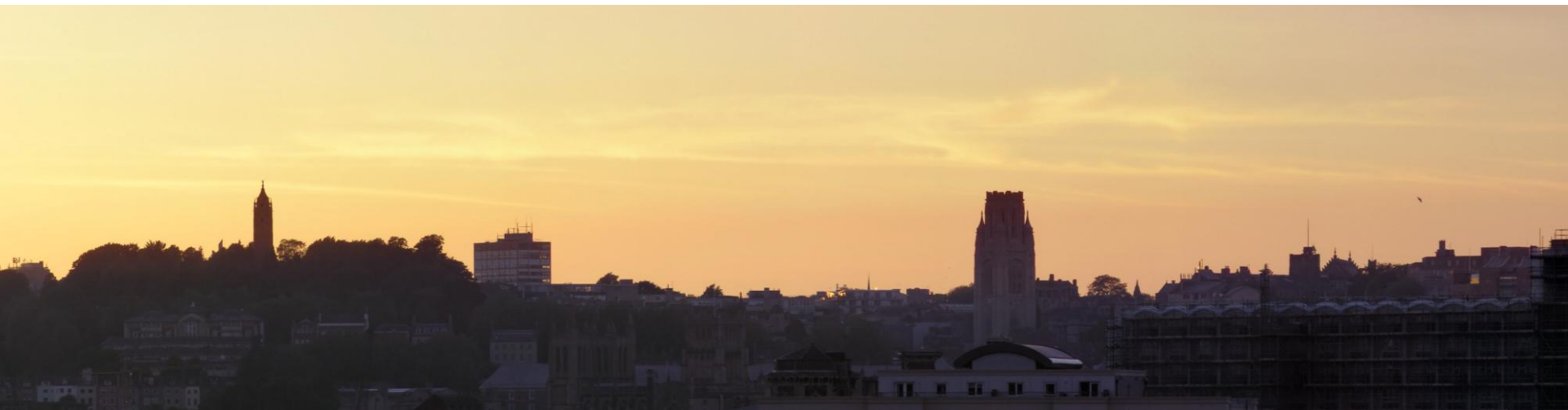


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# A Review of Food Poverty Response in Bristol 2014

January 2015

Compiled by Matthew Dobson



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## 1. Aims and Objectives

# 1. Aims and Objectives

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- The principal aim of this report is to review food poverty across Bristol, reflecting the position in 2014.
- There are also case studies provided of 3 other UK cities (Cardiff, Coventry and Sheffield) where city-wide food poverty initiatives are in operation.
- These case studies provide valuable information from which Bristol can learn, along with some ideas for possible future developments.

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## 2. Definitions

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## 2. Definitions

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**Food poverty is the inability to afford food or to have access to enough food to make up a healthy diet. It is about the quality of food as well as quantity. It is not just about hunger, but also about being appropriately nourished to attain and maintain health.**

*[Source: Food Poverty Definition from Food Poverty  
Report: Bristol, 2013]*

The report relates to food provided for consumption off the premises; it does not include the direct provision of cooked meals for homeless people or other vulnerable groups.



For the purpose of this report, food aid providers refers to Foodbanks, FoodPlus Centres, Salvation Army Centres and Independent Food Projects.

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### 3. National Scene

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## 3. National Scene

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### 3.1 Food Aid Providers in the UK

There are many different types of food provision organization in the UK, which partly reflects different aims and/or levels of operation. Some highly structured systems run through a franchise system or networks, while others are managed more independently.

Most organisations running food aid projects are also operating other initiatives looking to address the underlying causes of food poverty such as:

- community cafés;
- cook-and-eat clubs;
- debt advice workshops;
- emotional help; and
- signposting to help elsewhere.



Food aid providers regard the non-food related support they are able to offer as a particularly important aspect of what they do.

*[Source: Household Food Security in the UK: A Review of Food Aid, 2014]*



## 3. National Scene

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### 3.2 National Statistics

Oxfam and Church Action on Poverty have calculated that food for the equivalent of **20,218,242 meals** was given to people in food poverty in 2013/14.

This was principally via the two main national food aid providers (Trussell Trust and FareShare). This reflects a 54% increase on the 2012/13 figure of around 13 million.

2012/13 Meals Equivalent Distributed	
Trussell Trust	3,122,928
FareShare	10,000,000
Total meals	13,122,928

2013/14 Meals Equivalent Distributed	
Trussell Trust	8,218,242
FareShare	12,000,000
Total meals	20,218,242

*[Source: Below the Breadline: The relentless rise of food poverty in Britain 2014]*

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### 3. National Scene

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More than 1 in 4 adults have skimped on their own food in the last year so that others in the household may eat

- The number of children in the UK living in poverty increased by 300,000 over the year to April 2012.
- There are now more than half a million children in the UK living in families who are unable to provide a minimally acceptable diet.
- During 2013/14 national Trussell Trust statistics reported that 582,933 adults and 330,205 children had received 3 days' food. It is estimated that children receive 36% of all food given.

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### 3. National Scene

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***‘There is no evidence to support the claim that increased food aid provision is driving demand. All available evidence, both in the UK and internationally, points in the opposite direction. Put simply, there is more need and informal food aid providers are trying to help.’***

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*[Source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) report on food poverty]*

People turn to food banks as a last resort, when other coping strategies (e.g. cutting back and changing eating and shopping habits, juggling budgets, turning to family and friends) had failed or are overstretched. Deciding to accept help from a food bank is often difficult, and is described by clients as being ‘unnatural’, ‘embarrassing’ and ‘shameful’. When they do finally turn to food aid, they will draw on as much assistance as possible, both for food and non-food related support.

*[Source: Emergency use only report, 2014]*

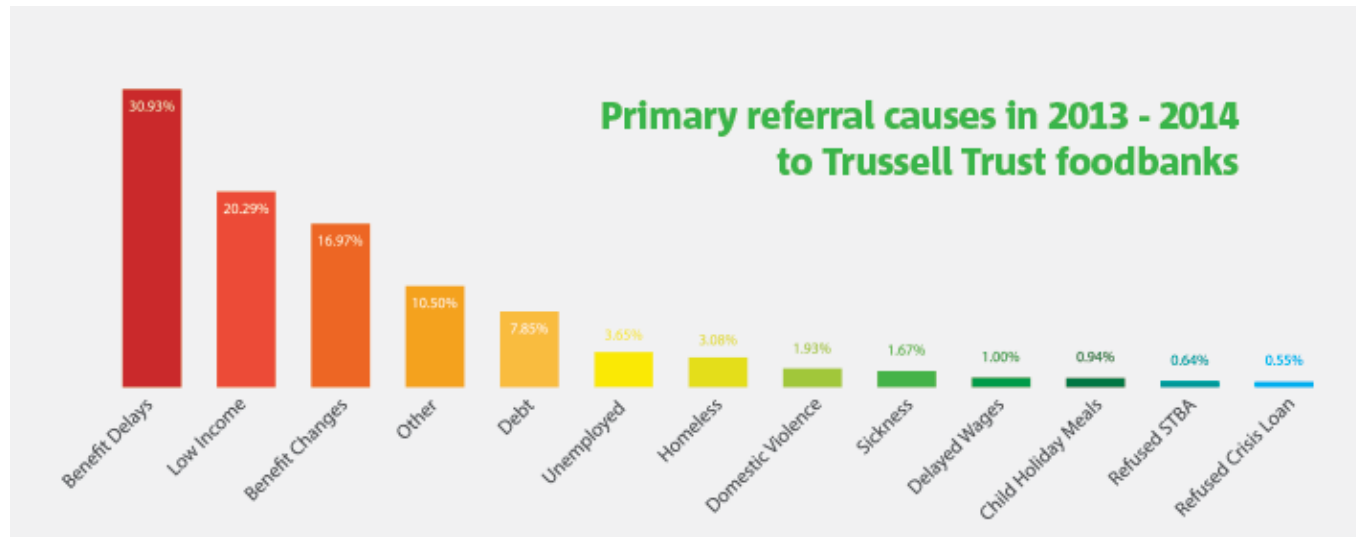
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## 3. National Scene

### 3.3 Causes of Food Poverty

This increase in the number of people using food banks is most commonly caused by:

- 1) Benefit delays;
- 2) Changes to the benefit system; and
- 3) Low wages coupled with an increase in the cost of living.



## 3. National Scene

### 3.4 Benefits Related Problem

Benefit delays occur for a number of reasons including change of address, birth of a new child and reassessment of health issues.

Changes to the benefit system are the most common reasons for people using food banks; these include sanctions, problems with disability benefits, problems with tax credit payments and changes to eligibility rules including the replacement of crisis loans mostly by in-kind provision.

There is a real risk that the benefit cuts and the introduction of Universal Credit (which will require internet access and make payments less frequent) will lead to even larger numbers being forced to turn to food banks.

*[Source: Walking the Breadline, 2013]*

According to the Trussell Trust, nearly a third of food recipients had been referred to the Trust because their social security benefits had been delayed. A further 15% came as a result of their benefits being cut or stopped (up from 11% in 2011–12). The majority of people turning to food banks were working-age families.

### 3. National Scene

Evidence shows that changes to the social security system are a driver of food poverty. Cuts to social security since April 2013 (DWP-funded crisis loans) have had a severe impact on poor and vulnerable families across the UK. This has been coupled with an increasingly strict and often misapplied sanctions regime. Sanctions can mean all benefit (other than child benefits) is not paid for a period of 4, 8 or even 13 weeks.

A nationwide survey of Trussell Trust foodbanks reports that benefit sanctions have caused more people to be referred for emergency food than the year before.

**58% of sanctions decisions are successfully challenged suggesting that many people needlessly suffer a loss of income through no fault of their own.**

*[Source: The DWP's JSA/ESA Sanctions Statistics Release, 2014]*

The abolition of the Social Fund has prevented thousands of households from being able to access crisis loans. The Trussell Trust estimates that 49% of people referred to food banks are there due to problems with social security payments or because they have been refused a crisis loan.

Research by Policy Exchange found 70,000 jobseekers have had their social security payments withdrawn unfairly leading them to rely on food banks.

Many food bank users were also not made aware of the various crisis payments available in different circumstances, and even fewer were receiving them.

## 3. National Scene

### 3.5 Low Wages Coupled with Increased Cost of Living

Despite their best efforts, many people cannot earn enough to live on:

- The Office of National Statistics calculates that UK workers have experienced a 7.6% fall in real wages during the past 6 years.
- Low and stagnant wages and insecure zero-hours contracts mean that for many low-income households, wages are not enough to meet their most basic nutritional needs.
- 62% of children in poverty are living in families where at least one parent has a job, indicating that wages are too low and that current Minimum Wage legislation is not adequate to lift people out of poverty through work.

*[Source: Walking the Breadline, 2013]*

It has been estimated that by increasing the National Minimum Wage to a Living Wage some 4.8 million workers would see an extra £4bn in take-home pay.



### 3. National Scene

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There are now **1.4 million zero-hours contracts** in the active workforce. Employers do not have to provide paid holidays or pensions that are rights integral to normal contracted jobs. Many employers also add in exclusivity clauses to their zero-hours contracts that prevent employees from taking on any other work. In some cases, this even includes voluntary work (this is currently being reviewed).

There has been a major difference between inflation in essentials, such as food, energy and housing, and general inflation. This has led to a massive squeeze on household budgets particularly affecting people in poverty or on low wages. This has been exacerbated by spending cuts due to austerity and large numbers of people having zero or below inflation increases in wages. Therefore people have no room for manoeuvre if there are any financial issues or a household emergency and so quickly the food cupboard is bare.

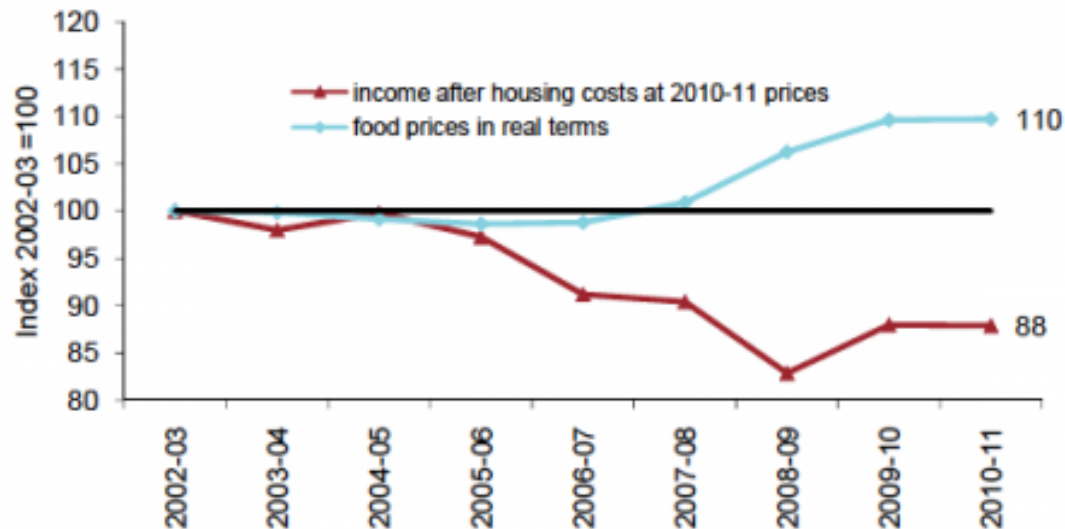


### 3. National Scene

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UK food prices increased by 43.5% (12% in real terms since 2007) between 2005 and 2013. Food expenditure as a proportion of total household expenditure has continued to rise.

*[Source: Food Statistics Pocketbook DEFRA, 2013]*



Source: *Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK, 2012*; Institute for Fiscal Studies.

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## 4. Bristol Scene

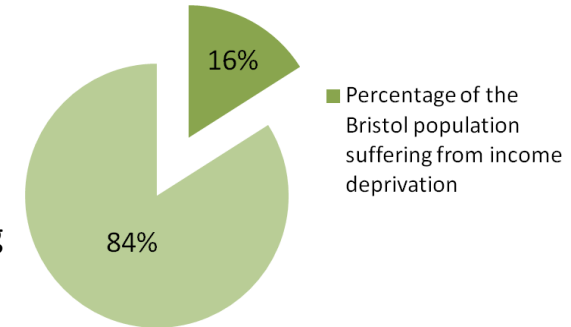
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## 4. Bristol Scene

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### 4.1 Poverty in Bristol

- In Bristol 69,500 people - 16% of the population - suffer from income deprivation.
- This ranges from 51% of people living in Knowle West to 1% of people living in Clifton Down.
- Over a third of the low income families in Bristol reported that they could not afford balanced meals.
- Average weekly spend per person on household food in 2011 was £27.99. This spend bought 4.2% less food than in 2007.



*[Source: Food Poverty Report: Bristol, 2013]*

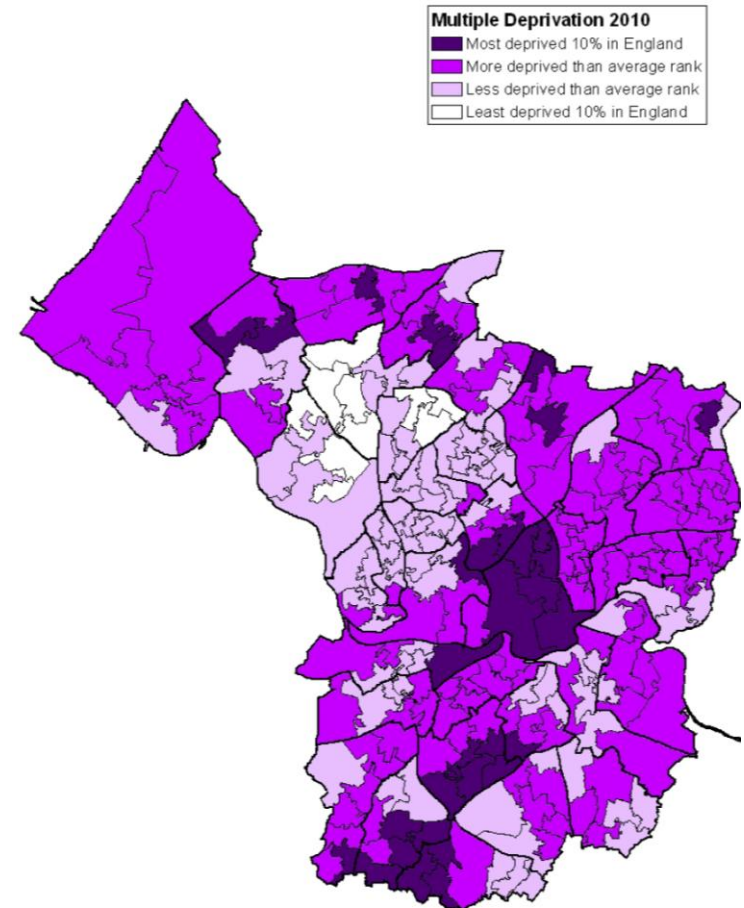
- 26% of children live in poverty once housing costs are taken into account. That's over 22,000 children that are living in households where there isn't enough money to provide a nutritiously balanced diet.
- Latest figures from the Department of Education show that in Bristol 13,300 pupils out of 48,900 enrolled (27%) were entitled to free school meals but only 11,500 pupils (24%) were claiming.

*[Source: End Child Poverty report, 2013]*

## 4. Bristol Scene

- In Bristol there are 26 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in the most deprived 10% nationally (11 are in South Bristol, 8 are in the central area and 7 in north and east Bristol).
- On a ward basis, more than a third of people are deprived in Lawrence Hill (36%) and Filwood (35%)

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Sources: DCLG English Indices of Deprivation 2010  
Map: ONS Super Output Area boundaries © Crown Copyright  
and database right 2011, Ordnance Survey 100023406

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## 4. Bristol Scene

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### 4.2 Food Aid Providers in Bristol

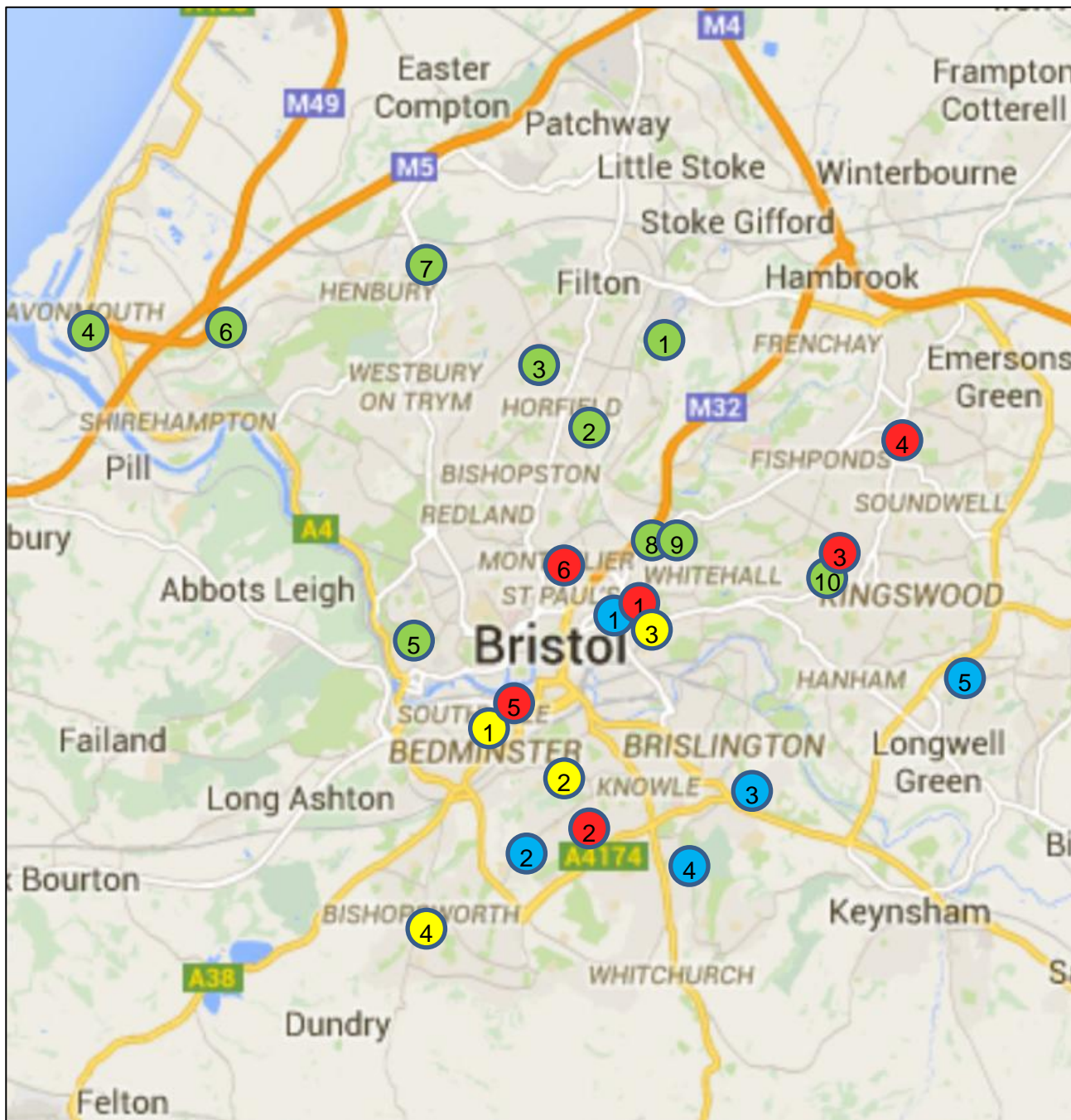
There are now 25 locations across Bristol where people can receive food aid plus additional help.

Most locations work on a referral only basis.

Sisters of the Church and the Salvation Army accept non referrals.





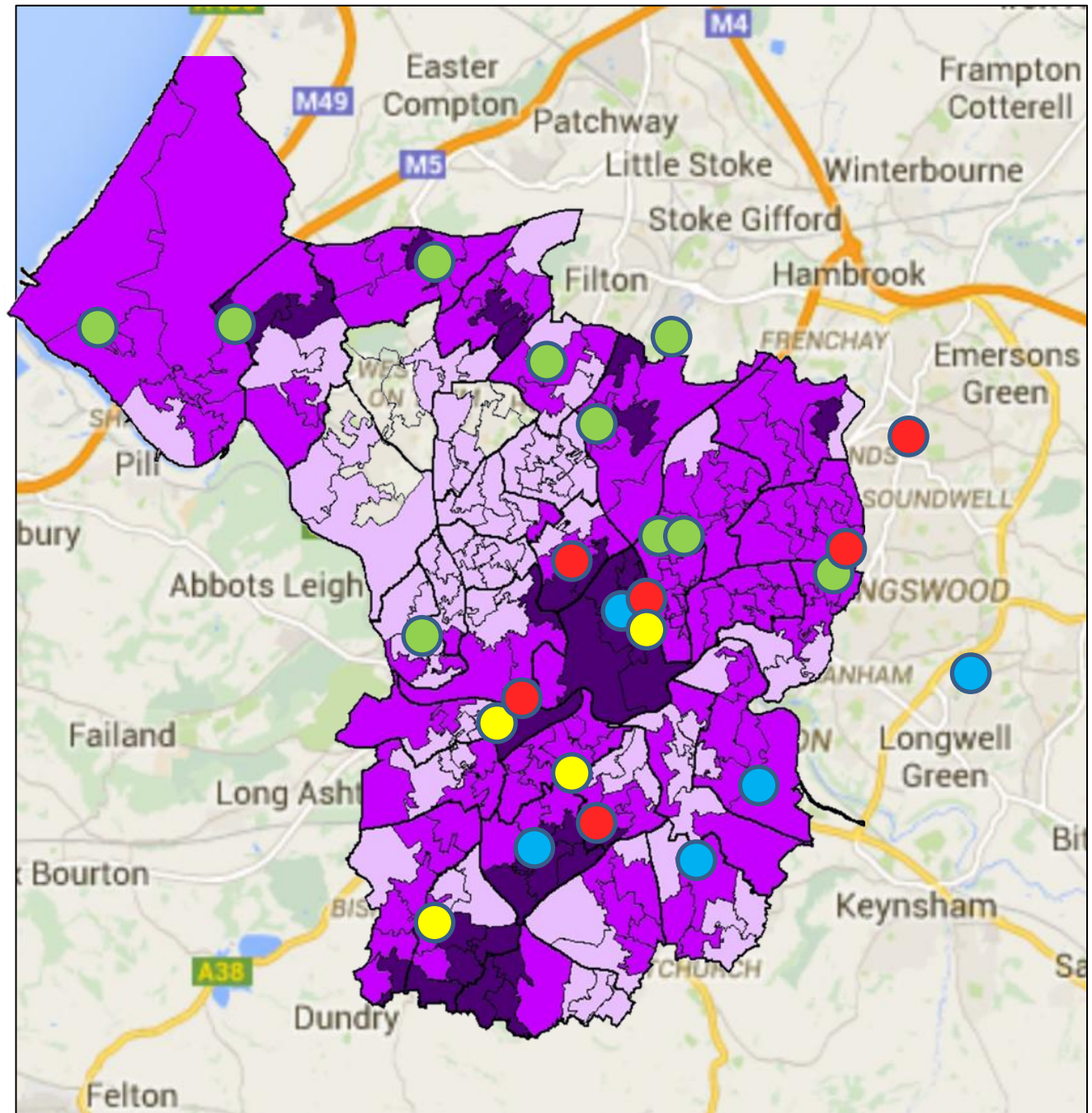


- Trussell Trust**
  - North Bristol Foodbank
  - 1 – Filton Outlet
  - 2 – Horfield Outlet
  - 3 – Southmead Outlet
  - Bristol North West Foodbank
  - 4 – Avonmouth Outlet
  - 5 – Hotwells Outlet
  - 6 – Lawrence Weston Outlet
  - 7 – Henbury Outlet
  - East Bristol Foodbank
  - 8 – Easton, St Mark's Community Café
  - 9 – Tudor Road, Easton Outlet
  - 10 – Kingswood Outlet
- The Matthew Tree Project**
  - 1 – St Judes FoodPlus Centre
  - 2 – Inns Court, Knowle West FoodPlus Centre
  - 3 – Brislington FoodPlus Centre
  - 4 – Hengrove FoodPlus Centre
  - 5 – Cadbury Heath FoodPlus Centre
- Independent**
  - 1 – Refresh Bedminster Foodbank
  - 2 – Victoria Park Baptist Church Foodbank
  - 3 – Sisters of the Church
  - 4 – Carpenters Food and Support, Withywood
- Salvation Army**
  - 1 – Easton
  - 2 – Knowle West
  - 3 – Kingswood
  - 4 – Staple Hill
  - 5 – Bedminster
  - 6 – Montpelier/ St Paul's

Locations of Food aid providers mapped on the Index of Multiple Deprivation map for Bristol

**Multiple Deprivation 2010**  
■ Most deprived 10% in England  
■ More deprived than average rank  
■ Less deprived than average rank  
■ Least deprived 10% in England

- Trussell Trust
- Matthew Tree
- Independent
- Salvation Army





## 4. Bristol Scene

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### 4.3 Geographic Gaps

- From overlaying the map of food aid distribution sites on a map displaying multiple deprivation it is evident that coverage across the city appears broadly very good.
- However, there are gaps in effective coverage. Most notably in Barton Hill, Lawrence Hill, St Phillips Marsh and Knowle. These areas sit within the most deprived 10% for England.
- As the principal reason for people coming to food aid providers is because they don't have enough income, affording public transport to get to the nearest site providing food aid can be very challenging. It would also be difficult to carry a number of shopping bags home especially if the client has a large family.
- It is therefore essential that the coverage of food aid providers across Bristol aligns with those areas where income deprivation and food poverty are at their most acute.



## 4. Bristol Scene

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### 4.4 Distribution of Food Aid Providers

There is a variety of different food aid providers in Bristol. This patchwork of providers demonstrates the determination of communities across the UK to prevent people from going hungry.

In the North of the city there are largely Trussell Trust run Foodbanks. In South Bristol there are independently run organisations such as The Matthew Tree Project, Refresh Bedminster and Victoria Park Baptist Church Foodbank.

Trussell Trust statistics are the most robust on food bank use and therefore more detailed and accurate data analyses can be applied.

The independent organisations in the South are more driven by their compassion but can lack the capacity and framework to provide in-dept data at the same level of detail.



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## 4. Bristol Scene

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### 4.5 Trussell Trust Statistics

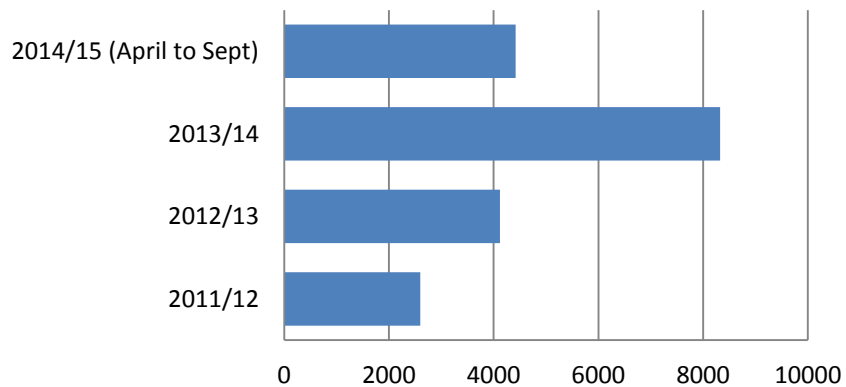
- There has been a definite upward trend in the number of people using Foodbanks.
- In 2012/13 (April-March) the Trussell Trust in Bristol provided food to 4,122 people. Of these an average of 41% were children.
- In 2013/14 (April-March) the Trussell Trust in Bristol gave food to 8,323 people (an increase of 102% on the previous year). Of these an average of 42% were children.

Current figures for 2014/15 estimate this number to have increased further. However the true extent of this increase is as yet unknown, as the crude method of extrapolating current figures to get a yearly total doesn't take into account the winter period which has been shown historically to be busiest time of year for Foodbanks.

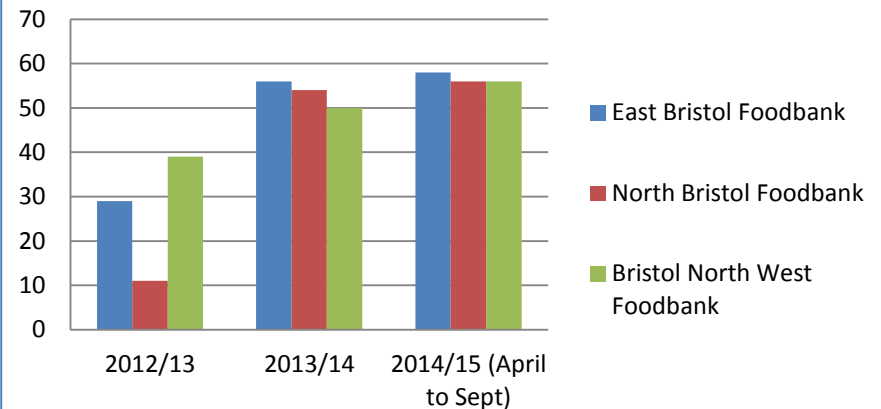
## 4. Bristol Scene

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**People fed by Trussell Trust Foodbanks in Bristol**



**Average number of people fed per week**



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## 4. Bristol Scene

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The most common reasons for needing food aid in Bristol reflect the national statistics. The principal reasons stay relatively similar year on year (+/- 2%):

- Benefit delays – 30%
- Low income – 20%
- Benefit changes – 16%

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*“Although I am employed, I’m underemployed! That is, I am only given 15 hours a week’s work. I’ve been job hunting for three years and am now on such a low income, I’ve applied for housing benefit and Council Tax benefit (which could take two months to process) so I have become eligible for Foodbank vouchers. You don’t have to be homeless or jobless to be poor!!”*

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*[Client from NW Bristol Foodbank]*

## 4. Bristol Scene

### 4.6 South Bristol Overview

- On average food aid providers feed 25 – 50 people a week per geographical venue. Managers of these organisations stated that these numbers were increasing year on year.
- Food aid providers in the South of Bristol also cited issues surrounding benefit changes and delays as the most significant contributing factors to the increase in numbers of people needing food aid.
- They also stated that they were seeing a rise in the number of people on too low an income due to wage inflation not keeping pace with the consumer price index. Inflation on fundamentals such as food and fuel, as well as an increase in zero-hours contracts, causes clients to oscillate in and out of benefit dependency.

## 4. Bristol Scene

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### 4.7 Across the Whole of Bristol

Extrapolating weekly data from the independent food projects and Matthew Tree Food PLUS Centres in south Bristol, and adding this to the Trussell Trust statistics, an estimated total number of people who received food aid can be made.

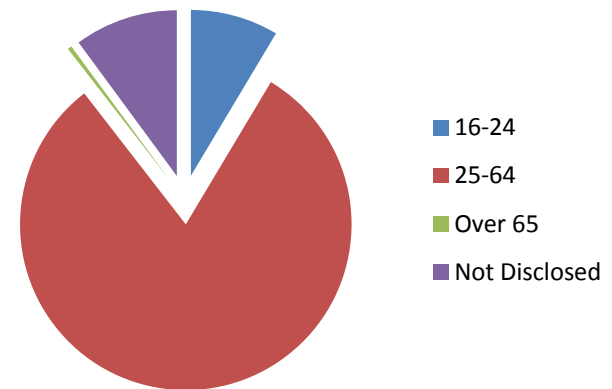
**In 2013/14 at least 21,254 people received food aid.**

That's 50 people per 1000 in Bristol.

This number indicates the number of people who have accessed food aid but the number of people suffering from food poverty is likely to be much higher.

The pie chart indicates the age groups using foodbanks.

Most of the people in the 25-64 age bracket are families.



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## 4. Bristol Scene

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### 4.8 Over 65s Demographic Gap

There are 1.6 million pensioners living in poverty in the UK and nearly a million of these are in severe poverty.

*[Source: Households below average income, 2013]*

Living on a low income long-term can have a range of impacts, but for many older people this will result in restrictions in choice and a daily struggle to make ends meet. An older person's food budget can be seen as part of expenditure that is flexible and therefore can be cut back if urgent needs arise.

*[Source: APPG on Hunger and Food Poverty Enquiry, 2014]*

## 4. Bristol Scene

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The **Bristol Food Poverty Council** identified older people (defined as those aged 65 years and over) as more likely to experience food poverty.

Data shows that the most at risk in over 65s groups are those in low-income households, the oldest, those from some BME groups, those with a disability and men living alone.

*[Source: Food and Nutrition Security at Risk in Later Life: Evidence from the United Kingdom Expenditure and Food Survey Journal of Social Policy, 2011]*

In 2014 single pensioners on the lowest incomes will have seen the most dramatic percentage rise in their winter food bill since 2008.

The prevalence of malnourishment is also an increasing problem in the UK with more than one million people over 65 malnourished or at risk of malnutrition because they are struggling to afford basic nutritious food.



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## 4. Bristol Scene

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- The future doesn't look much brighter, with reports predicting the average annual food bill for over 65s to rise by an additional £297 by the end of 2018 - more than for any other demographic.
- **Despite this clear need, on average only 0.3% of people receiving food aid in Bristol were over 65 years old. The reality is therefore, that there are a large number of older people in need of food aid but that are not receiving it – many of these are likely to be housebound or have low mobility, and therefore not able to visit a food aid provider.**
- It is interesting to note that many people over the age of 65 are missing out on vital benefits and support - up to £5.5 billion of means tested benefits are unclaimed each year.

## 4. Bristol Scene

### 4.9 Refugees and Asylum Seekers Demographic Gap

Without money or access to public housing, refugees are often forced to drift between places where they can stay for only a night or two. With little or no money, buying food is a real problem too. Some refugees skip meals or miss out on nutritious food in favour of cheaper, unhealthy options – making them more likely to suffer ill-health.

*[Source: British Red Cross Poverty and Fear: The truth about refugee destitution, 2013]*

Because Asylum seekers are not allowed to work whilst their claims are being determined, most depend on Section 95 support, which is a lower rate of support than for UK citizens who are unable to work. It often works out at just over £5 a day (housing and utility bills are paid for separately) to pay for food, clothing, toiletries and other essential items. According to researchers, this group *‘are forced to live on the ‘margins of the margins’ while waiting for their cases to be processed. Cut off from the world of work, and often denied decent housing, adequate medical provision or cultural services, many drift into a state of destitution, rely on charity hand-outs or are forced into an underground economy.’*

*[Source: The Forgotten Poor: Refugees and Asylum Seekers, 2013]*

## 4. Bristol Scene

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Over half of 84 interviewed people in the asylum system reported that they were *'never or not often able to buy enough food of sufficient quality and variety to meet their needs for a nutritionally balanced diet'*. Thirty-four were either never, or not often able to buy enough food of any quality to prevent them from being hungry.

*[Source: Poverty among refugees and asylum seekers in the UK An evidence and policy review 2014]*

Within Bristol, asylum seekers and refugees are at increased risk through unemployment, exclusion from social networks, low-income, weakened family networks and little personal control over their future. Evidence has been found of malnourishment, ill-health related to poor diet in babies and weight loss in children

*[Source: Food poverty: What does the evidence tell us, 2013]*

In Bristol there are limited referral routes for refugees and asylum seekers to receive food aid, and this evidence suggests there is such a great need both in Bristol and nationally.

## 4. Bristol Scene

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### 4.10 Partnerships

From studying all the food aid providers in Bristol it is evident that co-ordination both between different food aid providers, and between food aid providers and other agencies, was seen as key to their functioning and success.

Partnership is at the core of food aid provision in Bristol. Most food aid providers are linked to supermarkets where regular food collections take place. Over 90 schools are linked to Foodbanks and donate food and student volunteers throughout the year. Big businesses have also been keen to support the Foodbanks and FoodPLUS centres including Nisbets, HSBC and Lloyds Bank. Foodbanks and FoodPLUS Centres are also in partnerships with over 200 referrers and over 100 organisations to signpost clients to.

**There are over 500 volunteers working in food aid projects across Bristol.**



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## 4. Bristol Scene

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### 4.11 Greatest needs

- Warehousing/ storage to manage the influx and variability of supply of food and help prevent waste.
- Increasing the supply of certain key items between March and September each year.
- More partnerships with businesses and other Foodbanks to share information and streamline their operations.
- More staff and training for the volunteers to be able to signpost effectively.
- Smaller food aid providers require more funding to meet administration and running costs.
- Increasing provision of non-food items such as nappies, toothpaste and pet food.



## 4. Bristol Scene

## the 5k partnership

### 4.12 Future Plans and Priorities

- A **Foodbank delivery service** for people who can't access Foodbanks, particularly older people and people with health problems - NW Bristol Foodbank have a van from *The Wheels Project* and are keen to address this issue, and in particular the needs of the over 65 group identified earlier in this report.
- The Methodist Circuit intend to use *The Ark Bus*, a converted double-decker bus, as a **mobile food aid distribution point**. This would enable some of the geographic and demographic gaps identified in this report to be addressed.
- Healthy **eating on a budget workshops**. Food poverty isn't just about lack of access to food. It's also about being able to have a healthy, nutritious diet. Providing workshops for people with limited income or people using Foodbanks to learn to cook healthy meals on a budget is essential, but it is recognised that this needs to be done in a non-patronising way.
- Run **CAP money courses** to teach clients how to budget or signpost them to experienced money advisors.
- **City wide database** to enable more in-depth data analysis.
- New **outlets in Patchway and Lockleaze**.
- **Gas and electric assistance** – an increasing number of people are able to get food from a Foodbank but unable to cook it as they don't have enough money for gas and electric.



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## 5. Case Studies

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# 5. Case Studies

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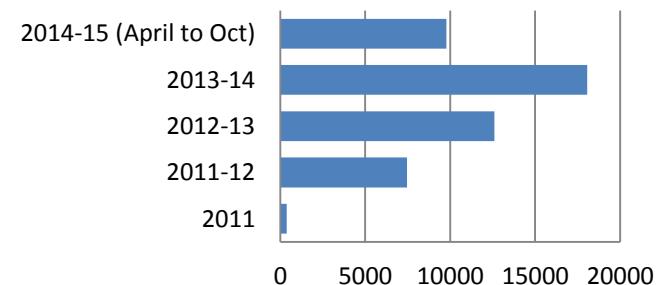
## 5.1 Coventry

Coventry at a glance:

- Population of 330,000
- 18.3% of population live in neighbourhoods considered to be amongst the 10% most deprived in England.
- In 2013/14 just over 18,000 people were fed – a 42% rise in demand from the previous year
- 44% of people fed were children under 16
- Welfare benefit changes and delays are the most common reason for the need for food vouchers at 46%. Foodbank managers cite more aggressive sanctions as a significant factor in this
- This is followed by low income at 23%
- The Foodbanks are most extensively used by families



**People fed by Coventry Foodbank**



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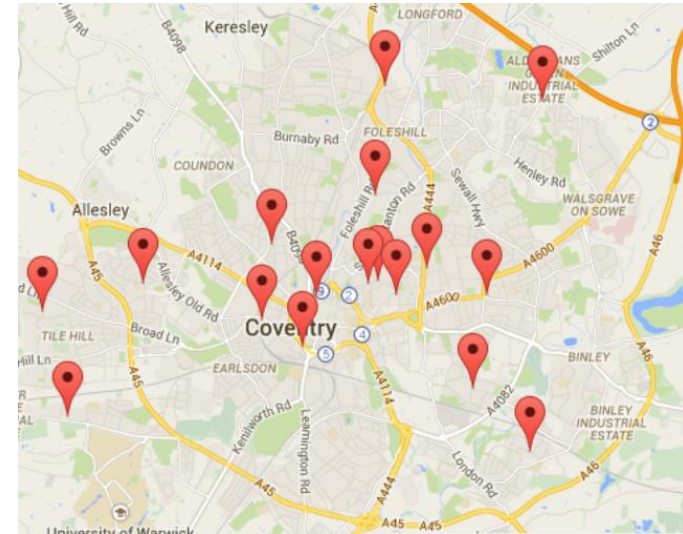


## 5. Case Studies

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### 5.1.1 Model

Coventry has 17 distribution centres, all of which are Trussell Trust operated, open 7 days a week for a total of 53 hours. These distribution centres are facilitated by an office, donated by Whitefriars Housing Group and refurbished by young people from the Prince's Trust, and a central warehouse in an old Methodist church building. Every week, once the distribution outlet has closed, food is ordered from the warehouse in crates depending on how many days of food have been given. For example, if 20 people came to an outlet, 20 pre-packed crates would be delivered to the outlet to maintain a minimum stock level. The warehouse is run by a warehouse manager and volunteers 5 days a week. Last year 3 tonnes of food was distributed a week. This is made possible by 3 vans donated to the Foodbanks: one LDV van from the City Council, one van with a tail lift purchased with a £12,000 grant from BGL Group and a transit van donated by BT.



**Foodbank distribution outlets in  
Coventry**

## 5. Case Studies

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**Governance:** There are 6 members on the Board of Trustees, and all are there based on their skill set. A consultation committee including all the distribution outlet managers, Hugh McNeill and Gavin Kibble meet once a quarter to discuss the Foodbanks' progress, any recurring issues, general feedback and offer each other additional support. Hugh is the foodbank Project Manager and Gavin is the Operations Director. Every year there is an Annual Conference which gathers all the distribution outlet managers, warehouse staff and volunteers to celebrate the work of the Foodbanks across the city. This provides a clear reminder as to why people are doing what they are doing and acts as a reward to all the volunteers and staff who work tirelessly to run the Foodbank network so effectively.

## 5. Case Studies

### 5.1.2 Key findings

- The visible leadership of the Church of England has been important to the expansion of Coventry Foodbank. The Bishop of Coventry, Christopher Cocksworth, is a patron of Coventry Foodbank. Morris Rodham, Archdeacon Missioner, was appointed by Bishop Christopher in 2009 and tasked with reshaping local Deaneries so that churches can be more effective in serving their communities and model the relevance of the Christian Faith for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Food sustainability – there is a clear seasonality of food donations for Trussell Trust. There is a bounty at Harvest and Christmas time, and shortages of certain items at other times of the year. Coventry Foodbank has developed relationships with Mars Foods, Arden Fine Foods and Fyffes. Unlike other Foodbanks, Coventry, with their warehousing and city-wide network, can move food quickly and efficiently between its 14 distribution points. Around 3 tonnes of food is distributed every week. Coventry Foodbank also receives fresh fruit and vegetables in season from allotments around the city. Sustainability of food donations results from the variety of sources of food.

## 5. Case Studies

## the 5k partnership

- Funding – Coventry Foodbank do receive support from the City Council but this is done without any restrictions. The Foodbank as a whole receives £19,400 to cover warehouse salaries and the permanent use of a City Council van. The Foodbank has started a new initiative aiming to engage multiple small donors (giving around £5 a month). This programme is called “Breadgivers” and encourages people to donate the cost of a loaf of bread per week to the Foodbank.
- Partnership between CAB and Coventry foodbank: In June 2013 Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau (CCAB) received £373,062 for its Food Crisis Resolution project working in partnership with Coventry Foodbank. It will support 4,000 people in financial crisis across the city. The funding will train over 50 dedicated volunteers to support 900 people to get back to self-sufficiency and over 3,000 more with advice on housing, budgeting and benefit changes at the six Foodbank distribution centres. The volunteers will address the underlying problems that cause people to need a food parcel by giving them advice on money, benefits changes, budgeting, employment and housing matters. Charley Gibbons, of Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau, said: “...we are delighted to be able to create a new partnership with Coventry Foodbank to deal with the underlying issues facing many of their service users.”

## 5. Case Studies

## the 5k partnership

- Partnerships with larger corporate organisations – an aspect of many large corporate organisations' Corporate Social Responsibility Policy will be the support of national and local charities by the company and the employees. Coventry has partnered with HSBC, Barclays, Perkin Elmer, Orbit Housing Association, Whitefriars Housing Association, Severn Trust and West Midlands Fire Service. Employees have been able to:
  - 1) Donate food;
  - 2) Benefit from team building exercises by working in the warehouse or carrying out supermarket collections; and
  - 3) Fundraise for the Foodbank, which has often been matched by the company,Coventry Foodbank is now a *'magnet for corporate volunteers'*.
- There is a particular emphasis on partnership and cooperation amongst all Foodbanks as evident in their city-wide network approach. Most Foodbanks in Coventry are an expression of ecumenical partnership for the benefit of the city. Some 43% of distribution points are managed by Anglican churches, 20% by non-denominational churches, 12% by Methodist churches and 8% by Baptist churches.

## 5. Case Studies

## the 5k partnership

- Coventry Foodbank managers state that large cities require a different model of Foodbank provision compared to small towns. In Coventry there is one Foodbank with multiple distribution points, whereas in Bristol and many other large cities there are multiple Foodbanks with multiple distribution points. A joined up city-wide approach has many logistical benefits particularly around food collection and distribution. It was clear that a central warehouse for all the distribution centres was one of the strongest aspects of Coventry Foodbank's model. The large supermarket model of having one regional distribution centre allows for mass storage of food and enables the Foodbanks to receive, breakdown and distribute volume product from wholesalers and manufacturers. For Coventry Foodbank this has proved to be invaluable considering the rapid increases in volumes and demand in recent years.
- Operating as a **united organisation**, as one Foodbank together across the city results in many benefits:
  - 1) It simplifies supermarket collections as there are no issues over which Foodbank can collect at which supermarket. All supermarkets are connected to all the Foodbank distribution centres across the city.
  - 2) Data analysis is also far simpler. Data for the Foodbank activity across the whole city is easily accessible from one database. Therefore intellectual resources are easily created and a more accurate picture of food poverty across Coventry is possible.
  - 3) Having one database for the whole city improves the visibility of all Foodbank activities as well as visibility of clients. This eliminates the number of people exploiting the system and using multiple Foodbanks, a problem in cities where there are numerous different foodbanks.

# 5. Case Studies

the 5k partnership

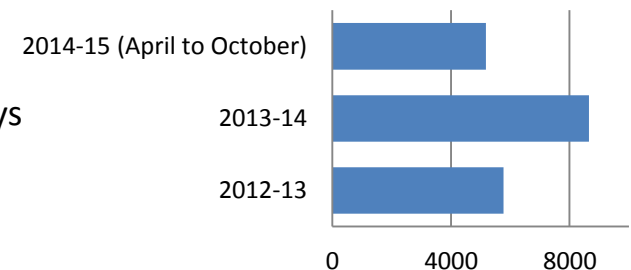
## 5.2 Cardiff

Cardiff at a glance:

- Population of 324,800
- 80,000 people live below the poverty line
- 24% (17,440) of children in Cardiff are living in poverty
- 8,651 people were fed in 2013/14, a 50% increase from 2012/13
- An average of 2 tonnes of food is distributed each week
- 400 volunteers are working in the warehouse, office and the 5 outlets
- In 2012/13 FareShare Cymru collected 248 tonnes of food and redistributed 240 tonnes. This was enough food to contribute to 479,680 meals.
- The most common causes for food poverty in Cardiff are: cuts or delays in benefits, refusal of crisis loan and low income
- Cardiff Foodbank is involved in the Cardiff Food Council, a group established to oversee and deliver a coordinated approach to addressing food poverty in Cardiff.



### People fed by Cardiff Foodbank



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## 5. Case Studies

## the 5k partnership

### 5.2.1 Model

- The Foodbank has a central warehouse and small office facility, which is the hub of its operations. Food is distributed via a network of five local distribution outlets, strategically located across Cardiff to allow for easy access by those in need - Ely, Cathays, Llanedeyrn, Splott and the city centre (City Temple Church). There are plans to expand this to 7/8 outlets as there are still gaps in the Foodbank's coverage of Cardiff. Foodbanks are open across the city 6 days a week.
- The 3,800 sq ft warehouse and office space in Cardiff Bay Business Park was provided at reduced rates by the Foodbank's partners UK Steel Enterprise. The reduced rent and rates were then covered for the first few years by a Comic Relief grant. Volunteers from Cambria Maintenance Services (South) worked non-stop to transform 1.7km of sustainable timber donated by Jewson into purpose-built shelving for the warehouse, with transport provided by Day's Rentals. Jewson's sister brand, Graham the local plumbers' merchant, also supported the project by part funding the stock supplied.
- The Foodbank operates by maintaining a minimum stock level in all their distribution centres. Food is delivered to each outlet every week. Once the distribution outlet has closed for the day, food is ordered from the warehouse in crates depending on how many days of food have been given out that week. Deliveries are made by 2 vans, one donated from the City Council and one from funding received from a Comic Relief grant. The warehouse is run by a warehouse manager and 30 volunteers 5 days a week.



## 5. Case Studies

## the 5k partnership

### 5.2.2 Key Findings

- Much the same as Coventry Foodbank. Working as one city-wide Foodbank with a warehouse allows for the Foodbank to partner with large organisations. This provides a sustainable source of food as suppliers can donate food by the pallet load all year round.
- Cardiff Foodbank benefits from 50 volunteers from Companies House, Lloyds and Principality Building Society. The number of volunteers Cardiff Foodbank receives from corporate organisations is increasing year on year.
- The Foodbank maintains strong links with Fareshare Cymru. FareShare Cymru works to fight food poverty through tackling food waste; it takes edible surplus food from the food industry, food that would otherwise be wasted, and redistributes this to the Foodbank amongst many other organisations that feed people in need. In addition, FareShare Cymru provides volunteering and work placement opportunities, often to the people that are helped through providing food.

## 5. Case Studies

## the 5k partnership

- Cardiff Foodbank has a new partnership with Cardiff training company, ACT. This partnership allows their young trainees access to meaningful training opportunities to develop their skills and assist in making them 'work ready'. The range of opportunities available are still in discussion but are likely to include: skill development around office administration, stock control and stock movement, database entry and reporting, and communication skills - both verbal and written.
- Data analysis is also far simpler. Data for the Foodbank activity across the whole city is easily accessible from one database. Therefore intellectual resources are easily created and a more accurate picture of food poverty across Coventry is possible.
- **Cardiff Foodbank has been inundated with opportunities to apply for cash grants due to their coordinated city-wide approach and clear business plan.**
- Plans are currently being put in place to design a course whereby volunteers can be trained in child protection, adult protection, basic benefits awareness, first aid and money management so that they can provide a more informed service to the clients. An important aspect of Cardiff Foodbank is the signposting and initiatives that aim to solve the root causes of people needing food aid.
- Cardiff Foodbank is operating a similar model to Coventry Foodbank. By working as one entity across the whole of the city they look to be achieving similar benefits to Coventry Foodbank.

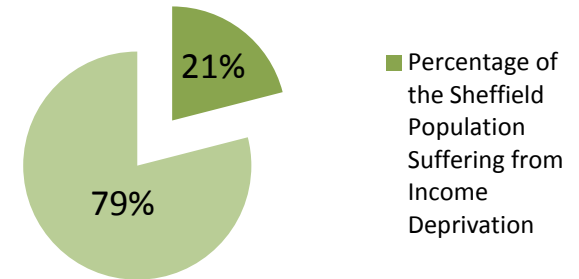
# 5. Case Studies

## the 5k partnership

### 5.3 Sheffield

Sheffield at a glance:

- Population of 551,800
- Approximately 40,000 people in Sheffield are currently experiencing food poverty



*[Source: The Sheffield Food Strategy 2014-17, 2013]*

- Lack of income, low wages, benefit sanctions and delays are cited as the key issues causing the increase in demand for food aid.
- The rate of foodbank use has increased since benefit changes were introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013

*[Source: Rapid Review: Foodbanks in Sheffield 2013]*

- Every foodbank in Sheffield reported that the demand for food parcels was erratic but with a definite upward trend. A lot of the foodbanks reported that the increase in demand could lead to a doubling of the number of parcels given this year compared to last.
- Estimated 22,000 people fed in the past year

## 5. Case Studies

## the 5k partnership

### 5.3.1 Model

- There are around 18 foodbanks across the city. They range from Trussell Trust Foodbanks to small independents. Many food banks are now also serving a vital role in communities by providing advice and support to isolated and vulnerable people on issues such as benefits, welfare rights and healthy eating.
- There is a wide variation in terms of practice and models. All organisations provide food aid to people desperately in need. But they differ in the method of meeting this need. For example, some organisations fundraise and buy food, others have a range of supporters who provide funding and food, and others rely on donations from the public or large supermarkets.
- Two of the foodbanks do not provide a drop in - instead they use a team of drivers to deliver food to peoples' homes.
- There is wide variation in what information foodbanks collect. Many foodbanks lack the resources to gather data systematically and/or are unconvinced of the benefits of sharing intelligence.
- The organisations operate independently but come together as the **Sheffield Foodbank Network**. The Sheffield Foodbank Network comprises of representatives from the majority of foodbanks across Sheffield and they meet once every 6 weeks. These meetings allow for the sharing of ideas, sharing of best practice and allows the foodbanks in Sheffield to speak as a single voice on various councils and other bodies.

## 5. Case Studies

## the 5k partnership

### 5.3.2 Key findings

- The group comprises of a mix of different foodbank style organisations that have been operating for varying lengths of time. This allows the different organisations to maintain their identity whilst also being able to learn from other organisations' mistakes and successes. Smaller and newer foodbanks can quickly become an efficient and effective provider of food parcels through the partnerships gained in the Foodbank Network. For example, the representative for S2 foodbank, opened in September 2014, had the opportunity to ask questions to other members of the Foodbank Network and learn from how other foodbanks operate. Without this group the rapid development of S2 Foodbank and similar newer foodbanks would have been slower and more troublesome.
- The Foodbank Network enables smaller foodbanks to be more productive by sharing supermarket collections. Smaller foodbanks struggle to find the volunteers necessary to run a supermarket collection so often miss out on this valuable source of donations. **To solve this issue larger foodbanks in Sheffield partner with the smaller foodbanks, increasing the number of volunteers to a level whereby a collection is possible. The food collected is then split equally between the two foodbanks enabling smaller foodbanks to tap into this valuable resource.**
- A cross-referral process between the foodbanks has also been initiated. A small minority of clients abuse the system and take food parcels from multiple foodbanks. This referral process limits the ability of clients to be able to take advantage of the system.

## 5. Case Studies

## the 5k partnership

- 2014 - Sheffield City Council has committed £20,000 to help food banks over the course of the coming year. This includes a government funded CAB/ Foodbank partnership whereby CAB advisors will be placed in a number of foodbanks. There is also potential for other pots of money being available to the Foodbank Network.
- **As a network they have a larger sphere of influence.** Members of the Foodbank Network are placed within a number of strategy groups. For example one foodbank representative was part of the Food Executive Group which was involved in initiating a Child and Household Poverty Strategy. The Foodbank Network and foodbanks in general are increasingly being referred to in major city-wide strategies. The Sheffield Foodbank Network now has a good reputation as a collective organisation.
- The Sheffield Foodbank Network's approach to a city-wide food poverty prevention strategy doesn't address any logistical strategies, and when raising this point in a meeting it was something they hadn't yet considered. However what it does include is the sharing of advice and experience, development of relationships and speaking with a single voice on various Council and other bodies. This has led to an overall improvement in the way foodbanks have been run in Sheffield, as well as increasing the influence of foodbanks in City Council work.

## 5. Case Studies

the 5k partnership

- The city has released a 2014-2017 food strategy that looks to tackle food poverty. It outlines these three key areas:
  - 1) To challenge policy at a national level and to understand and challenge at a local level where our own systems exacerbate the problem;
  - 2) To raise awareness of the impact of food poverty in Sheffield, including working with and supporting foodbanks in the short term and supporting foodbank recipients to get out of food poverty; and
  - 3) Increase the number of children and young people taking up their Free School Meal entitlement.

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## 6. Recommendations for Bristol

## 6. Recommendations for Bristol

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**It is clear from this report that partnership between food aid providers and a more joined up, city-wide approach to tackling food poverty is beneficial to large cities such as Bristol.** The need for food aid is increasing year on year but the causes of food poverty remain the same. It is therefore recommended that a combination of both the logistical elements of the Coventry and Cardiff foodbank model and the campaigning elements of the Sheffield model should be implemented in Bristol. Implementing similar strategies to Coventry and Cardiff will ensure a sustainable food supply as well as effective distribution networks. This would ensure that current and future need will be met efficiently and effectively. Incorporated within this should be an approach similar to the Sheffield Foodbank Network looking to get to the root causes of food poverty. Through operating at a Governmental level, by representing food aid providers in various city-wide strategy groups, the Sheffield Foodbank Network has increased the profile of foodbanks and been able to have valuable input into strategies that will address the causes of food poverty.

These recommendations would ensure a more holistic approach to tackling food poverty across Bristol.

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## 6. Recommendations for Bristol

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The recommendations on the previous page are reflected in the following key action points:

### Logistics:

1. Shared warehousing;
2. Coordinated delivery and distribution networks;
3. Work with the Ark Bus and NW Bristol Foodbank to enable them to fill some of the geographical and demographic gaps identified in this report;
4. Seek to establish a city-wide database of food aid provision; and
5. Address the needs of asylum seekers, refugees and the over 65s.

### Increasing influence:

1. Encourage unity amongst food aid providers across the city to give a clear voice to the local authority and significant partners

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## 7. References

## 7. References

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**This report is based on detailed interviews with:**

- Stewart North - Manager of North Bristol Foodbank
- Andy Irwin – Manager of East Bristol Foodbank
- Sally Hunter – Assistant Manager of East Bristol Foodbank
- Emma Murray – Manager of Bristol North West Foodbank
- Kevin Vicker – Chair of the Board of Trustees of The Matthew Tree Project and Manager of the St Jude's Bristol Central FoodPlus Centre.
- Naomi Knapp – Trustee and Projects Director at Refresh Bedminster
- Carole Hall – Foodbank Coordinator at Refresh Bedminster
- Brendan Bassett – Minister and coordinator for Victoria Park Baptist Church Foodbank
- Ian Mountford – Salvation Army Bristol Citadel
- Hugh McNeill – Project Manager at Coventry Foodbank
- Gavin Kibble – Operations Director at Coventry Foodbank
- Cath Williams – Manager of Cardiff Foodbank

Information was also gathered from a Sheffield Foodbank Network meeting. This included in-depth conversations with a number of foodbank managers throughout Sheffield.

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