

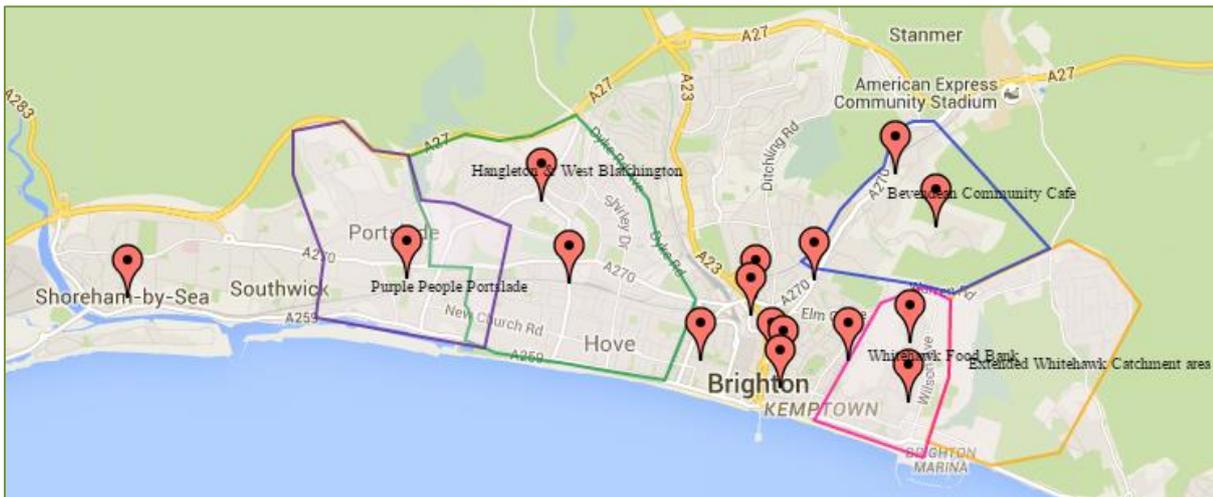
Brighton & Hove Food Banks and Emergency Food Survey 2016

Context: Who operates our food banks and who are they for?

There are currently 15 food banks in Brighton & Hove. There is a further food bank in Shoreham which may be accessed by Brighton & Hove Residents which is not included in this report. Unlike the media stereotype, the majority of the city's food banks require a referral to access them - you can't just turn up. Three food banks in the city do regularly give food on a drop-in basis but only to a tightly defined client group, and others may occasionally in a crisis situation.

Three food banks are run by from Children's Centres alongside other children's centre support and services. There is only one Trussell Trust Food Bank (in Whitehawk). The others are independent food banks operated by voluntary or faith groups, some as a 'stand alone' operation and some alongside a range of other community services. The Trust for Developing Communities has supported the development of some.

Several food banks, particularly those outside the centre, serve a 'catchment' area, shown by the coloured lines. The three children's centre food banks also serve their local areas (Whitehawk, Tarnar and Moulsecomb). City-wide food banks include Brighton Food Bank plus food banks supporting particular groups such as Brighton's Women's centre (women only), Faith Alive Ministries (students only) and BVIE (for migrants and people without recourse to funds).



There is a list in the appendix of the food banks represented in this report. You can also access the [‘Referring to a Food Bank’](#) page on the Food Partnership’s website for a list with contact details. Brighton & Hove Food Partnership coordinate the [Brighton & Hove Food Poverty Action Plan](#) and facilitate the local Food [Banks and Emergency food Network](#) and this background information is taken from that wider work.

The Food Partnership’s advice for people experiencing food poverty can be found at <http://bhfood.org.uk/food-poverty-advice>.

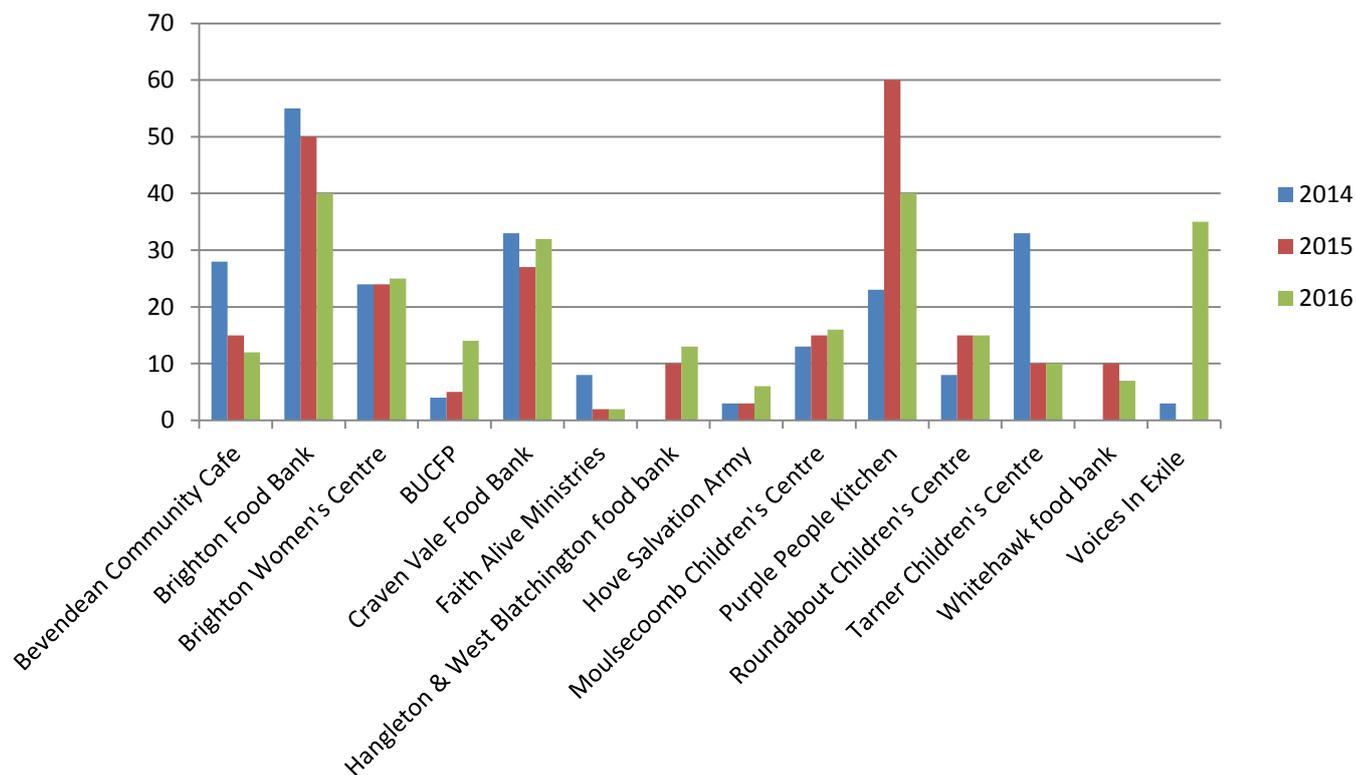
Food Bank Usage and trends: findings from 2016 Food Banks Survey

The 2016 survey found that despite the improvements in the national economy, food bank usage remains steady in the city. Indeed there is a **slight increase on 2015 figures**. This year 15 food banks in Brighton and Hove give out food parcels to an average of **298 households per week**¹. The average value of a food parcel is **£23**.

In 2015 15 food banks gave out roughly **289** food parcels (average value of a food parcel was **£22**). In 2014 13 food banks distributed **266** food parcels.

Nine of the fourteen food banks reported that there had been **increase in demand** over the last year with only Bevendean Community Cafe food bank experiencing a decrease, which reflected a change from operating as a drop-in to a referral food bank. Three reported that demand was roughly the same as last year.

Food parcels distributed by food banks in Brighton & Hove 2014-2016



5 food banks reported an **increase in demand in both 2015 and 2016**. As well as Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project (BUCFP) in the city centre these included The Roundabout Children's Centre and Craven Vale Community Centre, Hangleton and West Blatchington food bank,

¹ The figures in this report are from Brighton and Hove Food Partnership's annual *Food Banks and Emergency Food survey*. 14 of the city's 15 food banks took part in the July 2016 survey either via online survey or follow up phone call. Data was missing for one food bank so overall usage was estimated for 2016 based on 2015 reporting.

and the Purple People Kitchen in Portslade – some of the areas of the city which experience the highest levels of income and other deprivation alongside poor food access² .

The survey also sought to capture changes in food bank use, for example large families and migrants accessing food banks. For more information see 'A Changing Picture' below.

Food banks weren't asked to estimate the number of their individual beneficiaries however FareShare Sussex estimate the five 'stand alone' food banks they deliver to regularly have a combined 266 unique beneficiaries per week. FareShare also deliver to a further seven food banks which offer other additional food services alongside (such as meals). The total beneficiaries for these 12 food banks, including meals on the premises as well as meals made from food parcels, is estimated at 823 unique weekly beneficiaries/1620 weekly meals.

*Note these figures all depend on how you define a food bank. For this survey, organisations self-identified. Also that food parcels come in varying sizes with varying contents- some food banks vary parcel size depending on numbers in household and circumstances. Additionally it is very likely there are many people in the city who **may not be able to access a food bank** e.g. people with physical or mental health or mobility issues or who don't know about food bank provision or don't feel able to seek them out because of stigma. Therefore this survey only gives a snapshot of the demand for food banks in the city and does not take into account the many people who are struggling around but cannot or choose not to access food banks.*

*Note also that the survey focuses on emergency food use. Emergency food poverty is only **the tip of the iceberg**. Previous research estimates by Brighton & Hove City Council in partnership with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership estimates that **23% of people in the city** have trouble paying basic costs including food.³ The many more people who live with **longer term food poverty or household food insecurity are the focus of the city's [food poverty action plan](#)**.*

Other projects which distribute food parcels

There are several other projects which give out food parcels as part of their service, but aren't a 'food bank' as such, so are not included in this survey. As an example, FareShare Sussex redistribute surplus food to a further **11 projects** in Brighton and Hove that give out food parcels, including day centres, children's centres, sports groups, after-school clubs and lunch clubs. FareShare Sussex estimates these 11 settings have a combined 770 unique weekly beneficiaries. *(NB these are individual beneficiaries, not households)*

FareShare also distribute to **15 residential settings** in Brighton & Hove which give out food parcels, for example some hostels hand out food parcels to their tenants or supported households provide a shared meal. FareShare estimate there are around 281 unique weekly beneficiaries in these settings. *These are individual beneficiaries, not households and these figures are less precise as there is overlap with cooked shared meals.*

² Parts of Hangleton and Whitehawk were both identified as 'food deserts' in a recent report by Food Matters (2016) *To what extent does the poverty premium influence the cost of a basket of basic, healthy goods?* [Working title]. Living in a food desert refers to an urban area in which it is difficult to buy affordable or good-quality fresh food. Factors causing this include travel expenses, paying higher prices in convenience stores or because their local shop does not stock fresh food

³ <http://bhfood.org.uk/Blog/the-launch-of-a-city-wide-action-plan-on-food-poverty>

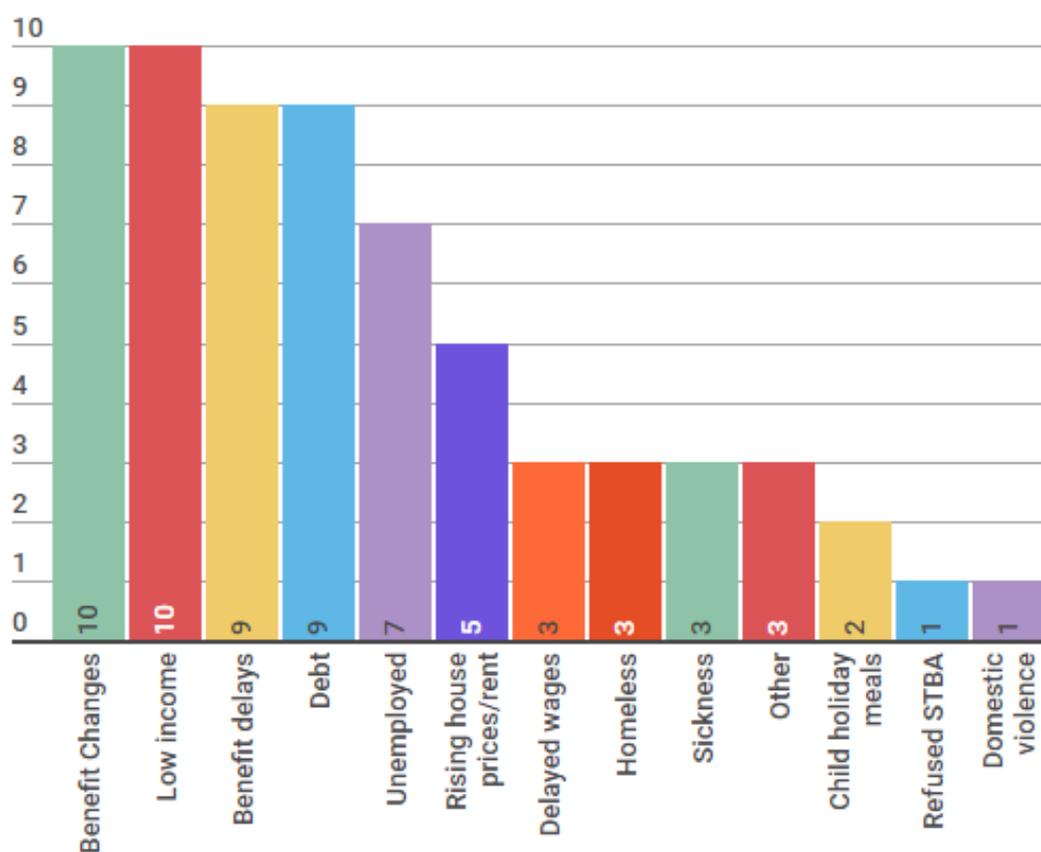
Why are people accessing food banks in Brighton & Hove?

This question was asked in the survey for the first time this year. The city’s new food poverty action plan includes an action for food banks to **record** reasons for usage using categories devised by the national food bank provider, the Trussell Trust, so local data can be compared with national data.

Ten food banks supplied information on the reasons for food bank use. They reported **benefit changes, benefit delays, low income, debt and unemployment** were the main reasons clients use their service.

An additional category added to our local survey was the impact of **high housing costs**, particularly in the private rented sector, because this issue had been raised at Food Bank Network meetings. **Half of food banks** which responded felt **the high cost of housing** is a factor in people using their service.

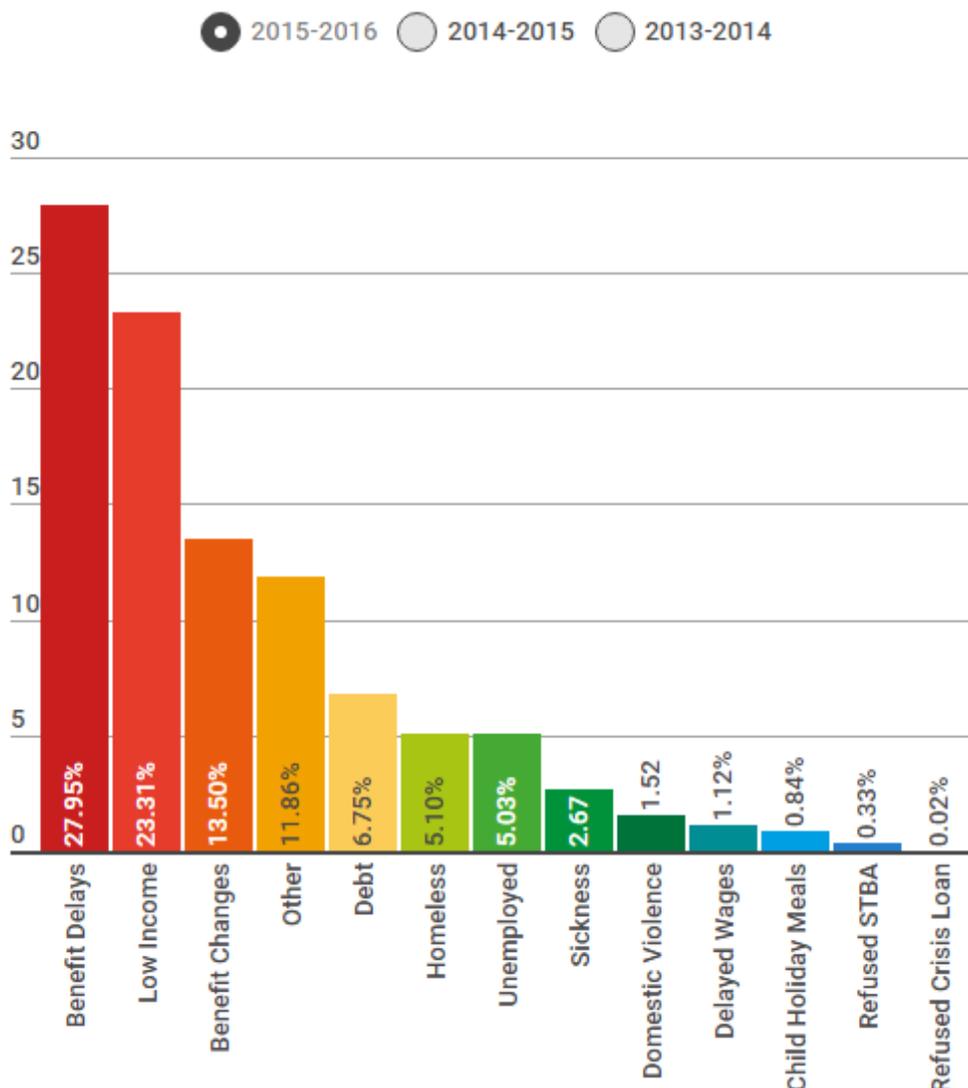
Reasons for Food Bank Use, Brighton & Hove 2016, as reported by food banks



‘We are increasingly hearing of people facing eviction due to higher rental costs’
– Brighton Food Bank

Reasons for food bank Use Nationally - Trussell Trust figures

From <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/>



Direct comparisons with national Trussell Trust figures need to be treated with caution as the Trussell Trust only allows ‘main’ reason for food bank use to be recorded for data purposes, whilst the majority of local food banks have reported on several reasons where there are multiple reasons why someone is accessing their food banks.

Also some local food banks offer a more flexible and/or longer term support package compared to the Trussell Trust food banks, so ‘longer term’ issues such as ongoing low income are more likely to figure over short term emergency situations.

Despite this caution, it does appear that when compared with national figures, **low income** and **benefit changes** are particular factors in food bank use in Brighton & Hove. **Debt** also seems to be playing a greater role, whilst benefit delays are less important than nationally.

Food Bank use – a changing picture?

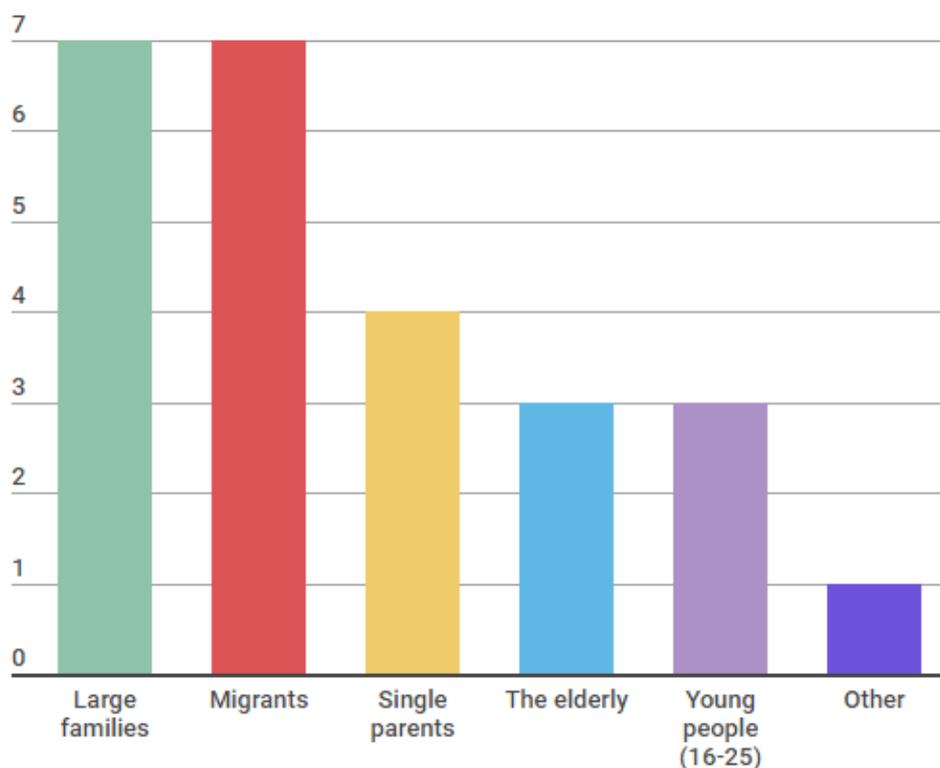
Food banks were asked in the survey about changing patterns in demand, especially some of the groups which had been identified in the city's [food poverty action plan](#) as most at risk from food poverty.

Six out of twelve food banks reported increase in demand over the last year from **larger families**. They have already been disproportionately affected by high housing costs in the city alongside a series of changes to benefits tax credits. At a recent network meeting food banks were concerned that demand from large families is set to increase further with the full roll out of **Universal Credit**, expected to arrive in Brighton and Hove around March 2017. This will replace all new claims for JSA, Housing Benefit, tax credits, ESA and Income Support. In addition, a maximum of two children per household will qualify for Child Tax Credit (CTC) meaning parents of a third, fourth or fifth child born after 6th April 2017 will not receive CTC for those additional children.

Six out of twelve food banks reported an increase over the last year from **migrants**. Brighton Food Bank **provides Syrian migrants and their families with a start-up home pack**. The number of migrants accessing the home pack has already doubled this year. In addition, Voices in Exile food bank have identified refugees, asylum seekers and migrants with no recourse to public funds who use their service.

One food bank flagged up rough sleepers and homeless people as a group increasing demand. Elsewhere in the survey people with mental health issues were also mentioned.

Increases in demand over the last year as reported by 12 food banks



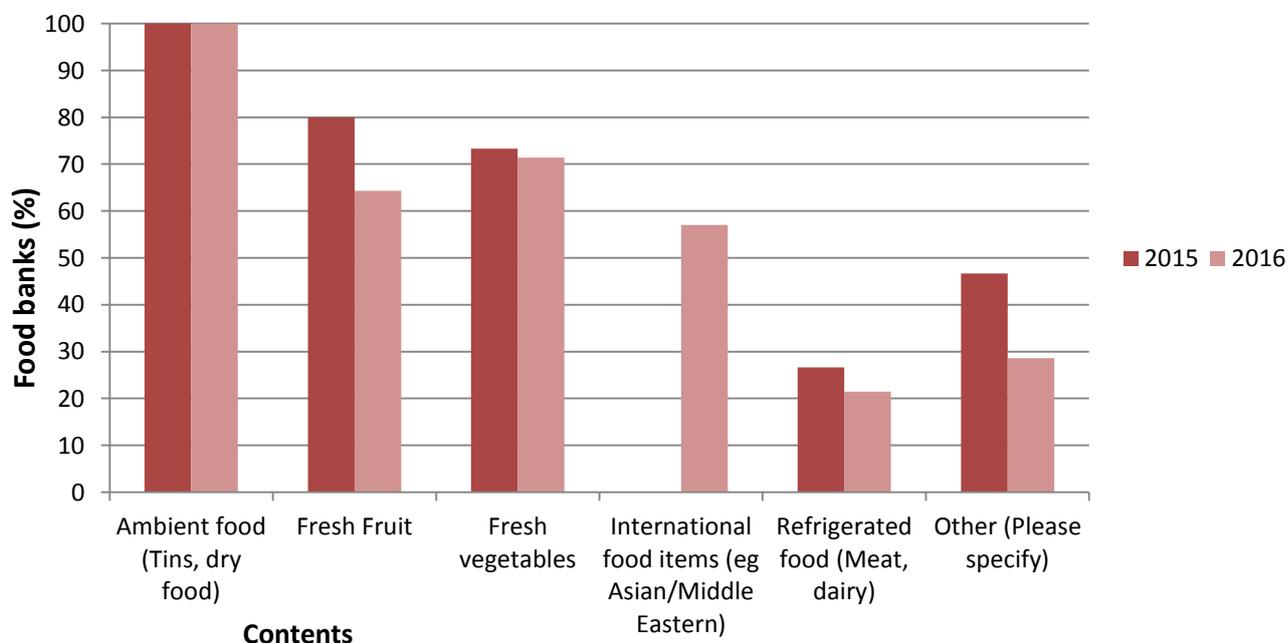
What is in a food parcel?

All food banks give out **ambient foods** (tinned and dry goods) whilst **nine give out fruit** and **ten provide vegetables**, similar levels to 2015. Ensuring fresh/healthy food reaches food banks is one of the actions in the city's food poverty action plan.

'International food items' is a new category added to the 2016 survey in light of Brighton's growing multiculturalism. Results show that **eight distribute international food** in their parcels.

In addition, some food banks reported providing additional items such as fresh bread and pastries, toiletries and washing powder.

The contents of food parcels distributed in Brighton and Hove, July 2016.



Beyond food: What additional services do Food Banks Provide?

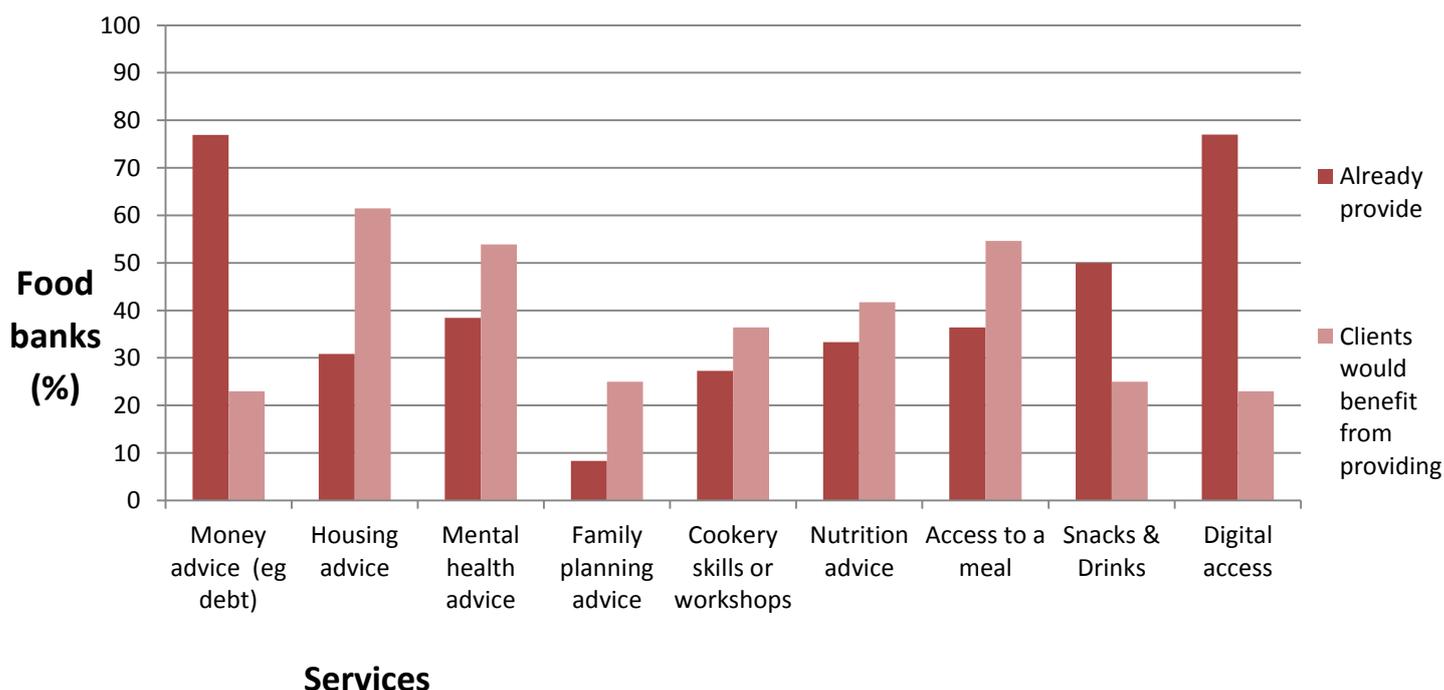
The majority of food banks already provide both money advice and digital access for their clients, two areas which were identified as key needs by food banks as part of the process of developing the city’s [food poverty action plan](#)

The biggest gap identified was **housing advice** which four food banks currently provide and another eight would like to offer, reflecting concerns about housing raised elsewhere in the survey and at network meetings.

Other services which food banks feel clients would benefit from are:

- Access to a meal (6)
- Mental health advice (7)

Services food banks already provide and services clients would benefit from while using the food bank:



“Brighton does a very good job in providing for the less fortunate. Much of this work is done by volunteers who dedicate long hours to the cause. We should celebrate our success. Those who run the city must be made aware of the underpinning effect this has.”

- Purple People Kitchen food bank, Portslade.

What training would Food Banks like for their staff and volunteers?

Food hygiene course is still in high demand in 2016 with **8 out of ten food banks** agreeing it would benefit their staff and volunteers. This was also seen as a priority in 2015.

Also in high demand is a **first aid course (eight out of ten 10)**.

Food banks in Brighton and Hove have experienced an increase in demand from migrants (see above) and five banks in 2016 suggested they would benefit from training in **understanding migrant rights and cultures**.

With shared meals a focus for the city's food poverty action plan, Brighton Women's Centre food bank expressing an interest in adding a lunch club to their existing service, and four food banks were interested in **catering skills for large groups**.

Food banks in Brighton and Hove feel their staff and volunteers could benefit from the following training:

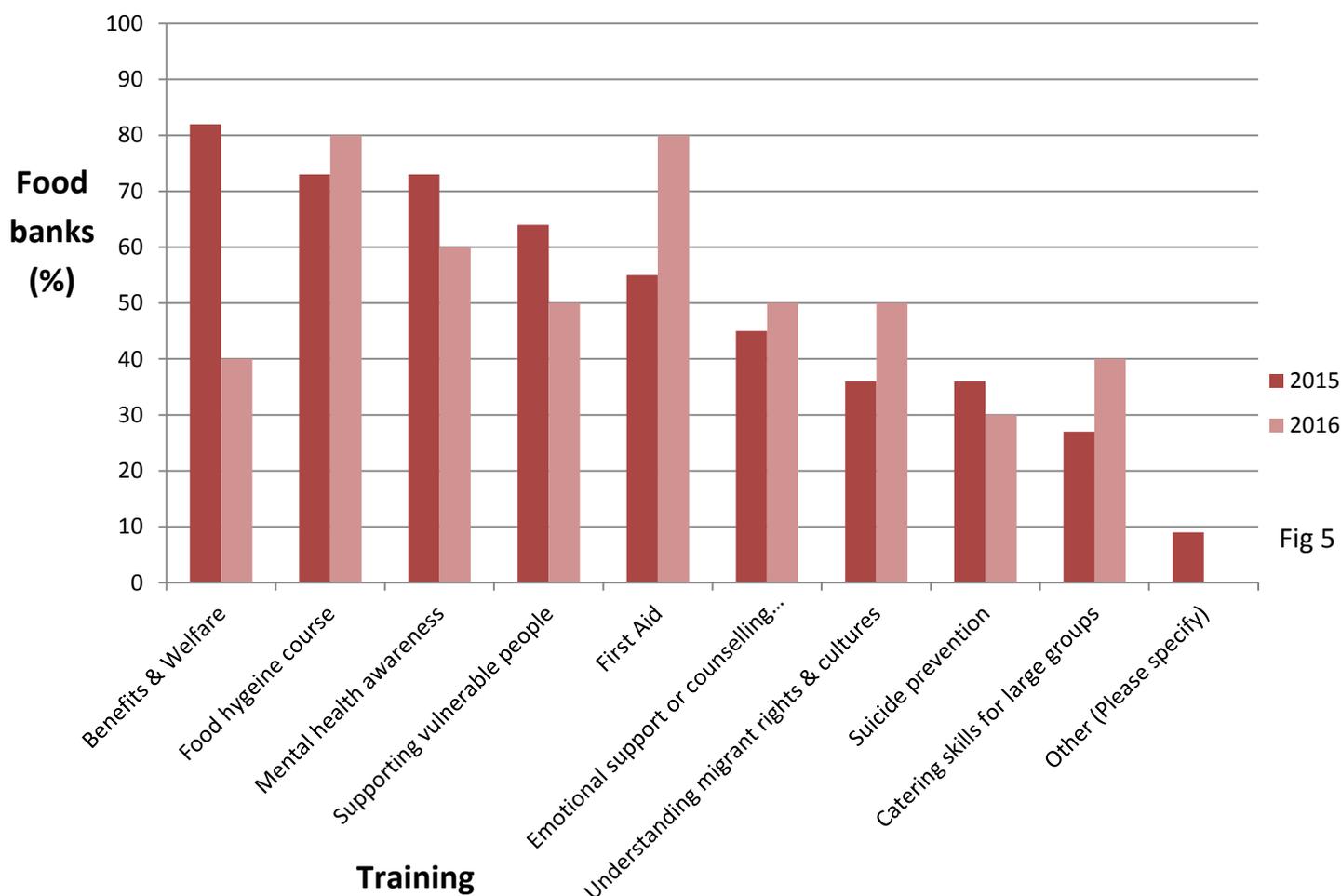


Fig 5

Food Bank Accessibility

An important factor for improving accessibility was better routes for **information about and referrals into food banks**. Bevendean food bank has recently expanded catchment area and wants to generate more referrals from the new Moulsecoomb area, but it was also a general theme, with food banks identifying 'Getting people who really need our service to come in' as a challenge for the next year.

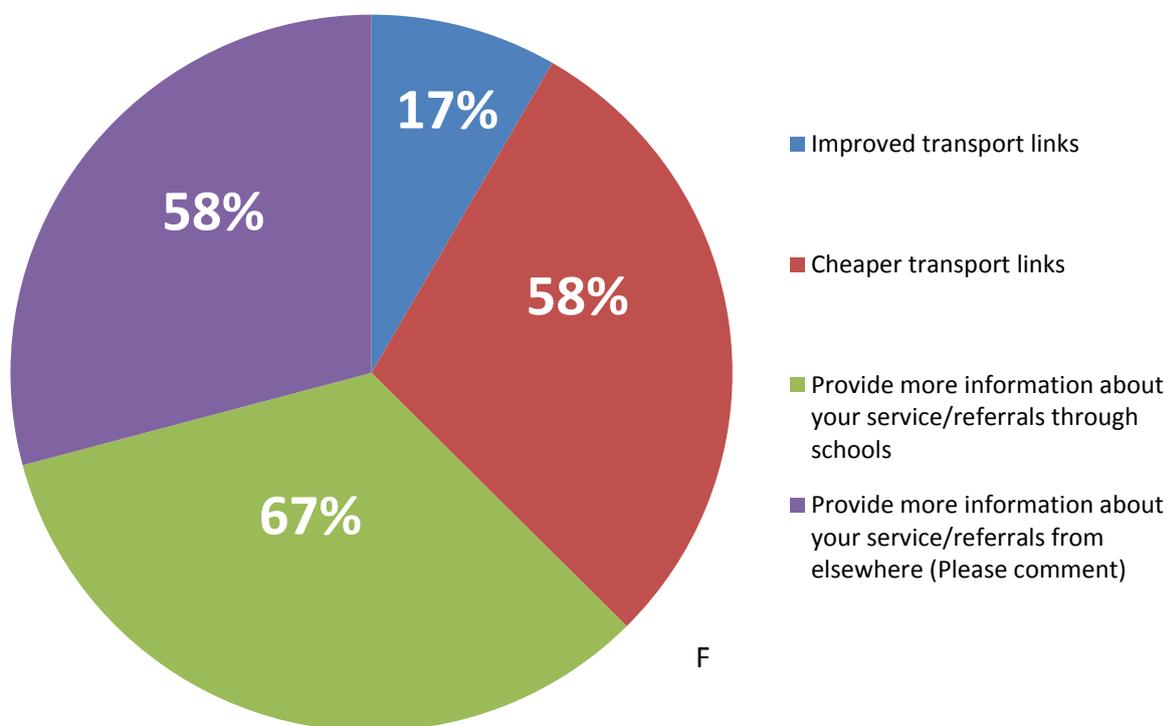
Schools were seen as particularly important potential partners. Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project is already working closely with schools and run **Crafty Lunch** during the school holidays, which offers lunch and activities, **Eight out of 12** food banks agreed that providing more **information about their services and referrals through schools** would help accessibility. There was a request for the food partnership to support work to improve links with schools

The other major factor was transport and seven out of 12 food banks felt cheaper **transport links** could improve accessibility

Other suggestions which food banks made to improve accessibility include:

- Passing on information about the service to other agencies, e.g. citizens advice or job centres
- Doctors could refer more elderly people.
- Produce a citywide leaflet of all the food banks which could be given to referral agencies.

Food banks feel these actions could make their service more accessible to clients:



The future of the Emergency Food Network and support from the Food Partnership

All 13 food banks which answered the question feel it is 'very important' (11) or 'important' (2) that the food banks & Emergency Food Network continues. Suggestions for future meetings include:

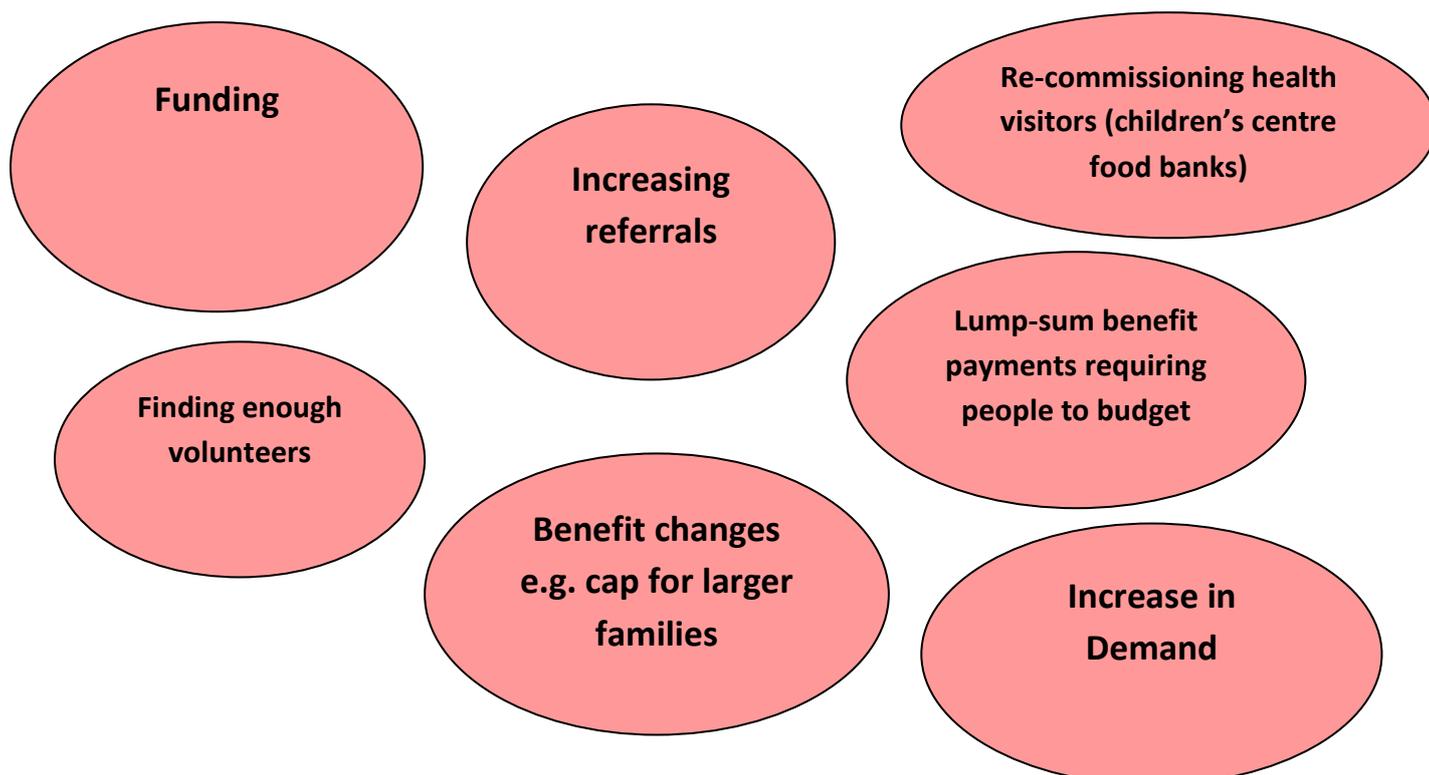
- Information about what is going on citywide.
- Continue to share problems all food banks are experiencing and try to problem solve together.
- To have plenty of opportunity for networking and feedback.
- An opportunity to increase communication with Brighton & Hove City Council – this came up both around information and referrals e.g. communication with social workers and schools (see also above) and around potential funding/bidding processes.

Suggestions for Food Partnership support included:

- Sending people who can inform and educate clients.
- Going into schools and spreading the word about what food banks do.
- Continuing current provision, the community allotment has been really helpful.
- Send out information from meetings for those who can't attend.
- 'We would be interested in having a lunch club but currently don't have the volunteer or staff capacity.'
- 'To continue to chair the meetings, provide a strategic framework into which the food banks sit and provide information and advice which enables us to better deliver our service.'

Finally, looking ahead

We asked food banks to predict their biggest challenge for the next year...



Appendix: Food Banks in Brighton & Hove (see also <http://bhfood.org.uk/referring-to-a-food-bank>)

Food bank	Location	Criteria	Included in this report:
Bevendean Community coffee morning & Food bank	Church Hall, Norwich Drive, BN2 4LA	Drop in for Bevendean residents only. Serving lower & higher Bevendean, Moulsecoomb, Meadowview, Bates Estate, Saunders Park, Lewes Rd corridor.	Yes
Brighton Food Bank	Calvary Church Building, Stanley Road, BN1 4NJ	Referral/ appointment only service – see website.	Yes
Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project	6 Tilbury Place, BN2 0GY	Drop in for cheap lunch or free lunch, small amounts of emergency food if in crisis. Referral required for food parcels.	Yes
Brighton Women’s Centre	72 High Street, BN2 1RP	Can be referred or self refer – See website. Long and short term support.	Yes
Craven Vale Community Centre food bank	17A Hadlow Close, BN2 0FH	Drop in, proof of residency required.	Yes
Faith Alive Ministries	BMECP Centre 10A Fleet Street, BN1 4ZE	All types of Students (inc families) by referral. Bring NUS Card	Yes
Fresh Start Community Centre	131 Lewes Road, BN2 3LG	Registered families only.	No
Hangleton & West Blatchington Food Bank	St George’s Street, BN2 1RP	Referral for Hangleton, Knoll & West Blatchington residents.	Yes
Hove Salvation Army	159 Sackville Road, BN3 3HD	Referrals via phone/email/self refer on Fridays/appointments.	Yes
Moulsecoomb Children’s Centre	Hodshrove Lane, BN2 4SE	Local Children under 5 by referral.	Yes
Purple People Kitchen, Portslade	Victoria Road, BN41 1YF	Referral – see Basics Bank website.	Yes
Roundabout Children’s Centre	Whitehawk Road, BN2 5FL	Local children under 5 by referral.	Yes
Shoreham Food Bank	St John Ambulance Building, BN43 6PA	Referral – See website for agencies.	No
Tarner Children’s Centre	Ivory Place, BN2 9QE	Local children under 5 & pregnant mothers by referral.	Yes
Voices in Exile	St Magdalen Community Centre, BN1 3FH	Refugees / Asylum Seekers drop in.	Yes
Whitehawk Food Bank	St Cuthman’s Church, Whitehawk Way, BN2 5HE	Referral through agencies who issue vouchers for the food bank.	Yes