

The cost of hunger and hardship in Wales

Key facts and figures from our report

Our report explores hunger and hardship in Wales 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.

420,000

people face hunger and hardship in Wales. Hunger and hardship is at record levels across Wales. This includes 270,000 working-age adults, 38,000 pensioners and 110,000 children. This is a 16% increase in the number of people facing hunger and hardship since 2002/03.

23,000

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

Children are most at risk of hunger and hardship



One in six (17%) children in Wales face hunger and hardship – compared to 13% of all people across Wales



One in six (17%) people in a single parent family face hunger and hardship in Wales



One in four (26%) living with three or more children face hunger and hardship in Wales



Two in five (39%) people in families claiming Universal Credit across the UK face hunger and hardship

Work is not always protecting people from hunger and hardship

210,000

people in families where someone is working face hunger and hardship across Wales. In Wales, 28% of families with part-time work face hunger and hardship.

230,000

people in Wales 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 more likely to face hunger and hardship than if you live in a non-disabled family (16% vs. 11%).

*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 13.9% 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.			
Wales	105,000	-24%	10.6%
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.			
Wales	50,000	-12%	12.4%
Removing the two-child limit and benefit cap Reversing policies that make reductions to the amount people should receive in social security payments.			
Wales	25,000	-6%	13.1%
Maximising incomes Ensuring people of working age and pension age receive all the social security support to which they are entitled.			
Wales	15,000	-4%	13.4%



For more information

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