested but not every week, and 28 (12%) would not be interested.

The graph below shows that of 196 (87%) people who expressed an interest in the previous question and responded to the question about paying towards the cost, a total of 68 (35%) people were either **unsure whether they might be able to pay** towards the cost or said they were **unable to pay towards the cost** of the box, meaning that 128, or **65%** of those interested, said they **might be able to pay towards the cost**.

Based on the graph below and using cumulative frequencies, 10 people might be able to pay up to £12 (the estimated cost of a potential box), 14 might be able to pay up to £10, 24 might be able to pay up to £8, 53 might be able to pay up to £6, 100 might be able to pay up to £4, and 128 might be able to pay up to £2.

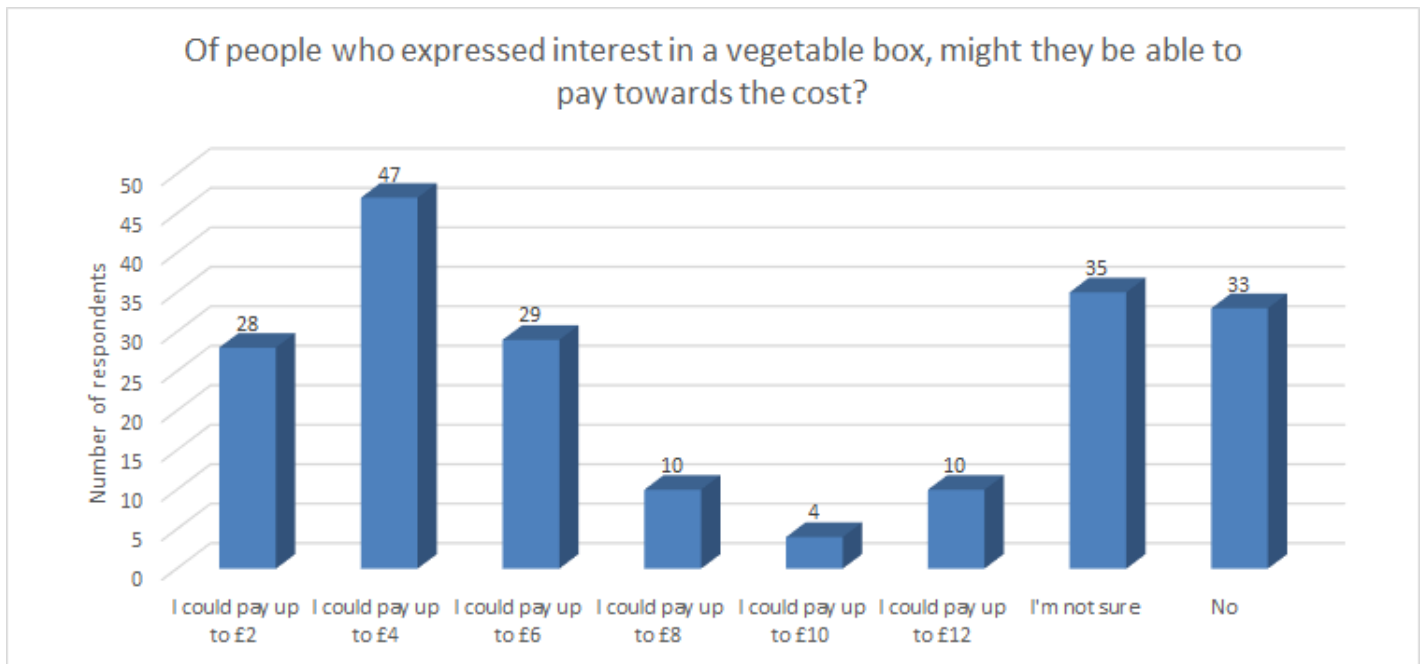


Figure 11: Amount of those interested in a vegetable box that could pay towards the cost.

Tinned and Dry Goods Box

225 Respondents

99 (44%) said they would be **interested** in receiving a ready-made tinned and dry goods box each week, 64 (28%) said they **would be if they could customise it**, 52 (23%) would be **interested but not every week**, and 39 (17%) would **not be interested**.

The graph below shows that of 186 people (83%) who expressed an interest in the previous question and responded to the question about paying towards the cost, a total of 79 people (42%) were either **unsure whether they might be able to pay** towards the cost or said they were **unable to pay towards the cost** of the box, meaning that 108, or **58%** of those interested, said they **might be able to pay** towards the cost.

Based on the graph below and using cumulative frequencies, 7 people might be able to pay up to £15 (the estimated cost of a potential box), 16 might be able to pay up to £10, 28 might be able to pay up to £8, 53 might be able to pay up to £6, 88 might be able to pay up to £4, and 107 might be able to pay up to £2.

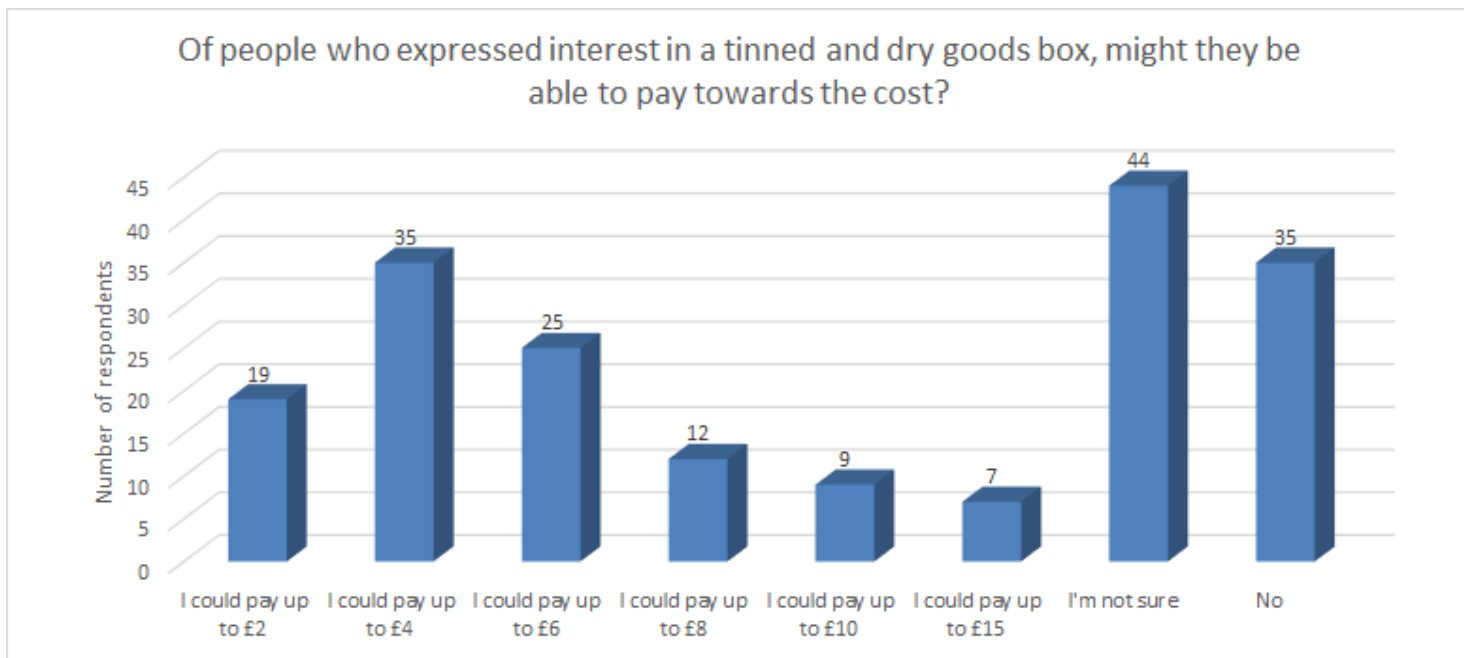


Figure 12: Amount of those interested in a tinned and dry goods box that could pay towards the cost.

Cooked meal

223 Respondents

84 (38%) respondents **would be interested** in a cooked meal and pudding like those in the images that were provided (figure 13), 21 (9%) would be **interested but in a different meal/pudding**, 14 (6%) would be **interested but in a meal only**, not a pudding and 104 (47%) said they **would not be interested**.



Figure 13: Images of cooked meal and pudding that were included in survey.

The graph below shows that of 121 people ((54%) 119 who expressed an interest in the previous question plus two people who must have skipped the previous question and so not been filtered by interest) and responded to the question about paying towards the cost, a total of 52 people (43%) were either **unsure whether they might be able to pay** towards the cost or said they were **unable to pay** towards the cost of the box, meaning

that 69, or **57%** of those interested, said they **might be able to pay towards the cost**.

Based on the graph below and using cumulative frequencies, 1 person might be able to pay up to £6 towards each meal, 2 people might be able to pay up to £5, 8 might be able to pay up to £4, 20 might be able to pay up to £3, 41 might be able to pay up to £2, and 69 might be able to pay up to £1.

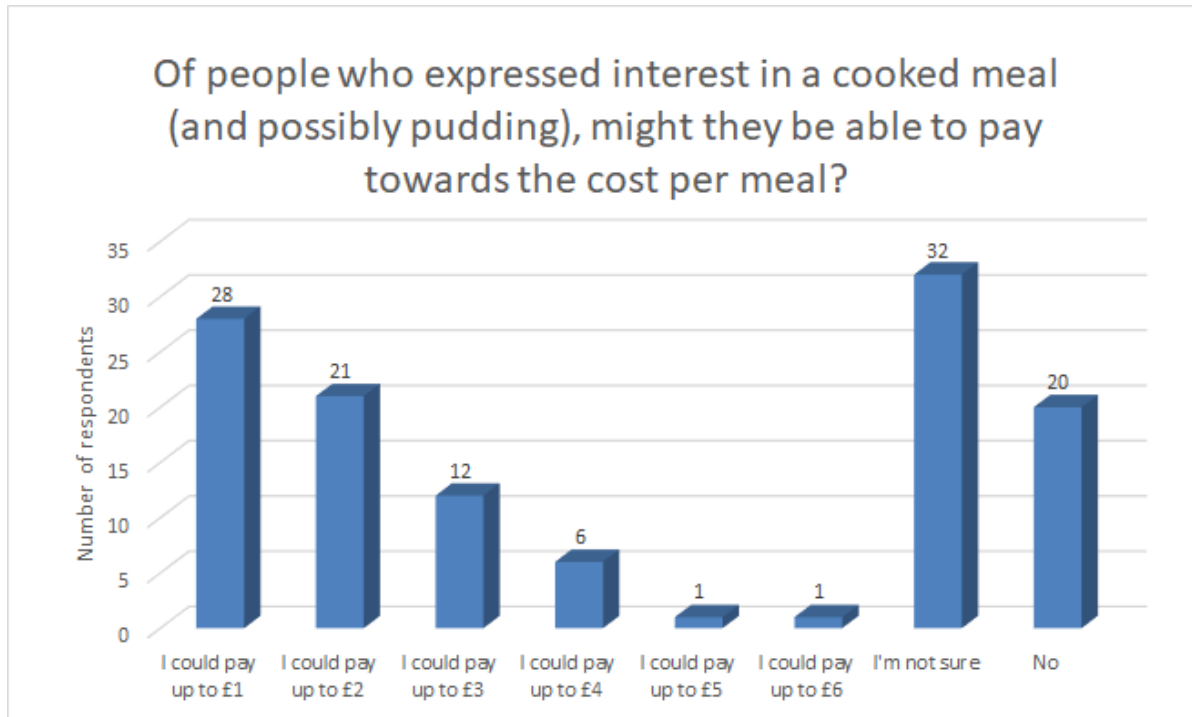


Figure 14: Amount of those interested in cooked meals and puddings that could pay towards the cost.

Of the 119 people that responded to the question about how many per week they'd estimate they would want, 3 people (3%) said **1 meal per week**, 6 (5%) said **2 meals per week**, 19 (16%) said **3 meals per week**, 24 (20%) said **4 meals per week**, 15 (13%) said **5 meals per week**, 4 (3%) said **6 meals per week**, 43 (36%) said **7 meals per week**, and 5 (4%) said **'other'** (these were specified as: "Any more is better", 7 per person, 10, 12, and 15).

Any other thoughts?

People Struggling to Afford Food but Not in Receipt of a Parcel

- One person said that a *"voucher would be better to use for us to make our own choice"*.
- Another voiced concerns about the uncertainty around what **Brexit** will mean for **food availability** *"I would be interested in receiving produce & understand that this would be seasonal. Were it not for mobility problems I would shop at the local greengrocer where there is plenty of choice ; how leaving the EU will affect this, I know not; all things considered, I feel it's unwise to sign up for anything until the way ahead is clearer."*

- Several people mentioned **variety**, with two having tried box schemes before and having been disappointed, *“Just variety. Been having the same 3 meals every week now for months” “I’d be concerned that the boxes would have enough variety and would be affordable and have things I want to eat. Have been disappointed by box schemes in the past. Also, the origin of the food as I make an effort to buy local, in season food with limited carbon-footprint. I grow my own veg on allotment so no need for veg box for me.” “Have tried a few boxes now as I’d like to support buying local but not been happy with the content. How many potatoes and sour apples can a person eat?”*
- One person explicitly said **“Delivery is vital.”** They also pointed out that smaller quantity items would be better for some, who don’t have access to a freezer.
- One person explained that complex **dietary requirements** make cooked meal services unusable for them *“I have dietary restrictions that make using pre-cooked meal services unrealistic (for example no onions, citrus or gluten).”*

People in Receipt of Emergency Food Parcels

- A range of considerations were made (across dietary requirements, dietary preferences, medical disabilities, price comparisons/cost, storage and preparation).
- There was encouraging interest, and choice has been stressed due to dietary differences including within households, with several people hoping a scheme would factor in their intolerances.
- In terms of meals, one person pointed out the importance of ingredient labelling – not just of the 11 main allergens, saying *“It’s important to state on every meal The EXACT ingredients as people like myself have weird allergies like: yellow peppers, courgette, aubergine and chilli - strange but these foods just cooking can sometimes land me in hospital with anaphylaxis”*.
- Several mentions of variety as being desirable – some people have been having the same few meals for a while now, and others have been disappointed by the lack of variety in box schemes before.
- Someone suggested a salad box; others specifically mentioned healthy food, notably fruit and vegetables.
- People seem keen to be able to make a contribution, but someone pointed out that not having a bank account would have to be factored in. Additionally, someone suggested that price flexibility might be a good idea, saying *“it would be a good idea to contribute any amount I would afford”* - presumably this means a pay-as-you-can model.
- Buying local fresh produce was mentioned as being prohibitively expensive, and being able to buy more food for less money in supermarkets has been a key consideration in desirability of box schemes.
- Meat was desirable to some, with one respondent saying that they’d been eating vegetarian meals but that these were not fulfilling enough for them.

- One person suggested *“maybe people could share recipes using items received from the foodbank”* - perhaps if there was an online newsletter similar to the BHFP one, or a social media page where people could submit recipes/meals made and they could be posted anonymously?

Another suggestion was that *“covid19 safety standards should be known to those using your services so they feel safe and confident”*.



Appendix 1: Survey Methodology

Outline

The Brighton and Hove Food Partnership 'Beneficiary survey' asked a series of questions to Brighton and Hove residents who are struggling to afford food, including but not exclusively those who have been in receipt of an emergency food parcel.

In order to take into account, the Covid-19 pandemic, we specifically asked about barriers, food parcel usage, and meal reduction/skipping since the 23rd March. We also added 'reasons for food bank usage' options and employment options to include considerations relating to furlough, shielding, panic buying, and worry about going outside.

Aims

The overall aims were to gain some insight into experiences of food access, barriers, ongoing needs and preferences regarding potential developing projects. We included optional questions taken from the Brighton and Hove City Council's 'Equalities Monitoring Form' (https://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/article/inline/REVISED%20About%20You%20Equality%20Monitoring%20Apr15_0-1.pdf) in order to compare responses across different demographics and characteristics. The survey includes a question from the Food Foundation's Fruit and Veg Stories Survey. Based on feedback, we did change the wording, but we did include the question: 'We are all being encouraged to eat plenty of fruit and veg. Is there anything that would help you to eat more?', and responses will be anonymously passed on to the Food Foundation.

Survey distribution

The survey was distributed in a variety of ways:

SMS text messages were sent to 606 numbers (21 of these failed) from council referrals - the purposes were checked with the council and we were advised it was fine to use them for the survey, as the respondents are reviewing emergency food services that have been provided.

A link was put in the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership fortnightly newsletter on both the 16th and 30th July.

250 distribution slips were sent out in food parcels from the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership. These contained the link to the survey online, and the food partnership's office phone number, to allow digitally excluded recipients the opportunity to call in, leave their number, and have a BHFP intern call them back on a withheld number to go through the survey by phone. A total of ___ people filled it in via phone.

Social media posts on the BHFP pages.

Posting the link and a short description on other social media pages (e.g. local Brighton area pages and the 'Brighton Girl' page).

Time To Talk Befriending, a charity that had been delivering food parcels and meals to a largely digitally excluded section of the population. They wished to assess continuing need, and delivered an adapted version of the survey to their service users, which they have collected and will write a report on in August. This could then be incorporated into ours.

30 paper copies were also sent to the Phoenix Centre, who are planning to set up a food pantry style model



soon.

Emails encouraging distribution with the survey link, distribution slips, and paper copies were sent to all members of the Emergency Food Network (a collaboration of food banks and other organisations providing food to those in need because of food poverty), mutual aid groups, the Trust for Developing Communities, and the Community Works list.

Due to a low response rate from BME respondents, an extra follow up email was sent to Brighton Cauldron and BMECP requesting they share the survey with their beneficiaries.

Brighton and Hove City Council also agreed to make social media posts on Facebook and Twitter to advertise the survey.

Survey methodology

The survey was carried out through the 'Typeform' website, which could be accessed through the links '<https://bhfood.typeform.com/to/bTX9pbIN>' or '<https://tinyurl.com/surveybhfp>'. Participants were assured at the beginning that answers would be kept anonymous – we would ask them their post-code but this would not be used to identify them, and we would ask their email address only if they ticked to express an interest in 'Entering the prize draw for a £30 food voucher of your choice', 'Receiving information about volunteering at my local food bank or the proposed scheme', or 'Subscribing to the Food Partnership's fortnightly email newsletter for information on a wide range of food classes, events and community projects'. There was the option to skip or select 'I am not interested in any of the above', the email address was only asked after the question of interest, and it was made explicit that email addresses would only be used for the purposes specified.

Any question could be skipped by pressing enter or clicking the 'V' arrow at the right-hand side of the screen, and it was possible to go back by pressing the '^' if anyone made a mistake - and this was all explained in the first slides of the survey.

It was advertised as taking 5-10 minutes to complete after several staff tests took approximately 7 minutes.

Drop-off rates

(note this is for all 230 responses including those cut from the further analysis)

Big picture

All Devices Desktop Mobile Tablet Other

Starts	Responses	Completion rate	Average time to complete
509	230	45.2%	14:02

Question-by-question drop-off rate breakdown can be found in the Beneficiary Survey 'Results' folder on Teams.

