

Cash-First: Towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland

Equality Impact Assessment

October 2023

Equality Impact Assessment

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Screening and policy aim

This Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken as part of the process of preparing a Cash-First: Towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland Plan (referred to as the Plan) and associated actions.

This EQIA summarises relevant evidence and sets out the strategic equality issues that were considered in developing the Plan, highlighting where there may be specific areas of opportunities for advancement, barriers to equality, or discrimination related to protected characteristics.

The assessment indicates that the Plan and associated actions are likely to have a positive impact on people and communities that share certain protected characteristics. There is evidence of higher levels of food insecurity and food bank use in people with some protected characteristics including age, disability, and race: it is therefore expected that action to improve the response to financial hardship is likely to have a greater impact on these groups.

Background

The Scottish Government's 2021 and 2022 Programmes for Government committed to publishing a Plan, grounded in human rights, that sets out the further action we will take to improve the response to hardship so as to reduce the need for food banks. This is a cornerstone of our commitment to tackling poverty, protecting and fulfilling the right to food and achieving our Good Food Nation ambition.

A draft Plan was developed with contributions from a stakeholder steering group and direct experience reference group, and this was published for consultation between 20 October 2021 and 25 January 2022.¹ There were over 400 responses² and an independent analysis of views has been published.³ This reaffirmed a shared consensus across Scotland, including among food banks and other food aid providers, for a human rights informed approach to ensure that everyone can afford an adequate diet.

Since then, the rising cost of living has caused more people to cut back, skip meals, seek assistance from food banks, and in extreme cases to go without food

¹ Scottish Government, Ending the Need for Food Banks: Consultation on a draft national plan (2021) [Ending the need for food banks: a draft national plan - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)

² Scottish Government, Ending the Need for Food Banks: Published consultation responses (2022) [Published responses for Ending the need for food banks: a draft national plan - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)

³ Scottish Government, Ending the Need for Food Banks: Consultation analysis (2022) [Ending the need for food banks – draft plan: consultation analysis – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

completely. Food bank networks are reporting unprecedented demand for their services, but have also indicated that some Scottish Government interventions such as the Scottish Child Payment may have helped to slow the pace of demand for some households.⁴

On 5 June 2023, the Scottish Government published “Cash-First- Towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland” (the Plan).⁵ This details the nine targeted actions the Scottish Government will take over the next three years, alongside other public bodies, local services and anti-poverty organisations to improve the response to crisis and start to reduce the need for emergency food parcels. The learning from these actions will help to identify scalable interventions that move us closer towards our longer term ambition of a Scotland without the need for food banks, which we will continue to pursue to the fullest of our power and resource.

Our shared ambition is that everyone has a sufficient and secure income to be able to access food that meets their needs and preferences. Where financial hardship occurs, coordinated local responses are in place which prioritise cash-first assistance and integrate money advice and other holistic support services to reduce the need for food aid and prevent future hardship. Where help to access food is still needed, this is provided in a way that maximises dignity.

Who will it affect?

The direct beneficiaries of the Plan and its associated actions are people who experience financial crisis and require assistance to access food and other essentials. There is evidence of a higher prevalence of food insecurity and food bank use in certain household groups, including some with protected characteristics.⁶ The Family Resources Survey⁷ indicates that this includes:

- younger people;
- disabled people;
- minority ethnic households;
- single adults;
- lone parents;
- larger households;
- low income households; and
- tenants in the social rented sector.

Organisations that provide assistance to those groups may be affected:

- Food banks may see a reduction in demand for their services.

⁴ Trussell Trust: Scotland Data, End year statistics 2022-23 (2023) [Microsoft Word - EYS Scotland Factsheet 2022-23 - FINAL \(trusselltrust.org\)](#)

⁵ Scottish Government, Cash-First: Towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland (2023) [Cash-First - towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland: plan - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

⁶ Equality Act 2010, definition of protected characteristics [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)-

⁷ DWP, Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 (2023) [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- Local sources of emergency financial assistance such as the Scottish Welfare Fund may see an increase in the need for their services.
- Advice services may see an increase in demand or complexity of need.
- Organisations that refer people to food banks may notice changes to the referral landscape.
- Organisations that provide holistic wellbeing supports may notice changes to the referral landscape.

What might prevent the desired outcomes being achieved?

The rising cost of living has pushed more people into financial hardship, and crisis support services may therefore have more limited capacity to participate in improvement work. However, the higher need for services would indicate that strengthening access to cash-first sources of support is more important now than ever. Access to cash in a crisis could help to reduce the need for emergency food support, and the integration of holistic support including money advice could help to reduce future hardship and future need for crisis services. The Plan has been developed alongside representatives from crisis support services, and the delivery of associated actions will continue to be responsive to the barriers that frontline staff experience.

Stage 1 Framing

While anyone can experience financial hardship, there is evidence that some households are more likely to experience this than others. Some may also experience barriers to accessing crisis support services, which should be further considered in the development and delivery of the Plan. The available evidence generally focuses on one protected characteristic at a time, but it will be important to be mindful of the intersections between experiences through the delivery of the Plan and associated actions.

Official statistics on the prevalence of food insecurity and evidence from services that support people experiencing crisis indicate a higher prevalence of food insecurity and food bank use for some protected characteristics. Practitioners also highlight challenges in targeting crisis support to some households.⁸

The Scottish Government established a Steering Group and Direct Experience Reference Group to inform the development of the Plan. Members took steps to promote diverse participation in the consultation on a draft plan through their networks. An Easy Read document was published alongside the consultation with the option for paper copies to be issued on request.⁹

An independent analysis of responses provided insight into some of the barriers that people with some protected characteristics experience in accessing services that are there to support people experiencing financial crisis – for example, the barriers that disabled people can experience in accessing the Scottish Welfare Fund.¹⁰

Internal cross-policy engagement has highlighted evidence of high prevalence of food insecurity and barriers to accessing support services in other groups beyond the list of protected characteristics – for example, people with No Recourse to Public Funds, and those living in remote or rural communities.

Extent/Level of EQIA required

Evidence suggests that people with some protected characteristics have a higher prevalence of food insecurity and food bank use, and are likely to be impacted by the plan and associated actions. A full EQIA is therefore required.

The evidence also indicates that there is a higher prevalence of food insecurity in some household groups beyond the list of protected characteristics. Some of these impacts are further considered through the following separate assessments:

- Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment.

⁸ Scottish Government, Winter Support Fund 2021-2022 (2022) [Winter Support Fund: summary of local action to tackle financial insecurity 2021-22 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/winter-support-fund-2021-2022/summary-of-local-action-to-tackle-financial-insecurity-2021-22/pages/10-to-12.aspx)

⁹ Scottish Government, Ending the Need for Food Banks: Consultation on a draft national plan, Easy Read version (2021) [Ending the need for food banks - a draft national plan - Easy Read - Scottish Government consultations - Citizens Space](https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-the-need-for-food-banks-a-draft-national-plan-easy-read-consultation-analysis/pages/10-to-12.aspx)

¹⁰ Scottish Government, Ending the Need for Food Banks: Consultation analysis (2022) [Ending the need for food banks – draft plan: consultation analysis – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-the-need-for-food-banks-a-draft-national-plan-consultation-analysis/pages/10-to-12.aspx)

- Islands Communities Impact Assessment .
- Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment.

Stage 2 Protected Characteristics - Data and evidence gathering, involvement and consultation

Include here the results of your evidence gathering (including framing exercise), including qualitative and quantitative data and the source of that information, whether national statistics, surveys or consultations with relevant equality groups.

Characteristic¹¹

Age – Data availability is strong

Across the UK,¹² official statistics for 2021-22 indicate –

- Prevalence of food insecurity was highest amongst young adults (18% of those aged 16-24) and this generally reduced as age increased, with 3% of adults aged 65-74 and 1% of adults over 75-84 reporting that they are food insecure.

In Scotland,¹³ official statistics for 2021, suggest –

- Younger adults were the most likely to be worried they would run out money for food: affecting 14% of those aged 16-44, compared with 8% of those aged 45-64, and 1% of those aged 65 and above.
- Younger adults were the most likely to report that they had eaten less: affecting 9% of those aged 16-44, compared with 7% of those aged 45-64, and 1% of those aged 65.
- Younger adults were the most likely to report that they had run out of food because of a lack of resources: affecting 4% of those aged 16-64, and 0.5% of those aged 65 and above.

In Scotland,¹⁴ official statistics covering 2019-22 suggest –

- 36% of people in households with household heads aged 16-24 were in relative poverty after housing costs (160,000 people each year).
- In comparison, the age groups 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64 all had similar (and lower) poverty rates between 17% and 22%.

¹¹ Refer to Definitions of Protected Characteristics document for information on the characteristics

¹² DWP, Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 (2023), household food security data, table 9.3 [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2021-to-2022)

¹³ Scottish Government, The Scottish Health Survey 2021 (2022) - volume 1: main report - [Supporting documents - The Scottish Health Survey 2021 - volume 1: main report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-survey-2021-main-report-1/pages/index.aspx)

¹⁴ Scottish Government, Poverty and Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 (2023)- [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 \(data.gov.scot\)](https://data.gov.scot/dataset/poverty-and-inequality-in-scotland-2019-22)

The Trussell Trust end-year statistics from April 2022-March 2023¹⁵ do not highlight any specific age ranges experiencing food insecurity. The data available highlighted 171,776 food parcels issued to adults in Scotland with 87,968 (33.8%) to children in Scotland. These figures reflect a 30% increase compared to 2021/2022.

Data collated from the Independent Food Aid Network¹⁶ does not highlight any specific age ranges or numbers of people experiencing food insecurity. A snapshot UK-wide survey in January 2023 suggests that 24.4% of households with children experienced food insecurity in January 2023 compared to 12.1% in January 2022.

Disability – Data availability on disability is strong

Across the UK,¹⁷ official statistics for 2021-22 indicate that –

- 16% of households with one or more disabled adults under State Pension Age (66) experienced low or very low food security.¹⁸
- 11% of households with one or more disabled adults experienced low or very low food security, compared with 3% of households with no disabled adults.¹⁹
- 7% of households with one or more disabled adults under State Pension Age (66) used a food bank in the last 12 months (based on household composition).²⁰
- 5% of households with one or more disabled adults used a food bank in the last 12 months (based on disability within the household).²¹

In Scotland,²² official statistics covering 2019-22, indicate that –

- The poverty rate after housing costs for people in households with a disabled person was 24% (560,000 people each year).
- This compares with 18% (550,000 people) in a household without disabled household members.

In Scotland²³, data highlighted that –

- 15% of adults with limiting longstanding illness were worried they would run out of food because of a lack of money or resources in the last 12 months.

¹⁵ Trussell Trust: End year statistics 2022-23 (2023) [End of Year Stats - The Trussell Trust](#)

¹⁶ Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) statistical data [Data | IFAN \(foodaidnetwork.org.uk\)](#)

¹⁷ DWP, Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021-2022 (2023) [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁸ DWP, Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021-2022 (2023), household food security data, table 9.2 [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁹ DWP, Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021-2022 (2023), household food security data, table 9.4 [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁰ DWP, Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021-2022 (2023), household food security data, table 9.13 [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²¹ DWP, Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021-2022 (2023), household food security data, table 9.15 [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²² Scottish Government, Poverty and Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 (2023) [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 \(data.gov.scot\)](#)

²³ Scottish Government, The Scottish Health Survey 2021 (2022): food insecurity supplementary tables - [Scottish Health Survey 2021: supplementary tables - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

- 5% of adults with a non-limiting longstanding illness and 7% of those adults with no limiting illness worried they would run out of food because of a lack of money or resources.
- 6% of adults with limiting longstanding illness ran out of food because of a lack of money or resources in the last 12 months.
- 2% of adults with non-limiting longstanding illness and 2% of adults with no limiting longstanding illness ran out of food because of a lack of money or resources.

Across the UK,²⁴ in early 2020, data highlighted that –

- 62% of working age people referred to a Trussell Trust food bank had a disability, (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) over three times more than the general population.
- People referred to food banks also differed from the general population with regards to the severity of their disability.
- Two thirds (66%) of households referred to a food bank in early 2020 had one or more members with a disability, as defined by activities being limited a little or a lot.

Additional costs associated with disabilities vary in level and nature, affecting drivers of poverty for this group. This can include having access to specialist foods needed to manage some disabilities. In December 2022,²⁵ Citizens Advice Scotland published data on the impact of the cost of living crisis for people living with a disability or long term health condition which indicated that 15% have to cook specific meals and may face higher costs.

Sex - Data availability on sex is strong

In Scotland,²⁶ official statistics covering 2021 indicate that there was no significant difference in prevalence of food insecurity between men and women.

Across the UK,²⁷ official statistics indicate that –

- 22% of single parent households experienced low or very low food security.
- This decreased for households with two or more adults.
- No evidence was provided to clarify the sex of the adults within the households with children in the Family Resources Survey.

²⁴ Trussell Trust, State of Hunger report (2021) [State-of-Hunger-2021-Report-Final.pdf \(trusselltrust.org\)](#)

²⁵ Citizens Advice Scotland, media article, hidden cost of living crisis facing disabled Scots (2022) [Citizen's Advice Scotland warns of hidden cost of living crisis facing disabled Scots | STV News](#)

²⁶ Scottish Government, The Scottish Health Survey 2021 (2022): volume 1: main report [Supporting documents - The Scottish Health Survey 2021 - volume 1: main report - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)-

²⁷ DWP, Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021-2022 (2023), household food security data, table 9.2 [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

In Scotland,²⁸ the poverty rate was highest for single mothers (36%) and single childfree men (36%). The poverty rate for single childfree women was 30%. Estimates for single fathers are not available due to small sample sizes.

Across the UK,²⁹ in mid-2020, 28% of those referred to a Trussell Trust food bank were single adult men compared to 14% single adult women.

Pregnancy and Maternity - no data available.

Gender reassignment - no data available.

Sexual Orientation - Data availability is reasonable.

In Scotland³⁰, official statistics indicate that the poverty rate has been consistently higher for LGB+ adults compared to straight / heterosexual adults. In 2019-22, 27% of LGB+ adults were in poverty, compared to 20% of straight adults and 17% of adults whose sexual orientation was unknown.

Race - Data availability is good.

Across the UK, in 2021-22, data highlighted that –

- 19% of 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British' headed households experienced low or very low food security, compared to 16% 'Arab' households, 12% of mixed or multiple ethnic groups, 8% of 'Asian and Asian British' headed households, 8% of other ethnic group households and 6% of 'White' headed households.³¹
- 7% of 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British' headed households used food banks in the last 12 months, compared to 6% 'Arab' headed households, 5% 'mixed and multiple ethnic groups', 3% 'Asian and Asian British' headed households, 3% 'White' headed households and 2% of other ethnic groups.³²

In Scotland,³³ official statistics covering 2017-22, indicate that –

- People from non-white minority ethnic groups were more likely to be in relative poverty after housing costs compared to those from the 'White - British' and 'White - Other' groups.
- The poverty rate was 49% for the 'Asian or Asian British' ethnic groups and 48% for 'Mixed, Black or Black British and Other' ethnic groups (no population estimates available due to the small sample).

²⁸ Scottish Government, Poverty and Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 (2023) [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 \(data.gov.scot\)](#)

²⁹ Trussell Trust, State of Hunger report (2021) [State-of-Hunger-2021-Report-Final.pdf \(trusselltrust.org\)](#)

³⁰ Scottish Government, Poverty and Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 (2023) [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 \(data.gov.scot\)](#)

³¹ DWP, Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021-2022 (2023), household food security data, table 9.6 [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

³² DWP, Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021-2022 (2023), household food security data, table 917 [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

³³ Scottish Government, Poverty and Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 (2023) [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 \(data.gov.scot\)](#)

- The poverty rate amongst the 'White - Other' group was 23% (80,000 people) and that of the 'White British' group was 18% (860,000 people).

Trussell Trust end-year statistics from April 2022-March 2023³⁴ do not highlight any data of numbers people experiencing food insecurity who belong to a particular race or ethnic minority group.

Religion or Belief - Data availability is reasonable.

In Scotland,³⁵ between 2017 and 2022, data highlighted that –

- Muslim adults were more likely to be in relative poverty (63%, 40,000 each year) than adults overall (19%), after housing costs were taken into account.
- Of adults belonging to the Church of Scotland, 16% were in relative poverty after housing costs (170,000 adults each year), compared to 19% of Roman Catholic adults (110,000 adults) and adults of other Christian denominations (19%; 60,000 adults).

³⁴ Trussell Trust: End year statistics 2022-23 (2023) [End of Year Stats - The Trussell Trust](#)

³⁵ Scottish Government, Poverty and Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 (2023) [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019-22 \(data.gov.scot\)](#)

Stage 3: Assessing the impacts and identifying opportunities to promote equality.

Having considered the data and evidence you have gathered, this section requires you to consider the potential impacts – negative and positive – that your policy might have on each of the protected characteristics. It is important to remember the duty is also a positive one – that we must explore whether the policy offers the opportunity to promote equality and/or foster good relations.

Do you think that the policy impacts on people because of their age? Positive, Negative, None and reason for decision.

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. None - No differential impacts have been identified.
- Advancing equality of opportunity. Positive - Prevalence of food insecurity is higher in younger people, so improved access to emergency financial assistance and holistic support services may have a greater positive impact for this group.
- Promoting good relations among and between different age groups. None - No differential impacts have been identified.

Do you think that the policy impacts disabled people? Positive, Negative, None and reason for decision

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. None - No differential impacts have been identified.
- Advancing equality of opportunity. Positive - Evidence suggests that disabled people experience a higher prevalence of food insecurity, so improved access to income-boosting and holistic services may have a greater positive impact for this group. Access to income is likely to improve access to specialist foods needed to manage some disabilities.
- Promoting good relations among and between disabled and non-disabled people. None - No differential impacts have been identified.

Do you think that the policy impacts on men and women in different ways?

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination. None - No differential impacts have been identified.
- Advancing equality of opportunity. Positive - Prevalence of food insecurity can be higher where sex intersects with other characteristics, so improved access to emergency financial assistance and holistic support services may have a greater positive impact for different sexes in different circumstances.
- Promoting good relations between men and women. None - No differential impacts identified.

Do you think that the policy impacts on women because of pregnancy and maternity?

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination. None - No differential impacts have been identified.
- Advancing equality of opportunity. None - No differential impacts have been identified.
- Promoting good relations. None - No differential impacts have been identified.

Do you think your policy impacts on people proposing to undergo, undergoing, or who have undergone a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex? (NB: the Equality Act 2010 uses the term 'transsexual people' but 'trans people' is more commonly used)

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination. None - No differential impacts have been identified.
- Advancing equality of opportunity. None - No differential impacts have been identified.
- Promoting good relations. None - No differential impacts have been identified.

Do you think that the policy impacts on people because of their sexual orientation?

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination. None - No differential impacts have been identified.
- Advancing equality of opportunity. None - No differential impacts have been identified.
- Promoting good relations. None - No differential impacts have been identified.

Do you think the policy impacts on people on the grounds of their race?

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination. None - No differential impacts have been identified.
- Advancing equality of opportunity. Positive - Evidence suggests that prevalence of food insecurity is higher in Black and Asian households, so improved access to income-boosting and holistic services may have a greater positive impact for these groups. Access to income is also likely to increase access to culturally appropriate food.
- Promoting good relations. None - No differential impacts have been identified.

Do you think the policy impacts on people because of their religion or belief?

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination. None - No differential impacts have been identified.
- Advancing equality of opportunity. Positive - Evidence suggests that poverty rates remain higher for Muslims than people of other religious/belief groups. Improved access to income is likely to improve access to specialist foods linked with religious observances and beliefs.
- Promoting good relations. None - No differential impacts have been identified.

Do you think the policy impacts on people because of their marriage or civil partnership?³⁶

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination. Not assessed.

Stage 4: Decision making and monitoring

Identifying and establishing any required mitigating action

- Have positive or negative impacts been identified for any of the equality groups?
Yes
- Is the policy directly or indirectly discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010³⁷? No
- If the policy is indirectly discriminatory, how is it justified under the relevant legislation? N/A
- If not justified, what mitigating action will be undertaken? N/A

Describing how Equality Impact analysis has shaped the policy making process

The assessment has identified groups who experience a greater prevalence of food insecurity, and may experience greater barriers to accessing crisis support services. This has helped to frame the priorities within the Plan, which recognises the household groups most impacted and considers targeting and inclusion across the associated actions.

This includes continued support for the Scottish Crisis Fund which offers support based on a referral from trusted agencies and is inclusive of those who may otherwise be ineligible for government support. The crisis response pilot with Citizens Advice Scotland aims to provide greater agency and choice to those experiencing crisis through cash grants and shopping cards, which may help to better meet different needs and preferences. An evaluation report will be published when the pilot ends.

Locally tailored cash-first tools such as the Independent Food Aid Network ³⁸ leaflets have been developed alongside a range of local services representing diverse needs and have been translated and provided in inclusive formats.

³⁶ In respect of this protected characteristic, a body subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (which includes Scottish Government) only needs to comply with the first need of the duty (to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010) and only in relation to work. This is because the parts of the Act covering services and public functions, premises, education etc. do not apply to that protected characteristic. Equality impact assessment within the Scottish Government does not require assessment against the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership unless the policy or practice relates to work, for example HR policies and practices.

³⁷ Equality Act 2010, definition of protected characteristics [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

³⁸ Independent Food Aid Network, Why Cash-First [Cash First Leaflets | IFAN \(foodaidnetwork.org.uk\)](https://www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk)

The Plan reaffirms support for the community food sector and other trusted partners that can help overcome barriers to services, and it reaffirms that food insecurity policy and practice will continue to be guided by direct experience.

Monitoring and Review

The Plan details the nine targeted actions the Scottish Government will take over the next three years alongside partners to improve the response to crisis and start to reduce the need for emergency food parcels. Impact will be monitored throughout delivery and learning will help to identify scalable interventions that move us closer towards our longer term ambition of a Scotland without the need for food banks. We will continue to monitor the national prevalence of food insecurity, including through data which provides insight into the experience of those with protected characteristics. We will also continue to be guided by people with direct experience.

Stage 5 Authorisation of EQIA

Please confirm that:

- ◆ This Equality Impact Assessment has informed the development of this policy:

Yes No

- ◆ Opportunities to promote equality in respect of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation have been considered, i.e.:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation;
- Removing or minimising any barriers and/or disadvantages;
- Taking steps which assist with promoting equality and meeting people's different needs;
- Encouraging participation (e.g. in public life); and
- Fostering good relations, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Yes No

- ◆ If the Marriage and Civil Partnership protected characteristic applies to this policy, the Equality Impact Assessment has also assessed against the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in respect of this protected characteristic:

Yes No Not applicable

Declaration

I am satisfied with the equality impact assessment that has been undertaken for Cash-First – Towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland and give my authorisation for the results of this assessment to be published on the Scottish Government's website.

Authorised:

Name: Julie Humphreys

Position: Deputy Director, Tackling Child Poverty and Financial Wellbeing

Authorisation date: 28 June 2023

Equality Impact Assessment – Results

Executive Summary

Cash-First: Towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland

Summary of aims and desired outcomes of policy

The Plan details the nine targeted actions the Scottish Government will take over the next three years, alongside partners, to improve the response to crisis and start to reduce the need for emergency food parcels.

Background

The Scottish Government's 2021 and 2022 Programmes for Government committed to publishing a Plan, grounded in human rights, that sets out the further action we will take to improve the response to hardship so as to reduce the need for food banks. This is a cornerstone of our commitment to tackling poverty, protecting and fulfilling the right to food and achieving our Good Food Nation ambition.

A draft Plan was developed with contributions from a stakeholder steering group and direct experience reference group, and this was published for consultation between 20 October 2021 and 25 January 2022.³⁹ There were over 400 responses⁴⁰ and an independent analysis of views has been published.⁴¹ This reaffirmed a shared consensus across Scotland, including among food banks and other food aid providers, for a human rights informed approach to ensure that everyone can afford an adequate diet.

Since then, the rising cost of living has caused more people to cut back, skip meals, seek assistance from food banks, and in extreme cases to go without food completely. Food bank networks are reporting unprecedented demand for their services, but have also indicated that some Scottish Government interventions such as the Scottish Child Payment may have helped to slow the pace of demand from some households.

On 5 June 2023, the Scottish Government published “Cash-First – Towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland”⁴² (the Plan). This details the nine targeted actions the Scottish Government will take over the next three years, alongside other public bodies, local services and anti-poverty organisations to improve the response to crisis and start to reduce the need for emergency food parcels. The learning from

³⁹ Scottish Government, Ending the Need for Food Banks: Consultation on a draft national plan (2021) [Ending the need for food banks: a draft national plan - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)

⁴⁰ Scottish Government, Ending the Need for Food Banks: Published consultation responses (2022) [Published responses for Ending the need for food banks: a draft national plan - Scottish Government consultations - Citizen Space](#)

⁴¹ Scottish Government, Ending the Need for Food Banks: Consultation analysis (2022) [Ending the need for food banks – draft plan: consultation analysis – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

⁴² Scottish Government, Cash-First – Towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland (2023) [Cash-First - towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland: plan - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

these actions will help to identify scalable interventions that move us closer towards our longer term ambition of a Scotland without the need for food banks, which we will continue to pursue to the fullest of our power and resource.

Our shared ambition is that everyone has a sufficient and secure income to be able to access food that meets their needs and preferences. Where financial hardship occurs, coordinated local responses are in place which prioritise cash-first assistance and integrate money advice and other holistic support services to reduce the need for food aid and prevent future hardship. Where help to access food is still needed, this is provided in a way that maximises dignity.

The scope of the Equalities Impact Assessment

An EQIA was undertaken to assess the potential impact of the plan and associated actions on individuals and households. The aim was to identify potential positive and negative equality impacts for those with protected characteristics and consider actions to mitigate against these. This included reviewing official statistics on prevalence of food insecurity, evidence from frontline services, research publications, and consultation responses.

Key findings

There is evidence of higher levels of food insecurity and food bank use in people with some protected characteristics including age, disability, and race. It is therefore expected that action to improve the response to financial hardship is likely to have a greater impact on these groups, including the priority families in relation to Tackling Child Poverty where there is intersectionality with several protected characteristics.⁴³ No disaggregated food insecurity data is currently collected in relation to pregnancy and maternity or gender reassignment.

The available evidence generally focuses on one protected characteristic at a time, but it will be important to be mindful of the intersections between experiences through the delivery of the Plan and associated actions. Internal cross-policy engagement has highlighted evidence of high prevalence of food insecurity and barriers to accessing support services in other groups beyond the list of protected characteristics – for example, people with No Recourse to Public Funds, and those living in remote or rural communities.

Recommendations and conclusions

This assessment has helped to frame the priorities within the Plan, which recognises the household groups most impacted and considers targeting and inclusion across the associated actions.

This includes continued support for the Scottish Crisis Fund which offers support based on a referral from trusted agencies and is inclusive of those who may otherwise be ineligible for government support. The crisis response pilot with

⁴³ lone-parent families, a family where someone is disabled, families with three or more children, minority ethnic families, families with a child under one year old, families where the mother is under 25 years of age.

Citizens Advice Scotland aims to provide greater agency and choice to those experiencing crisis through cash grants and shopping cards, which may help to better meet different needs and preferences. An evaluation report will be published when the pilot ends.

Locally tailored cash-first tools such as the Independent Food Aid Network leaflets⁴⁴ have been developed alongside a range of local services representing diverse needs and have been translated and provided in inclusive formats.

The Plan reaffirms support for the community food sector and other trusted partners that can help overcome barriers to services, and it reaffirms that food insecurity policy and practice will continue to be guided by direct experience.

Impact will be monitored throughout the three year delivery of the Plan and learning will help to identify scalable interventions that move us closer towards our longer term ambition of a Scotland without the need for food banks.

⁴⁴ Independent Food Aid Network, Why Cash-First [Cash First Leaflets | IFAN \(foodaidnetwork.org.uk\)](https://www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk/)-



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