

The cost of hunger and hardship in Northern Ireland

Key facts and figures from our report

Our report explores hunger and hardship in Northern Ireland and across the UK: the scale, the costs to society, and the solutions needed.

To end the need for food banks, we need to understand how many people are already cutting back on essential items – and people at high risk of going without the essentials*.

This is what facing hunger and hardship means.

200,000

people face hunger and hardship in Northern Ireland. This includes 130,000 working-age adults, 12,000 pensioners and 62,000 children.

44,000

more people across Northern Ireland are projected to face hunger and hardship by 2026/27 without change.

39% of people in families across the UK claiming Universal Credit face hunger and hardship



14% of children in Northern Ireland face hunger and hardship – compared with 11% of all people across Northern Ireland



25% people in a single parent family face hunger and hardship in Northern Ireland



19% living with three or more children face hunger and hardship in Northern Ireland



114,000

people who live in disabled families now face hunger and hardship. If you live in a disabled family (with either a disabled adult or child) you are far more likely to face hunger and hardship than if you live in a non-disabled family (15% vs. 8%).

Work is not always protecting people from hunger and hardship

85,000

people in families where someone is working face hunger and hardship across Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland, 25% of families with part-time work face hunger and hardship.

*Our Cost of Hunger and Hardship project has developed a measure to define this group: people whose total resources are more than 25% below the Social Metrics Commission's poverty line. Family Resources Survey 2022/23

How to reduce hunger and hardship

We find a number of social security changes are immediate and direct levers that could be milestones to making our social security system the bedrock on which we reduce hunger and hardship. Without these changes the rate of hunger and hardship is expected to rise to 12.9% in 2025/26.

| Reduction in the number of people at risk of hunger and hardship | | % reduction | Rate of hunger and hardship after policy in place in 2025/26 |
|---|--------|-------------|--|
| Introduce the Essentials Guarantee Ensuring everyone has a protected amount of support in Universal Credit to afford the essentials. | | | |
| NI | 50,000 | -20% | 10.3% |
| Boost and extend the Scottish Child Payment This policy considers an extension of the Scottish Child Payment to the whole of the UK, at a higher level of £40 a week. | | | |
| NI | 55,000 | -22% | 9.9% |
| Removing the two-child limit Reversing policies that make reductions to the amount people should receive in social security payments. | | | |
| NI | 20,000 | -8% | 11.9% |
| Maximising incomes Ensuring people of working age and pension age receive all the social security support to which they are entitled. | | | |
| NI | 10,000 | -4% | 12.3% |



For more information

on definitions and further findings, go to: trussell.org.uk/coh