



Food Journeys: *understanding gaps in support*

[@changingrealities.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/changingrealities.bsky.social)

changing-realities-project@york.ac.uk



**CHANGING
REALITIES**

Why are we here today?

- Introduction to *Changing Realities* (11:20 – 11:30)
- Three short **presentations** on key challenges (11:30 – 11:45)
- **Interactive Activity:** Tree Zine (11:45 – 12:15)
- **Wider Group Discussion** (12:15 – 12:30)



What is Changing Realities?

- A partnership between almost 200 parents and carers living on a low income, researchers at the Universities of York and Salford and CPAG
- Work together to develop and advocate ideas and recommendations for policy change
- Started March 2020 as a participatory response to the pandemic
- Original aims and motivations:
 - The need to open up political/ised conversations
 - The expertise that comes with experience
 - The importance of better understanding every day experiences of life on a low-income



Illustration: Cat Fortey

What do we do?

- We're documenting what life is like for people struggling to get by - diaries & 'big questions' on our living archive (changingrealities.org/archive)
- We're pushing for change - coming together in online spaces, sharing co-produced recommendations for change, writing briefings, working in collaboration with others, consulting policy makers
- We're using creative methods - animations, poetry, writing, creativing journaling, zines, podcasts...

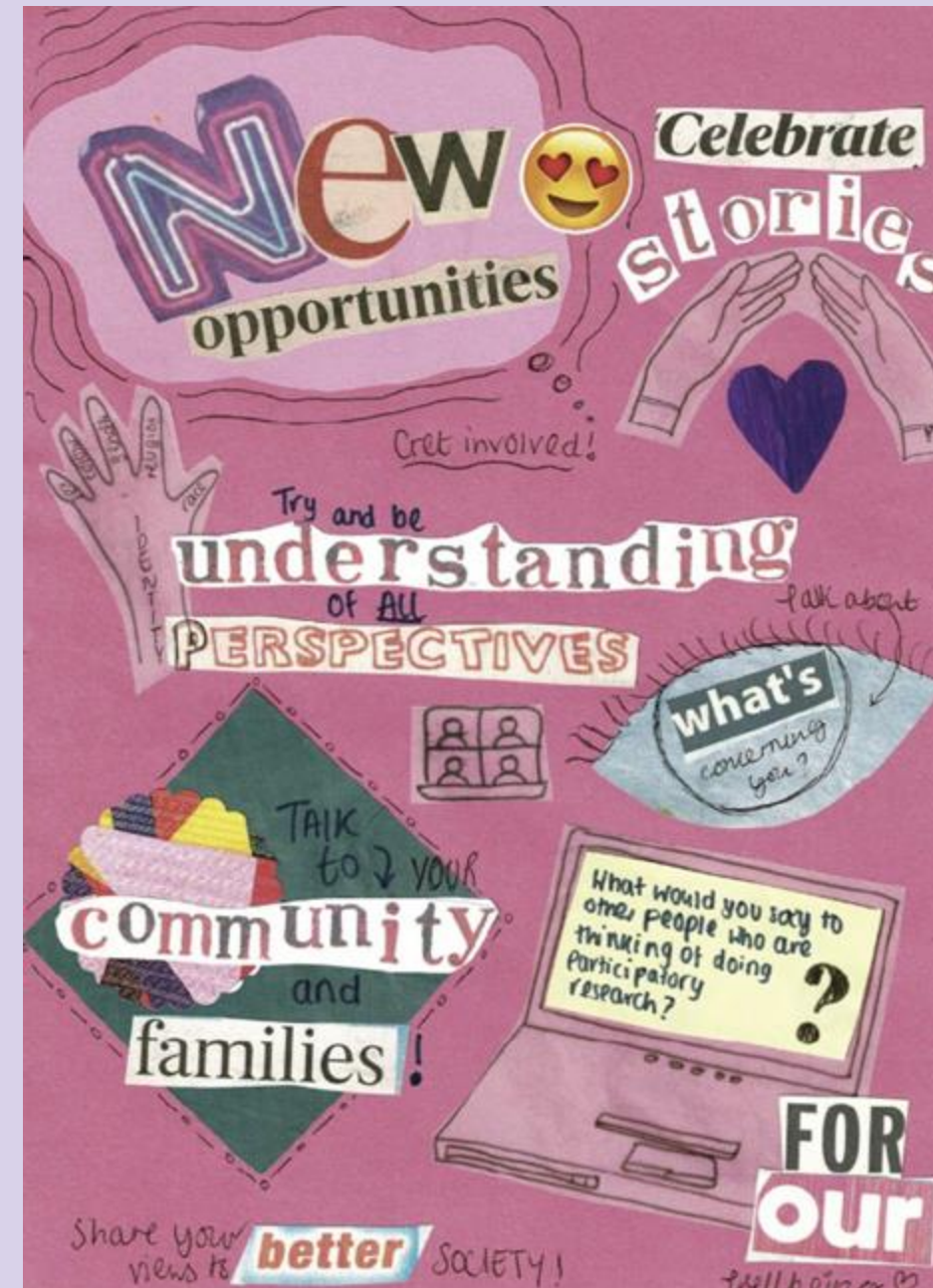


Image: Mahabuba

#EVERYCANHELPS

Challenges faced by people seeking asylum using food banks

Beauty Nosa



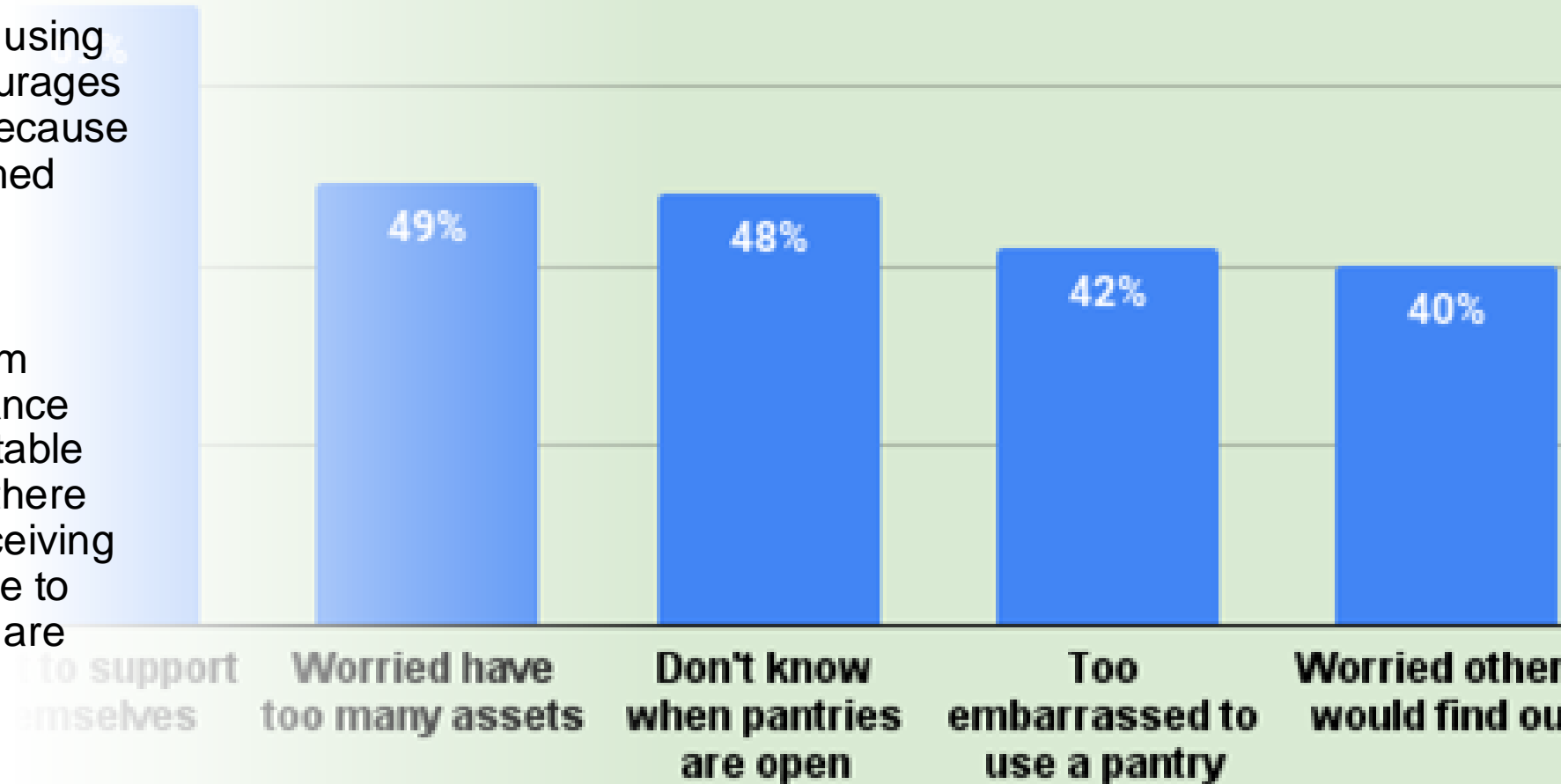
— Lack of Awareness:

- **Limited Information and Communication:**
- Many asylum seekers may not be fully aware of the support services available to them, including food banks.
- This could be due to language barriers, cultural differences, or limited access to information about their rights and available resources.
- Information about food banks may not always be effectively communicated through channels that asylum seekers frequently use.



Stigma: **Concerns about Using Food Pantries**

- There is stigma associated with using food banks. Oftentimes, it discourages people from using food banks because they feel embarrassed or ashamed about their situation.
- Asylum seekers might come from countries where seeking assistance from food banks or similar charitable organisations is uncommon, or there may be a stigma attached to receiving aid. This can make them hesitate to access food banks, even if they are available.



Source: Connecticut Foodshare's Institute for Hunger Research & Solutions

Transport and its complexity:

- They may have limited access to public transportation, particularly if they live in areas that are poorly connected to the central parts of the city. This can make it difficult for them to travel to food banks, which may be located in central areas or far from their accommodation.
- Navigating the public transport system in a new city can be difficult, especially for asylum seekers who might not speak English fluently or be familiar with local routes. This can discourage them from attempting to travel to food banks, even if they are technically within reach.



Language barriers:

- Glasgow has a diverse population, and asylum seekers often speak a variety of languages. Food banks may not always have staff or volunteers who speak the same language as asylum seekers, which can make it difficult for them to navigate the process or understand how to access food support.
- Many food banks have specific eligibility requirements, and these may be difficult to understand for someone who is not fluent in English. They may not know what documentation or proof is required to access the food bank, or they may struggle with the forms that need to be completed.



Hours of operation:

- Many food banks operate during specific hours or days, which is mostly during the week and at a specific time. This may not align with the asylum seekers' schedules or availability due to other obligations, such as attending immigration appointments, studies, or legal consultations. If public transportation services are limited outside certain hours, this adds another layer of difficulty.
- Asylum seekers belong to the vulnerable groups, such as single parents, people with disabilities, or those experiencing mental health challenges.
- These individuals may find it particularly difficult to access food banks within regular hours due to physical or emotional constraints. The short window of availability could worsen their challenges.

QUEEN'S PARK GOVANHILL
**FOOD
BANK**

THURSDAYS, 10.00AM-12NOON
QUEEN'S PARK GOVANHILL PARISH CHURCH
170 QUEEN'S DRIVE, GLASGOW G42 8QZ

'FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD...'
St Matthew 25:35

SOMETIMES WE ALL NEED HELP.
THE QPG FOODBANK SUPPLIES A
NON-PERISHABLE FOOD PARCEL
WITH ENOUGH FOOD FOR THREE
DAYS FOR THOSE IN NEED.



Disability and Health issues:

- Some people may have health issues, physical disabilities or chronic illnesses that make it hard to travel long distances, particularly if they have to rely on walking or using public transportation.
- This can prevent them from accessing essential food resources, especially if food banks are not easily reachable, as they may require additional assistance that food banks are not equipped to provide.



Legal consequences or fear of deportation:

- Asylum seekers may fear that accessing public services like food banks could jeopardize their asylum claim or lead to deportation. This is especially true for those who might not fully understand the system or who have been misinformed about the consequences of using such services.
- They have experienced negative interactions with immigration services or have witnessed others facing harsh treatment or deportation. This can lead to a lack of trust in any system that could potentially share information with the Home Office or immigration enforcement.
- As a result, they may avoid food banks altogether, even though these services are meant to be neutral.



Eligibility requirement:

- Many food banks in Glasgow operate on a referral system, where individuals must be referred by a support agency, social worker, or community organisation.
- Asylum seekers may not always have access to these referral pathways, particularly if they are newly arrived or have not yet connected with support services. Without referrals, they may be excluded from food bank services altogether.
- Food banks that have some eligibility requirement are based on the size of the family and their postcodes. Requiring postcodes as a criterion for food bank access can exclude vulnerable asylum seekers, making it harder for them to access the support they need in times of crisis.



In conclusion:

- Addressing these barriers requires a more informed approach from food banks, advocacy groups, and policymakers, ensuring that asylum seekers are aware of their rights, feel safe in accessing services, and that food banks can operate in a way that doesn't contribute to the fear of deportation.
- In addition, creating community-based solutions, more flexible services, and building trust with asylum seekers is crucial in overcoming this fear and providing the support they need.



Questions:

- How do you engage with local communities and raise awareness about your services?
- How do you ensure that the food provided is accessible and respectful to individuals with diverse cultural, dietary, or religious needs?



Barriers in Food Pantries: Food Quality & Lack of Kitchen Access

Presented By Syeda Sadaf Anwar
Date: 10th March 2025, Glasgow
Scotland.



Barriers in Food Pantries: Food Quality & Lack of Kitchen Access

Introduction:

- Food pantries are lifelines for many in Scotland, providing essential support to those facing food insecurity (Like Asylum seekers and Low income people)
- However, significant barriers exist, including issues with food quality, accessibility, and lack of kitchen access.
- Today, I'll explore these challenges and their impact on individuals and communities.



Barriers in Food Pantries

- ▶ **Stigma and Shame:** Many feel embarrassed to use food pantries, fearing judgment.
- ▶ **Limited Access:** Pantries are often located in urban areas, leaving rural communities underserved.
- ▶ **Eligibility Restrictions:** Strict criteria can exclude those in need.
- ▶ **Inconsistent Supply:** Reliance on donations leads to unpredictable availability of food.



Food Quality Challenges



- ▶ **Nutritional Gaps:** Pantries often lack fresh, healthy options, relying on non-perishable items (Sugar Free, Gluten Free, etc.).
- ▶ **Cultural Sensitivity:** Food may not meet the dietary or cultural needs of diverse communities (Halal Food, etc.).
- ▶ **Food Waste:** Limited storage facilities can lead to spoilage of perishable items.
- ▶ **Formula Milk and Infant Food:** Many pantries struggle to provide enough supplies of formula milk and infant food, which are essential for child development.

Lack of Kitchen Access

- ▶ **Cooking Facilities:** Many pantry users lack access to proper kitchens, making it hard to prepare meals.
- ▶ **Skills Gap:** Some individuals may not know how to cook with the ingredients provided.
- ▶ **Energy Costs:** Rising utility bills make cooking unaffordable for many.
- ▶ **Shortage of Volunteers:** Lack of volunteers for hot food preparation, and also cultural food making.



Solutions and Recommendations

- ▶ **Improve Food Quality:** Partner with local farms and businesses to provide fresh, culturally appropriate food.
- ▶ **Expand Access:** Establish mobile pantries and delivery services for rural areas.
- ▶ **Community Kitchens:** Create shared cooking spaces with free or low-cost access.
- ▶ **Education Programs:** Offer cooking classes and nutritional workshops.
- ▶ **Infant Food Support:** Ensure pantries can help people access formula milk and baby food including by providing vouchers or financial support.
- ▶ **Policy Advocacy:** Push for systemic changes, such as increased funding and support for food security initiatives.



- ▶ Food pantries play a vital role in addressing hunger, but barriers like food quality, lack of kitchen access, and ensuring that pantries support people access formula milk and baby food including by providing vouchers or financial support is very important.
- ▶ Support Local Pantries: Like Donation, volunteer support, or raise awareness.
- ▶ Reduce stigma and create welcoming spaces for all.
- ▶ By working together, like communities, organizations, and policymakers
- ▶ **“Hunger in the UK is not about food shortages it’s about justice, fairness, and ensuring everyone has a seat at the table.”**
- ▶ *Thank you for listening!*



Scottish Child Payment: a call for inclusion

The Impact on Asylum-Seeking Families

By Toyin Balogun

What is the Scottish Child Payment?

- A policy introduced to **reduce child poverty** in Scotland
- **£25 per child per week** for eligible families
- **Who is excluded?**
- Children of asylum seekers and others due to **immigration status**



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

My Experience as a Case Study

- ❑ **Single parent, asylum seeker, three young children**
- ❑ **Limited financial support** from the Home Office (£47.39 per week per person)
 - ❑ No extra funds for clothing or extracurricular activities
- ❑ **Struggles to meet children's basic and social needs**



The Mental & Social Impact on Children



Exclusion creates emotional distress

Personal example: *10-year-old son feeling left out*



Creates inequality among children

Some can afford extracurricular activities (e.g., football, swimming, gymnastics)
Others are excluded **due to their parents' immigration status**

Why Every Child Should Be Eligible

- ✓ Reduces child poverty for all children
- ✓ Ensures equal access to basic needs & opportunities
- ✓ Improves children's mental well-being
- ✓ Supports low-income families regardless of immigration status





Call to Action

1

Expand eligibility for
the Scottish Child
Payment

2

**Ensure all children in
Scotland are treated
equally**

3

**Advocate for policy
change to include
asylum-seeking
families**

Thank you
and question!

‘How will the government ensure that the Scottish child payment is not limited or segregated based on factors such as immigration status, ethnicity or employment status because children should be treated equally’

Mini 'zine' time:

- How do you engage with local communities and raise awareness about your services?
- How do you ensure that the food provided is accessible and respectful to individuals with diverse cultural, dietary, or religious needs?
- How will the government ensure that the Scottish child payment is not limited or segregated based on factors such as immigration status, ethnicity or employment status because children should be treated equally.
- Do you think food pantries should be a long-term solution to food insecurity?

