Heart 4 Harlow

Harlow foodbank

Bringing Faith to Life:

HARLOW FOODBANK

Group study and discussion resource for local churches











ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Thank you for considering this group study for your church / Christian group.

We have produced it to share our concern for those who are in poverty in Harlow.

The parent charity of the Harlow Foodbank is the Michael Roberts Charitable Trust. It is a Christian charity with this vision:

Our vision is that everyone can belong and participate in their communities, knowing that they are significant, valued, included and wanted.

Our vision is that no one should go hungry, or without the means to bring up their children, heat their homes or live in dignity. Anyone in that position should know that they are supported by those around them until things are good again.

Our vision is fueled by the belief that nobody is excluded, unwanted or overlooked by God, whose love is revealed through Jesus.

FOREWORD FROM MRCT

We see our vision as an expression of the life and teachings of Jesus, and we strive to be bold in action, inspired the love of God and prompted by God's Holy Spirit. Christians of all kinds (and none!) support us as we put our faith and theirs into action.

In these study sessions we ask you to help us think through and extend our influence, should you share our concern.

We are particularly burdened that things have been getting worse in our country and town. Our nation now tolerates inequality in ways that previous (post-war) generations would never have done. This is reflected in the level of financial assistance given to those supported by our 'collective purse': the welfare state. Foodbanks have never been so plentiful and busy. We openly question this trend in the light of scripture.

But this isn't simply about 'money'. Every day we meet people who are overwhelmed and broken through the impacts of poverty. In the longer-term this means children whose early years are compromised and are unlikely to get a chance to flourish in ways we might hope for them. This doesn't seem right.

Perhaps you can help us to change this?

USING THE STUDY GUIDE

- It has been conceived as notes for 3 sessions: HUNGER | JUSTICE & MERCY | ACTION
- The sessions are designed to be appropriately emotive and highly interactive. They should stimulate discussion using a mixture of thoughts and feelings from group members, scriptural reflections, and consideration of the stories of real people in Harlow.
- Sessions are a couple of hours long - but you could adopt your own timescale, delving deeper, or maybe just choosing one aspect if you see fit. This booklet has a mixture of facilitator's notes & handout sheets.
- It is based on the real-life stories of many people who have told us why they are at the Foodbank. We don't name them here, but we know them, and a further 60 who, like them, have also shared their stories with us. They represent the 2,000+ who come to us per year.
- The stories are moving: heart-breaking at times. The sessions invite you to consider what you might do, individually and collectively, to bring a glimpse of the Reign of God to people like them.

Session 1

INTRODUCTION / HUNGER

Bringing Faith to Life: HARLOW FOODBANK

Started in 2009 by the Michael Roberts Charitable Trust, Harlow Foodbank gave food to over 9,000 people in 2022. This is around 10 times the amount in the year it started.

The Foodbank is affiliated to the Trussell Trust network. It takes referrals from frontline professionals across the town, supporting anyone who is in crisis. This immediately helps reduce hunger and stress, and helps them to address the problems that have caused them to be without enough money to buy food.

Most of the Foodbank's food and other items comes from the public who donate it at supermarkets or special events such as Harvest Festivals or Christmas events.

The Foodbank is an act of faith. What does that mean?

Activity 1: What do you know… what have you heard?

The objective of this exercise is discover what pre-conceptions people have about the Foodbank.

Foodbanks have been in the news a lot recently - often as sign of the financial crisis: *the worse things get, the more people end up at Foodbanks*.

Does your group know much about Harlow Foodbank? Is what they heard true, or are they going on hear-say?

Ask the group to write the kind of things they have heard, and then what kind of questions that leaves them with. For instance they might have heard that some people use the Foodbank so they've got more money for cigarettes. So their question would be, "does anyone ever check up whether the Foodbank is actually doing damage to people?"



Take time to talk through a good number of these before saying '*let's check up what can find out from the FACT SHEET that has come with this learning guide'.* (see page 4)

Using the Fact Sheet help the group work through the facts and the questions that remain.

- Were there any surprises?
- What have these facts made people think about the levels of hunger in Harlow? Do group members ever meet people who use the Foodbank?

Activity 2: Hunger is a common issue in the Bible… how and why?



From famines to miracles of abundance, food is a central theme of many Bible stories. Food and shared meals come up often in Jesus' stories: sometimes in parables, sometimes in practice.

It becomes clear that looking after each others' needs is faith in action - for example in the Good Samaritan *(you could read this together to recap*) acting as God acts - with love, justice and compassion.

Have a look at these four quotes from different sections of the Bible - how would you relate them to what you know of the Foodbank?

Matthew 24 *(Jesus' illustration of the last judgment)*

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Psalm 146

He is the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them -
he remains faithful forever.
7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets prisoners free,
8 the LORD gives sight to the blind,
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,
the LORD loves the righteous.
9 The LORD watches over the foreigner
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

Hunger

Isaiah 58:

6"The kind of fasting I want is this: remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. 7. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives.

8 "Then my favour will shine on you like the morning sun, and your wounds will be quickly healed. I will always be with you to save you; my presence will protect you on every side. 9. When you pray, I will answer you. When you call to me, I will respond."

1 Corinthians 11

20 So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat,

21 for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk.

22 Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!

There is a lot of strong language here.

- Which words jumped out at you?
- Does it feel like God is on anyone's side? If so, whose?
- What do you think 'oppression' meant then and now? Is anyone oppressed in our town?
- Who might be the equivalent of 'foreigners, fatherless and widows' today?



Here are the stories of four people who visited the Foodbank last year, in their own words.

"I've come here because I've had a sanction on my Universal Credit, so I won't be getting any money until after Christmas. I missed an appointment, so they've stopped my payment. I told them that I couldn't make it because I was on a training course to get my HGV licence and hopefully then a job, but they've taken it that I've missed the appointment and penalised me anyway.

Before I came here, I sat for two days with no food and was too embarrassed to come.

I'm not used to people being nice – people don't seem as friendly these days. Everyone is so busy doing their own thing and competing, so when I came into the Foodbank and everyone was so friendly, it felt a bit odd. Coming here, I've just realised this is the longest that I've spent speaking to an adult in about a month."

"I've been in England for ten years, living with my husband and our two children. We've separated now due to domestic violence and I've been sent to Harlow with my children. I don't know anyone here. My friends are all back where I used to live, but I can't go there because he's there. My parents aren't in this country. I'm so alone and so depressed.

Now I'm here at the foodbank and I feel like a zero. I have no one to turn to. All my money is gone.

I try to shop by myself. I don't like coming to the foodbank but the bills take all my money and I can't keep up. It's all too much.

I am determined I will learn to drive. I will get a job. I will take my kids places. But right now I'm trying to get through everything alone."

Hunger

"I was crying on the phone as they were changing the locks on my home. They knew I had mental health problems and needed support, but they threw me out without any warning anyway. I was sent a bill for what it cost them to get rid of my furniture, which they put on top of my rent arrears. How am I supposed to change things, if they keep penalising me?

They automatically take the council tax and rent arrears out of my Universal Credit now, so I'm left with about £200 a month which covers food, my phone bill, travel to the job centre and for courses. I'll be in this situation for years."

"Normally I have to choose between monthly bills and food – that's been going on for a couple of months now.

The £20 Universal Credit uplift during Covid was my shopping money and I'm getting in so much debt now. My bills – like everyone's – have skyrocketed. House bills are rising but income and benefits aren't.

The working class, everyone generally, are struggling. I'm the type of person who doesn't usually do things like come to the Foodbank, but I'm in such a hole, I have no option. I have no family or friends in this town.

I feel stronger on my own. I am doing what I can for me and my family. Coming to the foodbank has made me realise that more people need to get over their pride and come here. If you're on benefits you can feel like you're already taking too much and don't want to take anymore, but it doesn't matter what your situation is, you should be able to ask for help."

We have collected 70 more stories just like these.

- What thoughts did these stories trigger in you?
- Can you see an answer or an end to people's problems?
- What connections do you make between these stories and the Bible previous readings?
- What would you want to say to the people speaking here?



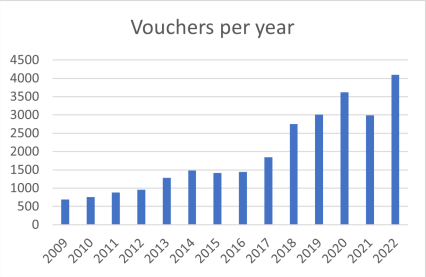
HARLOW FOODBANK FAQ FACT SHEET

How often is the Foodbank open?

We operate from St Paul's church in the town centre Monday to Friday: 10 am to 1 pm and Salvation Army, Tendring Road, Weds 11 am to 2 pm.

How many people use the Foodbank?

This has risen year on year—in 2022 we gave out over 3,920 parcels that fed nearly 9,134 people. 40% were children.

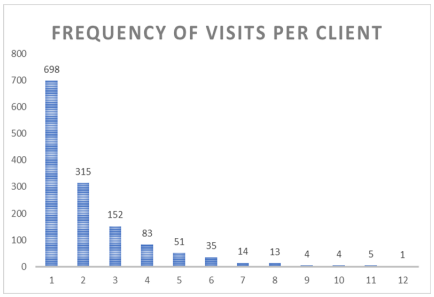


Do we know why people are coming to the Foodbank? What's the problem?

Our voucher writers record the reason people need help. It's a slightly inexact science, but most reported problems are: *Universal Credit (initial 5-week wait, delays, benefit changes) ~50%; in-work low income levels ~20%; Debt ~12%; sickness ~8%; Domestic Violence ~4%; Refugee/Asylum ~3%; Homelessness ~2%*

Is there a limit to how many times people can come?

People come on average 2.2 times. So the most common number is once: people getting through a crisis with a one-off parcel. If people come week after week we will contact the writer of the voucher to see if they are getting the right help to get out of crisis. On exceptionally rare occasions (less than one in 1,000) we intervene and insist that people get more help rather than depending on the Foodbank



How do you get to use the Foodbank? Do people just turn up?

Everyone needs to have a voucher issued by a caring or advice professional. There are around 350 eligible to write these in Harlow. People can also call the Harlow Community Hub for a voucher (01279 927005). The Hub will take their details and also see if they can get them support for the underlying problem that has made them unable to buy food.

Vouchers are written online and are immediately visible at our Foodbank - ready for people to pick them up.

Where does the food come from that is given out?

Most of it is given by the public in supermarkets around the town. Other food is given by churches, schools and businesses at Harvest, through bulk donations from local business clearing out stock, or bought by donations of money given by our supporters. Thanks!!

What kind of people come - is it mostly the homeless?

Hardly anyone is street homeless in Harlow, though many may be in temporary accommodation or staying with friends. Around 45% of our recipients live by themselves and so have more precarious economic circumstances - trying to manage everything single-handedly. Our Foodbank has a disproportionate number of people seeking help from Harlow's 'Permitted Developments': housing created in the last decade by modifying former business premises. These often accommodate people moved out from London on a temporary basis, but then end up stuck there, not moved on. Much of it is unsuitable for families, yet they were decanted to Harlow.

When did Foodbanks start?

Foodbanks in their current form started in 1999.

Do we tell people the gospel when they come?

This is a question many Christians ask us knowing that we are, at origin, a Christian charity. We see ourselves as proclaiming God's love in action more than word. We like people to know the inspiration behind the project, but don't insist that everyone who helps has a Christian faith and we don't 'preach' - though we regularly pray for those who find support from us.

How many staff and volunteers do you have?

MRCT runs four projects. The Foodbank is the largest and runs on 4 staff and around 75 volunteers helping weekly .

How much does it all cost?

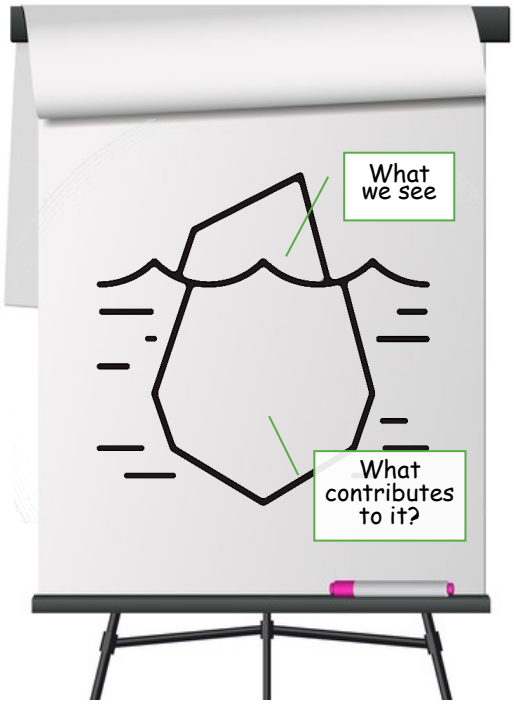
Around £140,000 a year to give out over 100,000Kg of food, which is given to us for free. The first amount of that money comes from regular donors and churches; our premises are supported by a local Trust and the Harlow Council; further income comes from many grant makers including supermarkets, Trussell Trust and the Community Fund.

Do you offer any further services for users?

We now have a financial caseworker in the Foodbank whenever it is open. He can review people's finances with them, checking they are getting the right amount of benefit income and managing their budgets as well as possible. Also the Community Hub are on site in person 2 days a week giving housing, mental health, debt, and community integration support.

Session 2

JUSTICE AND MERCY



Going further from the previous session - this one looks at underlying causes of hunger in the UK.

On first glance we might consider those who use the Foodbank to be just 'unfortunate'. Many think we have always had foodbanks of different sorts, although the kind like Harlow Foodbank started around the year 2,000. There are increasingly commonplace reasons why people come. It looks like something systematic is going wrong, not just personal misfortune. Is some social factor making things worse?

This section looks at the connection between justice and compassion.

Most people would agree that showing kindness through Foodbank provision is a good thing. But what is contributing to Foodbanks becoming so common? There are now more Foodbanks than McDonalds in the UK!

Using a rough graphic of an Iceberg, can the group think through the connections between this growth and the social factors contributing to increased Foodbank usage. What is unseen; below the water-line?

(examples might be inflation, entitlement, an unjust welfare system, sickness… make a list)

Two perspectives on sharing things out.

The objective of this is to connect Biblical ideas of justice to what happens in Harlow.

Alternative starting activity: bring a small bag of dry pasta and ask a group member to share pieces amongst the group in a fair way. Then reflect on why they distributed it the way they chose to.

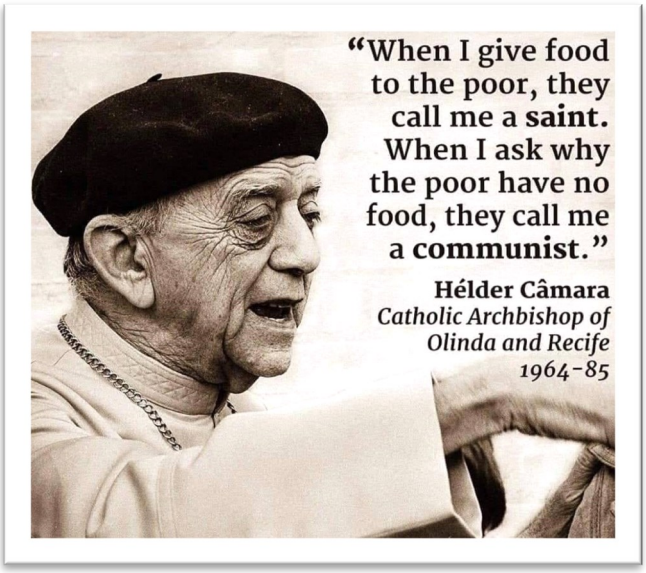
Imagine our country got given 50 million Kg of grain each year and we shared it out 'fairly'. What would that mean? Would everyone get the same amount? After all, if we all have the same needs wouldn't it be right that we had our needs met? That could be called 'distributive justice'.

Imagine that the whole amount was given to only 20% of the population and *they* decided if they would be kind enough to pass any on. What would you call that? The 20% might say they were 'generous'. What would the rest call it? They might say that the set up is 'unjust'.



Quite often justice and mercy are portrayed as opposites: *"will he demand justice or will he show mercy".*

That is usually said after a crime has been committed. But 'distributive justice' is the way that we set things up fairly in the first place. So the system can have mercy built into it: can show understanding that sometimes people end up needing support because they are vulnerable.



Incidental: What do you think of this?

Imagine you discovered that the Bible had a whole series of commands about this built into the way God's people were told to live? Would you be surprised? Let's see...

Leviticus 25

8 Count off seven sabbath years—seven times seven
years—to a period of forty-nine years... 10 Consecrate the
fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all
its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is
to return to your family property and to your own clan.

25 If one of your fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells
some of their property… It will be returned in the Jubilee,
and they can then go back to their property.

39b If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell
themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves.
40 They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary
residents among you; they are to work for you until the
Year of Jubilee. 41 Then they and their children are to be
released, and they will go back to their own clans and to
the property of their ancestors. 42 Because the Israelites
are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must
not be sold as slaves. 43 Do not rule over them ruthlessly...

The Jubilee system seems to suggest that humans will create and tolerate inequality unless mercy resets the clock every 50 years!

Deuteronomy 24

19 When you are harvesting in your field and
you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it.
Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and
the widow, so that the LORD your God may
bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When
you beat the olives from your trees, do not go
over the branches a second time. Leave what
remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and
the widow. 21 When you harvest the grapes in
your vineyard, do not go over the vines again.
Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fa-
therless and the widow. 22 Remember that you
were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command
you to do this.

In Bible times the fatherless, widows and foreigners had almost no power as they were not connected to a male head of household (these days we would consider that unfair!) - they are legally powerless.

Justice

Isaiah 42

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will bring justice to the nations.
2 He will not shout or cry out,
or raise his voice in the streets.
3 A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;
4 he will not falter or be discouraged

The New Testament tells us that this prophecy is about Jesus.

Micah 6:8

God has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

Justice here relates to how we set up a fair society which will bring peace in the land .

These days we collectively decide on what is justice through democracy. 'Everyone' decides. Economic justice usually comes down to how much taxes we decide to pay, and where it goes.

If the majority tolerate injustice it will prevail.

This is a big topic!

- The book of Leviticus lays down the Law for the people of Israel - that law is merciful to those who end up powerless. Its sense of justice incorporates mercy. It is clear that we shouldn't let inequalities accumulate and continue. How would you compare that to today?
- Jesus' summary of the Law and Prophets involves 'to love our neighbours as we would ourselves'. What kinds of support would you like if you lost your job?



Here are four more stories of people who visited the Foodbank last year, in their own words.

"They were looking to make people redundant and then used the pandemic as an excuse… I was left with a small redundancy of about £1,300.

I found myself in £900 of debt with Council Tax. I had been trying to get a DRO to get rid of my debt, but you have to pay £90 to use the service.

I spoke to the people at the Essential Living Fund who told me that I would qualify for help with them, so I paid the £90 for the DRO then applied for the Essential Living Fund. I was told that they're so busy it was going to take 10 days to even look at my application. I wish they'd told me before I paid the £90.

So now I find myself at the Foodbank. I'm paying everything off, along with an advance on Universal Credit, which I needed when my fridge/freezer broke down, and put me in debt from the start with them. I'm left with £295 a month once they've taken that advance, and that needs to cover all my bills and council tax arrears, before I even think about food.

"I live at one of the permitted developments. There's no gas there, just electric. I'm on a meter and I'm spending about £5 a day. I'm just in a studio flat and it's not insulated very well – there's just single glazed windows. I have an electric heater in the kitchen but it's causing condensation to build up and water is running down the windows. I put £5 in the electric the other night, did two loads of washing and put the heater on for a little bit and the money was gone. Now I've got no clean clothes. My son used to stay with me every weekend, but he doesn't like it where I'm living now, so I don't see him as much as I'd like."

Justice

I haven't spoken to a doctor for over 30 years, but I knew I needed to. I'm homeless so it's taken me five months to be able to register with one and start the process to get help.

I have been told that I can get a room in a shared house, but I would need to get rid of pretty much all my possessions to do so – I won't do that. It will take all my money, too...

What the government has done to this country is despicable. All they have done is taken from the poor to give to the rich… . Let them live for a year on minimum wage. When MPs are on £80,000 a year and they expect me to live on £3,000 a year, where is the justification? It feels like you're being told "It's more than enough money, shut up complaining".

My grandad paid £380 for his two-bed house which he sold in the 90s for £520,000. He bought it on five years' wages of a fireman. What fireman earns £520,000 in 5 years now?

My husband had a hemorrhagic stroke – only 28% of people live with the condition... He has been fed through a feeding tube for a while... We're both professionals and it just goes to show how quickly life can change.

We've applied for Universal Credit as a couple but because my husband is bedbound, they can't give us an advance payment. They need to verify his identity in person, but he can't get there, so we wait for someone to come and see him. The Job Centre has referred us to the Foodbank today.

The Universal Credit process could be more responsive to people's situations. It's an extreme medical event. You have to chase them all the time and you don't need it on top of everything else.



Many of these Foodbank users seem to be there because of 'the system'.

- What thoughts did these stories trigger in you?
- It is actually more expensive to buy things when you're poor in this country, because you buy in small quantities and often pay higher energy tariffs . Can you see how people get trapped? Does that seem right?
- What connections do you make between these stories, the previous Bible readings and your iceberg chart on the causes of hunger?
- What would you want to say to political decision-makers about this?

Section 3

WHAT COULD WE DO? … SHOULD WE DO?

> **The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed.**
>
> MAHATMA GANDHI

It is estimated that the planet produces enough to feed 10 billion people. So why does hunger still exist in a world of 7 billion people??

The UK is the world's fifth richest country—importing food from all over the world. Surely everyone can get a share?

Where does it go? The UK is estimated to throw away around 9.5 million tonnes of food waste every year. Is that the problem?

Or do people need educating to manage their money better, to spend on what they need, to cook and budget better?

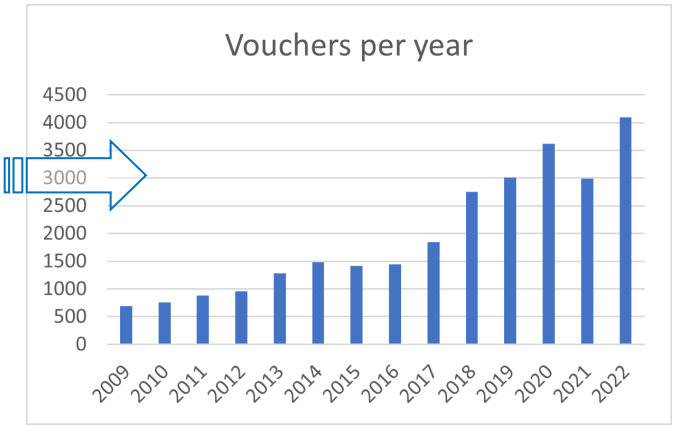


In the last two sections your conversations have probably covered many such topics. When we think about such basic human needs all kinds of ideas fly around. You may have just said that 'sin' is the problem as it is so overwhelming. We probably all agree some the basics:

- *Does God want anyone to go hungry?*
- *Does God like humans controlling the world's wealth so that 1% of the population owns 46% ?*
- *If we can't fix everything, shouldn't we try to fix something?*

Becoming part of the solution…

In Session 1 we considered this graph that shows Foodbank use in Harlow rising and rising. Where and when will it end?



Behind each voucher is a story like those you have been reading: a household that is struggling, often to the point of breakdown; 'a senseless waste of human potential' we sometimes say.

Poverty isn't so much about money as people, about lives becoming hopeless when everything seems against them.

The Christian faith is based on the good news of God coming to seek and save the lost in Jesus. To show that more than money, people matter to God. *"For as much as you do it to any of the least you do it as to me"* Jesus says in Matthew 25:40

Jesus calls his disciples 'salt' and 'leaven' to the world. This means that small gestures and actions that we do can bring about big changes: can establish justice and bring about peace.

On the next page are 6 things that we might do or campaign for to make a difference to this situation.

They might all make a difference, but can your group rank them in order of most to least effective?

Cut them out and organise them with what you think would be the most valuable at the top, and least at the bottom. FYI - we haven't included 'pray' as one as we assume that this will be part of whatever you do!

Take your time and discuss as you go along… have a look at the Hunger in the UK fact sheet for more info that might inform your discussion.

Cut these out and rank them from most to least effective ways to address food poverty is as much as you can agree it

Create a law that makes sure that all waste food will find its way to people without food.

Increase the levels of taxes on the richest people so that their income supports the poorest to have the basics.

Give people who are not in work or on very low incomes more money to live on.

Create more community land that it is used for those with little money to grow food.

Start more Foodbanks or similar neighbourly food donation programmes

Teach more people to cook and budget better - maybe starting at schools.

Add your own suggestion here

Cut these out and rank them from most to least effective ways to address food poverty is as much as you can agree it

This page has more empty boxes in case you want to add more ideas

HUNGER AND BENEFIT LEVELS FACT SHEET

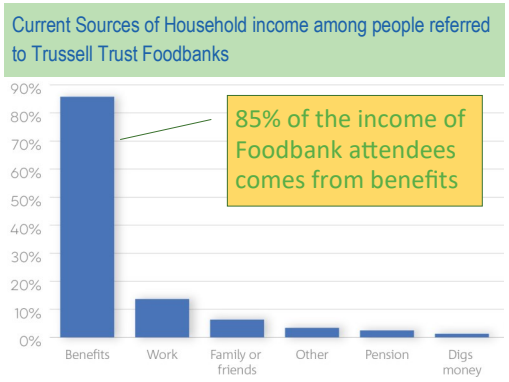
Haven't there always been Foodbanks in the UK?

The sort we see today have only been running since 1999. Most have grown rapidly in the last 10 years.

Why?

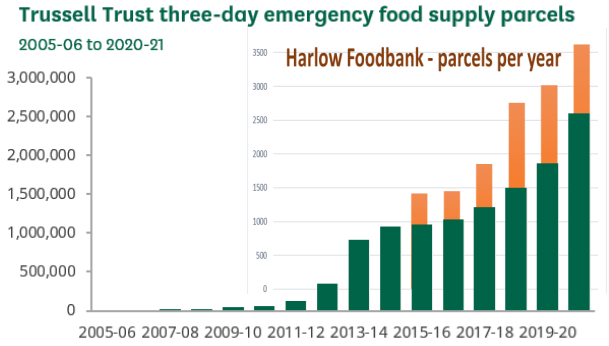
Some think that people now use Foodbanks 'because they are there', suggesting there is an *illusion* of more poverty as Foodbank supply has created demand…'

Recent research has debunked that view[1]. Nearly every-one finds it harsh to go to a Foodbank for help when you'd rather afford your own choice of food.



2021 Trussell Trust research[2] clearly con-nects a long-term low level of benefit support with more wide-spread hard-ship.

This relates to the low level of benefit *and* the way it is administered.



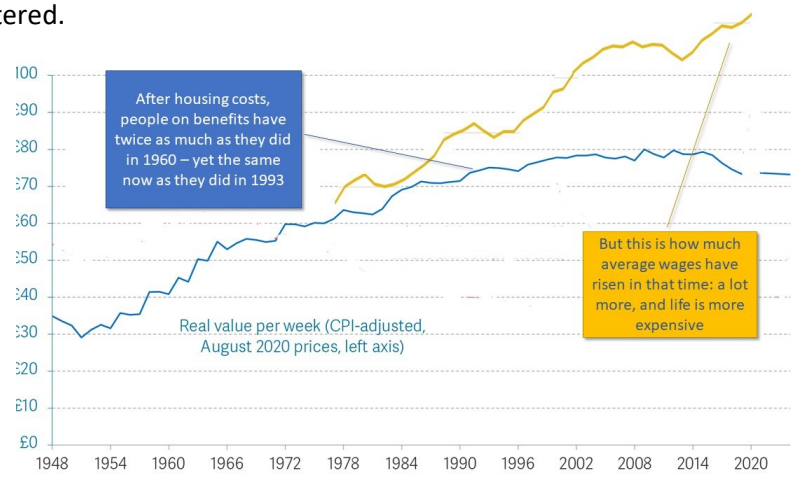
"The key design features of the social security system affecting people referred to food banks:

- having to wait five weeks for the first Universal Credit (UC) payment,
- very low rate of UC standard allowance, deductions from UC to repay UC advances and other debts,
- low Local Housing Allowance rates and caps…."

Trussell Trust State of Hunger Report 2021

UK's older citizens remember a time when lifestyles were simpler, and benefits were relatively lower. This graph shows how the real value of benefits went up as our standards of living rose, but pretty much levelled off in the 1990s[3].

This has meant that over the last 20 years, benefits have left recipients more and more precarious. Other costs have gone up, particularly housing. Most people use credit. If income falls and outgoings continue it is not long before people reach a crisis point.



Lets put that into numbers, the situation is shocking…

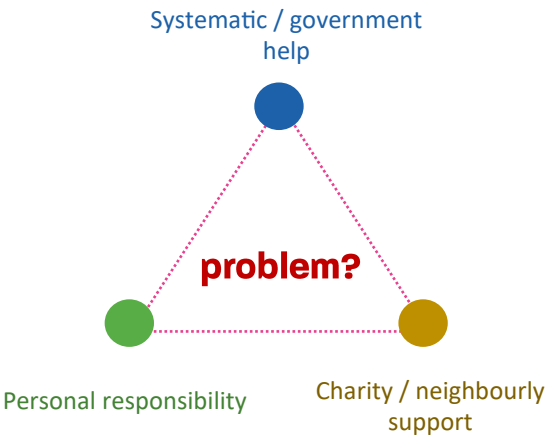
- The average household in the UK has £2,000 left per month after housing costs
- The average household fully dependent on benefits has **£290** not £2,000[4]
- The average person coming into a Trussell Foodbank is living on **£215** – just over 1/10 of average[2]
- *It doesn't take much to go wrong and tip you from poverty to destitution when you are on benefits*
- 7 / 10 Foodbank recipients had at least one challenging life experience such as relationship breakdown / divorce / job loss/ bereavement in the past year[2]

References: 1) Trussell Trust: State of Hunger Report 2019 & 2) 2021, 3) Resolution Foundation: Living Standards Outlook 2021, 4) Institute for Fiscal Studies: Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2020,

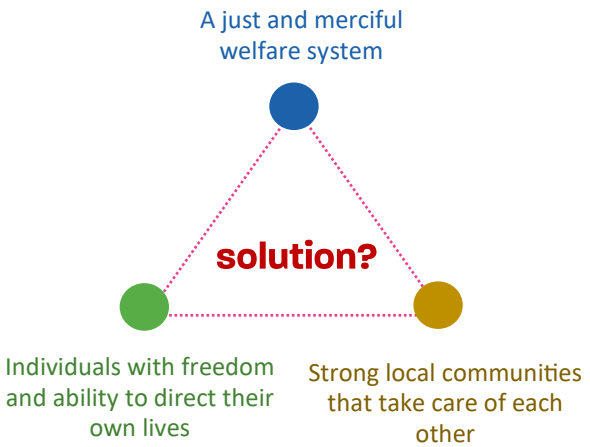
Some conclusions - doing something to help

After you have sorted out your cards as best you can, take a short break (to calm down if needed!) and then return to think about the process of ranking them:

1. Was it easy to do? Why or why not?
2. What did you have the biggest differences of opinion over?
3. Who did you think has the most power to change things?
4. Do you think that the Foodbank visitors whose stories we have read would have agreed with your rankings? Why or why not?
5. How did it all leave you feeling?
6. Can you join our online survey - enter your results and see what others thought
7. Have a look at / draw out at triangle diagram below - does it represent the different areas of responsibility (or blame) that you have been discussing? What would go where?



Some people emphasise one solution more than others: eg it's all the fault of the hungry person who has been irresponsible, or it's all the fault of the government for not giving high enough welfare support, or the local community for not coming to their aid... The extents may vary, but what could you change?



Increase the levels of taxes on the richest people so that their income supports the poorest to have the [illegible]

Create more community land that it is used for those with little money to grow food.

Start more Foodbanks or similar neighbourly food donation programmes

Give people who are not in work or on very low incomes more money to live on.

Create a law that makes sure that all waste food will find its way to people without food.

When you have finished your list, scan this QR code and submit it online. You can then see what others have concluded - is it the same as your group??



If you have any thoughts, ideas or suggestions how you or your church (or any organisation you belong to) might support those who are going hungry in Harlow - please get in touch with Harlow Foodbank to discuss or find out more.

01279 724515 / enquiries@mrct.org.uk

www.mrct.org.uk

Can you share the thoughts and feelings you have had during this study with your church? Perhaps suggest more ways we can all support Harlow neighbours by putting our faith into action.

Where are you, and where is God caring for the hungry?

NOTES

www.heart4harlow.org.uk

Church and Community Working Together

- God has a heart to bless the whole community of Harlow. In and through its partnerships, Heart 4 Harlow seeks to express through words and deeds the love of God shown to us in Jesus Christ.
- We celebrate the gift of our life together with gratitude and praise.
- We pray for the well-being of the town through Commerce and Entrepreneurs; Civic Authorities; the College; University and Schools; Charities and Churches.
- We work together with all people of goodwill for the benefit of others.
- We encourage all in the service of our communities and in the strengthening of family life.
- We seek to challenge all that harms our life together.

https://mrct.org.uk/foodbank

MRCT is a work driven by FAITH, guided by LOVE and sustained by HOPE in our Lord Jesus

If you know people needing support from the Foodbank—please contact Harlow Community Hub on 01279 927005

You can download more copies of this guide in PDF form at www.mrct.org.uk/H4HFBguide.pdf

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