Overview of Food Aid Provision in Scotland

Evidence from a study commissioned by the Scottish Government

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Introducing the Project

- Mapping and studying foodbanks and 'soup kitchens‘ in Scotland.
- **Context**: lack of data about the scale of food aid (beyond TT data) and about the role played by welfare reform.
- **Objectives (1)**: Identify providers; scale of provision; methods of operation; client base; monitoring systems.
- **Objectives (2)**: How dominant is TT? Is TT client base typical? Can the Scottish Government use Trussell Trust monitoring data as a guide to what non-TT providers are experiencing? If not, what additional research could be undertaken?
- **Objectives (3)**: Can food aid supply and demand be monitored? Can the impact of welfare reform be monitored? How?
Introducing the Project (2)

- 8 ‘case study’ locations:
  - Glasgow City,
  - Dundee,
  - Inverness,
  - Fort William,
  - Stirling,
  - Falkirk,
  - Kirriemuir & Forfar (Angus).
- From large urban to remote/rural.
- High on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- Semi-structured telephone interviews with managers of foodbanks and ‘soup kitchens.’
### Number of food aid providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Providing food parcels</th>
<th>Providing meals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow City</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee City</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stirling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falkirk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inverness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort William</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirriemuir</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forfar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Findings (contd.)

- TT represents around 20% of food parcel provision in Glasgow but is dominant in Dundee, Inverness, Falkirk, Angus and Fort William.
- Foodbanks mainly used by people who are housed but have no/small income. ‘Soup kitchens’ mainly used by homeless people who also tend to have long-standing issues (substance misuse, mental health, etc.)
- Glasgow also has destitute migrants/asylum seekers.
- TT clientele to an extent different from clients of other foodbanks: more clients experiencing a ‘one-off’ crisis, fewer with long-standing issues.
Key Findings (contd.)

- All providers have experienced increase in demand (broadly in line with the rate of increase observed by TT)
- Perceived factors behind rising demand: welfare reform, benefit delays, benefit sanctions, falling incomes
- Monitoring systems: robust for TT, patchy for others.
- Possible to monitor the number of food parcels and meals given out across Scotland
  - Challenges: how many individual beneficiaries? How many of them are ‘repeat users’?
- But not possible to monitor the profile of food aid beneficiaries.
- Monitoring the impact of welfare reform (beyond TT data): difficult
Semi-urban & rural Scotland

- Visibly more foodbanks than ‘soup kitchens’.
- Logistically more challenging – demand met, but distribution can be necessary (adds additional cost).
- Considering population size rural areas have a high volume of food aid distribution.
- Difficult to assess how successful these food banks are in addressing vulnerability in more rural/remote areas.
- Potential for ‘lost’ beneficiaries (such as the elderly) greater in rural areas, due to lack of awareness and information.
- Further expansion anticipated.
Recommendations for SG

- TT data can be used as an indicator of wider trends in demand for food parcels across Scotland.
- Changes to the welfare system, including the role of welfare reform, delays and sanctions were dominant reasons for using foodbanks.
- Do not extrapolate TT data onto ‘soup kitchens’ (different client base).
- Not possible to produce Scotland-wide demographic profile of food aid recipients, due to the complex dynamics of food aid.