

Tackling food poverty in Norfolk

How you can help make a difference



Our Spotlight reports take the pulse of Norfolk and illustrate how philanthropy can help to tackle important concerns affecting our communities.

In 2019, we identified food poverty as a major issue impacting on our county. This report discusses the extent of the problem and how Norfolk Community Foundation is best placed to work with groups on the ground, helping to change lives.

“In the face of having little to spend, households prioritise purchasing foods that will not go to waste and that are most filling. Often this means a reliance on cheap foods that are nutrient-poor but calorie-rich.”

End Hunger UK

Food poverty – how can this be happening in Norfolk today?

People in food poverty are unable to afford to eat properly. Food poverty is increasing in the UK, and as many as 4 million children now live in households that cannot afford a healthy diet. A major cause of this is that income from low-paid work or benefits is not keeping up with the cost of food and fuel. On a low income, the household food budget can be slashed by a day's lost work, late benefit payment or washing machine repair.

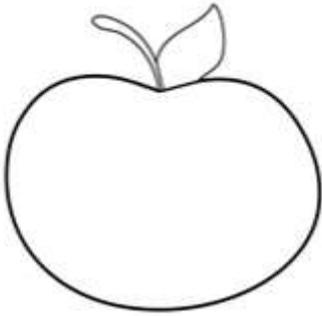
The impact of food poverty on individuals and families is well understood. They may spend a greater percentage of their income on food, but will experience a less varied diet, limited access to nutritional food, less choice about what to eat, and limited consumption of fruit or vegetables. In the long-term, their health and wellbeing suffer.



Benefit reform and food poverty

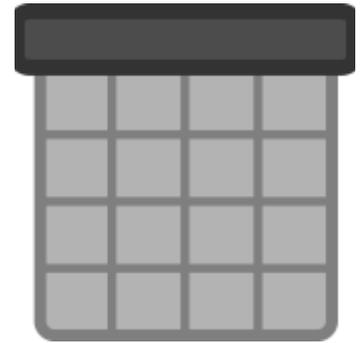
Many of Norfolk's most vulnerable residents are supported by different social security benefits. The Government is combining all of these main benefits into a single 'Universal Credit' payment. Great Yarmouth has been a pilot site for this new approach since April 2016. Since that time, the use of the local foodbank has increased by around 300%.

Why are people going hungry in Norfolk?



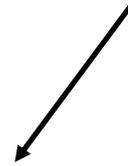
Low incomes

Eating healthily would cost poor families nearly half their weekly disposable income



Holiday hunger

In the school holidays children on free school meals don't eat as well as during term time



Food deserts

In many poor and isolated places it is hard to obtain cheap, nutritious food



A vicious circle

In Norfolk, people living in our disadvantaged communities are most vulnerable to food poverty. It is both a cause and effect of the social problems they face. And there is increasing evidence that many of the **29,300** children living in poverty in the county will go to school hungry. This affects their ability to concentrate, undermining their potential to attain the qualifications needed to escape the 'poverty trap' of life on benefits or low-paid, insecure employment.

With foodbanks now so visible, there is growing awareness of the existence of food poverty – the scale of the challenge locally being highlighted by the rapid increase in foodbank use. In 2018, 10 foodbank distribution centres in Norwich handed out **9,322** food parcels, **3,147** of which went to children under the age of 16.

The availability of food is also an issue. The number and variety of food retailers in poorer areas and isolated rural communities has declined. The effect is the creation of so-called 'food deserts' where residents must either spend more to travel to access food, or rely on the limited, less nutritious and relatively expensive foods available locally.



An estimated 1 in 6 parents now skip meals to ensure their children are fed



"Rising food poverty is deep-rooted in austerity, but also goes hand in hand with our unfair housing market so that today, some of the basics that we thought we could take for granted like regular work and a place to live, are no longer assured."

Eastern Daily Press, 19 March 2019

"Primary school aged children were most likely to receive support from a foodbank last summer. Families who rely on free school meals at primary school during term time can find themselves facing hunger in the school holidays, when there is extra financial pressure to provide main meals."

Norwich Foodbank



How we're helping tackle food poverty across Norfolk

Norfolk Community Foundation is the best placed to tackle the issue of food poverty in the county. Our work touches 1 in 4 people in Norfolk: we are local, informed and accessible, working with small local charities and community groups who work tirelessly on the ground to help the vulnerable.

The expansion of foodbanks is symptomatic of food poverty, but there are many other types of services working to help those in need.

Redistributing surplus food to those who need it

We work with Norwich Foodbank who collect surplus food from local food retailers that would otherwise go to waste, sorts and stores the food, and redistributes it to local charities who get it to the people who really need it.



Providing hot meals for the vulnerable

We support an organisation in Norwich providing hot meals for vulnerable older people and young families over the colder months. This initiative by NR2 Community Skills Share also helps alleviate loneliness and provide access to advice and information.



Clubs alleviating holiday hunger

We've supported a holiday club running weekly in locations across King's Lynn, which provides free lunches, as well as a variety of fun activities and learning opportunities to families. The club not only helps to alleviate hunger, but also to reduce feelings of isolation, raise children's aspirations and reduce the stress felt by working parents on limited budgets.



You can make a difference

We can only continue helping alleviate food poverty in Norfolk with your help.

Whether it's helping fund playschemes for children at risk of 'holiday hunger', particularly during school summer breaks, supporting foodbanks across Norfolk to deliver vital food supplies to the vulnerable, or contributing to addressing the causes of food poverty in order to tackle them, a little giving goes a long way.

You can be confident that your contribution will make a huge difference to making Norfolk a better place for everyone.

Talk to us today to find out how you can help transform local lives.



Talk to us

Contact us on 01603 623958
or email info@norfolkfoundation.com
www.norfolkfoundation.com

Norfolk Community Foundation
St James Mill
Whitefriars
Norwich NR3 1TN

Our thanks to Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland

Together, Norfolk shines brighter

Registered charity number: 1110817

