



University of
BRISTOL



The rise of food banks in schools in England

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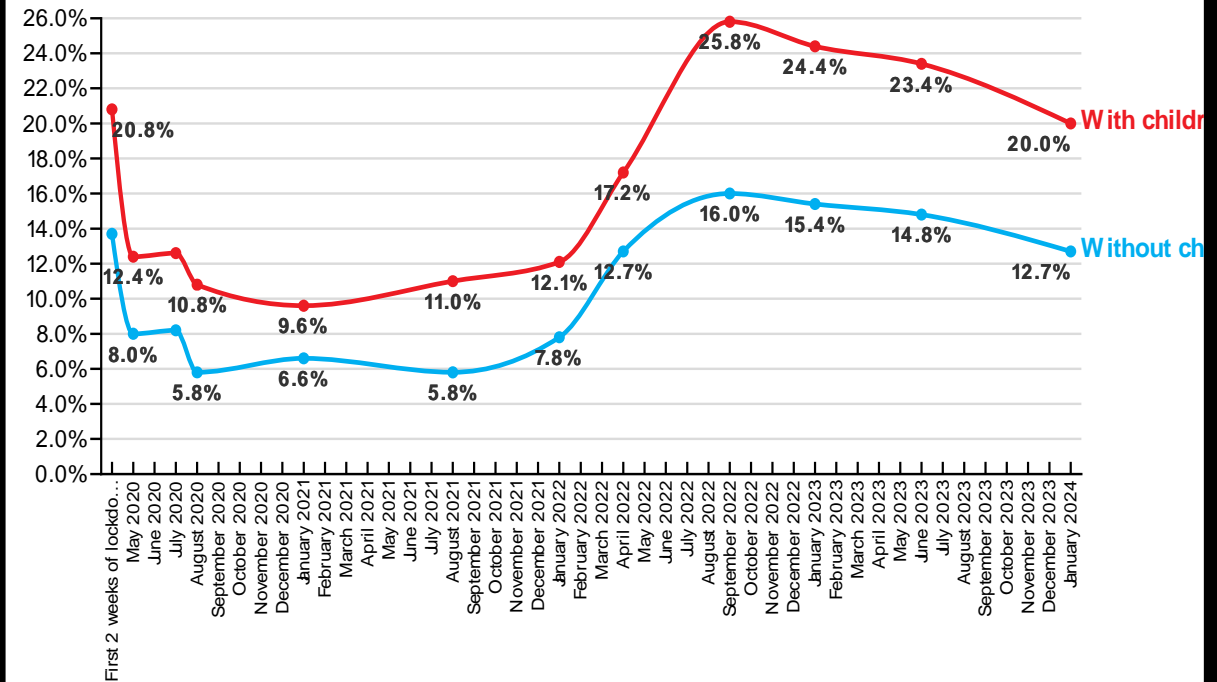
CHILD FOOD INSECURITY IN THE UK

- a) 3.5 million children living in food insecure* households in the UK.
- b) 1 million children in poverty don't qualify for FSMs because the income threshold is so low.
- c) 'Food insecurity is toxic for our children and a threat to the future of our next generation' (Viner 2021).

*'Household food insecurity, defined in high-income countries as "the uncertainty and insufficiency of food availability and access that are limited by resource constraints, and the worry or anxiety and hunger that may result from it"' (Loopstra et al 2019)

20.0% of households with children reported experiencing food insecurity compared with 12.7% of households without children

Percentage of households experiencing food insecurity* :



HUNGER, FOOD INSECURITY AND SCHOOLING

1. Hunger and poor diet negatively impact on a range of developmental, psycho-social, and educational outcomes (Jyoti 2005; Heflin et al 2020).
2. It is also likely to compound the broader negative impacts of poverty and disadvantage on children's life chances.
3. Food insecurity also has a significant negative effect on parent's mental health which in turn negatively impacts on parent's relationships with their children (Goodman et al 2011).
4. Research has underlined the important roles that educational institutions play in providing free school meals and, more recently, Breakfast Clubs to tackle food insecurity and poverty (Lambie-Mumford and Sims 2018).
5. Broader political and economic consequences?

FOOD BANKS IN SCHOOLS...

The logo for 'Teacher tapp' is displayed on a teal rectangular background. The word 'Teacher' is written in a clean, white, sans-serif font. Below it, the word 'tapp' is written in a white, handwritten-style font, with a small dash at the end of the second 'p'.

Key questions:

1. How many school-based food banks are there?
2. Where can we find them?
3. To what extent do they reflect the socio-economic intake of schools?

Data source:

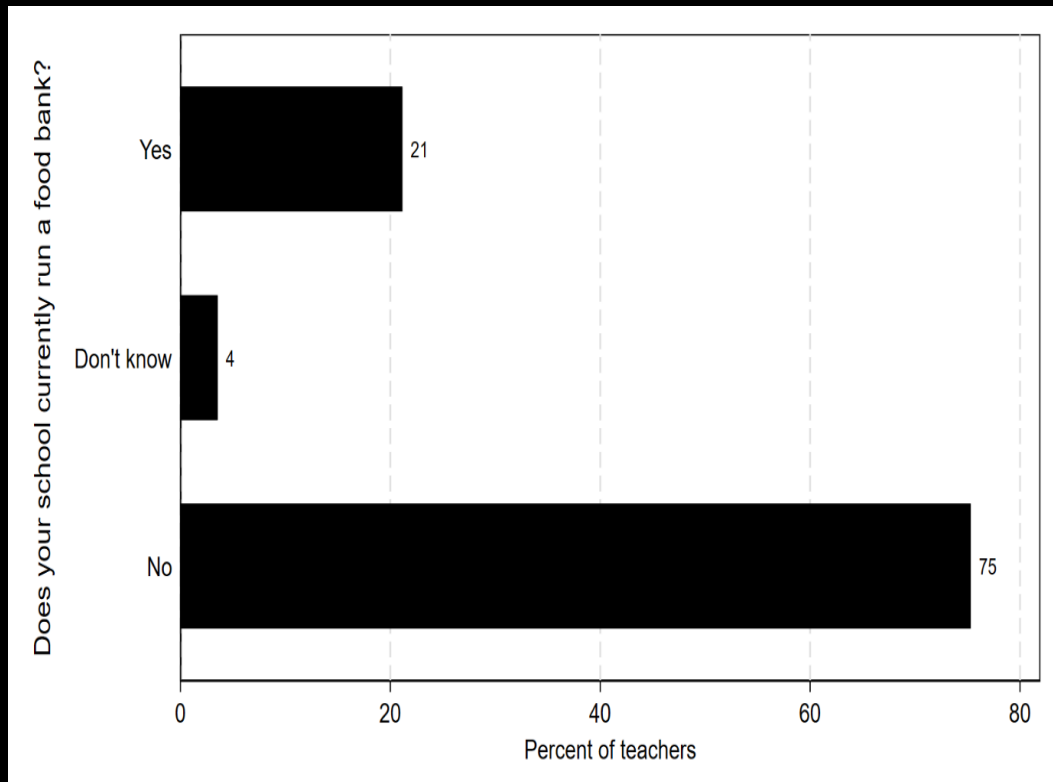
Teacher tapp – micro-survey app.

Using nationally representative survey data (n= 8,665) from teachers in England.

‘Q. Does your school run a food bank?’

Asked in May 2023 and November 2023.

HOW MANY SCHOOL-BASED FOOD BANKS ARE THERE?

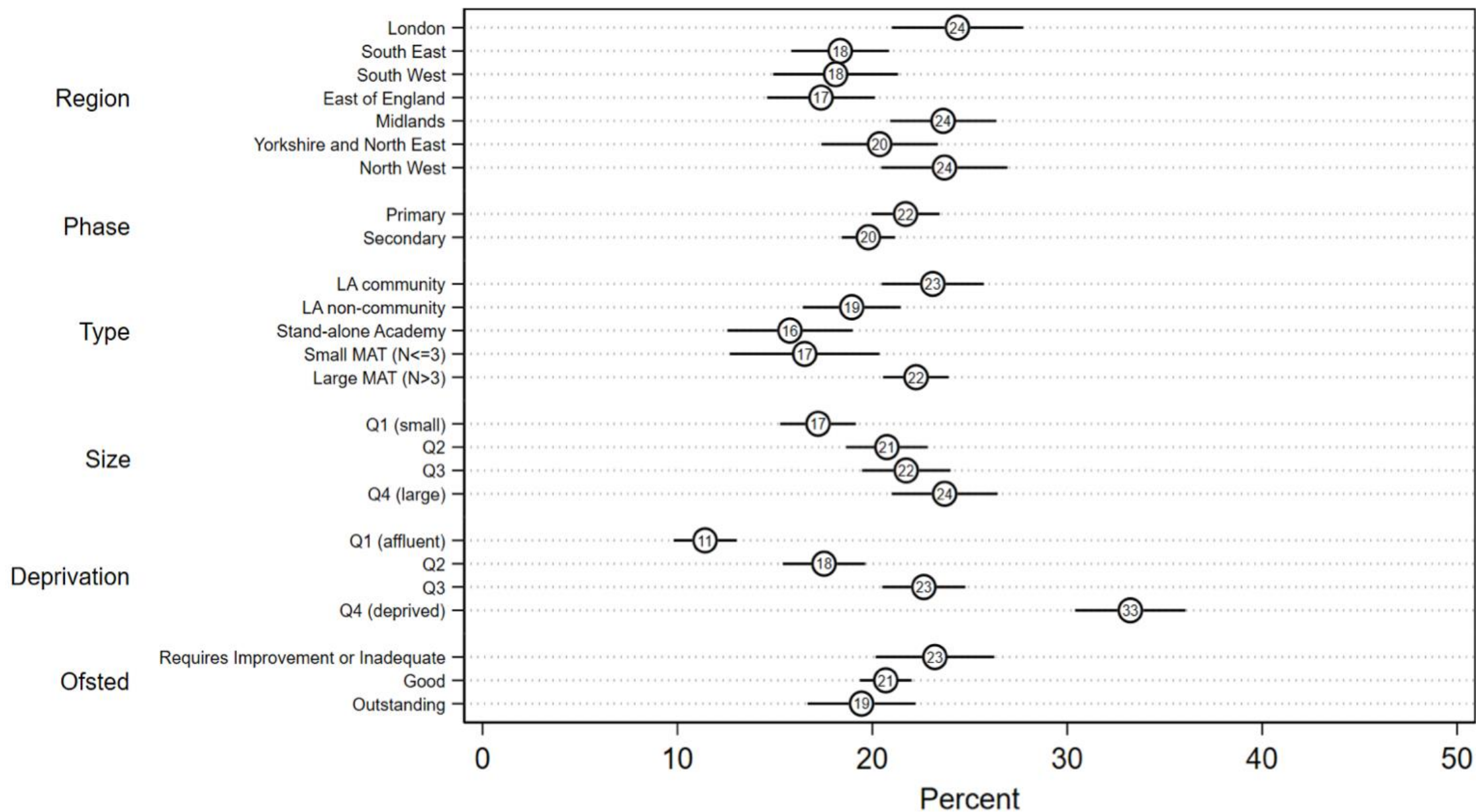


If 21% of schools in England have a food bank that's about 4250 schools.

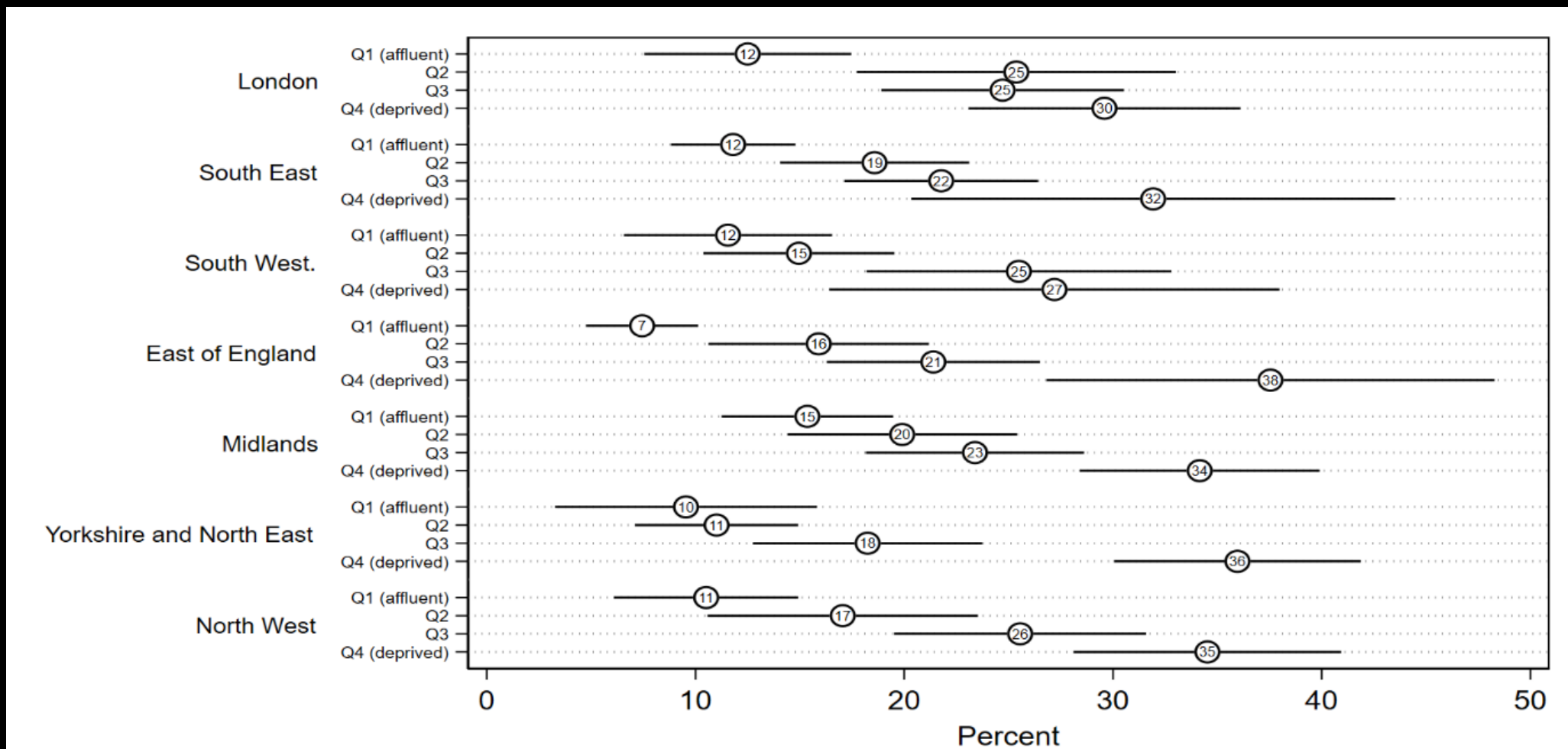
That means **there are now more foodbanks *inside* of schools than *outside* of schools.**

There are 1600 Trussell Trust foodbanks and 1200 foodbanks run by the Independent Food Aid Network

Figure 2. Percentage of teachers who say their school runs a food bank with 95% confidence interval, by school characteristic.



TO WHAT EXTENT DO THEY REFLECT THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTAKE OF SCHOOLS?



HOW AND WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

I'm investigating the rise of *food banks* in schools and consider its broader educational, social and political significance. In addition to the quantitative data, I'm also:

Gathering rich qualitative data from those involved in organising, running, and using food banks in schools:

- (i) In-depth semi-structured interviews with teachers and relevant school staff (n=35)
- (ii) and also parents.

Significant focus on Bristol but also gathering data in other parts of the country (e.g. London, Liverpool, Leicester). Typically, schools that serve working class and low-income families. Mixture of primary and secondary schools

MAIN ARGUMENT – A THEORY OF FOOD CHARITY IN EDUCATION

A1. It reflects how schools are having to act as a ‘fourth emergency service’. COVID-19 and cost-of-living crisis

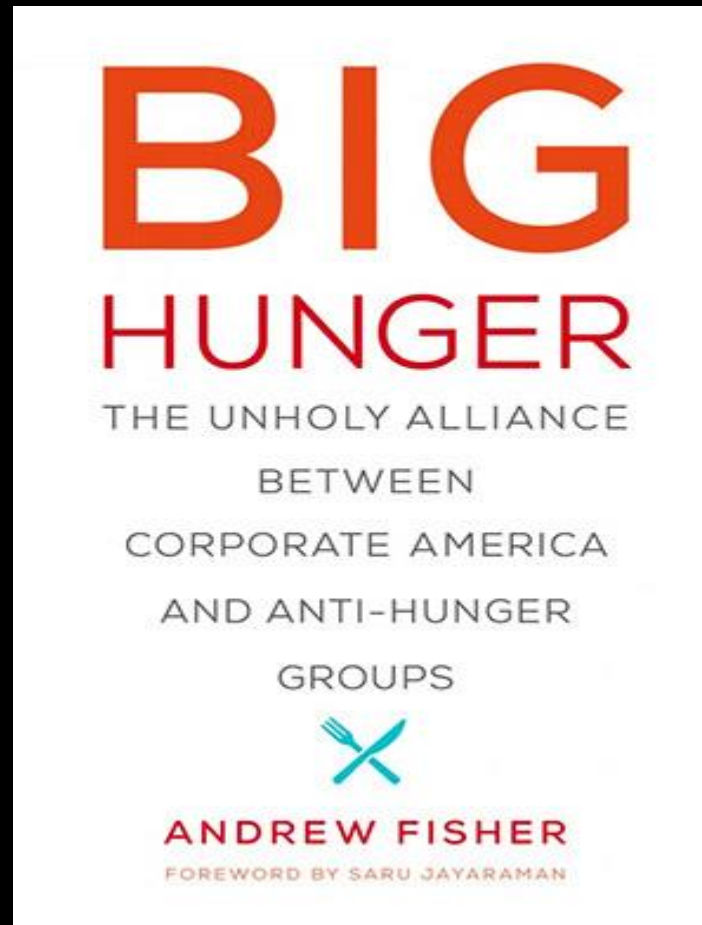
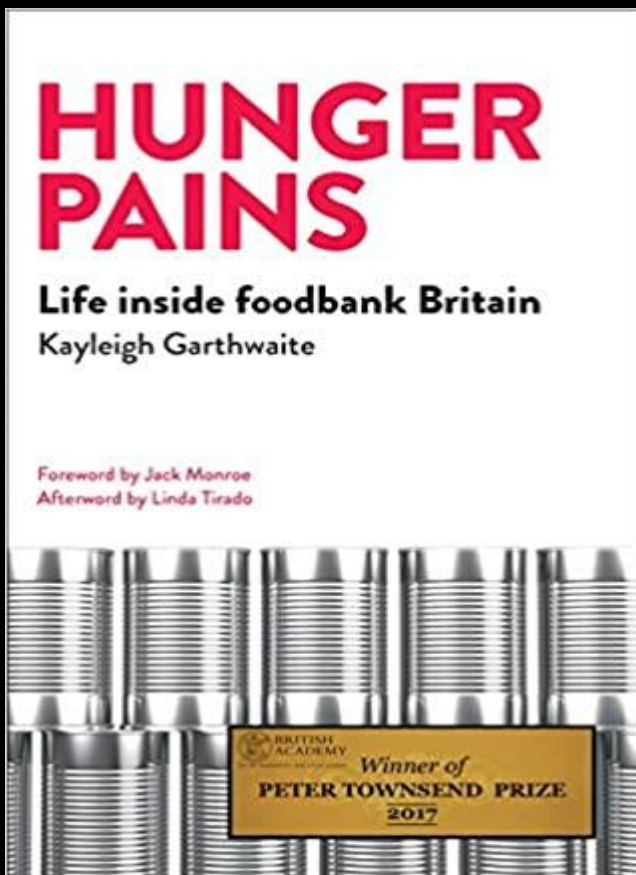
A2. Longer term processes: austerity, shrinking social safety net, neo-liberal forms of governance.

A3. The continued growth of food bank Britain.

A4. A new way in which businesses, the third sector, and charitable organisations are being further integrated into England’s contemporary educational landscape

A5. charitable outsourcing: where governments in many wealthy nations are outsourcing welfare activities and provision to non-state actors

THE RISE OF FOOD BANK BRITAIN...



‘...a story of ‘left-over’ food for ‘left behind’ people enduring the pain of stigma and the loss of human dignity’ (Riches 2018: 2)

‘foodbanks provide a lifeline to those using them, they are picking up the pieces of a broken social security safety net’ (Garthwaite 2016: 14).

WHY ARE SCHOOLS SETTING UP FOOD BANKS?

1. Increased need associated with poverty and cost of living crisis.
2. Food aid/charity sector is now so well developed it makes it much easier to set them up (connects to austerity)
3. Schools taking on increasing responsibilities for making sure families basic needs are met
4. Way of building relationships with vulnerable and marginalised families

‘...But she had a daughter in year six, and mum was crying. She was pregnant at home. And she had one jacket, potato for tea and no cereal. They had no cereal for breakfast. And the daughter had said to her ‘Mum, but they’ll help us in our school’....’They help with all sorts of stuff mum

HOW DO THEY WORK IN SCHOOLS?

1. They vary significantly in size and scope (also not always called food banks)
2. Many have relationships with FareShare, supermarkets and local business
3. Food available in school but also dropped off to families
3. Staff (generally NOT teachers) take on significant extra responsibilities to do this work
4. Some are 'public'/open to all and some are more focused 'under the table'.
5. Focus on 'waste' rather charity.

THE STATE, INTERNATIONAL LAW, AND THE RIGHT TO FOOD

1. The right to food in international law is part of the right to an adequate standard of living, first laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), article 25, and in treaties such as the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 27.
2. Article 11(1) of ICESCR (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) stipulates that state parties recognise the "right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing, housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The State Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realisation of this right."
3. The right to food is the right to **have regular, permanent and unrestricted** access—either directly or by means of **financial purchases**— to quantitatively and qualitatively **adequate and sufficient** food corresponding to the **cultural traditions** of the people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensure a **physical and mental**, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life **free of fear**.