

Food banks

In 2014-15 foodbanks fed 1,084,604 people nationwide. Of those helped, 396,997 were children. Latest ones set up in hospitals, by cancer charities, the Royal British legion. 44% of referrals to Trussell Trust (the largest with over 1,200 banks) are as a result of benefit delays/changes/sanctions.

Now Ian Duncan Smith (for the government) is sending Jobcentre staff into the food banks, trying to make food banks a permanent part of the collapsing welfare system. But charities, churches and voluntary organisations see themselves as a **temporary solution, a place of last resort**, and may be unwilling to prop up government indefinitely.

And what about those who donate to food banks – how will they view food banks becoming a permanent part of government? The Fabian Society suggests that the government should announce plans to phase them out by 2020.

At Tameside hospital in Manchester, staff will start to hand out food bags to patients about to be discharged who appear malnourished. Hospital staff have seen a sharp rise in the number of patients admitted due to malnutrition, up 15% nationally in the past year. QE hospital in Birmingham opened its own food and clothing bank this year.

Fareham and Gosport Basics bank Sept. 2014 to August 2015

People are referred to foodbanks by different organisations – Social Services, health visitors, Housing departments, Job Centre Plus, Citizens Advice Bureau. In the past year, there were 2,228 referrals, families and individuals. In that period 4,151 people were fed (between 200 and 500 per month).

Approximately 1.7 % of Britain's population had to go to a food bank in 2014/15. To put this into a Gosport context, that represents one and a half children in each year group at Bridgemary school (intake of 90 per year), just over four in each year group at Brune Park (intake of 250) or just under six in each year group at Bay House (intake of 350)

Percentage of children living in poverty in Gosport – Oct-Dec 2013

Gosport: before housing costs – 14.65%	after housing costs – 23.28%
Grange – 23.36%	36.33%
Town - 19.53%	30.91%
Forton - 18.22%	28.26%
B'mary N – 18.33%	28.67%

Nationally, according to government figures, over 13,000,000 people live in poverty – this doesn't look good so the government is abandoning its attempts to measure poverty (those living on or below 60% of the median wage), claiming the data is not accurate enough!

The News has carried reports on foodbanks over the past two years:

Read more: <http://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/food-banks-a-great-solution-or-an-impending-crisis-1-6235880#ixzz3sVygiNjo>

<http://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/fears-that-food-bank-use-could-keep-rising-1-6864330#ixzz3sVwSHVnc>

We know why more people are having to use foodbanks. They are evidence of the Tory government's attack on the poorest families in Britain and a chaotic benefits system. The recent U-turn on tax credits is, sadly, only a temporary victory. Independent assessments suggest that 2.6 million people will lose on average £1,600 each year under Universal Credit.