

What is Cash First and how can it make a difference?

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When it comes to getting food, most of us will choose and buy what we need.



If we can't afford to buy food, we're faced with a far more difficult journey.



First, many of us will put off trying to seek help

Stigma can mean people have not eaten for some time before they eventually find help.

and then there's the journey to the food bank

People may need to walk long distances or spend money to get to a food bank (if they don't deliver). Food banks are only open at specific times.

to repeat the cycle again

If household income is not increased, the cycle is likely to repeat. Sometimes there is also a limit on the number of food bank visits allowed.



you may need to get a referral from a local agency

Many food banks work on a referral only basis and it can be hard to get appointments.

to receive a parcel of food chosen by someone else

Many food banks work hard to offer choices, but this depends on what food is available.

For food bank teams, sourcing food is complex and challenging.

This parcel is made up of donated and surplus food

Food supply can be inconsistent and is dependent on donations and availability. Many food banks will also purchase food.

transported by volunteers

Food is often picked up by volunteers in their own vehicles. Surplus food may not be usable meaning food banks teams then have to dispose this waste.

sorted and packed in the food bank

Donated food is collected, checked for safety and quality, sorted, stored, packed and sometimes transported again before distribution.

to repeat the cycle again

Collectively, food bank teams are distributing food on an industrial scale. Unless lack of income is addressed, the cycle will repeat.



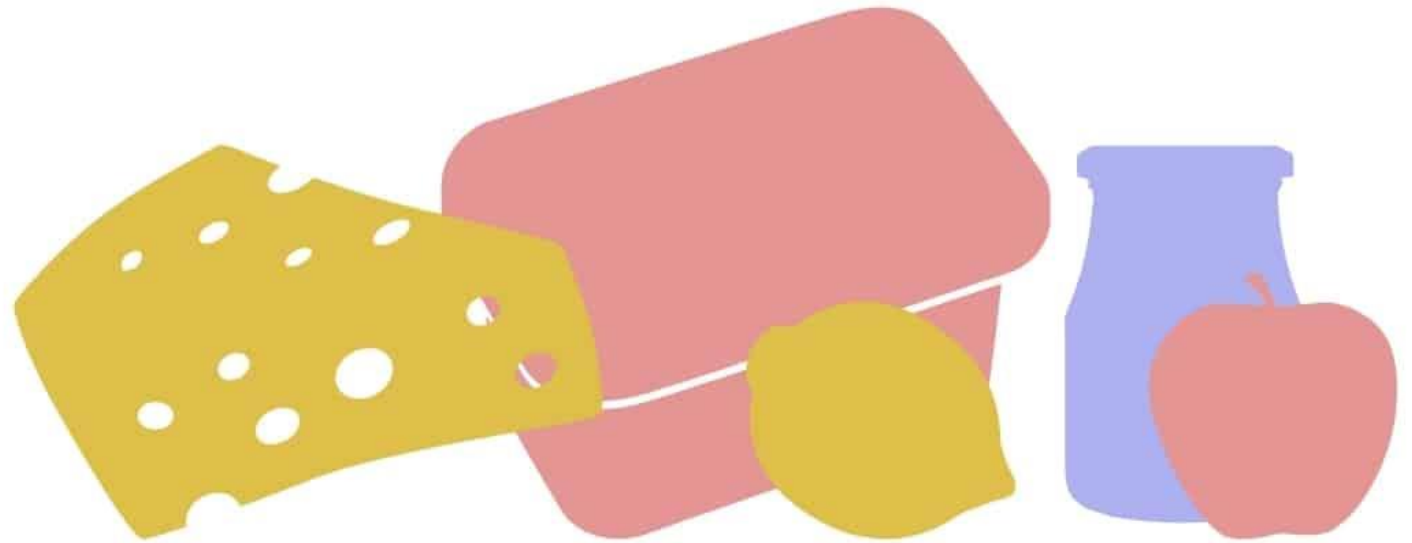
Food parcels can't solve poverty, but raising incomes can.

A #CashFirst approach would mean everyone could afford and choose their own food with dignity.



What is Cash First?

Providing people directly with money and/ or pathways to money when they are facing crisis.



- Offers flexibility and choice
- Dignified form of support
- Effective intervention



Adequate benefit payments, wages and secure work would mean everyone could afford food.

Adequate social security & wages

Ensuring access to cash in a crisis reduces food insecurity and pressure on food banks.

Cash payments via local authority

More dignified, and shifts responsibility away from charitable food aid.

Vouchers/cash via advice agent

Potential for more choice and dignity, still a stop gap measure.

Vouchers/cash via charitable food aid provider

Stop gap measure which does not reach most people in need.

Charitable food aid provider

Such as a food bank, food pantry, social supermarket, larder or soup kitchen.



Advice is key...

Adequate advice and support is fundamental to a cash first approach. Properly funded advice services and referral pathways will ensure everyone can access their full entitlements.

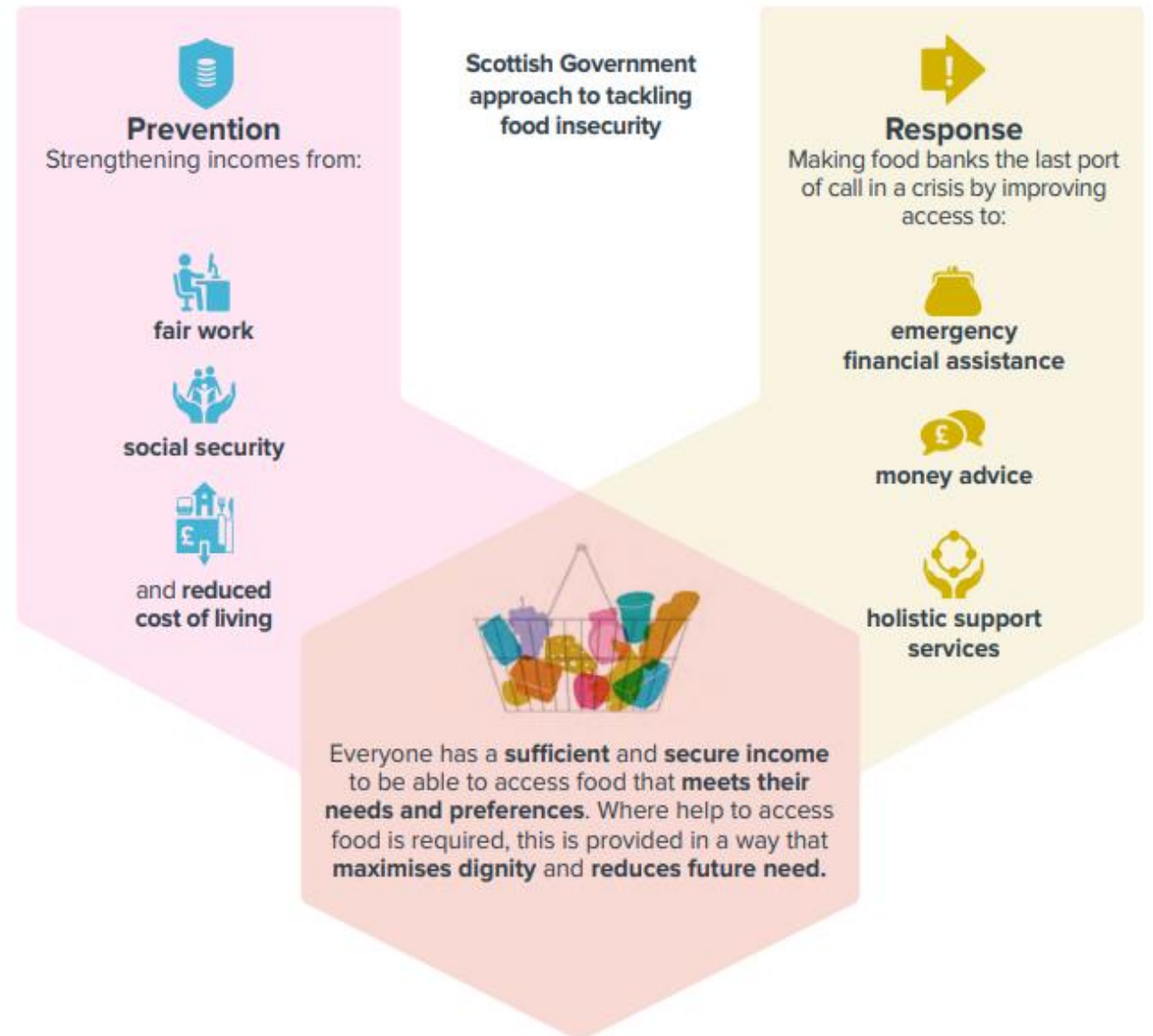
INDEPENDENT
FOOD AID
NETWORK

www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk

Cash-First: Towards Ending the Need for Food Banks in Scotland

“The Scottish Government's ambition is for a Scotland without the need for food banks. A Scotland where everyone has sufficient money to access the essentials they need with dignity and choice.”

The Scottish Government pilot - "Cash-First: Towards Ending the Need for Food Banks in Scotland" - sets out a human rights approach to tackling food insecurity.



Scottish Government Cash-First Pilot

The 2-year Cash-First project will support eight partnerships in different local authorities:

- Aberdeen
- Aberdeenshire
- Orkney
- Edinburgh
- Fife
- Glasgow
- North Lanarkshire
- West Dunbartonshire



Aberdeen Cash First Network

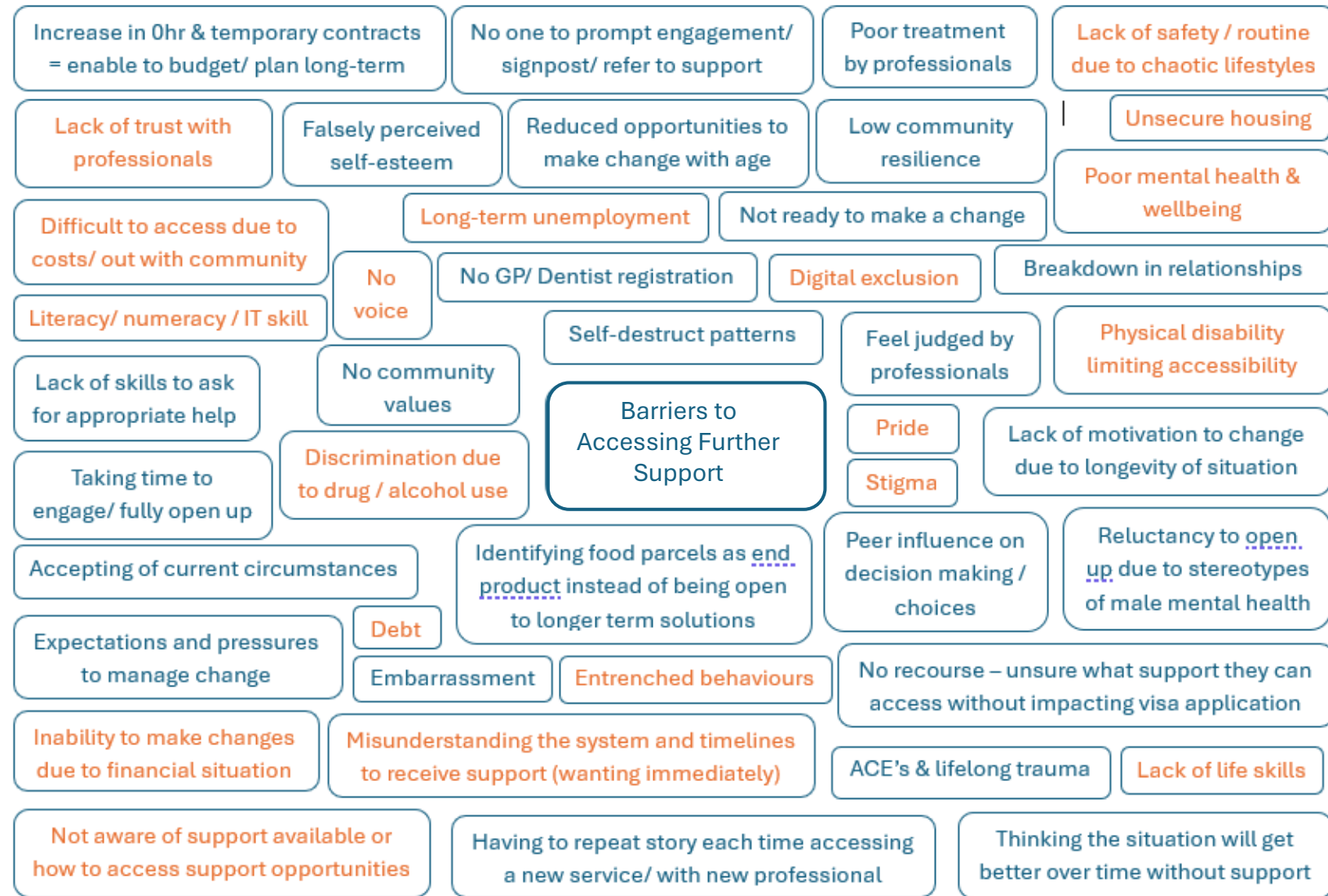
Single males from the age of 18 to 45 who are in receipt of universal credit and have no dependants.

Establish a flexible crisis fund to those facing financial emergency

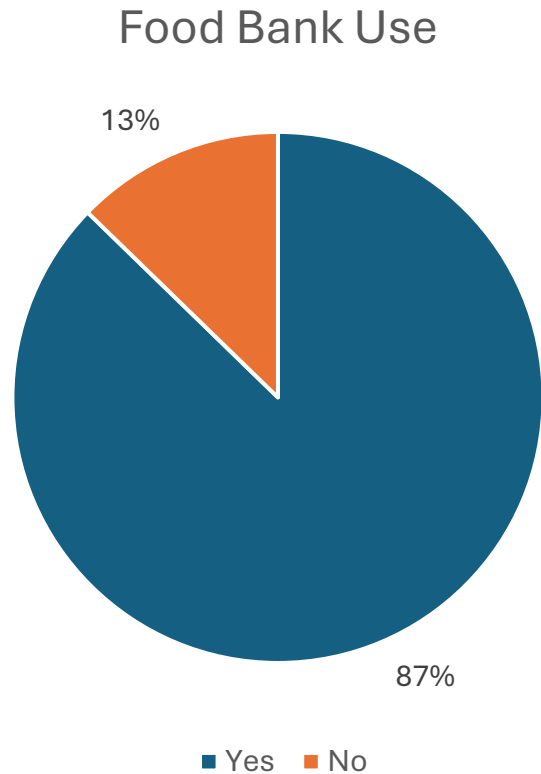
Improve access to financial advice and holistic support opportunities



Lived Experience Voice



Reasons For Food Bank Use



Theme 1: Cost of Living

- Essential items
- Food and pet food
- Bills and utilities
- Transport costs

Theme 2: Debt

- Cost of living debt
- Unpaid credit
- Payday loans
- Drug debt

Theme 3: Employment

- Training costs
- Digital exclusion
- Interview and employment costs
- Literacy, numeracy and IT skills

Theme 3: Benefits

- Sanctions
- Gaps when starting/ transitioning between
- Misunderstanding of the system

Hopes for Cash First

Reduces need and reliance for emergency food provision

Builds financial resilience for individuals

Long-term income optimisation

Long-term impact on individual outcomes

Positive impact on mental health and wellbeing

Improves access and awarenesses of support available

Creating collaboration and communication across third sector

Get in touch

Please contact Amy Duncan, Cash First Network Coordinator at ACVO, with any questions you may have about the project.



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<https://acvo.org.uk/cash-first-project/>