Disabled people’s views on barriers to food support in Surrey

Foreword by Nikki Roberts, CEO of Surrey Coalition of Disabled People

Earlier this year we released a report into how the Cost of Living crisis is disproportionately affecting Disabled People.

This report highlighted how Disabled People are struggling to pay their energy bills and their food bills, with some people skipping meals or not being able to put their heating on.

Our report highlighted that our members were not accessing food banks. We were keen to delve a little bit deeper to understand the barriers to accessing food banks so we could help to improve access.

Thanks so much to our members that completed the surveys, it really helps to focus our efforts in the right places so we can have the biggest impact.

As we move into the Autumn, we’ll be sharing as much information as we can on services that may be able to help.

With very best wishes

Nikki

Introduction

Disabled people and people with long-term health conditions may face additional expenses, such as equipment, therapies, insurance, and heating bills – also known as the "disability price tag." These extra costs can significantly diminish the amount of money that disabled households have left for other expenses, increasing their chances of financial difficulties and food insecurity. According to Turn2Us, every £100 earned by a disabled person only equates to £67 in spending power.

The Coalition's report on the cost of living crisis revealed that 97% of members surveyed had been adversely affected by living costs, with 43% unable to afford additional expenses related to their impairments.

Shockingly, 45% reported that they had gone without food. Between July 2022 and July 2023, The Coalition distributed £250 food vouchers to 443 disabled households on behalf of the UK Government's Household Support Fund.

Here are some statistics on food support that provide a national overview:

* Disabled people experience food insecurity at a rate of over 26%, which is nearly three times higher than the rate for non-disabled people (10%) (The Trussell Trust, 2023).
* 1 in 4 disabled individuals have gone without a meal because they couldn't afford it (Leonard Cheshire, 2022).
* According to The Trussell Trust, more than 6 out of 10 working-age individuals referred to food banks in early 2020 were disabled.

Methods

Between July and August 2023, The Coalition conducted an online survey to gauge the views of disabled individuals on food support in Surrey, and whether it was accessible. The survey was promoted through the Coalition's newsletter and social media, and received 25 responses from disabled individuals across 9 of Surrey's 11 boroughs/districts.

Limitations

It's important to note that the statistics mentioned above only account for residents classified as disabled under The Equality Act (2010), and who received emergency food parcels from The Trussell Trust food banks. Moreover, some boroughs/districts have not been recorded in these figures. As a result, the actual figures on food support use by disabled people in Surrey could be higher than reported.

Findings

32% previously accessed food banks, food clubs and/or community cupboards

72% did not know what food support was available in their area.

62.5% were unable to find information easily

Food banks provided parcels that catered to the specific dietary needs of 3 individuals.

However, some participants expressed uncertainty about whether food banks could accommodate for wheat-free, gluten-free, or diabetic diets.

Individuals who have utilized food support in the past have noted a few obstacles to accessing these resources. These include difficulties with accessibility, complicated referral processes, and the stigma associated with seeking assistance.

Findings from our survey indicated that transportation was the main barrier for individuals who had not previously sought food assistance. Additional challenges included navigating the referral process, feelings of shame, and the belief that others may be more deserving.

In the survey, a participant mentioned being housebound, while another expressed feeling "overwhelmed" at the idea of preparing a meal and anxious about leaving their residence.

59% cannot travel to food banks.

96% would prefer to receive food bank deliveries.

One participant told us: “I suffer severe anxiety at leaving my home for any reason so being able to travel to these sites depends on being able to get into the right state of mind.” Another said: “[I can] only [go] if someone drives me there.”

Conclusion

The results of our survey reveal significant challenges that disabled individuals experience when seeking food support in Surrey.

The Coalition is joining forces with Surrey County Council and local food banks throughout Surrey to ensure accessibility for those with disabilities. Furthermore, The Coalition will continue promoting food banks and other food resources to their members, raising awareness about these crucial services. A list of Surrey’s food support has been compiled at the end of this report. It can be accessed on The Coalition’s website and on Google Maps.

Resources

Food Support and Warm Welcomes in Surrey

Available to view on Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1J7CbkTRiUM_2YZTiCBo49UTe9CDhZCY&hl=en&ll=51.30813723240078%2C-0.5325426999999872&z=10>

Food Banks:

Epsom and Ewell Food Banks   
For more information, please visit: epsomewell.foodbank.org.uk

Woking Food Banks   
For more information, please visit: woking.foodbank.org.uk/locations

Farnham Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: farnham.foodbank.org.uk

Cobham Area Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: cobhamarea.foodbank.org.uk

Stanwell Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: [www.stanwellfoodbank.org.uk](http://www.stanwellfoodbank.org.uk)

Dorking Area Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: dorkingarea.foodbank.org.uk

Runnymede Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: runnymede.foodbank.org.uk

Food Bank at St Matthews, Redhill   
For more information, please visit: redhillfoodbank.org.uk

Loveworks Food Banks at Redhill and Reigate   
For more information, please visit: [www.loveworks.org.uk/food-banks](http://www.loveworks.org.uk/food-banks)

St Mark’s Food Bank, Godalming   
For more information, please visit: parishofgodalming.org.uk/st-marks-food-bank

Godalming Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: godalmingcommunitystore.org

Cranleigh Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: [www.cranleighfoodbank.org](http://www.cranleighfoodbank.org)

Ash Villages Food Parcels Covers Ash, Ash Green, Ash Vale and Tongham   
Please contact 07730609446

North Guildford Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: northguildfordfoodbank.co.uk

Chilworth Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: [www.parishofchilworth.org.uk/news/parish-news/foodbank.php](http://www.parishofchilworth.org.uk/news/parish-news/foodbank.php)

Farnborough Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: farnborough.foodbank.org.uk

Salvation Army, Guildford   
For more information, please visit: [www.salvationarmy.org.uk/guildford](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/guildford)

Salvation Army, Aldershot   
For more information, please visit: [www.salvationarmy.org.uk/aldershot](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/aldershot)

Jubilee Church, Shepperton   
For more information, please visit: [www.jubileechurchshepperton.org/Groups/288096/Bags\_of\_Food.aspx](http://www.jubileechurchshepperton.org/Groups/288096/Bags_of_Food.aspx)

Mascot Hub, Woking   
For more information, please visit: [www.mascotwoking.org.uk/activities](http://www.mascotwoking.org.uk/activities)

Open Hands, Reigate   
For more information, please visit: [www.openhandsreigate.com/food-parcel-request](http://www.openhandsreigate.com/food-parcel-request)

Surplus to Supper, Sunbury   
For more information, please visit: [www.surplustosupper.org](http://www.surplustosupper.org)

Salvation Army, Woking   
For more information, please visit: [www.salvationarmy.org.uk/woking](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/woking)

New Life Church, Woking   
For more information, please visit: newlifewoking.com/foodbank

St Silvans Area Charity Covers Caterham, Oxted, Godstone, Lingfield, Edenbridge and surrounding villages   
For more information, please visit: www.stsilvans.org.uk

The Village Centre’s Food Bank, Runnymede   
For more information, please visit: [www.villagecentre.org.uk/group/runnymede-foodbank](http://www.villagecentre.org.uk/group/runnymede-foodbank)

Purley Masjid’s Food Bank, Purley   
For more information, please visit: purleymasjid.com/food-bank

Bisley and West End Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: bisleywestendfoodbank.org

Byfleet Methodist Church Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: [www.byfleetmethodist.org.uk/foodbank.htm](http://www.byfleetmethodist.org.uk/foodbank.htm)

Salvation Army, Addlestone   
For more information about ‘Tin-A-Week’, please visit: [www.salvationarmy.org.uk/addlestone](http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/addlestone)

Kingston Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: kingston.foodbank.org.uk

Hart Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: hart.foodbank.org.uk

Haslemere Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: haslemerefoodbank.com

East Elmbridge Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: eastelmbridge.foodbank.org.uk

Caterham Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: caterham.foodbank.org.uk

MANNA Food Bank, Spelthorne   
For more information, please visit: [www.mannafoodbank.co.uk/home](http://www.mannafoodbank.co.uk/home)

St Saviours, Sunbury   
For more information, please visit: [www.stsavs.org/foodbank](http://www.stsavs.org/foodbank)

The BESOM, Camberley   
For more information, please visit: [www.thebesomincamberley.com](http://www.thebesomincamberley.com)

Horley Food Bank   
For more information, please visit: [www.horleyfoodbank.com/home2.html](http://www.horleyfoodbank.com/home2.html)

Community Fridges and Cupboards

The Village Centre, Egham   
Mondays and Fridays, 9 - 11   
For more information, please visit: [www.villagecentre.org.uk/group/community-fridge](http://www.villagecentre.org.uk/group/community-fridge)

The Vine Centre, Aldershot   
Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10:00 - 13:00   
For more information, please visit: [www.thevinecentre.org.uk/more-than-a-food-bank-aldershot](http://www.thevinecentre.org.uk/more-than-a-food-bank-aldershot)

Canalside Community Fridge,   
Woking Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:00 - 13:00   
For more information, please visit: linktr.ee/canalsidecommunityfridge

Hale Community Fridge   
Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 12:00 - 13:30   
For more information, please visit: [www.halecommunitycentre.org.uk/what-we-do/community-fridge-cupboard](http://www.halecommunitycentre.org.uk/what-we-do/community-fridge-cupboard)

Dorking Goodwyns   
Mondays & Wednesdays, 14:30 - 15:30   
For more information, please visit: midsurreycommunityfridges.co.uk

Dorking Town Centre   
Monday - Fridays   
For more information, please visit: midsurreycommunityfridges.co.uk

Zero Community Fridge, Guildford   
10:30 - 13:00, Tuesdays at St Nicolas Church & Thursdays at Quaker Meeting House

Boxhill, Tadworth   
Tuesdays, 13:30 - 14:00   
For more information, please visit: midsurreycommunityfridges.co.uk

Hurst Green Community Fridge at St Agatha’s Hall, Hurst Green   
Wednesdays, 11:15 - 12:30   
For more information, please visit: www.facebook.com/HurstGreenandOxtedCommunityFridge

Leatherhead   
Wednesdays and Thursdays, 13:00 - 14:00   
For more information, please visit: midsurreycommunityfridges.co.uk

South Bookham   
Thursdays at 13:00   
For more information, please visit: midsurreycommunityfridges.co.uk

Beare Green   
Fridays at 12:30   
For more information, please visit: midsurreycommunityfridges.co.uk

Pixham, Dorking   
Fridays, 13:00 - 14:00   
For more information, please visit: midsurreycommunityfridges.co.uk

Richmond Park, Dorking   
Fridays at 13:15   
For more information, please visit: midsurreycommunityfridges.co.uk

Capel, Dorking   
Fridays at 14:00   
For more information, please visit: midsurreycommunityfridges.co.uk

Godalming Community Cupboard For more information, please visit: godalmingcommunitystore.org/about-us

The Hive, Guildford   
For more information, please visit: [www.guildford.gov.uk/article/26240/Community-fridge-and-pantry?ccp=true#cookie-consent-prompt](http://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/26240/Community-fridge-and-pantry?ccp=true#cookie-consent-prompt)

The Meeting Place Community Fridge, Bookham   
For more information, please visit: themeetingplace.org.uk/community-fridge

Merstham Community Fridge, Redhill   
For more information, please visit: www.facebook.com/Communityfridgeproject

Food Clubs

The Salvation Army, Aldershot   
Mondays at 12:30 £4.50 for a 2 course meal.   
To book, call 01252 330 400

The Lighthouse, Woking   
Wednesdays, 11:30 - 12:30   
For more information, please visit: [www.lighthousewoking.org/communitylunch.html](http://www.lighthousewoking.org/communitylunch.html)

The Salvation Army, Woking   
Wednesdays at 12:00 £5 for a 2 course meal with drink.   
To book, email woking@salvationarmy.org.uk or call 01483 793704

Merstham Food Club   
Wednesdays, 12:30 - 14:00   
To book, call Eli on 0797 432 5000 or e-mail [eli.karlicka-cook@reigate-banstead.gov.uk](mailto:eli.karlicka-cook@reigate-banstead.gov.uk)

Redhill Food Club   
Wednesdays, 12:30 - 14:00   
To book, call Eli on 0797 432 5000 or e-mail [eli.karlicka-cook@reigate-banstead.gov.uk](mailto:eli.karlicka-cook@reigate-banstead.gov.uk)

Woodhatch Food Club, Reigate   
Wednesdays, 13:00 - 14:15   
To book, call Charlie on 0782 535 1472 or e-mail [charlie.griswood@reigate-banstead.gov.uk](mailto:charlie.griswood@reigate-banstead.gov.uk)

Horley Food Club   
Fridays, 11:30 - 13:00   
To book, call Tony on 0785 417 1383 or e-mail [tony.freeman@reigate-banstead.gov.uk](mailto:tony.freeman@reigate-banstead.gov.uk)

St Marks Food Club, Tadworth   
Fridays, 13:30 - 15:00   
To book, call Maria on 0785 417 1376 or e-mail [maria.hewson@reigate-banstead.gov.uk](mailto:maria.hewson@reigate-banstead.gov.uk)

The Hive, Guildford   
Meals are delivered between 11:30 - 14:00, everyday. £4.60 per meal   
To book, call 01483 458055 or e-mail info.communityservices@guildford.gov.uk

Bibliography

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[Rising costs are a catastrophe for disabled people](https://www.leonardcheshire.org/about-us/our-news/press-releases/rising-costs-are-catastrophe-disabled-people), Leonard Cheshire (19 April 2022)

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[Cost of living: the impact for disabled people](https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/research-policy/cost-of-living-report/), Scope

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[Disability from the 2021 Census](https://www.surreyi.gov.uk/census-2021/2021-census-disability/), Surrey County Council

[Hunger in the UK](https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/08/2023-The-Trussell-Trust-Hunger-in-the-UK-report-web-updated-10Aug23.pdf), The Trussell Trust (June 2023)

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