



Report Summary

The 2024 EFN report finds that thousands of Brighton and Hove residents still need the help of food banks, social supermarkets and community meals.

Our annual survey of food projects reveals 6,297 people need food support each week, with more than half seeking help on an ongoing basis. This is a similar number to the total beneficiaries supported in 2023, but still 18% higher than in 2022.

There are concerns that food insecurity is becoming the new normal. 60 locations across all parts of the city offer food support. Projects are noticing an increase in the numbers of people with mental health issues, Black, Asian & Minoritised Ethnic people, and people in work seeking help. Volunteers and staff can be at risk of burnout due to the high level of need.

The continued level of elevated need, high costs and declining food donations means projects spend £15,770 a week to stock their shelves. This level of expenditure is unsustainable. Half of projects expressed worries about insufficient funds to sustain their operations for the rest of the year. Some food banks have chosen to limit their service only to those in the most urgent crisis.

People will continue to need food banks if underlying issues that mean household incomes don't meet the costs of essentials for housing, food and utilities (negative budgets) are not addressed. Community supermarkets offer longer-term support, but they are not available everywhere. On p16 a case study of a Community Shop shows the impact of food sharing initiatives run by and for the community. There is good practice in the network of linking food support to advice work (see case study p11) and this model of wrap around support is the direction the network plans to go.

Food projects need staff, volunteers, resources, food supply, and funding. Members have again expressed how essential the Household Support Fund is to keep their doors open, but the short-term nature of decisions by Government about extending this support make planning hard.

The Emergency Food Network provides a valuable platform for mutual support. BHFP will continue to co-ordinate the network, to facilitate collaboration between the voluntary and statutory sector whilst also campaigning to end the need for food banks.

BHFP would like to thank all the projects, staff and volunteers involved for their enduring commitment to providing food for people in need, as well as their tireless dedication, enthusiasm, and willingness to support each other.

2024 Headline Stats

The Emergency Food Network survey recorded 48 active food projects

Food support is offered in at least 60 locations across Brighton & Hove.

Over half of respondents did not have funds to cover the rest of 2024

In one week:

6,297 people were supported

- ¼ of those were children.
- Projects noticed an increase in people with mental health issues, Black, Asian & Minoritised Ethnic people, and people in work.
- The main reason by far that projects thought people accessed their food was the increase in costs of living.
- Food projects reported on average 58% of people using their services were doing so indefinitely.

Projects across the city reported £15,770 was spent on food each week. That's £820,040 per year.

Volunteers give over 3,400 hours each week to food projects and surplus food distributors.