

# JSNA Health and Wellbeing Profile 2020/21

## Food Poverty / Insecurity

### Summary points

- Around 1 in 60 (1.7%) households in Bristol suffered from severe food insecurity in 2019/20 and 1 in 20 (5.0%) experienced severe or moderate food insecurity. Of approximately 200,000 households in Bristol, nearly 10,000 are estimated to suffer from moderate to severe food insecurity, and more than 3,000 from severe food insecurity. It is estimated that there are nearly 2,000 households experiencing occasions when they were unable to buy the food they needed to keep themselves and their family healthy, due to a shortage of resources.
- In the most acutely affected parts of the city, 1 in 20 (5.0%) of households reported severe or moderate food insecurity and more than 1 in 8 (12.0%) moderate or severe food insecurity (Stockwood and Hartcliffe & Withywood wards, respectively).
- Approximately 1 in 24 (4.2%) of households in Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston reported having used an emergency food service (such as a food bank) during the same 12-month period due to food insecurity.
- Certain groups were more likely to experience food insecurity and requiring emergency food provision compared to the Bristol average. This includes respondents with a disability, those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, single parents, disabled and people aged 16-24.

### Food insecurity – definition and measurement

The terms food poverty and food insecurity are often used interchangeably, but it is generally interpreted as the inability to afford, or have access to, food to make up a healthy diet. It is not necessarily about 'hunger' but more about being appropriately nourished to maintain health.

The causes of food poverty are complex and multiple and may include:

**Financial environment** - Relating to income (amount and consistency), price and affordability of locally available food

**Social environment** – Relating to cultural norms, food and cooking skills, social networks, and the impact of marketing of unhealthy foods

**Physical environment** – Cooking facilities, access to shops and cafes selling affordable healthy food, and/or transport required to access these facilities

Quantifying food poverty is difficult, as it encompasses such a broad range of causes, circumstances and similarly varied outcomes. There is no universal measure currently used in the UK, although during 2019 plans emerged to commence with the collection of a composite food insecurity measure in regular national surveys in future. At the present time there are no statistics that enable the situation in Bristol to be compared robustly to either the national average, or other parts of the UK. In 2018, Bristol City Council included additional questions concerning food poverty into the Quality of Life (QoL) Survey to establish benchmarks for future comparisons and to permit some analysis of variation across the city. These questions are

based on the United Nations Food Insecurity Experience Survey module<sup>1</sup> and focus on self-reported food-related behaviours and experiences associated with increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints. It enables a score to be calculated for all responding households that can be used to identify households suffering from moderate or severe food insecurity.

### Food insecurity and emergency food use by ward

Based on responses to the 2019/20 Bristol QoL Survey, an estimated 5.0% of households in Bristol have experienced moderate to severe food insecurity in the past 12 months (Figure 1) and 1.7% have experienced severe food insecurity. However, there is considerable variation across the city, associated largely with income deprivation. The highest percentage of QoL respondents reporting severe food insecurity was in Stockwood (5.0%) and Filwood (3.9%).

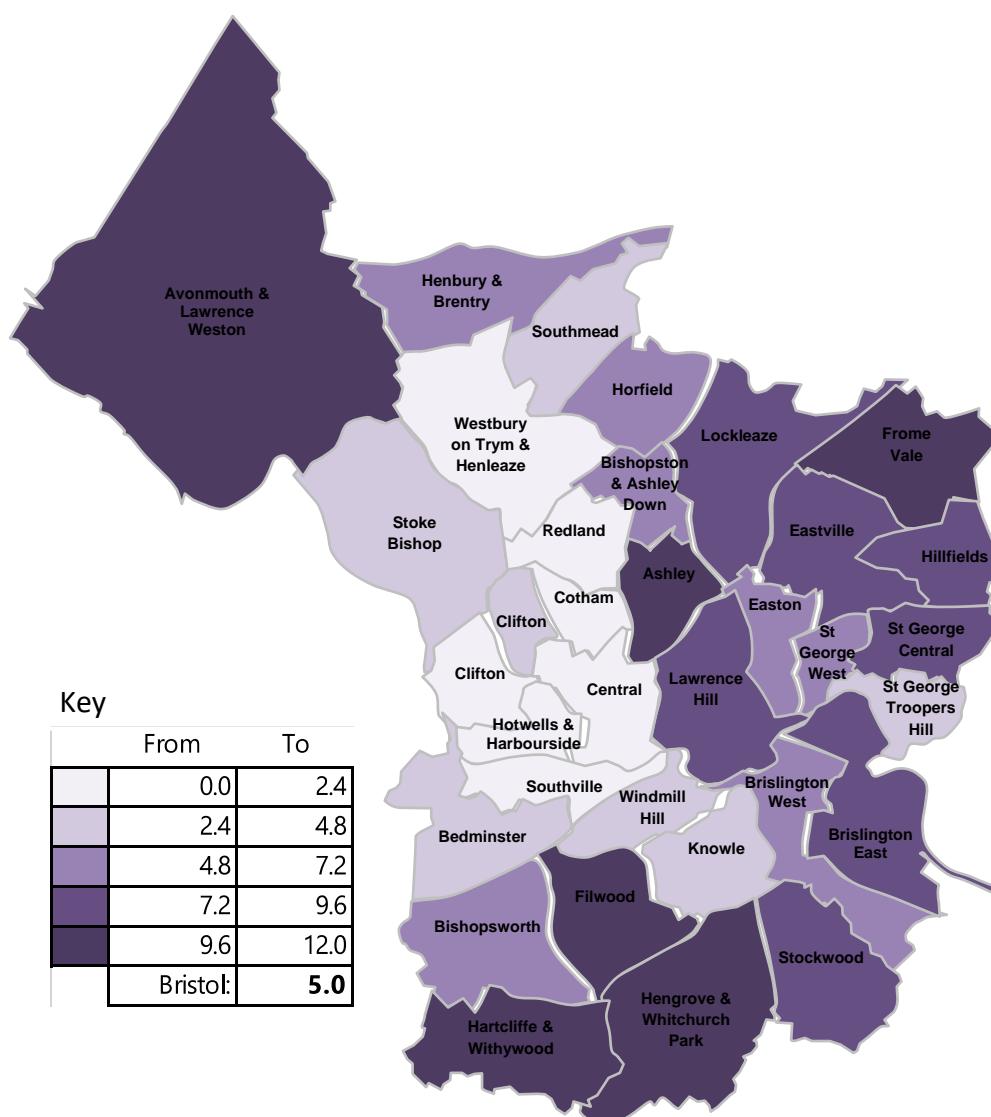


Figure 1. Percentage of QoL Survey respondents reporting moderate and severe food insecurity by ward, QoL Survey 2019/20.

<sup>1</sup> The Food Insecurity Experience Scale: <http://www.fao.org/in-action/voices-of-the-hungry/fies/en/>

Hartcliffe and Withywood (12.0%) and Filwood (10.9%) had the highest rates of moderate and severe food insecurity. Respondents from all but one ward (i.e. Redland) experienced some moderate to severe food insecurity. However, most wards (i.e. 20 of 34 wards) were below the city average of 5.0% experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity.

As another measure of likely food insecurity, the Bristol QoL Survey includes questions on the use of emergency food services (e.g. food banks). In the 2019/20 survey, 0.9% of Bristol households responded they had received emergency food and/or groceries within the previous 12 months. This compares to 2.1% of households in the previous year’s survey, although it should be noted that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will not have been captured by the 2019/20 QoL Survey Data. It will be important to explore the impact of the pandemic in the 2020/21 QoL Survey Data. The ward with the highest level of emergency food use was Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston, with 4.2% of households reported being in receipt of emergency food and/or groceries during the last 12 months. Respondents in 22 of Bristol’s 34 wards reported less use of emergency food services than the Bristol average. Taking one ward as an example; 12.0% of households responding in Hartcliffe & Withywood suffered moderate to severe food insecurity compared to 0.7% of the ward’s households responding as receiving emergency food services.

### Food insecurity and emergency food use by deprivation decile

We analysed food insecurity according to deprivation decile of Bristol households. The data indicates that there is an association between deprivation as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score for the lower super output area (LSOA) of residence of the respondent and both the likelihood of reporting severe and moderate/severe food insecurity and accessing emergency food services (Figure 2). The prevalence of moderate to severe food insecurity shows a significant deprivation gap between the prevalence in the 10% most deprived areas (12.4%) and the 10% least deprived areas (0.9%).

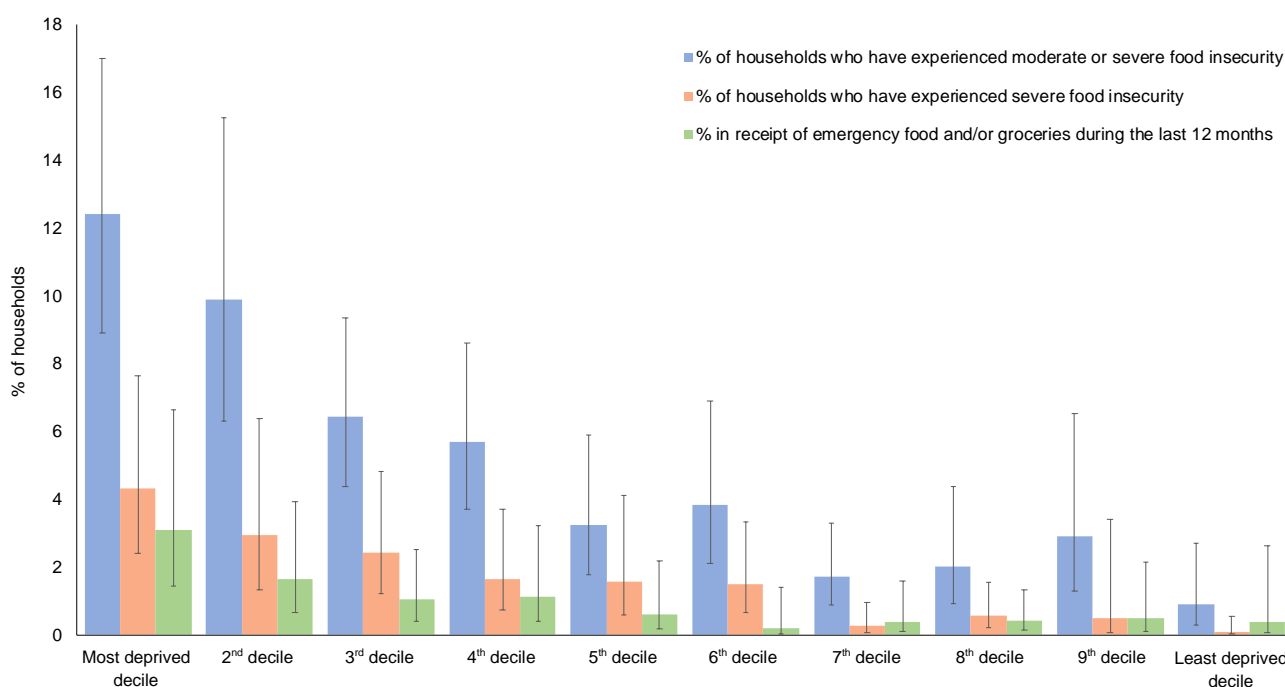


Figure 2. Food insecurity according to deprivation level in Bristol. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Emergency food use was also higher among those living in more deprived areas, with those in the most deprived 10% three times more likely (3.1%) to receive emergency food services compared to the Bristol average (0.9%).

### Food insecurity, emergency food use and equality

Single parents experienced higher rates of food insecurity compared to the Bristol average, with 13.0% of single parent households reporting that they had experienced moderate to severe food insecurity in the last 12 months, compared to the Bristol average of 5.0%. Single parents were also more likely to receive emergency food and groceries, with 3.4% of single parents reporting they had received emergency food and/or groceries during the last 12 months, over three times more than the Bristol average of 0.9%.

Disabled people are at significantly higher risk of food insecurity in Bristol, with 14.8% of disabled people reporting moderate to severe food insecurity in the last 12 months, nearly three times higher than the Bristol average of 5.0%, and 8.1% of disabled people reporting severe food insecurity, nearly five times higher than the Bristol average of 1.7%. Disabled people were four times more likely to be in receipt of emergency food and/or groceries than the average Bristol household (4.1% compared to 0.9%).

People from black and minority ethnic groups (BAME) were twice as likely to experience food insecurity, with 10.1% of BAME households reporting experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity compared to the Bristol average of 5.0%, and 4.5% of BAME households reporting severe food insecurity, compared to the Bristol average of 1.7%. Furthermore, people who identified as BAME were over four times as likely to be in receipt of emergency food and/or groceries than the average Bristol household (3.9% compared to 0.9%).

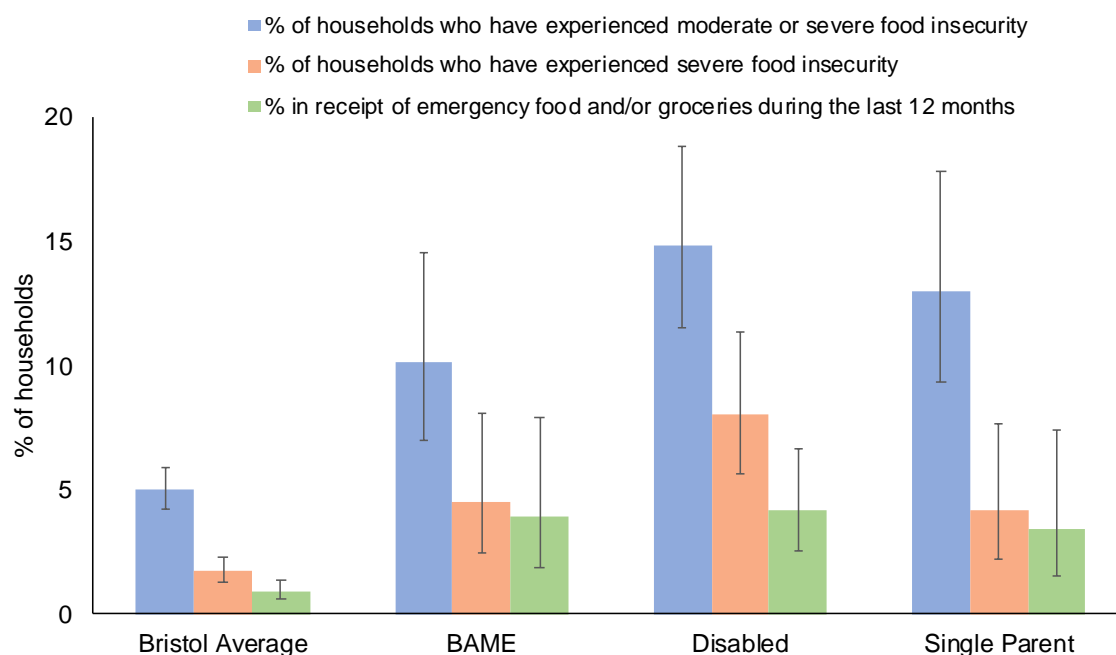


Figure 3. Food insecurity and emergency food use rates among QoL Survey respondents who identified as BAME, disabled or single parents, compared to the Bristol average.

Younger people appear more likely to experience food insecurity compared to older age groups. People aged 16-24 were at least twice as likely to be affected by food insecurity compared to those aged 50 and above, with 9.0% of people aged 16-24 years reporting that they had experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in the past year, compared to 4.3% of people aged 50 years and older, and just 1.2% of people aged 65 and over. A similar trend was seen for usage of emergency food services, with 1.8% of people aged 16-24 reporting they had received emergency food and/or groceries during the last 12 months, compared to 1.0% of people aged 50 and over, and 0.2% of people aged 65 and over (Bristol average: 0.9%).

No significant differences in food insecurity and emergency food receipt were observed between the Bristol average and those who identified as male, female, no religion/faith, with religion/faith, LGB, WME, and carers. This does not necessarily mean that differences associated with these characteristics do not exist, but we were unable to prove they do or do not with the results available from the 2019/20 QoL survey.

### Food insecurity and emergency food use: time trends

Levels of food insecurity and emergency food receipt appear to have fallen overall in Bristol between 2018 and 2019, according to the 2018/19 and 2019/20 QoL survey data (Figure 3). However, it should be noted that fluctuations in these numbers are to be expected because they are based on small numbers of responses each year, and how truly representative of the Bristol average the survey response is each year, changes also. Analysis over a longer period of time will allow more confidence with regards to trends. In addition, the 2019/20 QoL Survey will not have captured the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which are expected to be significant. It will be important to explore the effects of the pandemic on food poverty and food insecurity in the upcoming 2020/21 QoL Survey.

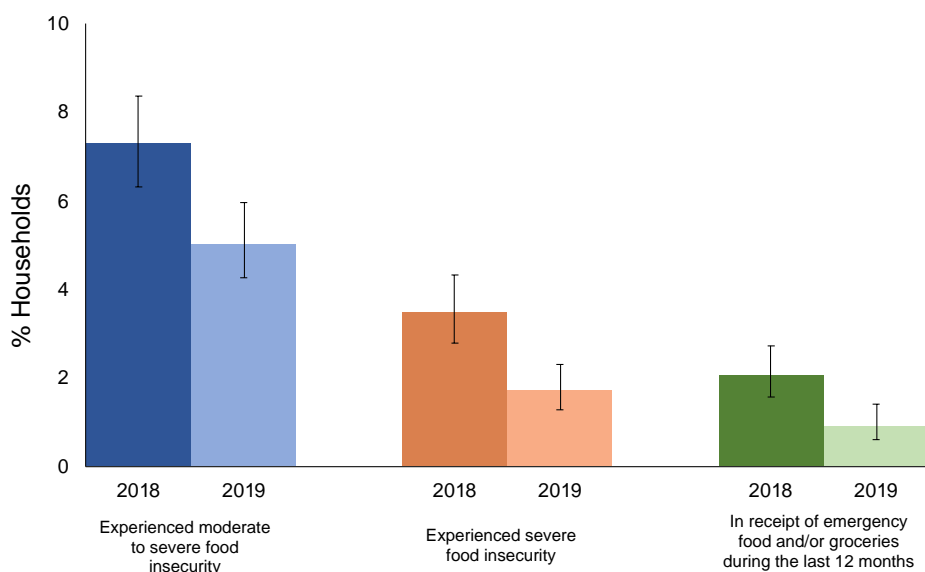


Figure 4. Changes in food poverty between 2018 and 2019. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

## How are we addressing Food Poverty / Insecurity and Emergency Food?

Through the *Alive Bristol* programme and the adoption of the Healthy Weight Declaration<sup>2</sup>, which was adopted in February 2020, work is ongoing to support changes to the food environment and support healthier food consumption. This includes investing in partnerships to support people out of food poverty, and agreeing a Council-wide Food Equality Strategy and Action Plan.

Feeding Bristol acts as an umbrella organisation for the city, supporting collaborative initiatives that increase food security across all social and cultural communities in Bristol. In 2020, it played an important role in the co-ordination of Bristol's Covid-19 Community Food Response. The 'Healthy Holidays' project continued in 2020, albeit within the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic. This included such things as; a free school meal leaflet distributed with all free school meal vouchers across Bristol, outdoor family food sessions, activity packs, craft kits for young carers, play & youth activities and recipe & cooking videos.

Feeding Bristol reported that 125 community organisations formed a network of food support across the city in response to the Covid-19 restrictions which began in the UK on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. Over 220,000 meals were delivered by these organisations between 23<sup>rd</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> May. The majority of recipients lived in wards with some of the highest levels of deprivation, the highest proportion living in Lockleaze, Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston and Hartcliffe & Withywood. Bristol's joined-up food network provided a platform for increased efficiency and effectiveness during the pandemic, and facilitated an agile and timely response.

### Covid-19 impact:

The Covid-19 pandemic has increased food insecurity across the city, due to the downstream effects of reduced and/or unstable incomes, and problems with accessing and/or affording food. The data from the 2019/20 QoL Survey (described above) was collected prior to the pandemic and therefore will not have captured these changes.

### Further data / links:

- [Bristol Food Provision Report 2018](#). Feeding Bristol commissioned some research to focus on the most deprived wards of Bristol.
- Feeding Bristol: [Bristol's Covid-19 Community Food Response](#). A high-level summary of the food provided to the economically vulnerable in the first two months of lockdown, published 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020.
- Feeding Bristol [Healthy Holidays : food provision during a pandemic Impact report 2020](#)
- Feeding Bristol [Healthy Holidays Impact report 2019](#)
- JSNA Healthy Eating Summary (6.3)
- Bristol Food Poverty [JSNA 2019/2020](#)
- A Food Environment map for Bristol is helping people locate all food provision and services in the city [Click here](#)
- Feeding Bristol [Website](#)
- Information about [Bristol City Council's Healthy Weight Declaration](#) (February 2020)

<sup>2</sup> [Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight](#)

- [Bristol Bite Back Better](#) Bristol Going for Gold is an initiative to involve the whole city in an ambition to make Bristol's food system better. The ambition is to be recognised as one of the UK's first Gold Sustainable Food Cities by Spring 2021.
- [National Food Strategy \(Part One\)](#), independent review commissioned by government and published 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020. Part two of the strategy expected Spring 2021.

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