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Food Banks in the UK

Research Briefing

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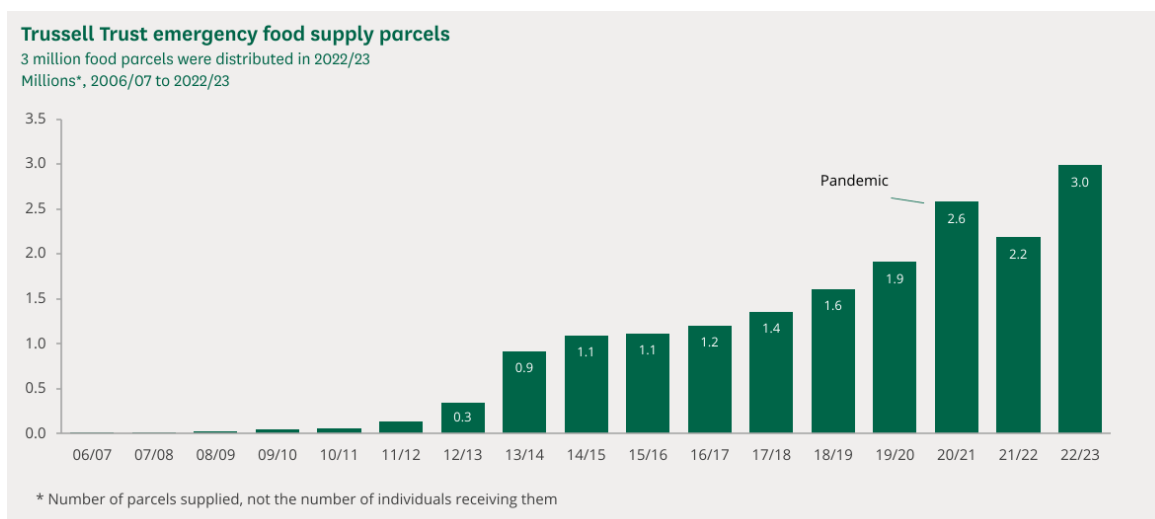
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How many food banks are there in the UK?

There are just under 1,400 Trussell Trust food banks in the UK, in addition to at least 1,172 independent food banks. The numbers of food parcels distributed by the Trussell Trust up to March 2023 can be seen in the chart below:



London was the region with the highest distribution of Trussell Trust food parcels in 2021/22, closely followed by South-East and North-West England.

How many households use food banks?

Food bank statistics should not be used as a proxy for the measurement of poverty. For statistics on poverty, see the House of Commons Library briefing [Poverty in the UK: statistics](#). The comprehensiveness and accuracy of food bank data, and the number of food aid outlets in existence, will affect food bank figures regardless of any changes in poverty levels.

The DWP published food bank data for the first time in 2023. In its [Households below average income \(HBAI\) statistics](#), it reported that 3% of all individuals in the UK used a food bank in the financial year ending 2022.

In June 2023 the Trussell Trust published [a report on Hunger in the UK](#). The report examined the causes of hunger in the UK, its impact and what type of people use food banks. Some of the headline findings of the report are:

- 69% of people referred to food banks in the Trussell Trust are disabled, compared to 26% across the general population;
- working age people are overrepresented among those referred to food banks in the Trussell Trust network;
- the majority of people (89%) referred to food banks in the network are in receipt of means tested benefits;
- 46% of people referred to food banks in the network live in social housing.

Rising cost of living

In February 2023, the Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) published its [latest survey of independent food bank finds](#). It reported that 89% of organisations saw an increase in demand comparing December 2022/January 2023 with the same period in the previous year. More than 80% of organisations reported people needed help for the first time in addition to people needing regular support.

A [report in March 2023 by the Independent Food Aid Network \(IFAN\)](#) into infant and maternal food insecurity in Scotland stated that there are currently an estimated 40,000 babies and 184,000 children living in food insecure households in the UK. The briefing found that increased food prices have put financial strain on families with babies, which resulted in a reduced ability to buy adequate nutrition to breastfeed or buy formula.

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