

Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023/24

Tackling Food Insecurity in B&NES: Rising to the Challenge

B&NES Health and Wellbeing Board 6 February 2025

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Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Tackling Food Insecurity in B&NES **Rising to the Challenge**

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Background to food insecurity

“Food security is having access at all times to enough food that is both sufficiently varied and culturally appropriate to sustain an active and healthy lifestyle”

The Food Standards Agency



Pregnancy & Neonatal:

- Depression & stress during pregnancy ([12](#)).
- Changes in weight during pregnancy ([13, 14](#)).
- Impact on feeding, health, and mortality in newborns ([12](#)).



Children:

- Impact on mental health, socialising, and behaviour ([15, 16](#)).
- Effect on concentration and poor child development ([16](#)).
- Impaired glucose tolerance and type 2 diabetes in children and adolescents ([17](#)).
- Dental decay ([18](#)).



Adults:

- Increased chronic disease risk including high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and obesity ([19-22](#)).
- Impact on sleep and mental health ([23, 24](#)).
- Three times the rates of disability and long-term health conditions in those attending food banks ([11](#)).

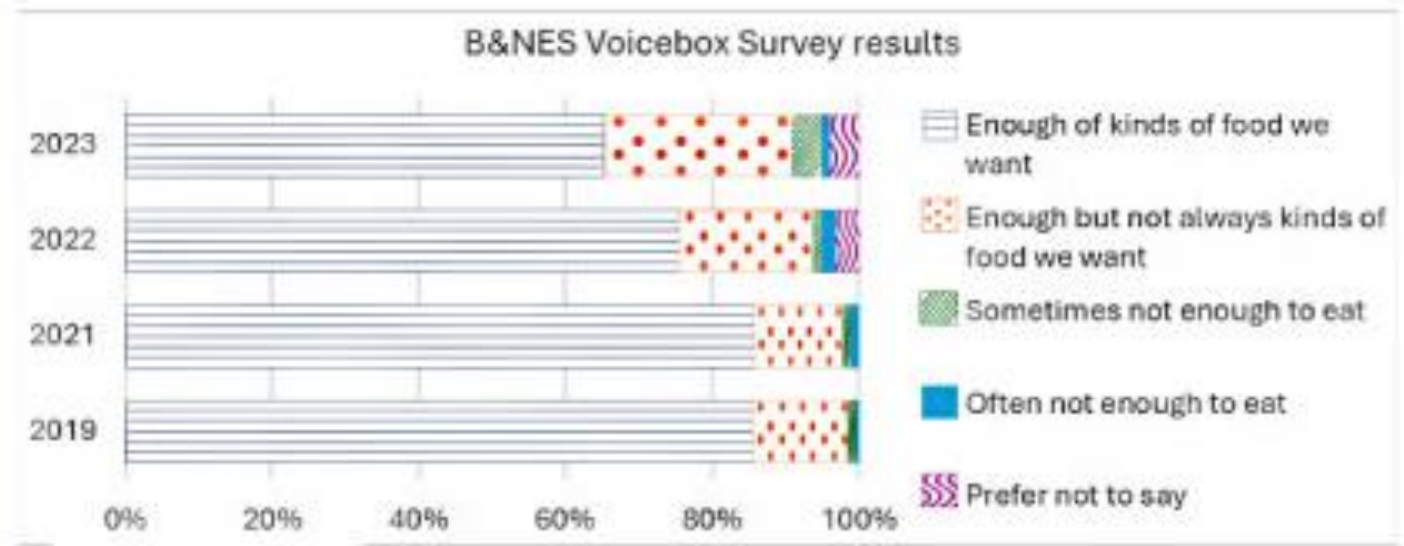


Older adults:

- More vulnerable to effects of malnutrition.
- Limitations in activities of daily living ([19](#)).
- Depression and anxiety ([19](#)).

The local picture on food insecurity

- An increasing number report difficulty in accessing food.
- Research by University of Bath demonstrates a high level of food insecurity in those receiving pension credits.



Food secure Pension Credit
Recipients: 51%

Pension Credit Survey 2023

B&NES Food Bank Activity Trussell Trust 2017/8 to 2022/3

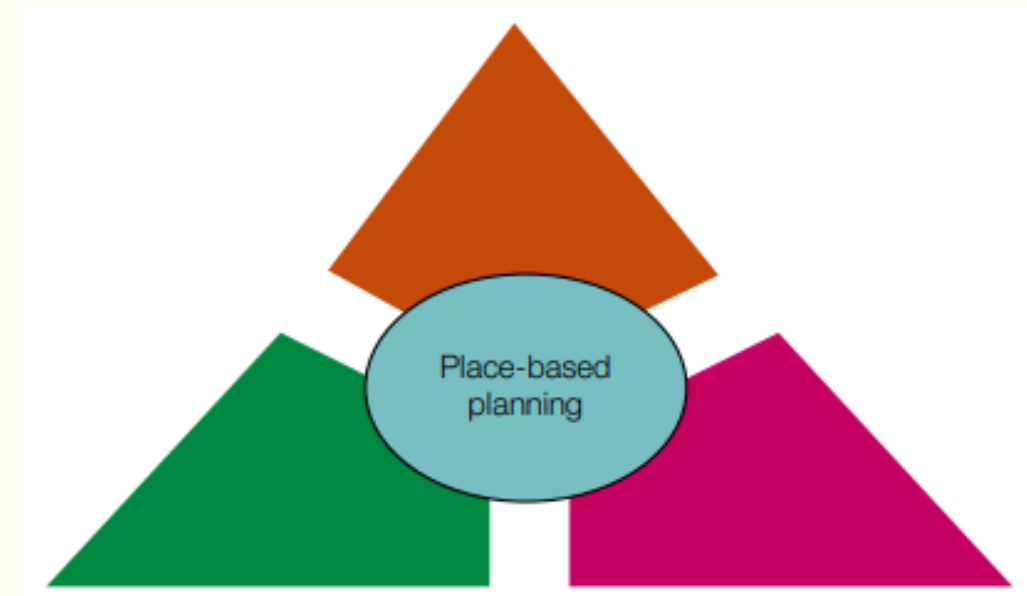


Action taken to address household food insecurity

Civic-level interventions: eg, B&NES economic strategy, corporate strategy, joint HWB strategy, joint special plan work of St John's Foundation,

Service-level interventions: eg, Council Welfare Team, Citizens Advice B&NES, Community Wellbeing Hub, Healthy Start, free school meals, Holiday Activities and Food programme, Affordable Schools Programme.

Community-level interventions: eg, local groups, social networks, the community voice – work of Third Sector members of the Affordable Food Network



Looking forward (and reflecting back)

1

Work effectively through the structure of the Fair Food Alliance to review and fulfil the ambitions of the Food Equity Action Plan and to broaden engagement.

2



Raise awareness and recognition of and embed food security within the Children & Young People's Plan.

3

All partners to support progress on upstream determinants of food insecurity through advocating for action on the universal credit essentials offer, widening criteria for free school meals and opt-out for key benefits.

4

Take forward the conversation with system partners about the development of a local food strategy for B&NES that contributes to addressing household food insecurity, as committed to in the B&NES Economic Strategy 2024-2034.



Discussion: what could members of this Board do to advocate for action to address food insecurity through their spheres of influence?