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THREE MILLION PEOPLE ARE GOING HUNGRY JUST THREE WEEKS INTO LOCKDOWN

NEW SURVEY RESULTS RELEASED

- **A new You Gov Survey online highlights that more than three million adults in Britain¹ (6%) report someone in their household has gone hungry in the first three weeks of lockdown**
- **1.5 million¹ Britons (3%) report that someone in their household hasn't eaten for a whole day since the lockdown came into effect**
- **Food insecurity was much worse in households which are self-isolating and households with children compared to those without**
- **2% of those surveyed – equivalent to more than one million Britons – report having lost all of their income. Of those who report a loss of income, 38% think they are not entitled to help from the government**
- **The government must move swiftly to:**
 - **SCALE UP THE NATIONAL FOOD RESPONSE and establish a National Food Aid Task Force led by DEFRA to:**
 - **Support local authorities to significantly scale up welfare assistance schemes and provide nutritious food parcels for people who are self-isolating, building on the best practice emerging from local authorities and front line charities like Greenwich, Hackney and Brighton**
 - **Significantly scale up home delivery options for those who are self-isolating by working with supermarkets, small businesses and volunteer groups**
 - **STOP FOOD INSECURITY DRIVEN BY LACK OF MONEY: Ensure people can buy the food they need to stay healthy at home. DWP needs to abolish the five-week wait for Universal Credit. The current option for advance payment simply forces people to face hardship now or later. They should also make child benefit a fortnightly payment (thereby doubling it) and simultaneously remove the benefit cap.**

Saturday 11th April – More than three million people¹ (6%) in Great Britain have gone hungry since lockdown began three weeks ago, reporting that someone in their household has been unable to eat, despite being hungry, because they did not have enough food.

A new YouGov poll commissioned by the [Food Foundation](#) and the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission (FFCC) found that 1.5 million¹ (3%) have gone a whole day without eating since the lockdown came into effect, and 7.1 million¹ (14%) say someone in their household has had to reduce or skip meals because they could not access or afford sufficient sustenance.

Of the 8.1 million¹ people (16%) facing food insecurity, 21% didn't have enough money to buy adequate food supplies, 50% were unable to get the food they needed from the shops due to shortages and 25% were unable to leave their homes and had no other way to get the food they needed. Given that shortages have subsided, a proportion of the problem was likely to be short term.

Just three weeks into the lockdown, more than three million¹ (6%) have already had to borrow money or take out personal loans as a result of COVID-19, though this has not increased in the last 14 days. 2% of respondents, equivalent to more than one million¹ people, said they've lost all of their income, but 38% of those who reported a drop in income think they are not entitled to help from the government.

The government's free school meal replacement programme means that 63% of the households with children (aged 8-16y) eligible for free school meals report receiving a substitute –up from 54% two weeks ago and 62% say they will be getting support during the Easter holiday, thanks in part to the government's decision to extend the free school meal voucher scheme beyond term-time. This shows encouraging movement in the right direction, but will still leave 507,000¹ children without the free school meals on which they relied before the lockdown, and 260,000¹ will still not receive the support they need over the holidays.

Anna Taylor, Executive Director of the Food Foundation, said: “We cannot rely on food banks to support the millions of people who need emergency food aid during this crisis: it is too big a problem, and urgently requires substantial investment from central government. The government must put money in the pockets of families who can't afford food, and support local authorities to scale up the food response for those who are self-isolating so they can secure enough food to sustain themselves and their children. Other countries are doing this, so can we.”

Sue Pritchard, Director of the Food, Farming & Countryside Commission, said: "It's taken a pandemic to reveal just how fragile our food system is for many people. Our report last year showed how the food system in this country needs levelling up. We need urgent action now, so that people do not go hungry, whilst farmers are having to throw away produce. This is a long-term problem that needs serious, substantial and radical change."

Sabine Goodwin, Coordinator of the Independent Food Aid Network, said: "Independent food banks in our network are seeing as much a 300% increase in footfall compared to this time last year. Meanwhile they are struggling to source enough or appropriate food because of reduced donations, limited access to supermarkets and diminished surplus supply. Unless the UK Government takes action to reduce poverty levels by increasing benefit payments and enabling cash grants, this situation will continue to spiral out of control."

Vic Borrill, Director of Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, said: 'Although shocking these figures will not surprise community food organisations who have moved quickly to respond to the increase in demand for food this crisis brings. Volunteers are incredibly worried that they will not be able to meet the day on day increase in need they are seeing. Across the UK local authorities and voluntary groups are already working together to get money and food to people who have none, this approach needs more government resource to ensure in the coming weeks that no-one is hungry at home.'

Jane Corbett, Liverpool's Assistant Mayor for Fairness and Tackling Poverty, said : "Our children must be protected from the double whammy of austerity and Covid19. The fragility of our current social security system is now being seen in stark relief... extreme pressure on foodbanks is just one clear example.

The Govt can decide today to remove the benefit cap, remove the two-child policy and double the child benefit payments. That would be a good start and be welcomed by millions."

Dr Rachel Loopstra, Lecturer in Nutrition, King's College London, said: "These figures, based on a three-week window of time, are 1.5-2 times higher than what we usually see when we survey about experiences of hunger covering a 12 month period. They suggest the COVID-19 lockdown has had a swift and devastating impact on the population's ability to access sufficient food, both for economic reasons and because of self-isolation." Dr Rachel Loopstra, Lecturer in Nutrition, King's College London

Notes to Editor

1. Calculations made by the Food Foundation using mid-year population estimates.
2. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 4343 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 7th - 9th April 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW OVER EASTER WEEKEND: Anna Taylor, Executive Director of the Food Foundation

Please contact:

Pandora Haydon – 07789 712608 / pandora.haydon@foodfoundation.org.uk

Jo Ralling – 07770 500858 / jo.ralling@foodfoundation.org.uk

Social Media

Twitter: @Food_Foundation

#Right2Food

About the Food Foundation

The [Food Foundation](#) is a charity working to influence food policy and business practice, shaping a sustainable food system which makes healthy diets affordable and accessible for all. We work in partnership with researchers, campaigners, community bodies, industry, investors, government and citizens to galvanise the UK's diverse agents of change, using surprising and inventive ideas to drive fundamental shifts in our food system. These efforts are based on the continual re-evaluation of opportunities for action, building and synthesising strong evidence, convening powerful coalitions, harnessing citizens' voices and delivering impactful communications.

Registered Charity Number 1187611

About The Food, Farming & Countryside Commission

FFCC is an independent inquiry funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and chaired by Sir Ian Cheshire, to help shape a new vision and a mandate for a just transition to sustainable food and farming systems, to respond to the interconnected crises in climate, nature and public health. It comprises 14 Commissioners drawn from across farming and food businesses, from public health and citizens groups, from environment and countryside groups and universities. The Commission published its report, *Our Future in the Land* in July 2019, to widespread endorsement, backed by farming and green groups, businesses and civic society. Politicians from all parties backed our recommendations.