



Isolation and Hunger:

the reality of the school holidays
for struggling families

Key Findings

- 1** More than **six out of ten** parents with household incomes of less than £25,000 said they weren't always able to afford to buy food outside of term time. For households with incomes of less than £15,000, that figure rose to 73 per cent of parents who struggled to afford food in the holidays.
- 2** **A third** of parents have skipped a meal so that their kids could eat during the school holidays.
- 3** **41 per cent** of parents on low household incomes say they sometimes feel isolated in the school holidays due to being unable to afford to go out and entertain their children.
- 4** **39 per cent** of teachers¹ say there are pupils in their school that do not get enough to eat over the school holidays.
- 5** **47 per cent** of parents on low household incomes would take their children to a community holiday club that served breakfast.
- 6** **78 per cent** of parents on low household incomes believe a community holiday club would ease parent stress.
- 7** **More than a quarter** of teachers (**27 per cent**)¹ believe that offering holiday clubs at their school would ensure that children get fed properly in the school holidays and **42 per cent** believe they would provide children with extra learning opportunities over the summer.



Foreword

The issue of Holiday Hunger was highlighted by last year's All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom. The 'Feeding Britain' report² is just one of a growing number of publications recognising the social injustice that affects children who receive free school meals and those whose families are surviving on low income wages.

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission recently stated:

'Child poverty is set to rise not fall in the next five years. The Institute for Fiscal Studies predicts that 3.5 million children – one in four – will be in absolute poverty by the end of the next parliament.'

The real, true scale of child food poverty in the UK remains unmeasured and unchecked and that is why we have to do things differently. Delivering a mix of good food provision and enrichment opportunities outside the busy school calendar year not only helps alleviate hunger but it can support working parents and those struggling with family food budgets in pressured holiday periods. It can also raise children's aspirations, offer safety and give opportunities for fun and socialising. We need more research on the impact such programmes can have on attendance, achievement and attainment outside school to see what influence it can have in term time. From my knowledge of existing international and UK projects I firmly believe that this kind of programme has a realistic chance of closing the inequality gap. For it to succeed it must be supported by the government's policy and funding.

Billions of pounds of public money has been spent by government in raising the standards of school food, training staff, building and refurbishing school kitchens over the last decade in all four UK nations, which means that this country has the skills, venues and potential to tackle at least one aspect of child poverty in the UK, hunger. Already we are seeing fledgling projects working hard to deliver thousands of valued meals during the 170 days when schools are out. Doing something differently is an option we have and that is why I welcome such programmes and projects as Holiday Breakfast Clubs.

Lindsay Graham

School Food and Health UK Policy Advisor
Chair Holiday Hunger Task Group – APPG School Food
Winston Churchill Fellow – Author '170 Days' 2014 Report

Introduction

Traditionally holidays are a time when children should be having fun and taking part in activities with their families and friends. **It's a worrying fact that many families in the UK on low household incomes are being left to struggle in the school holidays.** A third of parents have skipped a meal so that their kids could eat during the school holidays and more than six out of ten parents with household incomes of less than £25,000 said they weren't always able to afford to buy food outside of term time, when there's an extra burden on family finances. For households with incomes of less than £15,000, that figure rose to a remarkable 75 per cent, while 41 per cent of parents in those low-income families had skipped meals. In 2012, The Children's Society Fair and Square report³ highlighted the cost benefits of Free School Meals to families. Parents had identified that the holiday time could increase the weekly shopping bill by between £30 to £40.

These are sad statistics when children spend 170 days out of school compared to 190 days in the classroom.

During term time, schools can provide breakfast clubs and school lunches free or at low cost, but in the holidays those options aren't always available and families are left counting the cost financially and socially.



The impact of the school holidays on struggling families

Isolation

Holidays aren't necessarily all fun and games for children and their families.

More than four out of ten parents on low incomes said they felt isolated during the holidays due to being unable to afford to go out and entertain their kids, and 46 per cent said they stayed in the house more often than in term time.



22 per cent of parents on lower incomes said they'd avoided having their kids' friends over during the school holidays.

17 per cent of parents on lower incomes said they'd avoided inviting family to their house during the holidays due to a lack of money for food.





Hunger

Some parents have to make difficult choices between food and fuel cost in order to feed their family.

One in twenty parents with a household income of £25,000 or less said affording food in the holidays was a constant struggle.

For households with incomes of less than £15,000, that figure rose to a remarkable 73 per cent.

14 per cent of parents on lower incomes said they'd served smaller meals to their family to keep costs down.

Almost four in ten parents on lower incomes said they'd bought cheaper, and perhaps less healthy food.

Providing support for families in Food Poverty during the school holidays

It's apparent that the school holidays, especially the long summer break, can leave families with lower incomes feeling isolated and struggling to provide enough food.

Working families often struggle with child care and providing activities to keep children entertained can be costly during the holidays.

When asked who they would turn to for help in the holidays **47 per cent** of parents would borrow money from family, **13 per cent** use a foodbank and **10 per cent** use a free community holiday club.

In a survey by The Association for Public Sector Excellence with 206 Local Authorities, **72 per cent** said that hunger in the school holidays is an issue in their area.⁴

Adrian Curtis, director of Trussell Trust Foodbank Network, said in August 2014:

“Last year we saw foodbank usage in August increase by over a fifth (21 per cent) compared to the same time in June, before the holidays began, and we expect this year’s figures to reflect a similar trend.”



Supporting positive change

We believe that Holiday Breakfast Clubs offer a crucial part of the solution to tackling non-term time child hunger. 47 per cent of parents surveyed would take their children to a community holiday club that served breakfast.

Teachers also told us that they believe this approach is a good solution.

More than a quarter of teachers (27 per cent) believe that offering holiday clubs at their school would ensure that children get fed properly in the school holidays and 42 per cent believe they would provide children with extra learning and enrichment opportunities over the summer.

Research by Northumbria University⁵ based on a Kellogg's pilot of 12 Holiday Breakfast Clubs over the summer of 2014 revealed that clubs were positively received by children, staff and adult participants and all groups were keen to see the provision made available during future school holidays.

The findings of this research showed evidence of food insecurity and suggested that holiday breakfast clubs could reduce the burden placed on families during school holidays. Moreover, holiday breakfast clubs confer a number of social and behavioural benefits that could impact on the health and wellbeing of children and adults making the transition between term time and holiday time much less pressured for families.

The research identified that the optimum holiday breakfast club model is a community based club that takes place in a venue such as a school or a community centre. The clubs should be free of charge to reduce the stigma associated with getting free food hand outs.



Kellogg's Holiday Breakfast Club Programme

Kellogg's has developed a holiday breakfast club programme based on these findings and has committed funding to the Mayor's Fund for London to help run ten clubs in the capital until August 2016.

In Manchester, Kellogg's is funding several clubs organised by the Community Foundation for Greater Manchester and we will also be supporting Ashram Housing Association's Holiday Kitchen model of provision across the Midlands.

Through support for food redistribution charity FareShare, Kellogg's food will be reaching the most vulnerable children and families in the UK through the different initiatives they support during the school holidays, such as local authority run play schemes.

Kellogg's hopes to continue to develop its holiday breakfast club scheme across the UK to help more struggling families. If you are interested in applying for funding please contact breakfastclubuk@kellogg.com for more information.



Case Studies

M32 Group, Stretford, North West

The M32 Group was part of a pilot scheme with Kellogg's in summer 2014 to reduce food poverty in the school holidays and help families whose children usually receive a free school meal or breakfast. It was part of 14 pilot schemes across the country.

The club was open for four weeks and had on average 100 attendees a day. Local children could have a free meal and take part in activities such as fitness and craft sessions.

Sarah Haughey, community leader at the M32 Group, was one of the driving forces behind the club.

Talking about the club, Sarah said: "I was a single mum for 14 years so I know how grim it is to look at a six week holiday and feel overwhelmed by the burden it can bring to the family budget.

"All of a sudden you need to find additional money for food, activities and bus fares, so it's easy to feel helpless and isolated if you don't have any support and that's what motivated me to set up the club.

"I was a single mum for 14 years so I know how grim it is to look at a six week holiday and feel overwhelmed by the burden it can bring to the family budget."

"We know there are some families in our community that struggle with access to food in the holidays so our club provides a safe environment for their kids to come along and have something to eat and play with their friends.

"We opened our doors to everyone but we know we are making a real difference to those children who would normally miss out on a meal at home and that's what spurred us on.

"We got 100 people through the doors when we opened, and ran out of a week's worth of milk in the first day which shows how valuable services like these are to local communities like ours."





A woman with blonde hair, wearing a tan top and a gold bracelet, is handing a small object to a young child sitting at a table. The child is wearing a striped shirt and is focused on eating from a bowl.

In the background, a man in a white t-shirt is leaning over a counter, possibly preparing drinks. There are several colorful plastic cups (yellow, blue, pink) and a red bowl filled with bananas on the counter. Other people are visible in the background, including a woman in a black top.

A young girl with brown hair, wearing a pink shirt, is sitting at a table. She is holding a small white container and appears to be focused on something she is doing. A woman's hand is visible near her, possibly assisting her.

A box of Kellogg's Fruit & Fibre cereal is prominently displayed in the foreground. The box is blue and white with the text "50% EXTRA" and "Kellogg's Fruit & Fibre" visible. The box also features an image of the cereal with fruit.

A green plastic bag is visible in the foreground, partially obscuring the table. The bag has some text on it, including "All of the pro..." and "contribution...".

FareShare

FareShare ensures good quality food ends up in charity kitchens so that it can have the greatest social, economic and environmental impact. It receives food from industry partners – including Kellogg’s – and redistributes it to over 1,900 charities and community projects across the UK, utilising an army of over 500 amazing volunteers who sort, pack and deliver the food.

FareShare CEO Lindsay Boswell said: “This report highlights the extent of child hunger in the UK. **We are definitely seeing more and more charities supporting children turning to us for food.** During the school holidays, we are also experiencing growing demand.

“For many low-income families it’s hard enough to stretch the budget during term time, let alone when there are kids to entertain and extra meals to provide.”

Some of FareShare’s Regional Centres have trialled successful pilots, working with more charities that support children and young people to ensure meals are put on the table during school holidays.

During Easter 2015, FareShare Merseyside worked with Liverpool Play Partnership (LPP) to provide food to children, delivering food to 41 schemes supported by LPP which include breakfast and lunch clubs.

MPAC (Merseyside Play Action Council) and Liverpool Charity & Voluntary Services (LCVS), two of the lead partners in LPP, have seen a dramatic rise in the number of children and families experiencing food poverty over the past five years.



Ann Dobie who is a Coordinator at MPAC said:

“We’ve seen a huge rise in the number of children in food poverty at the play schemes over the last twelve months and the problem has become so big that we now have to help feed some of their families.”

“Many community organisations have experienced funding cutbacks but in partnership with LCVS we have been able to work with the Mayoral Hardship Fund, Local Authority, CCG, Public Health and other Trusts to bring in new funding and support from the LPP, which has meant that we have been able to develop the programme.

“The food element of the support offered to the play scheme was initially set up to support children who get free meals in schools, so they don’t miss out when they are on school holidays. The play schemes have an estimated 30 children per session but there are still a large number out there who need our help.”



Appendix One

Research

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov. Research was carried out on behalf of Kellogg's.

580 parents with a household income of £25,000 or less, with children aged 5-16, were surveyed.

Fieldwork was undertaken between 2nd - 10th March 2015. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of GB adults (aged 18+).



Playing Our Part

Investing in our communities is part of our DNA. Our founder – WK Kellogg – believed in giving something back and that’s why we are committed to donating cereal and snacks to families in need through breakfast clubs, foodbanks, and community projects.

“Kellogg’s has been supporting school breakfast clubs for 17 years by donating food, money and training. Since 1998 when we started, there has been a huge growth in the number of schools with a breakfast club and this stands at 85% today.

“But more can be done and that’s why Kellogg’s is helping families in need during the school holidays by donating breakfasts and money to community run Breakfast Holiday Clubs.”

Jonathan Myers, Kellogg’s Managing Director



Sources

1. Teacher Research: The research was conducted by YouGov with 1,176 teachers. Fieldwork was undertaken between 9th - 24th July 2014. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB Teachers.
2. Feeding Britain Report: A strategy for zero hunger in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom.
3. Fair and Square – a policy report on the future of free school meals, The Children’s Society.
4. The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) is a local government association operating across the whole of the UK. This research was carried out with 206 Local Authorities in February 2015.
5. ‘Examining the impact of summer breakfast clubs on health, social and educational outcomes from children in the UK.’ Professor Greta Defeyter & Dr Pamela Graham, February 2015.





Kellogg's