



Challenge Poverty Week 2021

Sunday 10th October 2021

Food Insecurity Factsheet

Food Insecurity is a term which is often spoken of and the definition of this is the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. Food Banks are vital supporting mechanisms for all of our families and individuals who have found themselves in poverty in each of our communities within our Region.

Research has found that food insecurity is associated with increased risks of some birth defects, anemia, lower nutrient intakes, cognitive problems and aggression and anxiety.

They are often the very first point of contact which someone who has fallen into harder times will have with a supporting organisation and it's so often the case that their first interaction can frame the whole of their future fight against poverty.

All of our Food Bank providers within our Region offer additional supporting mechanisms for anyone who finds themselves in need and who visits a food bank for the first time. Referrals onto additional support services are made and leaflets and details of where to find support for fuel poverty or to increase incomes and reduce costs are often provided at the first visit. This helps to make sure that vital hope is given at what can so often be one of the lowest points in someone's lives.

Food Banks offer emergency food supplies in form of Food Parcels for between three days and a week depending on the needs of either the individuals or the families who are struggling at that time. Food Banks offer non-judgemental support and free food to those who are struggling and who have fallen into poverty, generally through no fault of their own. These supplies are either packaged up and passed on through Food Parcels or in some cases the food is cooked into prepaid ready meals which can then be easily warmed up.

Dumfries and Galloway Council have been providing support to our Food Bank providers through accessing additional funding both through our Anti-Poverty Area Committee Grants and also through our Participatory Budgeting Funding which Food Banks have succeed in securing funding from over the last few years.

In addition, throughout the Covid 19 Pandemic and again from April 2021, funding from Dumfries & Galloway Council's Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Policy Development Funding have covered the costs of Fareshare Membership to enable

surplus food from supermarkets throughout Scotland to be delivered to Food Bank providers in our Region.

During the last financial year alone, this project supplied £872,874.60 worth of food which equated to 244,402 Tonnes of Food which if split down would make 581,916 Meal Portions.

As part of our response to the on-going pandemic, we also formed Food Providers Network Groups across all of our region to offer dedicated support to all of our Food Banks, develop partnership opportunities and also to encourage the sharing of surplus food and supplies between each organisation. This continues and regular monthly meetings and communications between each continue to strengthen these new partnerships.

We are currently expanding our database of Food Bank Providers within our Region and if you want to source details of your nearest Food Bank, please contact Wendy Jesson, Anti-Poverty Officer on 0788 094 2909 or by e-mail on Wendy.Jesson@dumgal.gov.uk and we will be able to refer you onto your nearest provider at this time.