



University of Hull Pilot Research: Food Insecurity in Hull, UK



In partnership with the Hull Food Inequality Alliance
(part of the Hull Food Partnership)

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Contents

Welcome and Introduction	3
About this Research	4
Food Ladders	5
Local Context: Kingston upon Hull	6
About the respondents	7
Enough money for food?	9
Enough Food? Healthy Food? Skills to cook?	11
Accessing Food	12
Worrying about food	14
Decision makers - thoughts from food support service users	16
Next steps	18
Future research opportunities	18
References / Resources	19



Hull Food Inequality Alliance:

- [The Warren Project;](#)
- [HEY Smile Foundation;](#)
- [Hull City Council - Public Health;](#)
- [EMS - Environmental Management Solutions;](#)
- [Unity in the Community;](#)
- [Hull Vineyard Church;](#)
- [Cranswick PLC;](#)
- [FareShare Hull & Humber region;](#)
- [HU4 Community Network;](#)
- [Pelican Park Community centre;](#)
- [Hull & East Riding-Citizen's Advice Bureau;](#)
- [Amazing Grace Church;](#)
- [St. Michael's Youth Church;](#)
- [Community Money Advice Hull;](#)
- [Beannie Street Food Bank;](#)
- [Hull Online Foodbank;](#)
- [Bameen CIC;](#)
- [The Vulcan Centre.](#)

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Welcome and Introduction

The Hull Food Inequality Alliance (HFIA) is a network of community groups working in Hull to ensure that everyone can eat healthily every day, no matter who they are, what they do or where they live.

[The State of Hunger Report](#) (May 2021), by the [Trussell Trust](#), estimated that 2.5% of households in the UK needed to use a foodbank in 2019/2020 prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. This research starts to consider the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on household food insecurity in Hull, recognising that particular groups are at higher risk of food insecurity, including younger people, single parents, social renters, ethnic minorities and people in poor health.



During the Covid-19 pandemic, our Alliance has seen a huge rise in people needing to access emergency food support. In order to better understand the key issues which have driven this increased need, the HFIA has worked alongside the University of Hull to develop this report on local experience of food access over the Covid-19 period.

This report takes a people-first approach, focusing on the experiences of those who have accessed local food support networks over the duration of the last 18 months. It is an initial scoping exercise, to inform our work towards a three-year strategic food poverty action plan for Hull. As an Alliance, we recognise that food poverty is not just about hunger, rather it encompasses a variety of challenging circumstances such as having to compromise on quantity, quality and variety of food, skipping meals or 'trading down' to unhealthier food choices. In this report, we have sought to understand the financial difficulties and non-financial barriers to accessing affordable, healthy food. This work will help us to see the bigger picture, so that we can continue our collective work to tackle food insecurity and food poverty across Hull.



Cara Bilson, Hull Food Inequality Officer, Hull Food Partnership



Over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Voluntary and Community sector, the Council and partners have worked with all our communities to help those in need of extra food. Now, as we look towards the future, it is fantastic to see the HFIA working with local people to devise a strategy for how we can best tackle food poverty in our city. Huge thanks to all those who have participated in this piece of work, and we look forward to working with others as we develop a strategy to tackle food poverty in Hull.



Councillor Hester Bridges, Deputy Leader of Hull City Council



About this Research

This research focuses on food insecurity in Hull, UK. Between April and May 2021, we conducted a pilot survey of people who accessed food support services in Hull to gain information and insight into food insecurity in the city during the Covid-19 pandemic. We are grateful to the people who accessed food support services in Hull, for taking the time to complete the survey.

The survey was developed in consultation with the HFIA. We made it available online, and as paper copies available from food support organisations in the city. The survey was anonymous to encourage participation and to encourage respondents to be open and honest in their responses to questions. It consisted of a mix of open and closed questions. Closed questions captured respondents' demographic characteristics, asked which food provision service they were using and how many people of different ages were dependent on them for food. We asked respondents to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about their food security. We asked three open-ended questions to allow respondents to express their experience of and views on their food situation, and to express what they would like to communicate to decision makers regarding access to food.

Key Findings

- Over 1/3 of respondents to the survey in the last 12 months have been hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food.
- 'Food affordability' is an important dimension of food insecurity in Hull, but this is comprised of many specific factors facing individual respondents.
- Almost 1/3 of respondents don't feel that they can easily buy healthy food in their neighbourhood.
- Almost 1/5 of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had access to a kitchen and the things they need to cook with to make meals for themselves or members of their household.
- Almost 50% of respondents had been worried that the food they have at home would run out before they had money to buy more.
- Respondents expressed how food availability is a key factor in food insecurity, in their comments to decision makers.

In analysing the survey results, we have used the four dimensions or pillars of food security (Figure 1), which are commonly defined as: availability of food supplies; affordability of food; utilisation of food, e.g. the ability to prepare food and the cultural acceptability of available food; and access, i.e. can available food actually be physically accessed? To analyse the responses to the open-ended questions, we used a process of 'coding' each response to identify themes. We allocated codes to the appropriate dimension of food security, to help explore the specific issues which make up that dimension (e.g. what exactly contributes to making food difficult to utilise?). Some comments related to more than one theme and were thus 'double coded', and some comments were categorised as 'other' if they didn't fit easily into one of the four dimensions

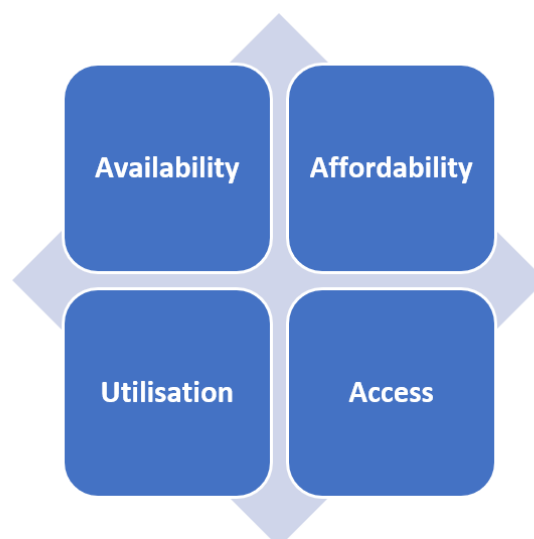


Figure 1: Dimensions of food security

Food Ladders

This research links to the concept of food ladders. The food ladders concept, as developed by [Megan Blake](#) at the University of Sheffield, acknowledges that food insecurity is more than just a lack of access to food due to financial constraints. The food ladders approach seeks to build on skills, knowledge and resources already present in local communities. It develops positive engagements through food, to create communities where people want to live, work, raise children and grow old well.

Food ladders work with the specificities of places to enable three levels of intervention (Figure 2).



Source: Adapted from Megan Blake, geofoodie.org

Figure 2: Food Ladders

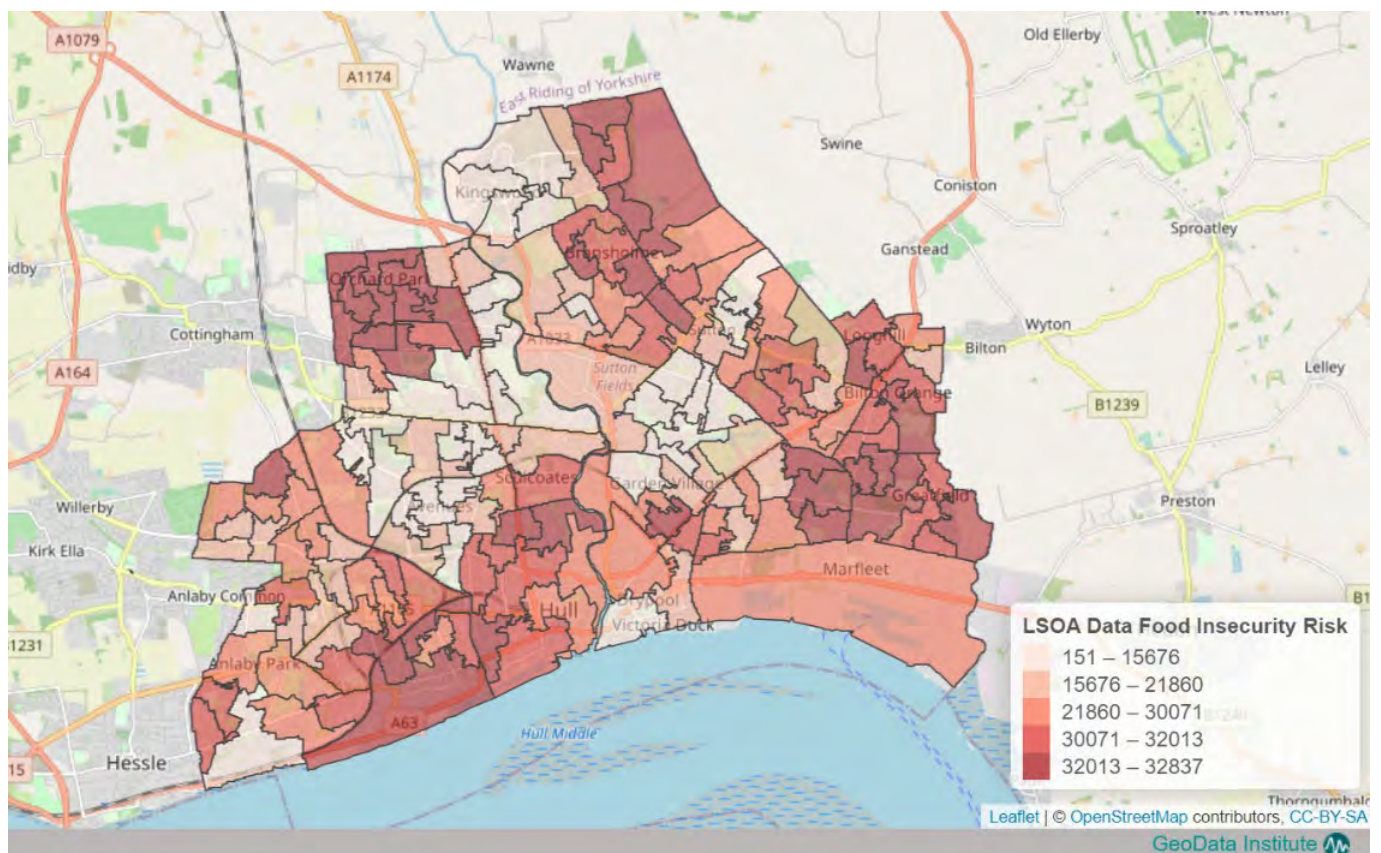
Local Context: Kingston upon Hull

Table 1 presents data on the wards within Hull, including FSM (Free School Meals). Highlighted in red are the areas that have the greatest levels of deprivation (with a 'Final Rank' of 1 indicating the greatest level of deprivation).

	Pensioners 65+ Living Alone		Children Under 16 in		Unemployment Claimant Rate		Fuel Poor Households		LLTI and Disability		FSM (Oct 2020)		TOTAL RANK (Without Population)	
	% of Households	Rank	% of Children	Rank	%	Rank	% of Households	Rank	% of Population	Rank	%	Rank	Average Rank	Final Rank
Avenue	8.7%	19	30.0%	12	9.7%	10	12.3%	5	16.2%	17	17.5	16	13.1	14
Beverly & Newland	9.1%	17	22.8%	15	7.0%	15	16.6%	1	14.0%	19	15.5	18	14.6	17
Boothferry	14.6%	5	17.5%	18	5.8%	18	9.1%	13	18.4%	15	17.4	17	14.9	18
Bricknell	14.1%	6	15.7%	19	4.3%	20	8.5%	15	18.2%	16	11.0	19	16.3	19
Central	9.0%	18	33.4%	2	16.0%	1	11.7%	7	20.7%	7	35.9	3	6.1	3
Derringham	15.0%	4	23.6%	14	6.9%	16	7.9%	19	19.6%	12	23.0	13	13.4	15
Drypool	10.8%	11	26.6%	13	9.8%	9	8.9%	14	19.6%	13	23.4	12	11.9	13
Holderness	9.2%	16	15.6%	20	5.2%	19	8.3%	16	13.9%	20	9.0	20	18.7	20
Ings	20.2%	1	20.6%	17	7.2%	13	8.3%	17	24.7%	3	21.0	15	11.6	12
Kingswood	0.9%	21	9.4%	21	2.8%	21	3.9%	21	7.2%	21	5.7	21	21.0	21
Longmire & Bilton Grange	16.1%	3	34.6%	5	16.6%	6	10.2%	9	34.7%	2	35.8	8	9.4	4
Marfleet	12.9%	8	42.7%	3	15.8%	2	12.7%	4	21.0%	5	45.0	1	4.0	2
Newington & Goswille	6.2%	15	14.1%	16	13.1%	5	11.8%	6	20.5%	8	28.9	11	8.1	6
North Carr	7.5%	20	31.0%	10	9.9%	8	10.5%	8	18.5%	14	38.3	3	9.7	9
Orchard Park	13.0%	7	37.4%	4	12.7%	4	13.2%	3	23.2%	4	44.1	2	3.7	1
Pickering	17.9%	2	30.0%	11	9.4%	11	8.2%	18	25.7%	1	35.7	7	8.6	7
Southcoates	11.0%	10	32.6%	7	10.1%	7	10.1%	10	20.4%	9	31.2	9	8.7	8
St Andrew's & Docklands	10.7%	12	44.7%	1	13.5%	3	8.6%	11	22.5%	6	37.7	4	5.5	3
Sutton	12.0%	9	22.7%	16	6.1%	17	7.6%	20	19.9%	10	21.2	14	14.3	16
University	9.4%	14	31.7%	8	7.2%	14	16.3%	2	16.2%	18	31.0	10	11.1	11
West Carr	10.2%	13	31.3%	9	9.3%	12	9.1%	12	19.8%	11	31.7	8	10.4	10

Table 1: Data provided by Public Health, Kingston upon Hull City Council

Using www.mylocalmap.org.uk the LSOA (Lower Layer Super Output Area) for Kingston upon Hull's Food Insecurity Risk is depicted in Figure 3.



Source: www.mylocalmap.org.uk

Figure 3: LSOA Kingston upon Hull - Food Insecurity Risk

About the respondents

There were 102 responses to the survey, 23 online and 79 paper-based. The 102 respondents to the survey have over 260 people who depend on them for food. Over 100 of these are children under 18 (Figure 4). Respondents to the survey were asked to provide their postcode. Figure 5 shows the postcode area for respondents.

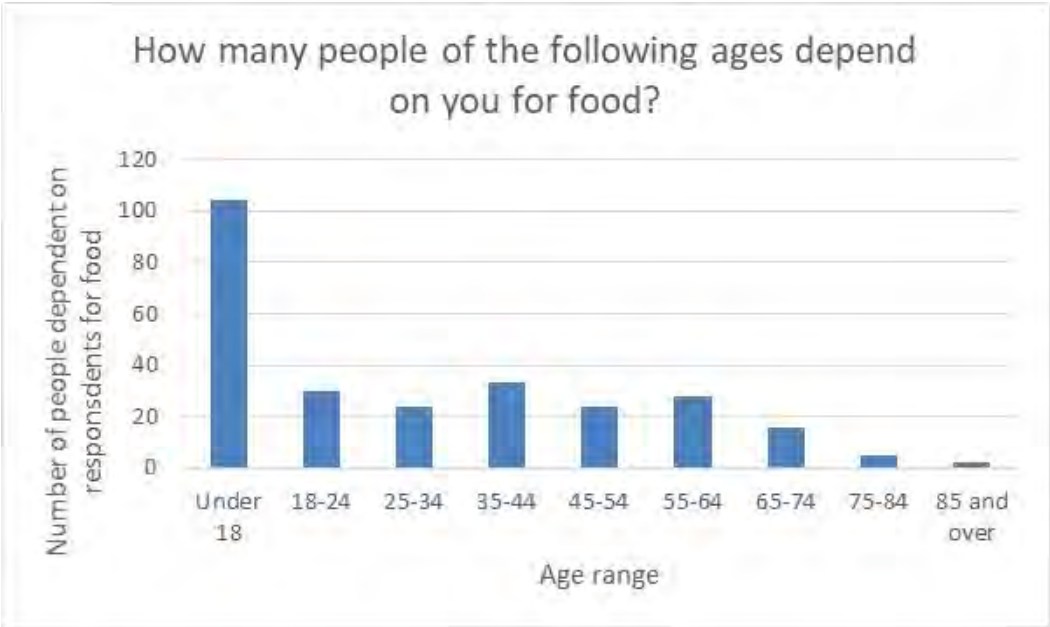


Figure 4: Number of people who depend on respondents for food, by age range

65% of respondents to the survey were female, 33% were male and 2% preferred not to say. 83% of respondents to the survey were White British, 13% were Black/African/Caribbean/Black British and 4% preferred not to say. In the 2011 Census for Kingston Upon Hull, the ethnicity statistics were: 89.7% White British, 0.3% White Irish, 4.1% Other White, 1.1% S. Asian, 1.2% Black, 1.3% Mixed Race, 2.3% Chinese and other (0.8% Chinese).

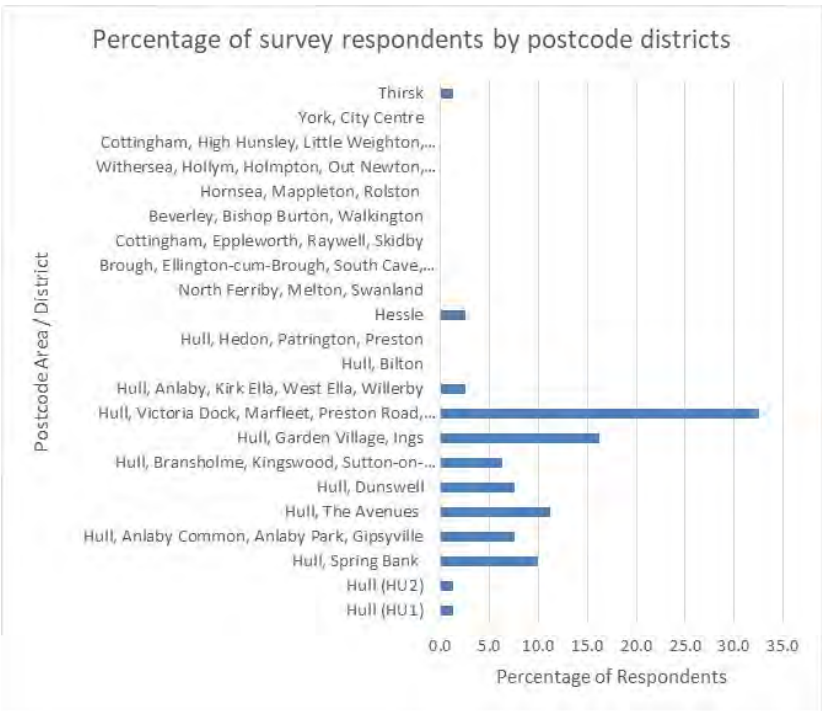


Figure 5: Survey respondents by postcode area

We asked survey respondents about their current work situation (Figure 6). 16% of respondents were unable to work due to physical or mental health issues. 30% of respondents were employed or self-employed.

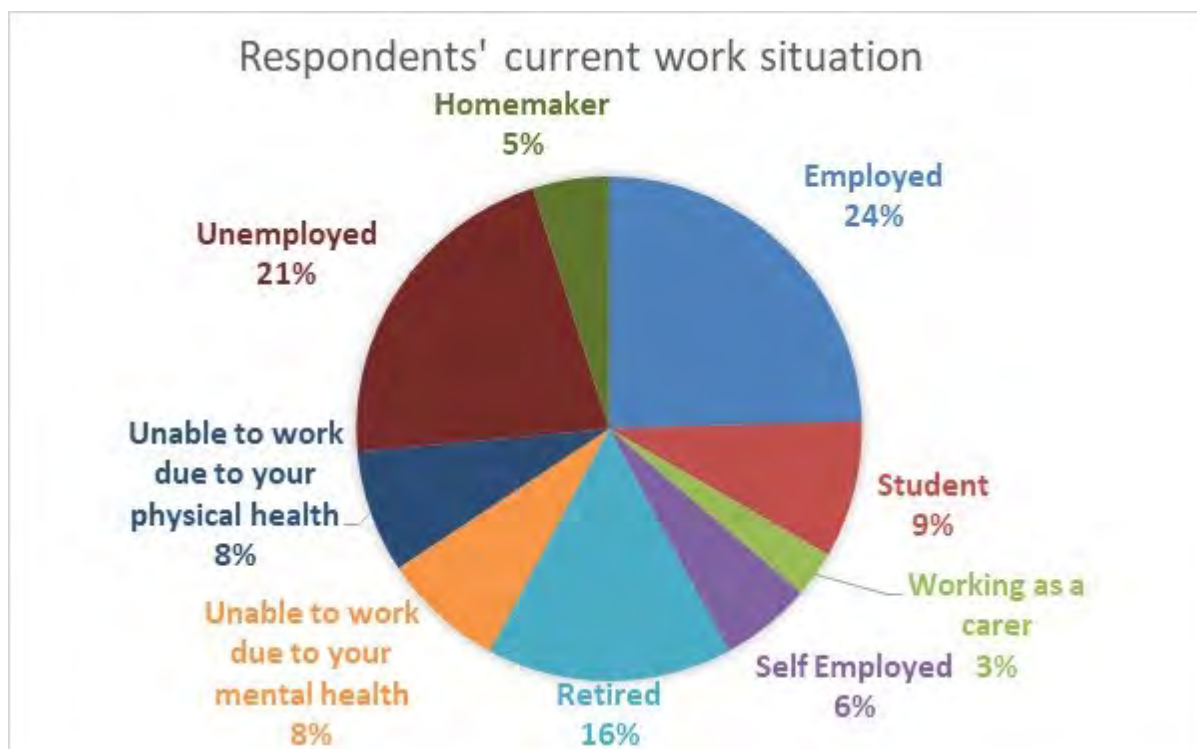


Figure 6: Respondents' current work situation

We asked respondents about how many people depended upon them for food (Figure 7). The average (mean) number of people that relied upon the respondent for food was 2.6.

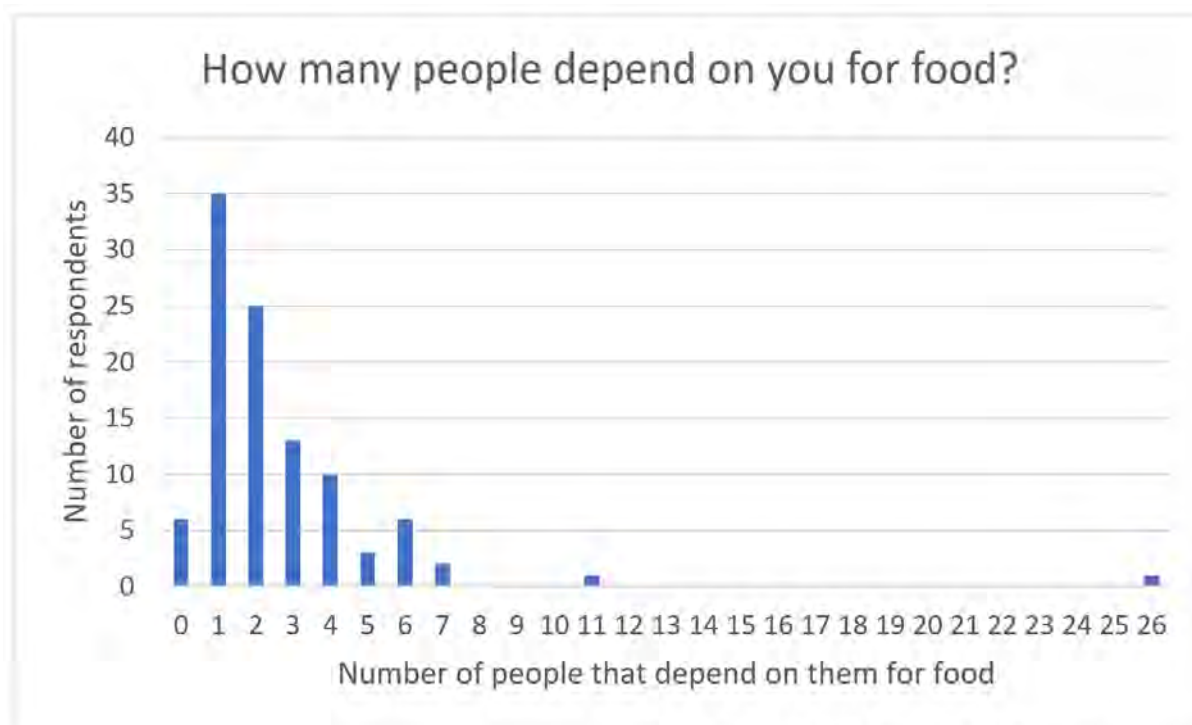


Figure 7: Number of people that depend on respondents for food

Enough money for food?

In the questions below, respondents were asked to consider whether or not they agreed with a series of statements, using the following scale:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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We asked respondents to consider, if in the last 12 months, they have worried that the food they have at home would run out before they had money to buy more (Figure 8). Almost 50% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. 16% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

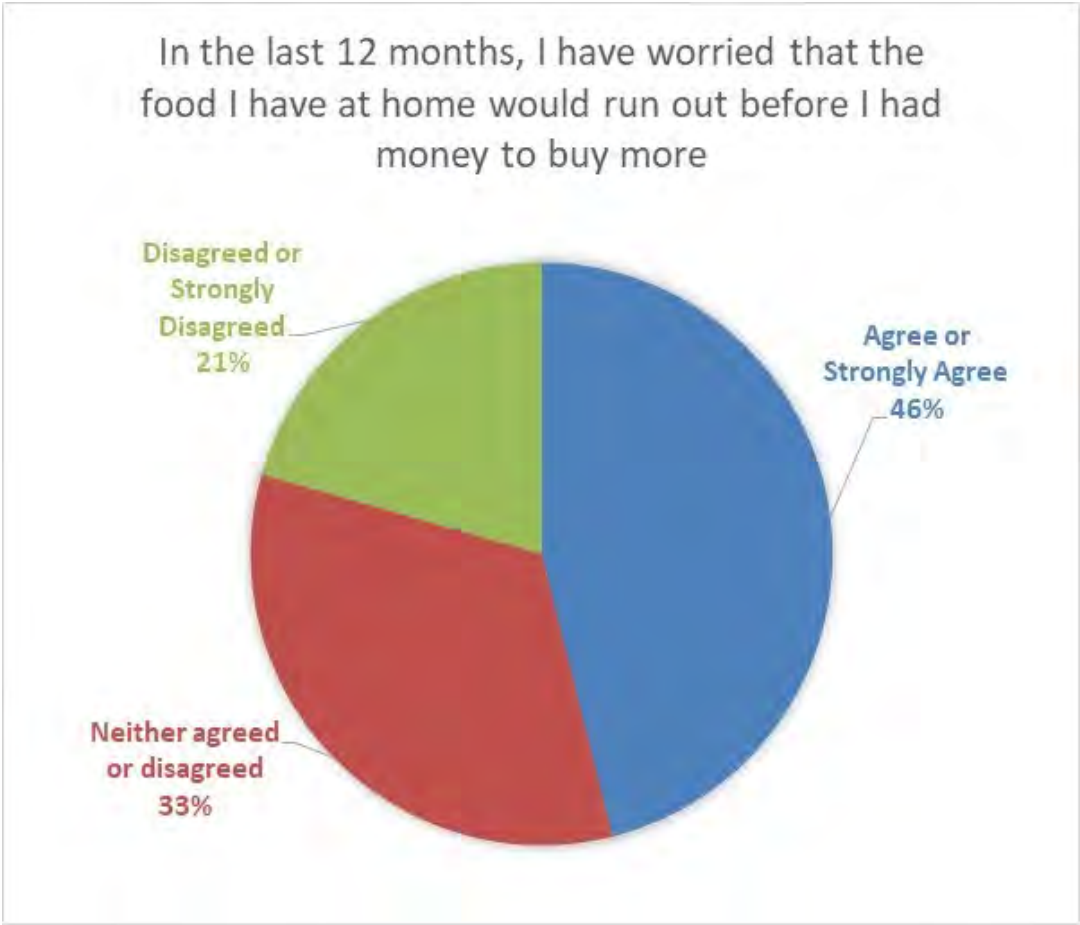


Figure 8: Food will run out before I had chance to buy more

We asked respondents if, in the last 12 months, they or someone else living with them had cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food. 17% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, almost 1 in 5 people.

34%	of respondents agree or strongly agree that they themselves or someone living with them has cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food.
43%	of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that they themselves or someone living with them has cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food.
23%	of respondents neither agree or disagree that they themselves or someone living with them has cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food.

Respondents to the survey were asked to consider if, in the last 12 months, they have been hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food.

Over 1/3 of respondents have been hungry in the last 12 months but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food.

In addition to spending on food, households spend money on other things, for example, household bills. We asked respondents if they often spend less on food to be able to afford other things, for example gas/electric (Figure 9).

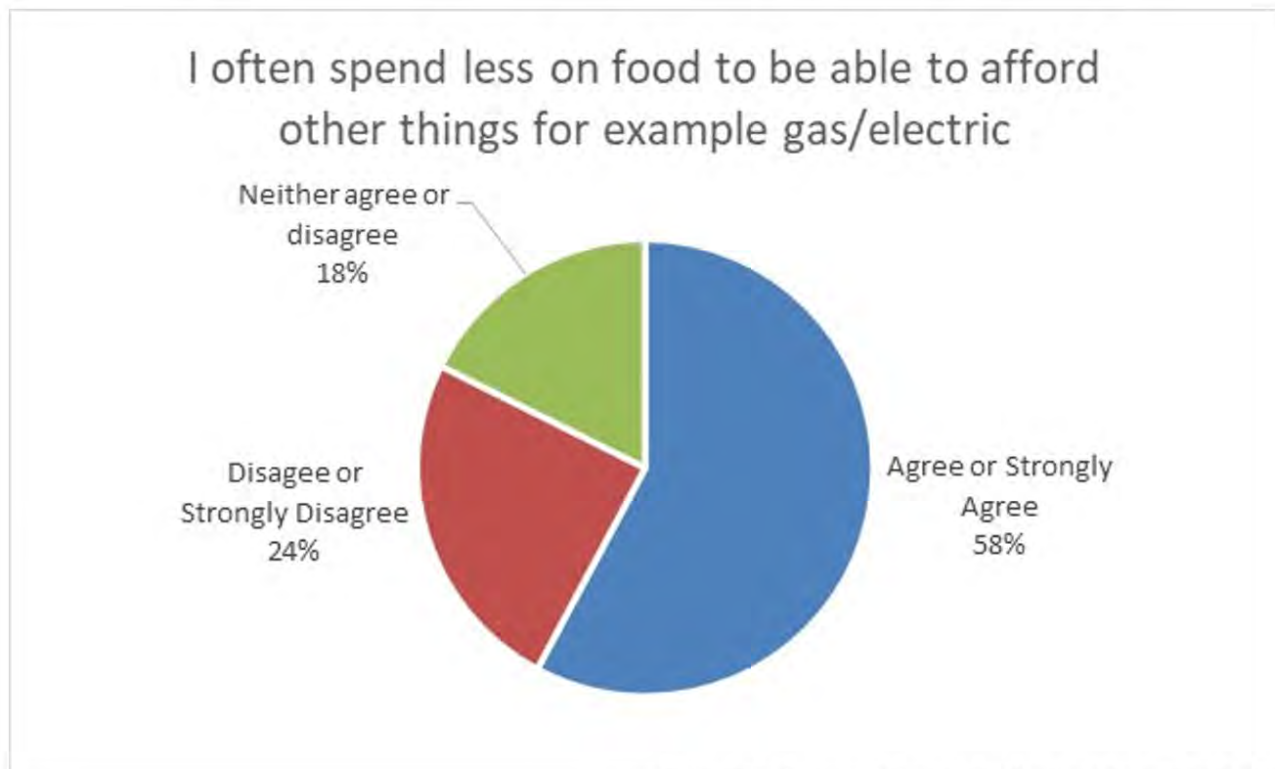


Figure 9: I often spend less on food to be able to afford other things

When asked to consider if they and/or the people they live with often don't have enough money to buy the food they need, 44% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. This contrasts with 35% of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. 21% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed.

Enough Food? Healthy Food? Skills to cook?

We asked respondents to think about the kinds of food they eat and in particular if, in the last 12 months, they and/or their family has had enough of the kinds of food they want to eat (Figure 10). Almost 1/5 of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.



Figure 10: Enough of the kinds of foods we want to eat

One of the issues that was of interest in this research was the concept of 'food deserts.' Food deserts are described as areas where food shopping is more expensive; shops tend to be relatively expensive smaller convenience stores; and where there is limited good value fresh produce to buy. We asked respondents if they feel that they can easily buy healthy food in their neighbourhood.

55%	of respondents agree or strongly agree that they can easily buy healthy food in their neighbourhood.
31%	of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that they can easily buy healthy food in their neighbourhood.
14%	of respondents neither agreed or disagreed that they can easily buy healthy food in my neighbourhood

As almost 1/3 of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that 'they can easily buy healthy food in their neighbourhood', we analysed where these households were located by postcode area (Figure 11). It should be noted that not all respondents provided a postcode. HU9 (Victoria Dock, Marfleet, Preston Road, Greatfield, Bilton Grange), HU8 (Garden Village, Ings) and HU4 (Anlaby Common, Anlaby Park, Gipsyville) were postcodes where at least four respondents considered that they cannot buy healthy food in their neighbourhood.

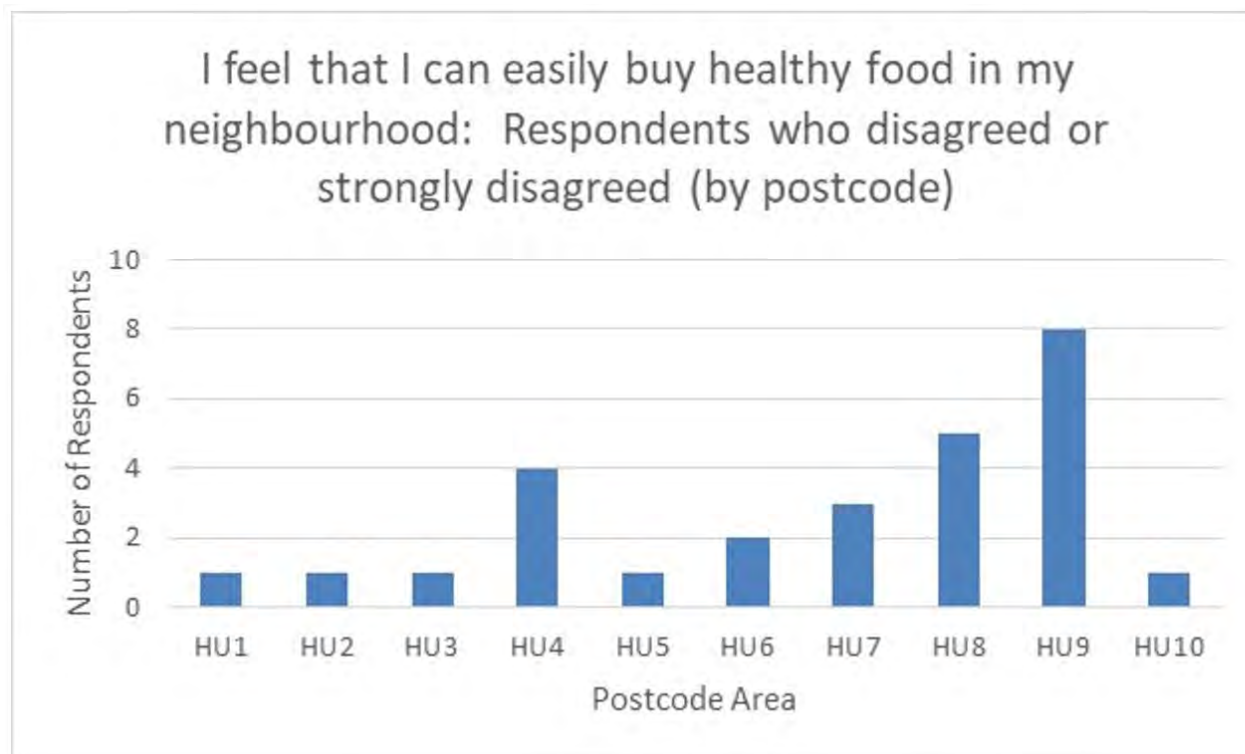


Figure 11: I can easily buy healthy food in my neighbourhood

Key to being able to prepare meals is having access to the right equipment and the skills to prepare food. With this in mind, we asked respondents if they feel they have access to a kitchen and the things they need to cook with to make meals for themselves and other members of their household.

82%	of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had access to a kitchen and the things they need to cook with to make meals for themselves or members of their household.
9%	of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had access to a kitchen and the things they need to cook with to make meals for themselves or members of their household.
9%	of respondents neither agreed or disagreed that they had access to a kitchen and the things they need to cook with to make meals for themselves or members of their household.

We asked respondents if they feel confident preparing and cooking meals using fresh ingredients. 6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

82%	of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel confident preparing and cooking meals using fresh ingredients.
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Accessing Food

The survey asked respondents to consider if they feel they often can't access the food that they need, what is the main reason for this. Responses were coded and are shown in Figure 12. Some of the comments from respondents included:

"Both members of our household are unable to cook food due to ill health."

"Always catching up on bills and healthy food is far more expensive than unhealthy food."

"Lack of money, spending on other essentials."

"Not able to get to the shops."

"Don't have enough money after bills."

"Lack of healthy food in shops in my area."

Figure 12 indicates that the responses to this question focussed on the affordability of food, predominately a lack of or insufficient money/ income.

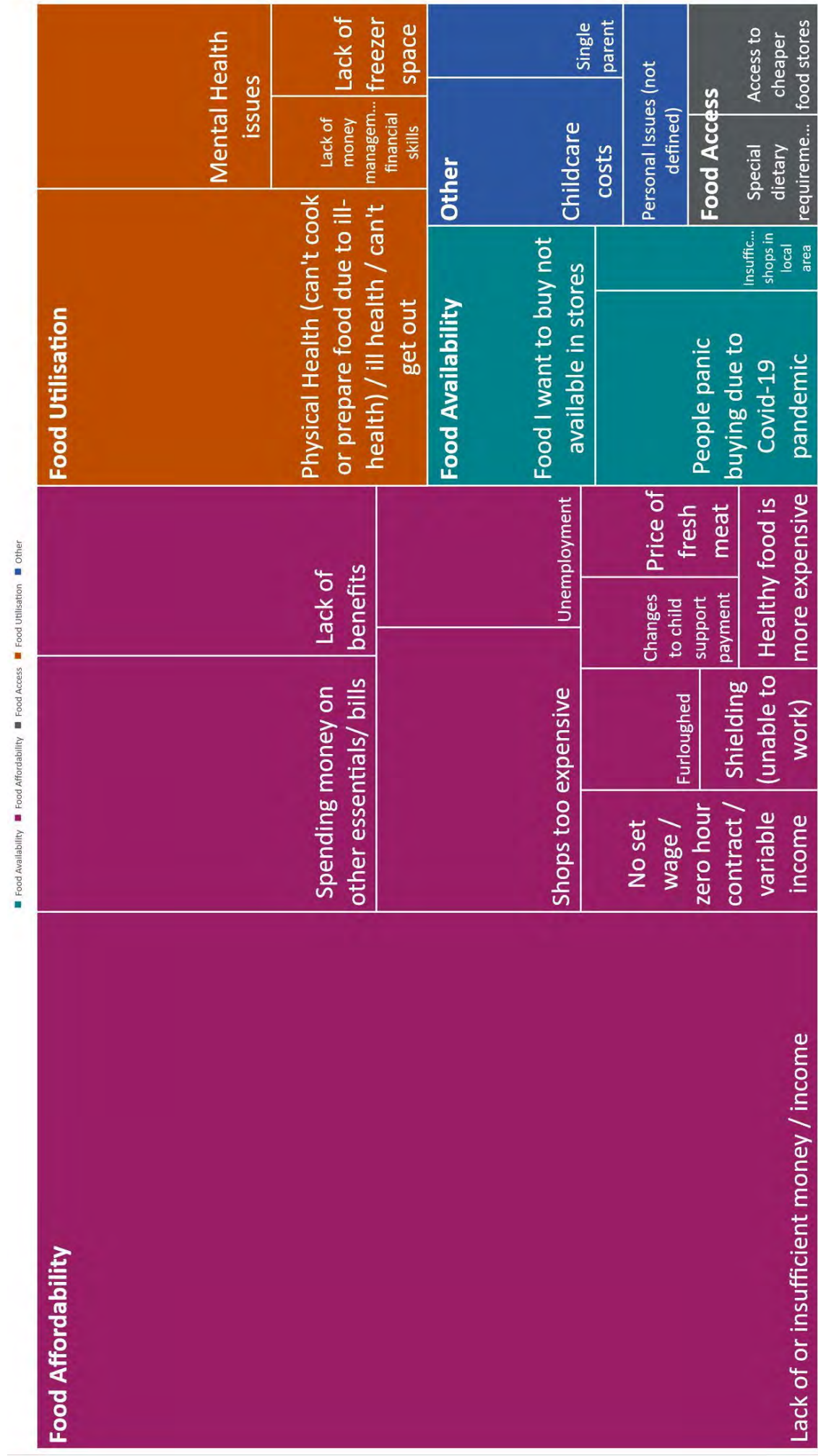


Figure 12: What is the main reason you often cannot access the food you need?

Worrying about food

Respondents were asked about what changes they feel would need to happen for food to no longer be a worry for them (Figure 13). Food affordability features strongly in the responses to this question. Respondents commented:

“Partner able to find employment again.”

“Supermarkets to have healthy food at decent prices.”

“Benefits need to be sorted quicker.”

“If the food bank closed we wouldn’t cope.”

“Healthy food to be cheaper.”

“To have a job and earn money.”

“I would need a bigger garden to grow my own food.”



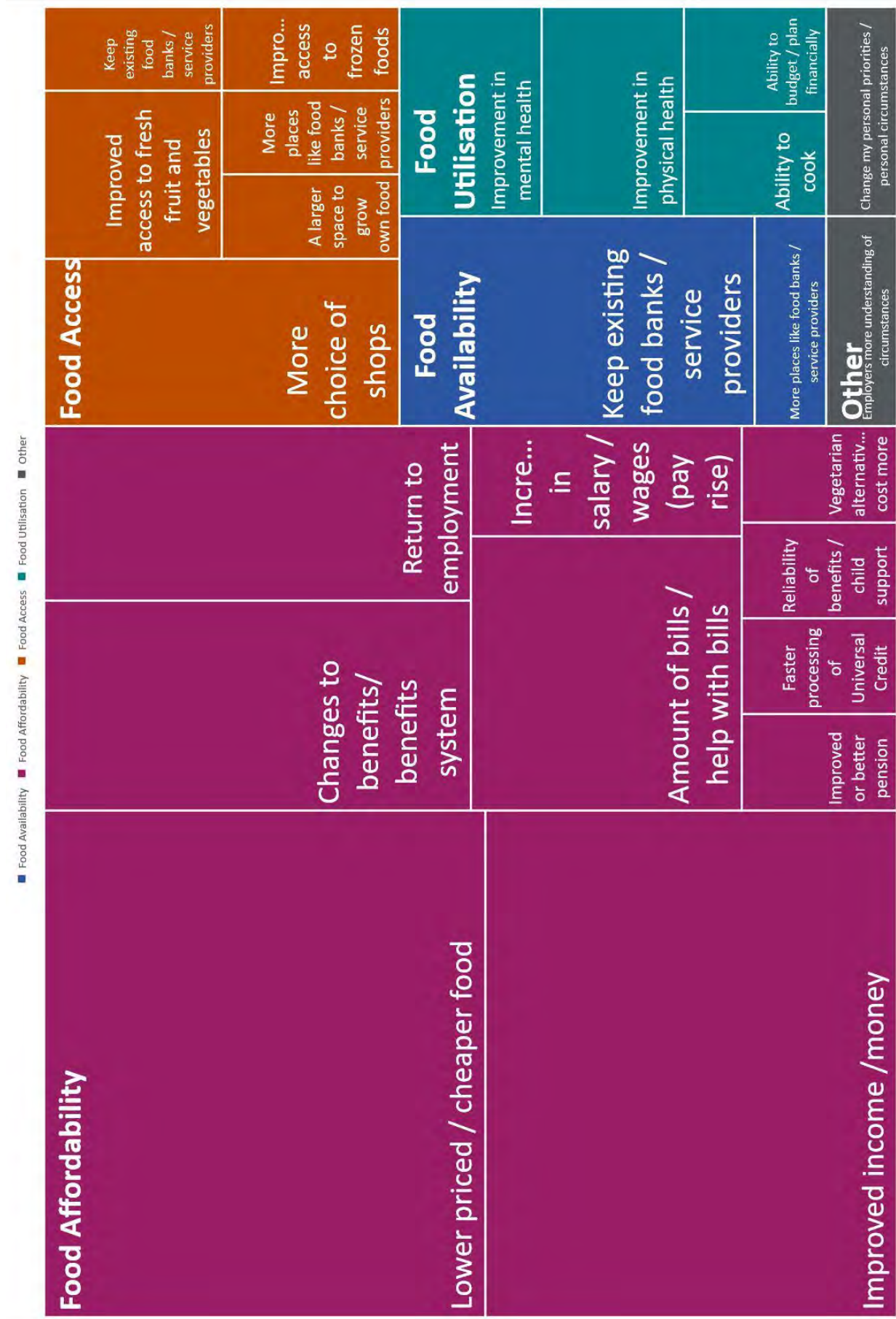


Figure 13: What change do you feel would need to happen for food to no longer be a worry for you?

To understand this further, we looked at the food affordability category in more detail. Where five or more respondents had identified the same change, it is depicted in Figure 14.

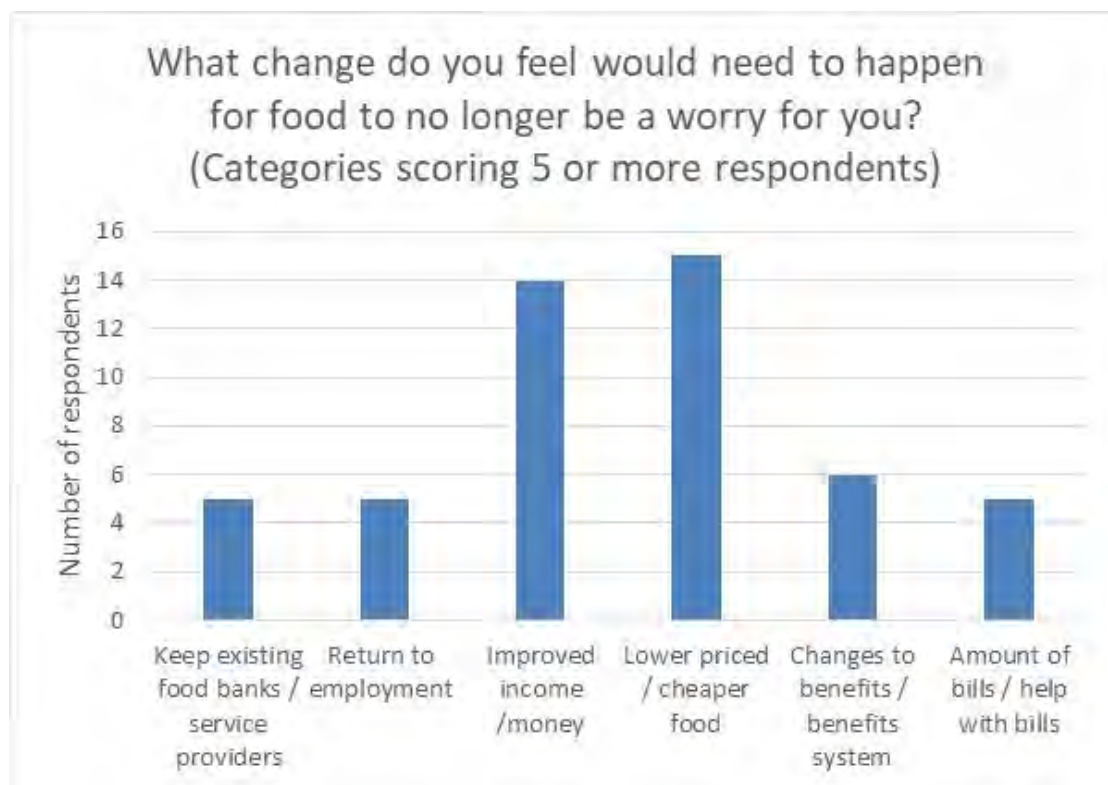


Figure 14: What change do you feel would need to happen for food to no longer be a worry to you?

Decision makers – thoughts from food support service users

We asked respondents what they would like to say to decision makers about access to food during Covid-19 pandemic (Figure 15).

“I would really like as much help as possible until I get back on my feet again.”

“Hull community church have literally put the food on our tables most of the week. And I haven’t had to worry so much about my children being able to access great food, and have a healthy diet.”

“I think the school vouchers helped a great deal during covid especially for families out of work.”

“It made it difficult when my partner was furloughed and we went for 4 weeks without any money at all. This was very hard.”



Food Availability				Food Access		Food Affordability	
Thank you to food banks / service providers				All the food is the same (rice and pasta)		Provide food to households	
				Need culturally appropriate food in supply chain	Need dietary appropriate food in supply chain		
				Prioritisation of disabled people	Make it more accessible to those in need	Nothing	Food should be a right, not a luxury
				Pre-parcelled boxes of food available to buy	Relied on food parcels	Insuffic... food shops	Good access
				Food banks run on certain days (access limitations)	Improved co-ordination [of food provision] rather than lots of smaller groups	Lack of choice of food	
Consistent Supply of fresh fruit and veg / meat				Keep funding food banks		Welfare checks are needed	
				It was hard to access basic foods		I need to plan	
Rationing [from the start] to prevent panic buying				There are waiting lists for food banks	More food banks are needed	Food Utilisation	
				Mass shorta... of food	Allowing food shops to open in the pandemic		
				More support is needed for people in food poverty		Be happy with where you are	
						Role models - e.g. Marcus Rashford	
						Help for shielding families	
						There was no help for elderly people	
						There is embarrassment / stigma associated with accessing food support services	
						Encourage community groups / self-help	
						Provide help (to get back on my feet)	
						The impact of furlough on income	
						Keep costs the same (at least)	
						School vouchers helped	
						Food poverty existed prior to Covid-19, but it has been exposed	
						Disable people should have received the £20 uplift other claimants received	

Figure 15: What food support service users would like to say to decision makers

Next Steps

This report will be used to inform HFIA's understanding of local people's experience of food poverty, as it takes the next steps towards developing Hull's food poverty action plan. On the 7th of September 2021, this document will be presented at the Hungry For Change Food Summit, to help stakeholders establish priority themes which need to be addressed across the city. The aim of this pilot research is to use community voices and stakeholder engagement as a foundation for the development of food policy and our plans for the future. The Alliance intends to continue this level of community engagement throughout the production of the food poverty action plan to ensure that this work responds to local need and provides a cohesive, city-wide response to tackling food poverty and food insecurity.

Future research opportunities

This pilot research presents a snapshot and an insight into food insecurity in the city of Hull, UK in spring 2021. Further research is needed to:

- Examine the reasons for and the implications of the geography of emergency food provision in the city;
- Explore in more depth and detail the lived experiences of food poverty and food insecurity in Hull;
- Evaluate the effectiveness at different timescales of different projects, interventions and policies in addressing the problems of food poverty and food insecurity in the city; and
- Determine what existing resources and skills can be fostered, and what additional resources and skills are needed, to encourage movement up the rungs of the 'food ladder' in different parts of Hull and amongst different communities.



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Hull Food Inequality Alliance



Community Money Advice



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