

Response ID ANON-KKJ4-N4PC-9

Submitted to Ending the need for food banks: a draft national plan
Submitted on 2021-12-22 12:33:57

Questions

1 Do you think that the approach outlined is consistent with the vision to end poverty and the need for food banks? Is there anything else you think should be included?

Yes

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

The Scottish Association of Social Work (SASW) is part of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW UK), the largest professional body for social workers in the UK. BASW UK has more than 22,000 members employed in frontline, management, academic and research positions in all care settings. There are over 10,000 registered social workers in Scotland around 1,500 of whom are SASW members. This comprises staff working in local government and the independent sector, across health and social care, education, children and families, justice services, as well as a growing number of independent practitioners.

It is important to understand social work and social care are entirely different professions. Social care is the practical support and assistance provided by social care workers and usually takes the form of personal care, practical support with everyday activities or social support. Social work provides assessment and care management functions, statutory interventions where necessary in peoples' lives and social workers use their skills and training to make use of themselves in a therapeutic relationship with people who need their help. It is with this distinction we provide our response from SASW who represent social workers. When referring to both social work and social care, we suggest "social services" is the best term.

SASW's key aims are:

- Improved professional support, recognition, and rights at work for social workers
- Better social work for the benefit of people who need our services and,
- A fairer society

BASW UK has published its visions for adults' (1) and children's (2) services in 2021. Both documents are based on principles of human rights, early support, consistent resource and being led by people themselves.

SASW recognises the growing evidence base between poverty, child abuse and neglect and between levels of poverty and children's increased chances of formal state intervention. (3,4,5) Social workers work closely with children and families experiencing the impacts of poverty and where formal intervention is necessary, they have a legal duty to do so. As increasing numbers of families live in poverty increasing demands are placed on social workers. Children in the most deprived 10% of UK neighbourhoods are over 10 times more likely to be in out of care than children in the 10% least deprived localities (6) . Deprivation is the largest contributory factor in children's chances of being looked after by the state (7) . Poverty has catastrophic consequences for children and young people greatly reducing their life chances.

Social workers witness first-hand the devastating impact poverty and therefore, food insecurity has on peoples' lives. Worrying about being able to afford food, compromising on quality and quantity of food and experiencing hunger is not acceptable for anyone. SASW believes that everyone has a right to have sufficient food and a secure income to be able to access food that meets their requirements and preferences. Where hardship occurs, and foodbanks have been established community groups, churches and other organisations are to be commended for their community-based response to addressing the destitution people face. Despite this good work foodbanks are not a long-term solution to food insecurity and poverty. SASW supports action to end the need for foodbanks and for people to have secure minimum incomes guarantees that provide food security. Where hardship occurs, coordinated local responses should operate dignified cash first approaches and access to other support services such as money advice and social work support.

(1) A Vision for Social Work: Adults (basw.co.uk), Feb 2021

(2) A Vision for Social Work: Children and Families (basw.co.uk), Feb 2021

(3) Beddoe, L. and Keddell, E. (2016) Informed outrage: tackling shame and stigma in poverty education in social work. *Ethics and Social Welfare*. 10(2): 149-162
Erger, L. M. and Waldfogel, J. (2011) Economic determinants and consequences of child maltreatment' OECD Social, Employment and Migration. Working Papers No. 111. Washington: OECD Publishing

(4) Bywaters, P., Bunting, L., Davidson, G., Hanratty, J., Mason, W., McCartan, S. & Steils, N. (2016) The relationship between poverty, child abuse and neglect: a rapid evidence review London: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

(5) Pelton, L. H. (2015) 'The continuing role of material factors in child maltreatment and placement'. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 41, 30-39.

(6) Morris, K., White, S. Doherty, P. and Warwick, L. (2015) Out of time: theorising family in social work practice. *Child and Family Social Work*. doi: 10.1111/cfs.12257

(7) CWIP (2017) Identifying and Understanding Inequalities in Child Welfare Intervention Rates: comparative studies in four UK countries. Briefing Paper 2: UK Four Country Quantitative Comparison, Coventry: Coventry University www.coventry.ac.uk/CWIP

2 Do you think that the actions underway will help to reduce the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity?

Yes

3 Do you think that the suggestions for what more we plan to do will help to reduce the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity?

Yes

4 Is there anything else that you think should be done with the powers we have at a national or local level to reduce the need for food banks as a primary response to food insecurity?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

YES – the actions underway will help to reduce the need for foodbanks as a primary response to food insecurity. Resourcing the implementation of this activity will be crucial and will demonstrate the commitment to eradicate the foodbank model and replace with dignified alternatives. Food insecurity and hardship through poverty is the result of political decisions. Responsibility for employment law and most welfare benefits, in particular work-related benefits, and immigration sit at a UK level. The relationship between these policy areas and poverty is well documented and requires cross cutting responses UK wide.

YES – The suggestions and list of activity will help but poverty will continue if the welfare system in the UK fails to provide people with adequate resources to meet regular living costs that prevent them being forced to choose between eating and heating for example. SASW particularly welcomes the identification of those groups of people most at risk from food poverty and recognition of particular issues faced by those with protected characteristics and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

The Scottish Government should continue to mitigate where possible policies that contribute to poverty and increase inequality and discrimination. They should ensure that devolved policy decisions do no further harm. The current inhumane system where refugees and asylum seekers have no recourse to public funds and are left destitute should be abolished The Scottish Government should help asylum seekers and refugees who have no recourse to public funds in any way they can.

5 Do you have any views on how we intend to measure impact, and what would give you confidence that we are moving in the right direction?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

Measuring impact should include both qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods and analysis. There should be evidence of a steady reduction in the number of foodbanks as the need for using them decreases when the alternative initiatives and mitigations take effect. Where people need to access holistic services as described in the consultation, the demand on these should be closely monitored and they should be adequately funded. A clear timeline mapping out milestones en-route to desired change is needed with adequate resources to ensure effective implementation. People with lived experience of food insecurity should be central to impact assessment

6 Is there anything else that you think should be considered in the development of this plan?

Please provide your comments in the text box below:

Many responses to food insecurity are locally based and rely on volunteers, compassionate citizens and kindness as people help each other. This has benefited citizens who receive support from foodbanks but also those who provide it and have signposted and supported people to get the additional help they need. It will be important to harness this to ensure relationships, support networks and capacity that has been built in communities where people help each other is not lost when food banks are no longer required.

About you

What is your name?

Name:

Anne-Marie Monaghan

What is your email address?

Email:

Anne-Marie.Monaghan@basw.co.uk

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

The Scottish Association for Social Work

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response only (without name)

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

I confirm that I have read the privacy policy and consent to the data I provide being used as set out in the policy.

I consent

Evaluation

Please help us improve our consultations by answering the questions below. (Responses to the evaluation will not be published.)

Matrix 1 - How satisfied were you with this consultation?:

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.:

Matrix 1 - How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?:

Very satisfied

Please enter comments here.: