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Devon Community Foundation
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University of Exeter



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Devon, Plymouth & Torbay VCSE Assembly



Torbay Food Alliance



COMMUNITY FOOD NETWORK



TEIGNBRIDGE CVS



one northern devon

Love Food CIC
LOCAL • ORGANIC • VEGAN • ETHICAL



FOOD Plymouth

Food insecurity in Devon

Sara Gibbs

Consultant in Public Health

May 2023



Quantitative survey

- Public Health Devon commissioned research conducted in:
March-April 2021 & Sept-Oct 2022



- Interviews undertaken with a representative sample of 1,206 households from across the county.

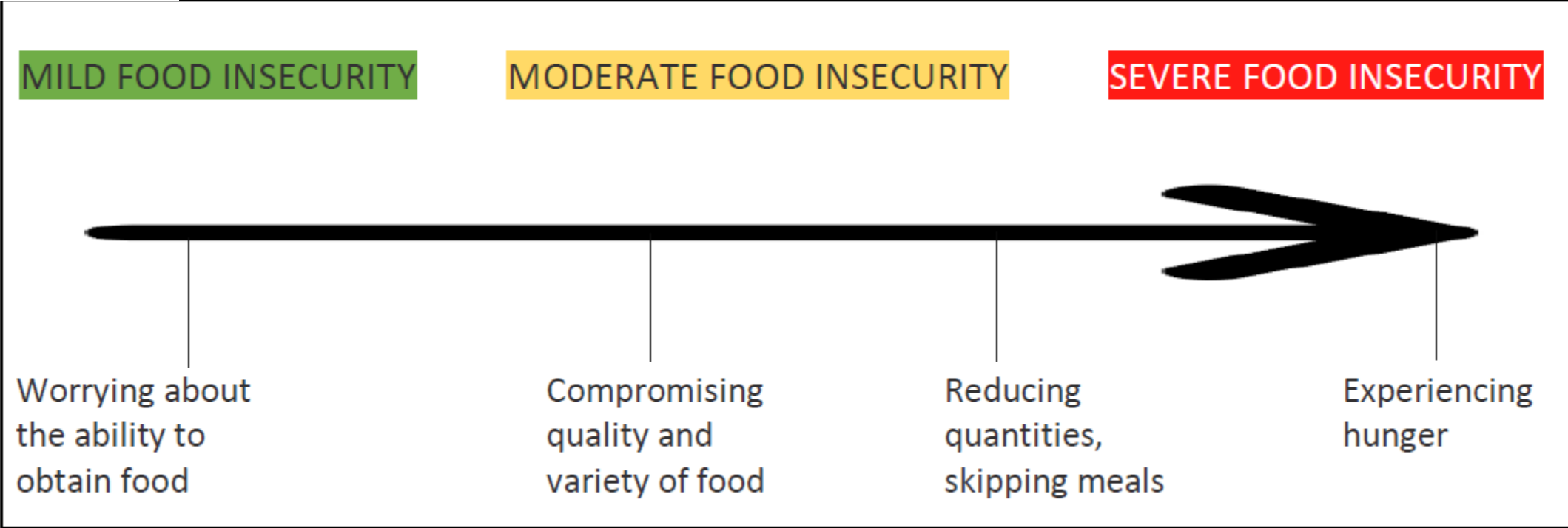
What is food insecurity?

“A lack of the financial resources needed to ensure reliable access to food to meet dietary, nutritional, and social needs. It can be acute, transitory, or chronic, and ranges in severity from worry about not being able to secure enough food to going whole days without eating”

Evidence Network on UK Household Food Insecurity (ENUF)

Levels of food insecurity

FAO Food Insecurity Experience Scale

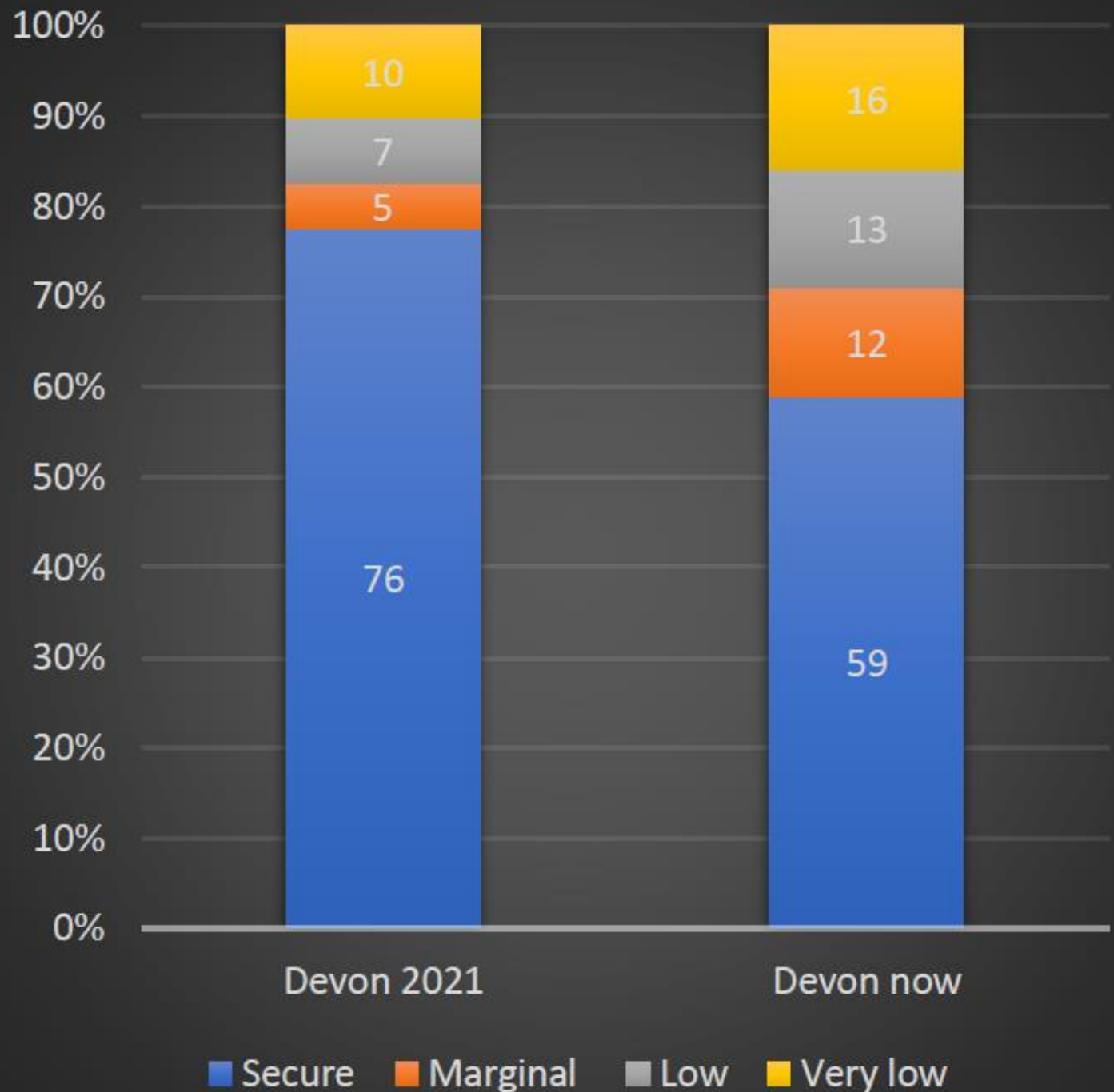


Headline findings: 2023 v 2022

Food insecurity has increased.

Very low food insecurity: 16% (+6%)

Low and very low food insecurity: 29% (+12%)



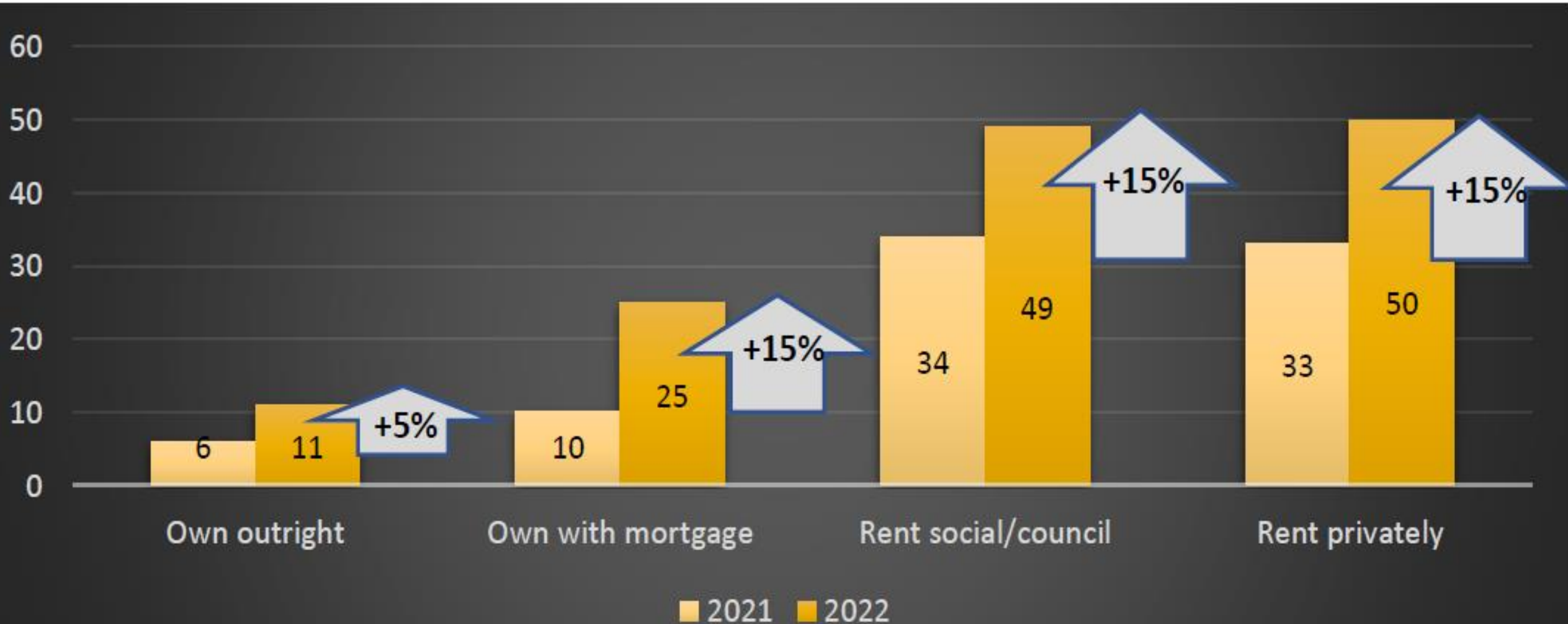
Types of households experiencing the highest rates of food insecurity

- Income of less than £16,190 *and* children (70%)
- Single adult household with children (60%)
- Households where the main respondent is long-term sick or disabled (58%)
- 1+ household member with a mental health condition (55%)
- Households where the main respondent is unemployed (55%)

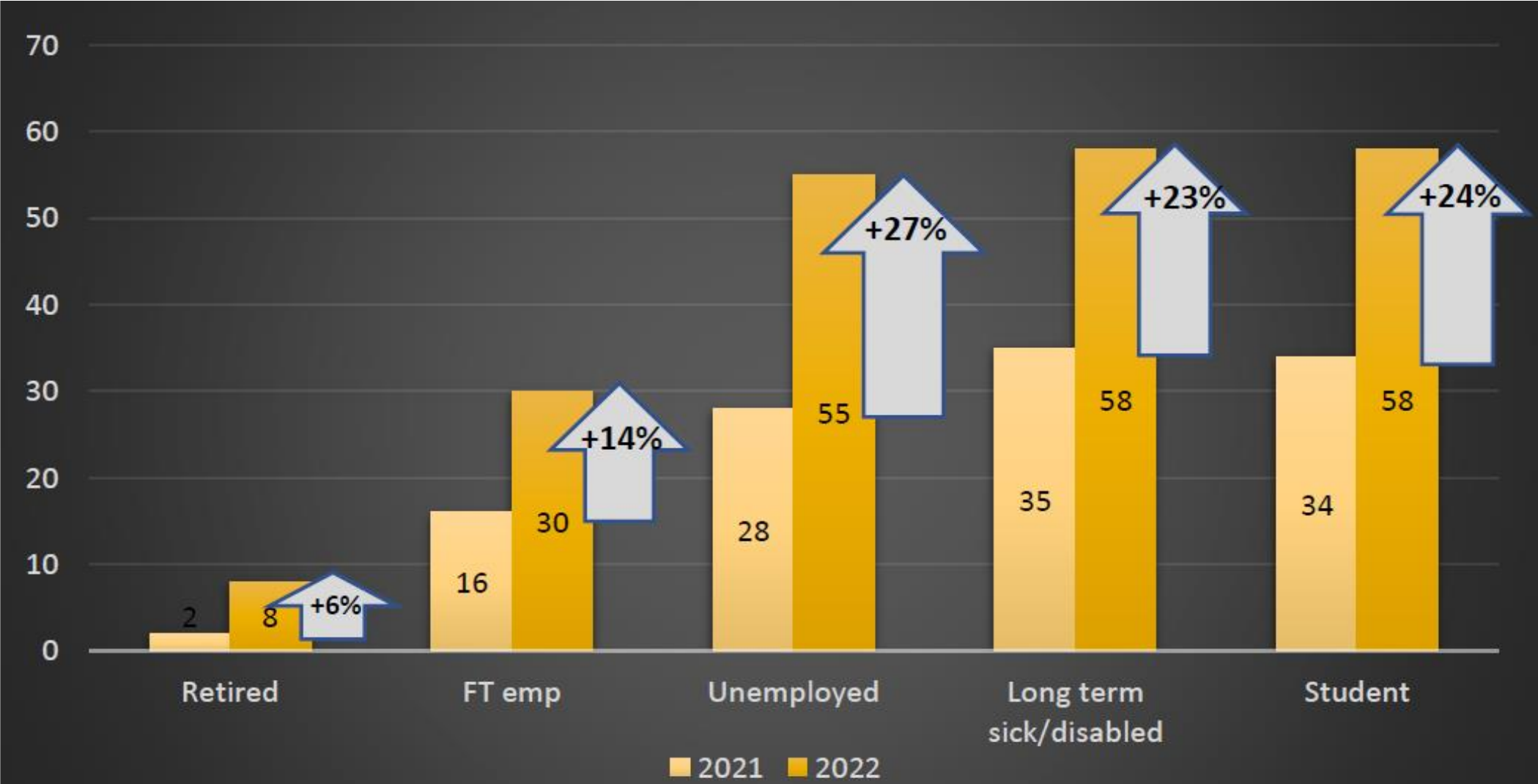
Households with children: income and likelihood of food insecurity 2021-2022 (%)



Household tenure and the likelihood of being food insecure: 2021 – 2022 (%)



Main Household respondent activity and change in food insecurity: 2021 – 2022 (%)



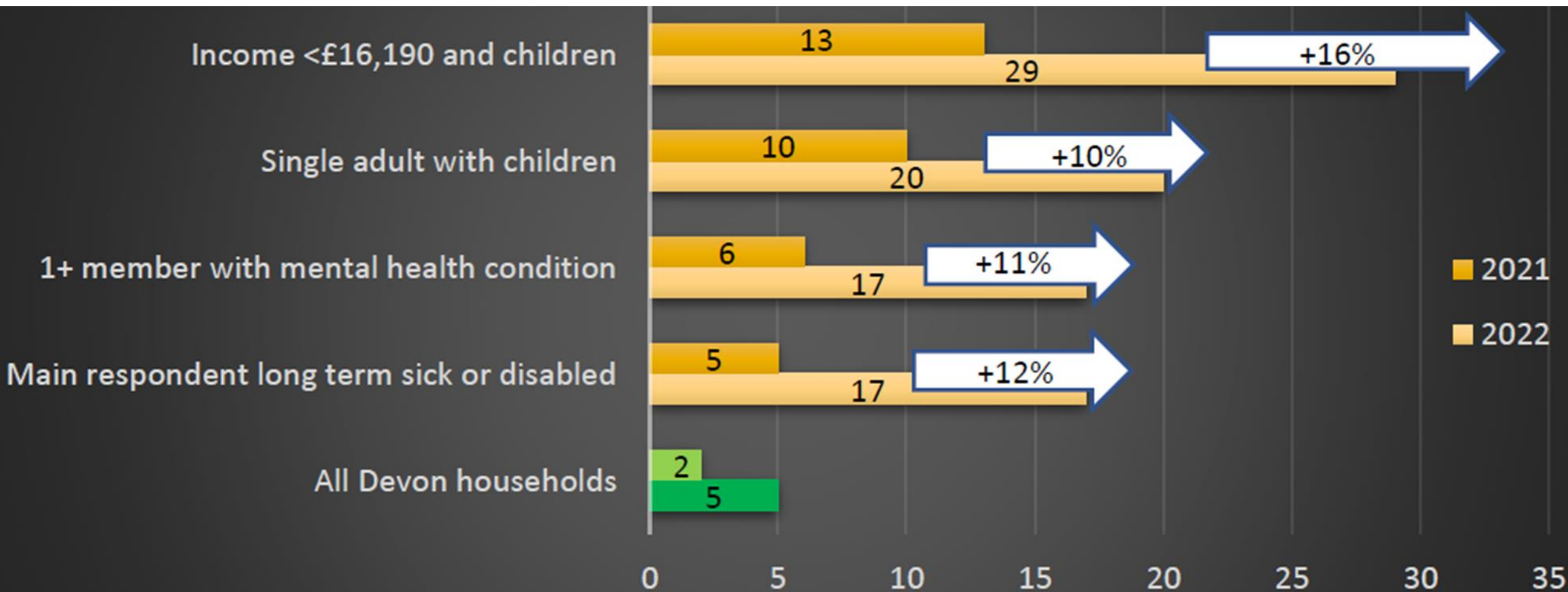
Free school meals

Uptake of free schools meals among households with children increased from:

14% in 2021

34% in 2022

The proportion of Devon households surveyed who accessed emergency food support over a 30 day period increased from 2% in 2021 to 5% 18 months later.



Among those households who accessed emergency food support in the 30 days prior to the survey:

- 70% had very low food security
- 84% were in receipt of means tested benefits

Awareness of emergency food support

All households, regardless of their food security, were asked:

“If you wanted support and advice about accessing affordable food for your household, such as food parcels, food banks, meal and distribution centres, would you know where to get it?”

- 44% said they would
- 8% said they wouldn't want it
- 39% said they would not know
- 9% said they were not sure

Household ethnicity

- 102 of the 1,206 households indicated that the ethnicity of at least one member of the household was something other than white British.
- Sample size was too small for detailed analysis.
- In line with national findings households in which all members were white were more likely to be food secure.
- Further research commissioned to understand more about the experiences of ethnically diverse households.

DEVON HOUSEHOLDS MOST LIKELY TO BE FOOD AND FUEL INSECURE 2022

- Children present
- Low income
- Single adult
- 1+ member with mental health condition
- Renting from council/ social/ privately
- Main respondent either long term sick, disabled or unemployed
- 5+ household members
- In receipt of Universal Credit

Other findings

- General awareness of food and fuel support initiatives needs to be greatly increased
- Uptake of free school meals should be prioritised
- Population Health Management (via NHS) to identify households most likely to be impacted by fuel insecurity and offer support
- DWP could collaborate with partners to ensure that households most likely to be food insecure are enabled to access appropriate support to increase their food security.

With many thanks to:



Nigel Tremlett

Transform Research Consultancy
52 Longbrook Street, Exeter, Devon, EX4 6AH
www.transformresearch.co.uk

Food Insecurity in Devon – Qualitative Research

Dr. Nicola Frost – Devon Community Foundation

Fatma Sabet – Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Exeter



HEATHFIELD FAMILY FOOD CLUB ACTION RESEARCH

How can we support schools to support families in food insecurity?



St Catherine's Food Club

TESCO £13.45

ALDI £7.93

SPAR £14.38
minus 3 unavailable items

Over 20 of our families collected their first food bags this Tuesday as part of our Affordable Food club. We have carried out a price comparison and parents save on an equivalent shop more than £ 9.38 at Heathfield Spar (who did not have all items in stock), £ 8.45 when shopping at Tesco and £ 2.93 when shopping own brand at Aldi, so the food club does give clear savings!

If you would like to order £5 food bags for your family please speak to Linzi or Becca in the school office for more information. Order and pay by every Friday. Collect the following Tuesday.





One Pot Wonders: Making the most from your slow cooker

FREE SLOW COOKER!

Learn about food prep, menu planning and healthy eating, and how good for you, your health, your energy bills and the environment using a slow cooker can be.

Take home and eat the things that you have prepared. Taste test some slow-cooked foods and think about things you like and don't like to eat. Learn how you can change recipes to suit different tastes.



Heathfield Food Shelf

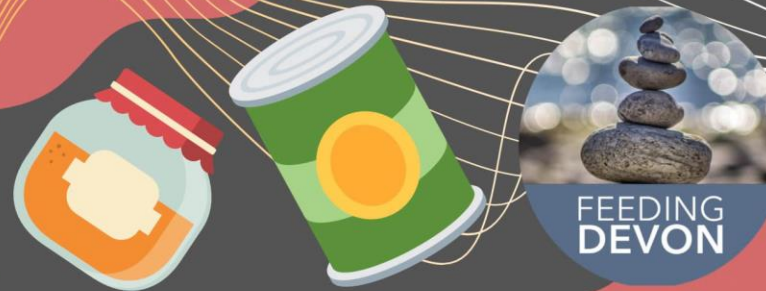


Bovey food hub

An Affordable Food Club

Feeling the pinch? Why not join our food club and save up to 50% on supermarket prices - only £5 per bag! Free lunch and drinks available

Tuesdays 11.30 to 12.30 at Bovey Methodist Church Hall (warm hub open from 11am)





common denominators

that can help to make school-based food projects successful

- **senior leadership buy-in**
- **a nominated and supported member of staff** who is responsible for the provision as part of their role
- **linking with** relevant organisations and groups in **the local community** can help with funding, resources, support and signposting
- good, regular **communication** is key, both between the school and the parents and the school and any external providers
- having **clarity around expectations** what can be offered/delivered by all partners
- making it **easy and ideally free to access** for pupils/parents

questions raised that would benefit from being explored/tested further

What allows families to access food support?

What makes it “easy to access”?

Location?

Free access?

Communication methods?

Minimal sharing or personal information?

Flexibility around ordering/pick ups?

A variety of payment methods and flexibility when to pay?

Appropriate packaging?

Offering choice?

How do parents relate to schools and support offered via schools?

Are all parents happy to engage with the school and share food insecurity concerns?

What enables parents to co-design and co-deliver food solutions?

Particularly those who struggle physically and mentally following the Covid pandemic and within the demands of the Cost-of-Living crisis?

What allows schools and VCSE food providers to free up capacity to develop, adapt and run food projects?

funding?

admin support?

dedicated staff member?

suitable location in school?

parent support?

HEATHFIELD FAMILY FOOD CLUB ACTION RESEARCH

anja@teigncvcs.org.uk



Torbay Food Support Research

May 2023



Simon Sherbersky



Catherine Fritz



Torbay Food Support Research

May 2023



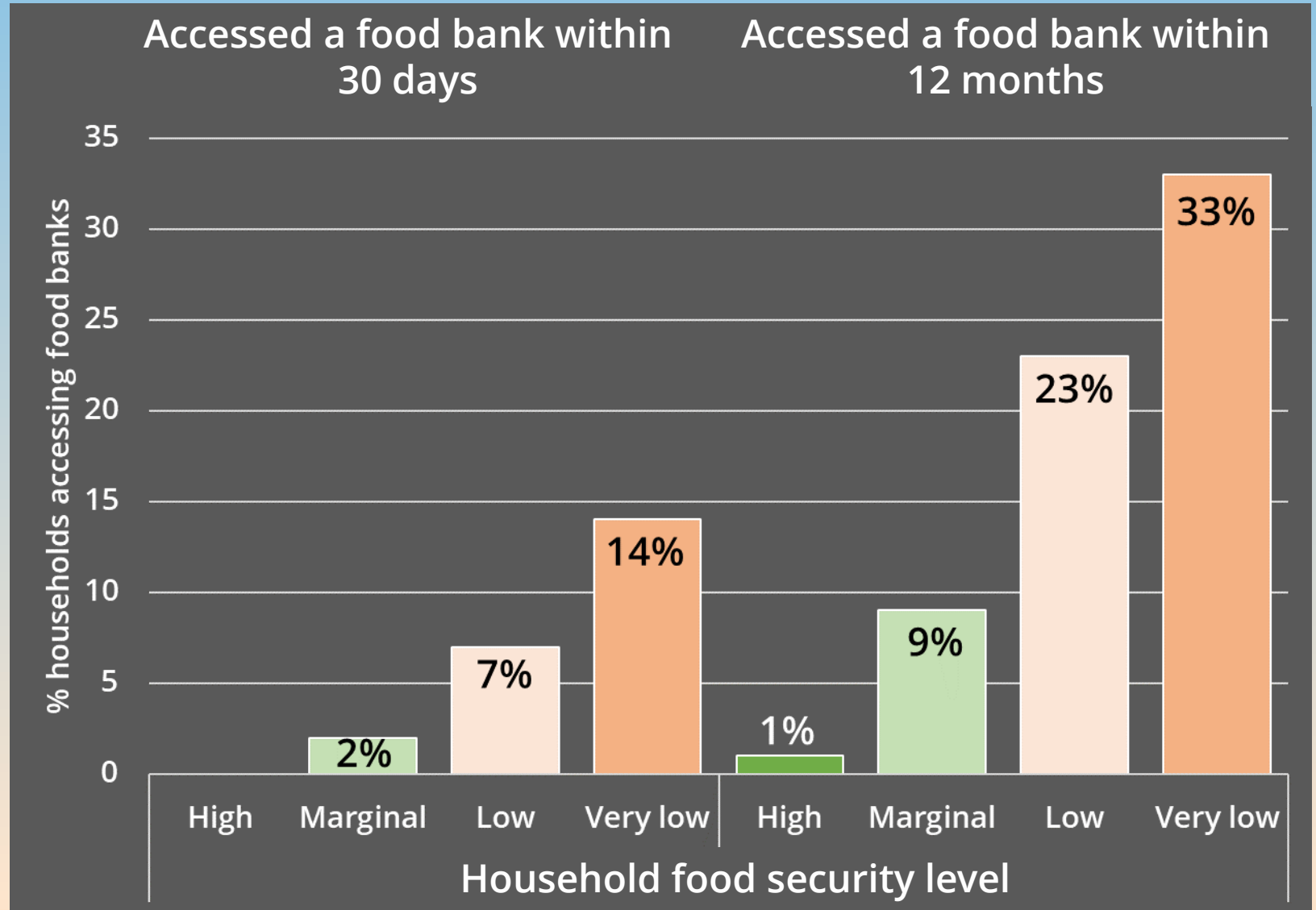
Families living in food insecurity often do not access the food support available to them.

Why?

What might increase the likelihood of doing so?

We spoke with families at local social supermarkets (food clubs) to find out more.

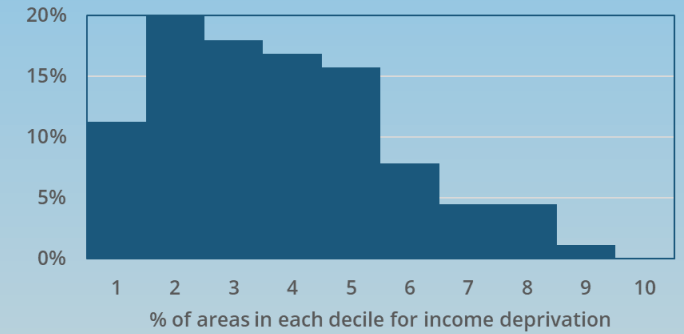
Most households experiencing food insecurity do not access food banks



DWP data for 2021-2022, UK-wide,
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2021-to-2022>

Torbay . . .

39th most income-deprived



27% of school children qualify for free school meals

Extensive coordinated support for food and other issues across three towns and several villages

Interviewees

9 people from families with children,
accessing food support through food
clubs (social supermarkets)

All were reluctant to use foodbanks

“I didn’t go back to the foodbank, due to how it made me feel and there wasn’t enough to make a full meal, as it wasn’t the food that my kids will eat.”

“Never accessed a foodbank as worried that it would go back to social services and there might be repercussions”

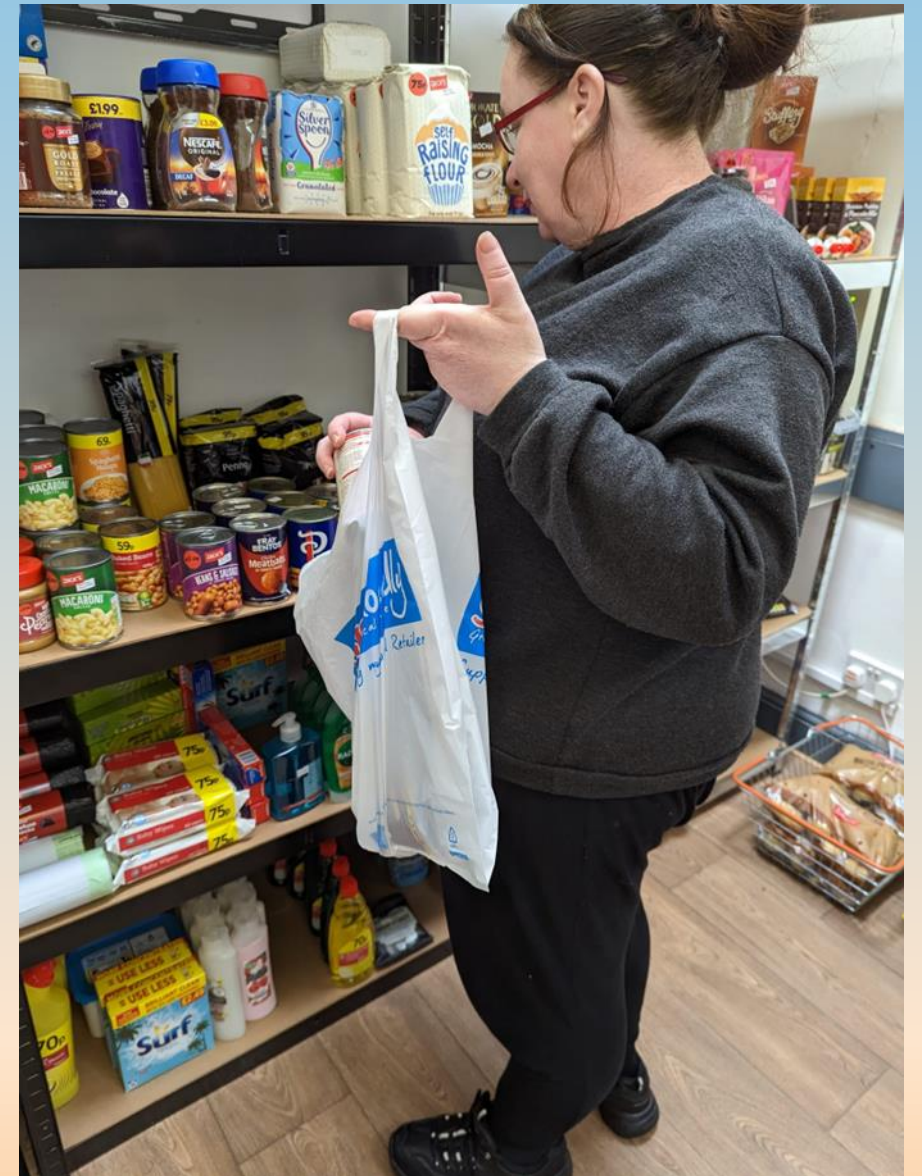
“Know quite a few parents who feel the same way about foodbanks”

- › Stigma / shame / embarrassment
 - › Others deserved it or needed it more
- › Mistrust/dislike of referral forms
- › Lack of choice / fit to food needs

Social supermarkets . . .

Interviewees were regular users of a social supermarket

- ✓ Applied to join
- ✓ Paid membership fee
- ✓ Paid roughly 25% of retail for groceries
- ✓ Choice – like shopping at a small supermarket



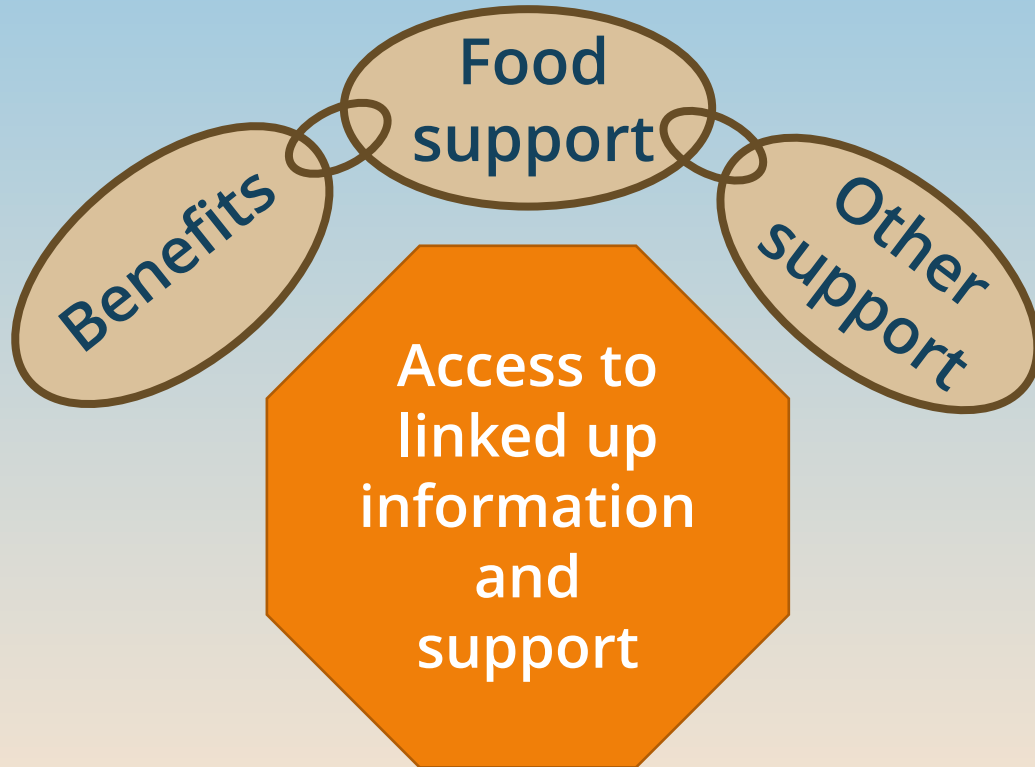
Social supermarkets . . .

Best with a café, kitchens, and opportunities to interact



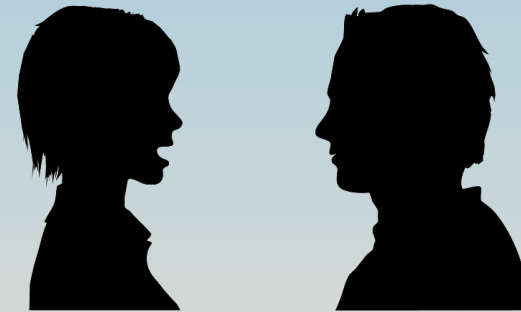
“Plainmoor Social supermarket are excellent; they really care and listen to our feedback to improve the range of items available. It’s not just a supermarket, it’s social. I get to meet new people, as there is also a café space”

Wider perceptions - negative



Need help navigating

Need to SPEAK with people



**Jobcentre appointment
(set up by DWP only)**

**Torbay Council
Connections closed**

Wider perceptions - positive

Free School Meals are highly valued – especially with the rising cost of living.

Olio – one interviewee is an Olio collector

- ✓ focus is on reducing food waste rather than charity
- ✓ Tesco, Lidl, and OneStopShop are on board

Wider perceptions - positive

Social supermarkets and food banks help develop life skills and provide employability benefits for volunteers and paid staff

- ✓ Cooking classes
- ✓ Working in the shop, café and kitchen provides work experience for disabled people and others

Opportunities

Social supermarkets / Affordable food clubs

- ✓ Provide intermediate level of food support, between supermarkets and food banks
- ✓ Best if also a good connection point – café
- ✓ Can also provide cooking classes
- ✓ Can integrate with other advice and support
- ✗ *Need a source for affordable food!*

Opportunities

Stimulate more resident led action, e.g. OLIO collector in every neighbourhood

Take home point -



People sometimes need help.
They will only access help from those they trust.
Locally run spaces can help to build trusting relationships in the local community.
Those trusting relationships can provide the basis for support.

Therefore, we should invest in locally run spaces.





FOOD INSECURITY INSIGHT

OVER 65 POPULATION
WITHIN THE EXMOUTH DISTRICT

VICTORIA ROGERS



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Mushroom - Exmouth District Community Food Network conducted a research project to gain the voices of the over 65 population living in the Exmouth, Budleigh, Woodbury and Lypstone community. Outreach sessions in community spaces were carried out to encourage engagement with the community survey and book in interviews with members of the public that were experiencing food insecurity.



THE STATE OF AGING IN ENGLAND IS GETTING WORSE

Today there are almost 11 million people aged 65 and over - 19% of the total population. In 10 years' time, this will have increased to almost 13 million people or 22% of the population.

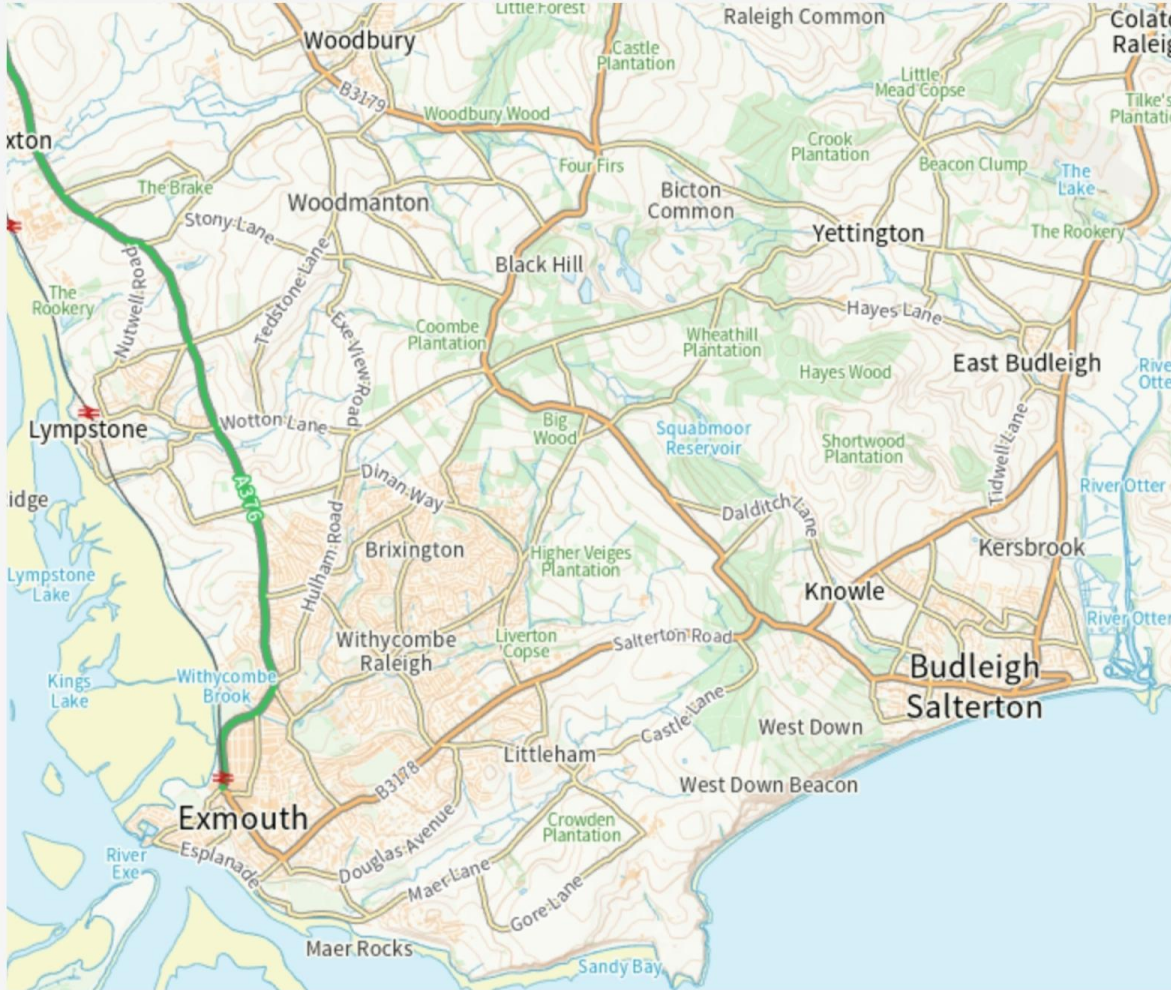
Research shows a sharp increase in pensioner poverty, meaning that almost 1 in 5 people were living in poverty in the 2019/20 period. That's some 2 million people.

We have also seen a reduction in our life expectancy (of 0.3 years for women and 0.4 years for men).

There are differences of up to 10 years in the lifespan of rich and poor pensioners.

ONS figures state that 30.1% of the population in East Devon are over 65 years old.

LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS



Community Food Network



at the heart of our community



FOOD POVERTY



- 52 people aged over 65 completed the food security survey throughout February 2023 in Exmouth, Budleigh, Woodbury and Lypstone
- 29.27% of reported experiences of food poverty in the last 6 months
- 7.32% reported that they had used a food bank or community fridge in the past 6 months
- 41.46% of respondents did not understand how to access emergency food provision should they need to



STIGMA

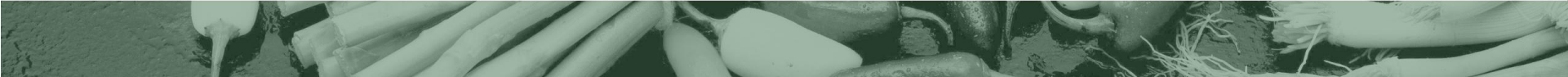
"I don't want to access the food bank. i feel ashamed that we sometimes don't have money to buy food - it is worse in winter when we sometimes need to put our heating on to get warm"

"I don't want to access the food bank - I always feel like there are more people in need than me. especially at the moment"

"I sometimes use the community larder at Littleham as I know this food would go to waste otherwise, I don't like the thought of going to the food bank"

"There is a stigma to using the food bank but needs must....."

"I wait for days of starving before I make contact with the food bank towards the end of the month when I have run out of money. I simply need to feel like I deserve to have the free food given to me"



BARRIERS

Transport

Cost of healthy food

Caring responsibilities

No affordable shops near home

Lack of cooking skills and confidence



Food labelling is not easy to understand

Cost of pre-made meals now

Unable to increase household income

Cost of gas and electric for cooking

Physical and mental health illness

Not being able to find the food wanted in the shops

KEY ACTION POINTS

- Awareness campaigns and outreach programs
- Stigma reducing efforts
- Resource expansion
- Transport and accessibility improvements
- Affordable ready made meal model and changes to foodbank model for those unable to cook for themselves



**"I FEEL LIKE WE
ARE NOT LIVING,
WE ARE SIMPLY
EXISTING"**



Navigating Mental ill Health and Food Insecurity in Exeter

Dr. Rebecca Sandover, University of Exeter and Maresa Bossano, Love Food CIC

Image from Changing Realities Project <https://changingrealities.org>



Introduction - Project Background

- Investigating experiences of Food Insecurity and Mental ill health in Exeter. Building on a Food Exeter project from 2018 and research with Clarity in 2021
- Focused on experiences of Exeter residents and insights from Exeter organisations who act as service providers, referral agents, community centres
- Exploring how recent national crises of Covid-19 and the cost of living crisis are being experienced by Exeter residents
- Provided insights on key challenges faced by Exeter residents and organisations
- Provided insights on some of the food related activities in Exeter that provide mutual aid and opportunities for community based support

Overview of Challenging Issues

Key Challenging Issues were identified that shaped people's experiences of food insecurity and mental ill health:

- Deprivation
- Long term Health Conditions and Mental ill health
- Food Insecurity
- Impacts of Covid-19 and the Cost of Living Crisis (CoLC)

Challenges of Deprivation

- A link was found between deprivation and mental ill health
- Everyday financial challenges, poor quality housing, new concerns re energy costs all exacerbate people's wellbeing and can lead to people experiencing anxiety and depression
- A link was found between deprivation and challenges in navigating the welfare system, such as delays in receiving benefits, the use of sanctions, low levels of payments etc
- Financial deprivation may be compounded by multiple forms of deprivation such as, lack of access to healthy fresh food produce, lack of access to greenspaces and other services that instil wellbeing

Challenges of Long term Health Conditions and Mental ill health

- Mental ill health disrupts the development of positive cooking and eating routines
 - Reliance on benefits creates increased experiences of stress, anxiety and depression
 - Low mood effected some residents' ability to eat well
 - Support services agree it is harder for people to access mental health support from CAMHS and the NHS therapeutic services
 - There is an added challenge of accessing services for people who have complex lives
- Participants had a range of different mental and physical health conditions, including multiple conditions such as:
- Limited mobility
 - Neurodiversity
 - Chronic Pain
 - PTSD
 - IBS and more

Challenge of Food Insecurity

'Not bothering to eat, not caring what you eat, used to have bulimia, sometimes eat too much. Now very aware of aware of food and mood but it is so much more expensive to eat a healthy diet. Community fridge not accessible. Carers get food. Using slow cooker and soup maker as it use lots of veg' *Participant 5*

- Support Services provide access to food via hot food services, supported access to food bank, food pantries etc.
- Covid and CoLC have resulted in changes in services
- New services such as community fridges are focused on food waste but are available to all
- Food retail options don't suit some residents with mental ill health and neurodivergence



St Thomas Community Fridge – photo LoveFood CIC

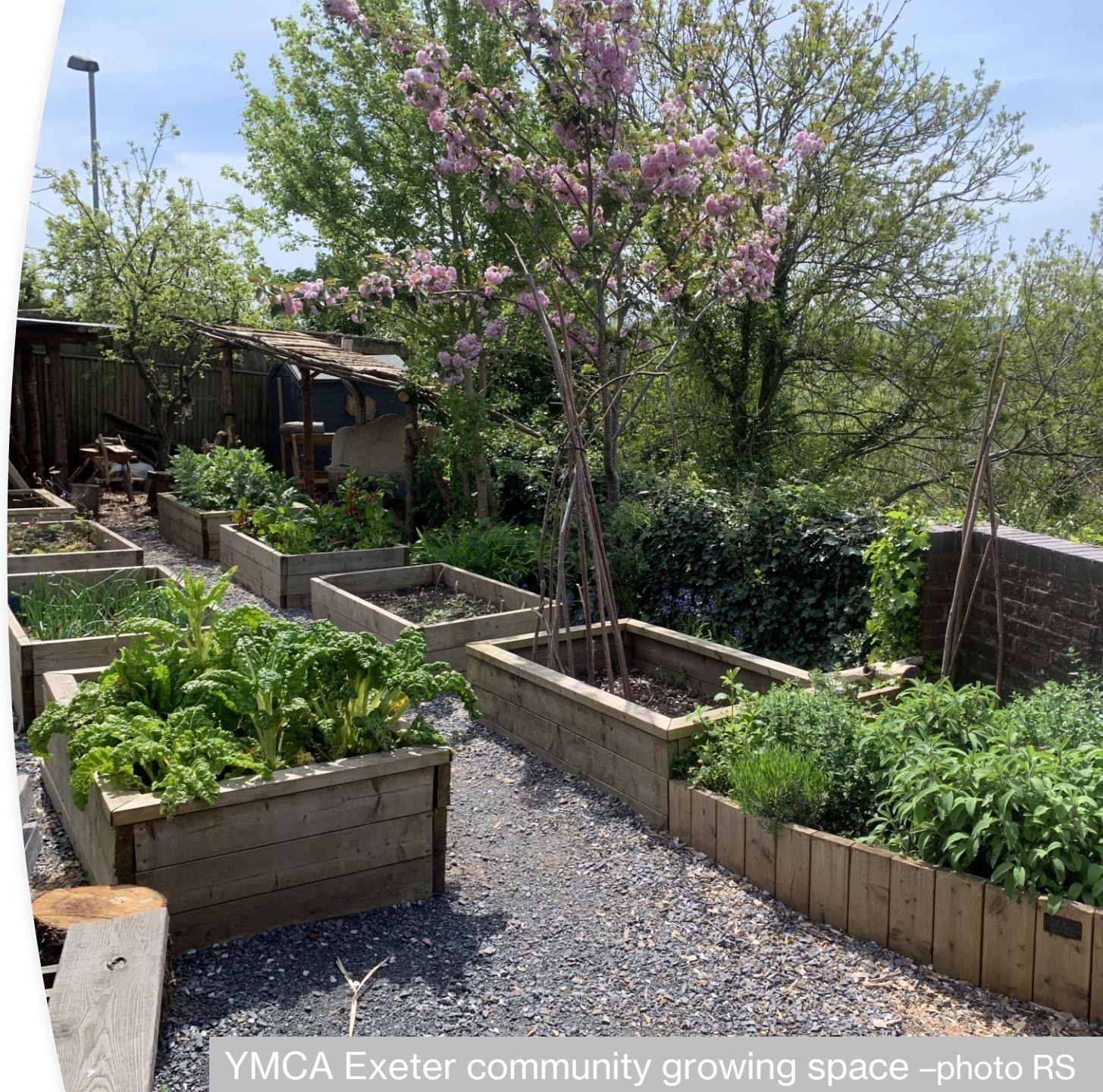
Impacts of Covid-19 and the Cost of Living Crisis (CoLC)

‘Covid has changed how people are, they are more isolated and with a loss of confidence with wellbeing needs increased. Covid 19 and CoLC has resulted in empty shelves in shops that shapes what people eat.’ *Organisation A*

‘Paying for care and bills worrying 24 hours, feel very tormented, services only pay £14 an hour, need to top up to £20 or £30, do not use an agency as it was different carers all the time. Energy costs are very high as heating is on all the time, have to charge electric wheelchairs, showers can take a long time with a carer.’
Participant 5

Support Services in Exeter

- There are a range of services providing community based food support and activities in Exeter
- Everyone has different needs and a different relationship to food
- Cooking clubs and food growing spaces provide supported activities that help to address social isolation, develop food skills and support wellbeing
- Some residents have prior reliance on Foodbank support
- Organisations services changed since covid-19 and CoLC, e.g. warmspaces projects



YMCA Exeter community growing space –photo RS

The role of Community and Family



Photo LoveFood CIC

- Positive relationships with friends and family are very important for people's wellbeing
- Support from personal networks, such as financial support, someone to talk to who understands challenges, reducing isolation
- Neurodivergence and mental health needs = challenges in accessing community activities

Final Thoughts

- Current food shopping options in Exeter do not meet the needs of those with neurodivergence and mental ill health
- There is a need for more local shops selling fresh produce and dried goods that can be bought by the weight (ie unpackaged)
- Free food doesn't always meet the needs of those with complex health needs and dietary needs
- Further efforts to take a joined up approach to understanding the health, mental ill health and dietary needs of residents is needed to address the growing challenges of mental ill health and food insecurity
- Organisations providing support services require both sustainable funding and opportunities to connect with other services and local authorities to develop a more strategic approach to tackling these issues



Thanks

Thanks to all participants who took part in this research and support from The Devon Food Partnership

For wider information on this issue please look at the work of the [Changing Realities project](#)

Accessing the Yams – BAME Communities and Food Support in Plymouth UK

A Small-Scale Practitioner Action Research Project

by

Ela Roszkowska (Diversity Business Incubator) and Ian Smith
(Food Plymouth Core Team and Community Interest Company)

Context

- VCSE – Civil Society / Voluntary & Community / Social Enterprises
Different Cultures – and Size Matters
- VUCA Environment
- Pandemic Emergency to Cost of Living Crisis
- People from BAME communities impacted disproportionately, while their needs are often under-served and their voices frequently unheard
- Plymouth 95% white and a Home Office dispersal area for Asylum Seekers

Data gathered



What? How? When?

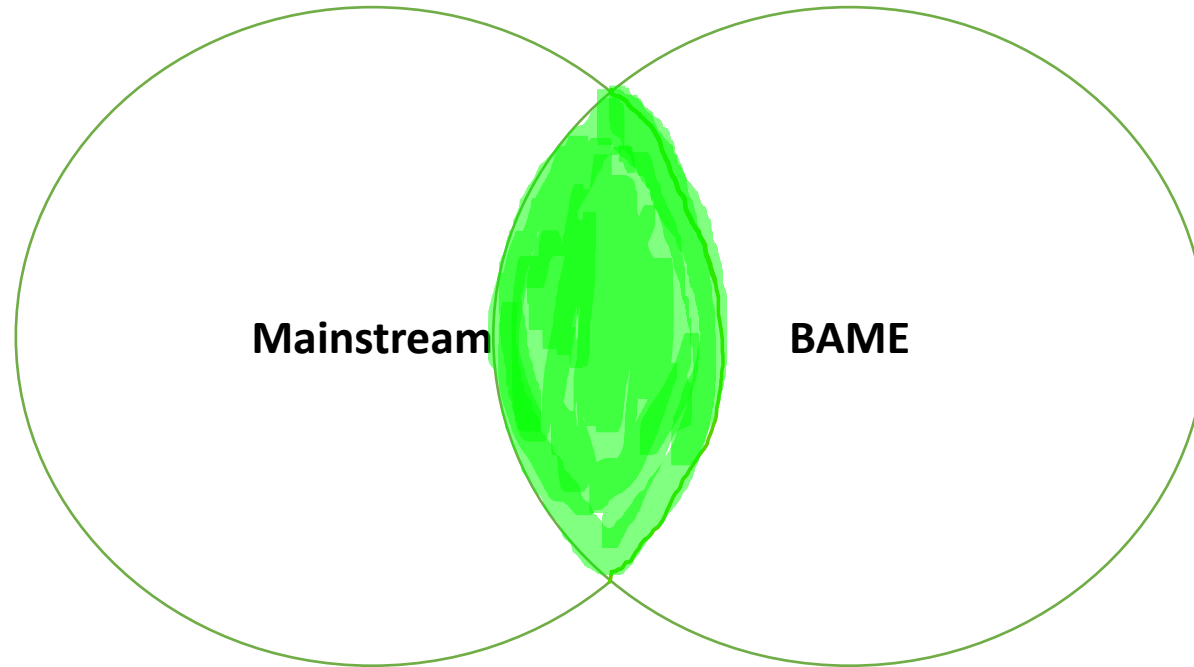
- Small scale action-orientated practitioner research (not academic, no university ethics approval - but mindful of ethical principles)
- Aiming to: Get BAME voices heard; inform service development; drive positive change; improve experiences and outcomes
- Semi-structured interviews and a wider conversation with members of the Plymouth Food Aid Network (PFAN)
- Fieldwork April and May 2023

Who?

- Six people from BAME Communities in Plymouth
- Six frontline providers from the Plymouth Food Aid Network (PFAN) –
Across the full spectrum of provision
- DBI team experience, knowledge and wisdom

Findings – Needs and Interventions

Some similarities -



Findings – Experiences / Needs

Commonalties –

- Transform Research factors e.g. Long-term ill health; low income; part-time working; Universal Credit
- Stress and anxiety
- Shame and stigma
- Redundant foodstuffs
- Prefer choice
- Craving dignity

Findings – Experiences / Needs

BAME People –

- Tastes of home important
- Willingness to try ‘different’ foods – and information and recipes vital
- Not liking canned foods
- Limited knowledge of provision – but through multiple channels
- Friendliness of food aid providers appreciated
- Referrals system sub-optimal
- Better understanding of their requirements would help

Findings – Providers' Experiences / Responses

Commonalities noted –

- Pensioners and BAME peoples' reluctance to ask for help
- Providers trying to be patient, open and listening
- Valuing and signposting to wrap-around support
- Wishing referrers gave more information re specialist requirements

BAME people –

- Perceived preconceptions and assumptions around providers
- Mixed perceptions and experiences around barriers to access

Findings – Providers' Experiences / Responses

- Growing experience of BAME community
- Desire and willingness to do well / better – 'going the extra mile'
- Wanting better referral system / more information
- Noting certain preferences – and dislike of canned foods
- Experiencing gratitude from people from BAME communities
- Seeing rising numbers of BAME people accessing services
- Perceiving Diverse Communities Community Builder role as an opportunity

Learning

- Time and trust are vital
- Lack of knowledge of food support is common
- Diaspora community support is significant
- Cultural awareness is key
- Dignity is important
- Inappropriate food is not 'just' about religious observance
- Much scope to build links with leaders from non-Christian faiths
- Christian church links are very useful

Learning

- Schools are a good route to families
- Research questioning bruising for providers
- Research work demanding for practitioners

Recommendations / Actions

- More and better information
- Outreach to faith leaders
- Address communications issues
- Increase dignity
- Better information for providers
- Emerging Plymouth Food Alliance to be more inclusive / have dedicated channels and services
- Emerging Plymouth Food Collective / Food Hub to research and procure culturally and nutritionally appropriate foods

Recommendations / Actions

- Engage with new Plymouth Diverse Communities Community Builder
- Link to Food Plymouth and DBI Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) 'REDI for Change' national Sustainable Food Places pilot
- Carry out additional action research in this field

Reflections

Afterthought –

Acknowledge the wisdom and experience of PFAN

Emerging conversation –

How to increase the agency and meaningful involvement of BAME / Trauma Informed / Lived Experience people in actually doing research like this ...

Thanks

Thank you for listening

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