

FSA research shows growing concern around the cost of food

Two further reports, also published today, show the rising use of food banks and community food providers across our society as well as a call from food banks to have clearer, more accessible advice on handling food safely.

The research finds:

- The cost of food is now a major future concern for three out of four (76%) UK consumers ([UK Public's Interests, Needs and Concerns Around Food project](#)).
- The number of people using a food bank or food charity continues to grow – from around one in ten in March 2021 (9%), to nearly one in six in March 2022 (15%). And over one in five (22%, in March 2022) say they skipped a meal or cut down the size of meals because they did not have enough money to buy food ([Consumer Insights Tracker](#)).
- Volunteers in food banks and other food aid providers need additional advice and support on handling donations, including storing, preparing, and distributing food safely, while avoiding food waste ([Project on Community Food Providers](#)).

Along with publishing this evidence, the FSA is working with businesses to ensure that donating their food is as straightforward as possible, and to support both those who work in food banks, and those who use them, to follow best practice for storing, preparing, and cooking food.

FSA Chair, Professor Susan Jebb, says:

“In the face of the immediate pressures on people struggling to buy food, food banks are playing a vital role in our communities. We are urgently working with industry and other major donors, and food bank charities, to look at what more we can do together to ensure that food which is safe to eat can be redistributed to people who can benefit from this support.”

“Food banks can be a trusted lifeline in the short term, but governments and regulators must also look more widely at other ways to enable people to reliably access safe and healthy food in the long term.”

Steps the FSA is taking include:

- Working with food aid charities including the Independent Food Aid Network and Fareshare to draw together and tailor resources for community food providers, to make them as easy to use as possible.
- We want to build on the strong work already done in partnership with WRAP to ensure that as much surplus food as possible is redistributed to people, rather than going to waste.
- Working with industry, government and charitable organisations to examine and improve the regulatory landscape for food banks and donors, making sure that rules and guidance are as proportionate and effective as possible, and helping to share best practice.

The three research projects and the work the FSA is doing to address the issue of household food insecurity will be discussed at its next Board meeting on 15 June.

The FSA, in collaboration with Defra and the WRAP, have published best practice [surplus food redistribution guidance](#).

Marcus Gover, CEO at WRAP, said:

“WRAP is proud of its longstanding relationship with the FSA and our collaborative work in the Courtauld Commitment redistribution working group.

“We support the FSA’s efforts to address the concerns many of us have around the cost of food. We estimate that more than 200,000 tonnes of surplus food could still be redistributed each year. So, by working together we can increase the redistribution of this food, which will also reduce the environmental impact of our food and help achieve a thriving UK food system for all.”