

# Evidence of rising food insecurity in UK and EU: potential drivers and the role of social protection

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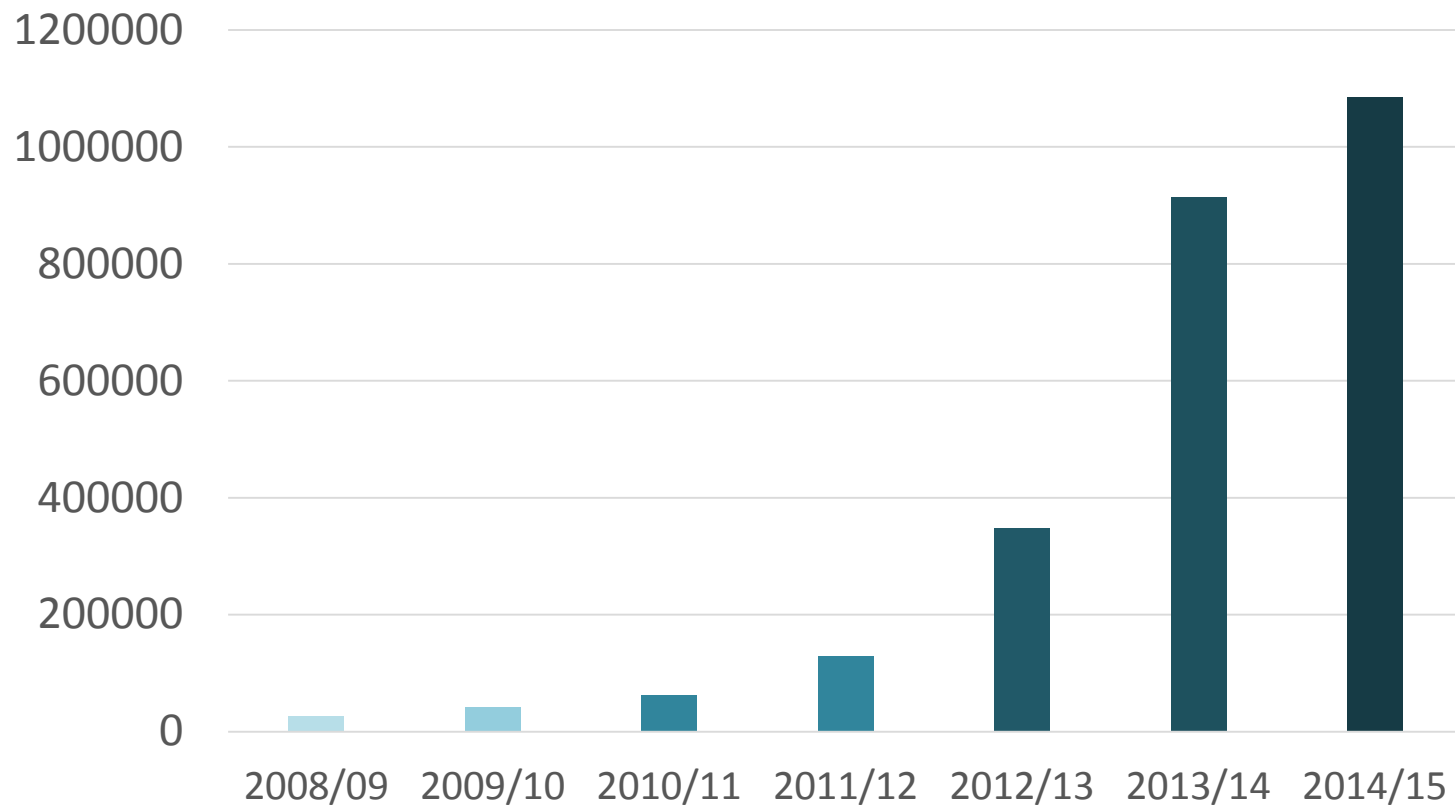
Britain, 2014. We're the sixth largest economy in the world. We have more millionaires than ever before...



So why have we handed out  
**ONE MILLION** food parcels?

AND NEW FIGURES REVEAL 330,000 WENT TO HUNGRY CHILDREN... SHOCK REPORT PAGES 4&5

# Numbers receiving emergency food parcels from the Trussell Trust

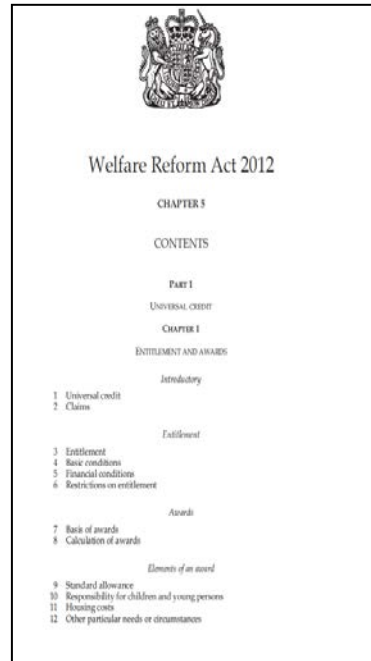


\* Data from Trussell Trust Foodbank Network, est. 2004. First year systematic data collection in 2008/09 .

# Changes to Welfare Support since 2010



~ 25% reduction in local authority budgets



Reduced entitlements  
Benefit cap



Tougher conditionality & sanctioning



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WARWICK

**Household Food Security in the UK: A Review of Food Aid**

**Final Report**

February 2014

# Feeding Britain

## 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

This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its Committees. All-Party Groups are informal groups of members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues. The views expressed in this Report are those of the Inquiry team established by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger and Food Poverty.

This report was funded with generous support from the  
Archbishop of Canterbury's Charitable Trust

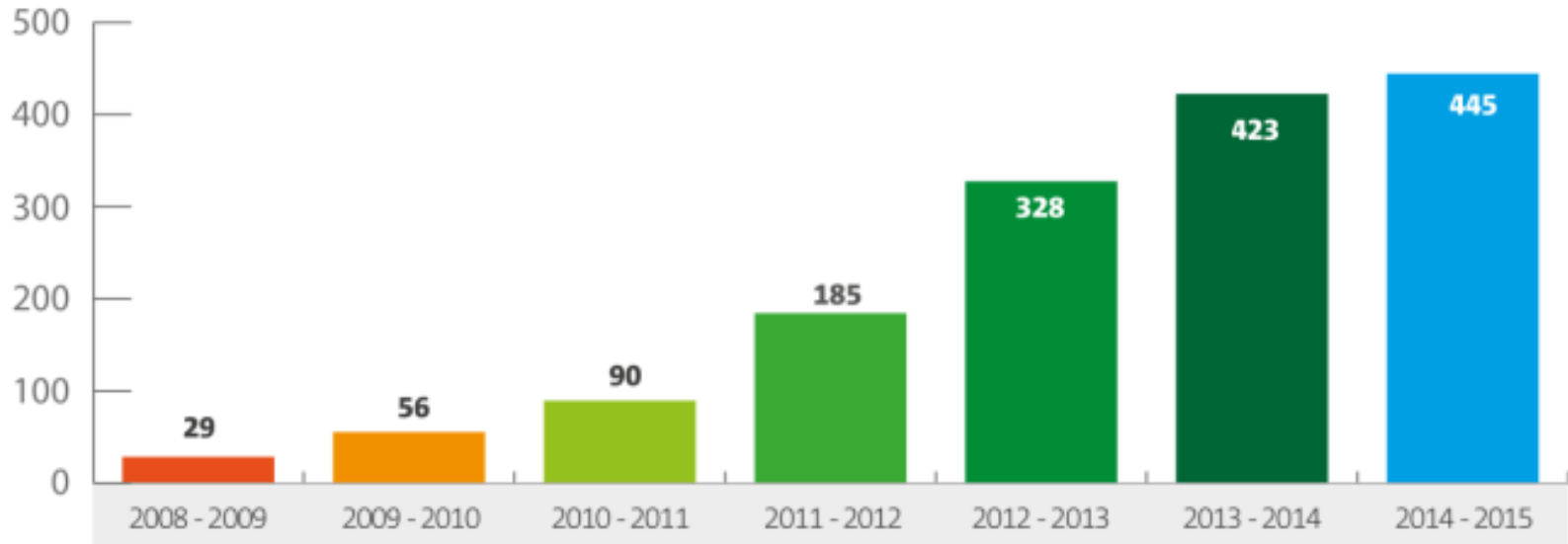
# Response from Government



“...no robust evidence linking food bank usage to welfare reform”  
- Esther McVey, Minister of State for Employment, Letter to Scottish Government, June 2014

# 'Foodbanks: Every town should have one'

## Growth of The Trussell Trust Foodbank Network 2008 - 2015



(Lambie-Mumford, Journal of Social Policy, 2013)

# Trussell Trust Foodbank Social Franchise Model

## START A FOODBANK

**Without people like you there wouldn't be a network of foodbanks supporting people in crisis across the UK.**

All Trussell Trust foodbanks are launched in partnership with local churches and communities, because these are best placed to meet local needs.

We'll provide you with all the tools, training and know-how to start a foodbank, so that people in crisis in your town don't have to go hungry.

## What we offer

When you join The Trussell Trust Foodbank Network, we will provide:

- Full training
- An operating manual
- Ongoing support from national staff team and a regional development officer
- Template website tailored to your foodbank with your own content management system
- Branding artwork (including leaflets, banners, etc.)
- PR advice and template press releases as well as opportunities to talk to national press
- An online forum
- An online stock control system
- Annual audits and quality assurance process
- Corporate relationships – discounts and services (e.g. many Trussell Trust foodbanks are able to hold supermarket collections in local Tesco stores and receive a cash 'top-up' on what is donated)
- National and regional conferences

£1500 start-up, £360 annually



# Supply vs Demand?



"Food from a food bank—the supply—is a free good, and by definition there is an almost infinite demand for a free good."  
Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform, 2013.

# Gaps

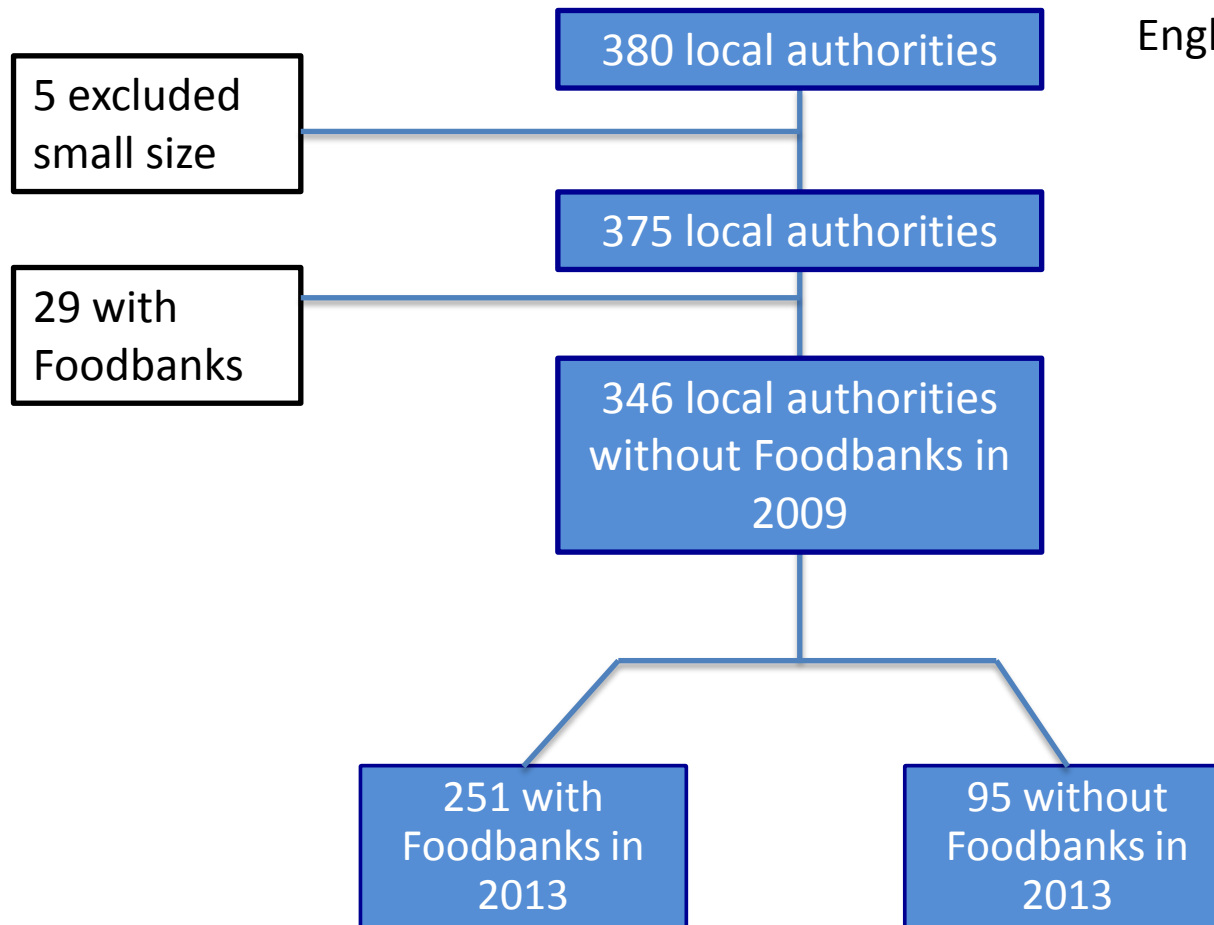
- Lack of systematic evaluation of factors associated with food banks opening across UK.
- Need to understand factors associated with food bank usage, accounting for changing provision of emergency food aid.

# Research questions

- What explains the rising number of Trussell Trust food banks opening in the UK after 2009 to 2013?
- After accounting for supply of food banks, what explains higher food parcel distribution?

# Sample of local authorities

England, Scotland, Wales



# Data

## *Trussell Trust Foodbank data, 2009-2013*

- Number of food banks operating each year
- Number of people fed by food parcels in each year

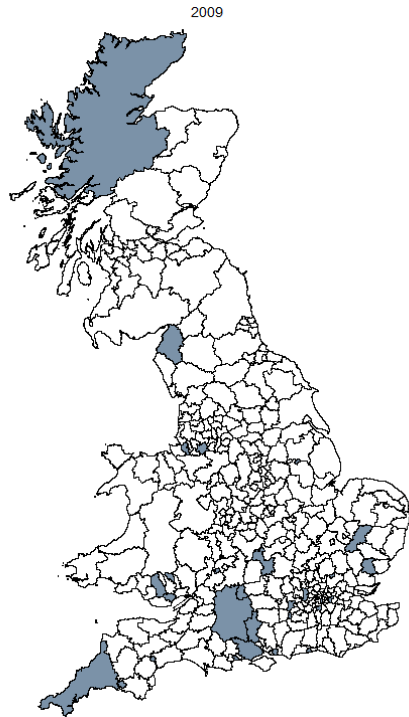
## *Official government statistics for local authorities, 2009-2013*

- Economic production: Gross Value Added (ONS)
- Unemployment rate (Nomis)
- Spending on local services provision, welfare support, and community programmes (DCLG)
- Benefit spending on unemployment insurance, disability benefits, low income etc. (DWP)
- Sanctions applied to unemployment benefit claimants (DWP)
- Proportion of population identifying as Christian (Census 2011)

# Analysis 1

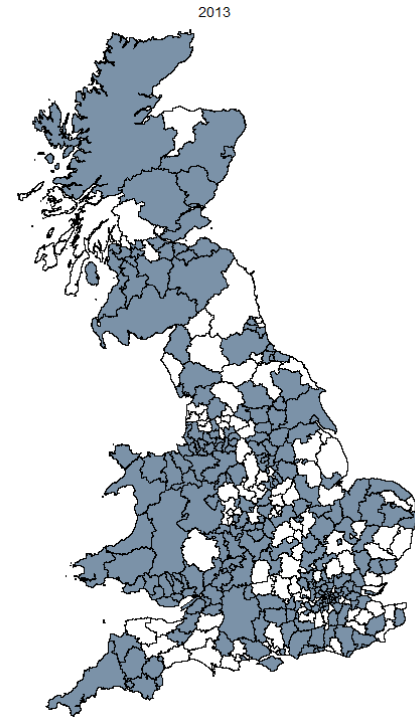
- First food bank opening in local authorities:
  - Logistic regression model:
    - Local authority-years excluded from analysis after censoring.
    - N=1071 local-authority years included.
    - Clustered standard errors by local authority
  - Predictor variables:
    - Socioeconomic conditions in two years prior
    - Percent reductions in spending in two years prior

# Expansion of Trussell Trust food banks across local authorities in the UK



**2009**

Trussell Trust food banks in 29 local authorities



**2013**

Trussell Trust food banks in 251 local authorities

## Table: Factors associated with first food bank opening in local authorities.

	Odds Ratio for Food Bank Opening	95% CI
Each 1 percentage point higher unemployment rate		
One year prior	1.08**	1.02 to 1.14
Each 1% cut in local authority welfare spending in the prior year		
One year prior	1.07***	1.03 to 1.11
Two years prior	1.06**	1.02 to 1.11

*Notes:* Model also includes % of population identifying as Christian, central cut in welfare benefit spending, and Gross Value Added.

95% confidence intervals based on standard errors clustered by local authority to reflect non-independence of sample units. Local authorities were censored for years after first food bank initiated.

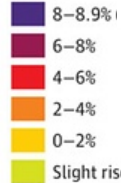
\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



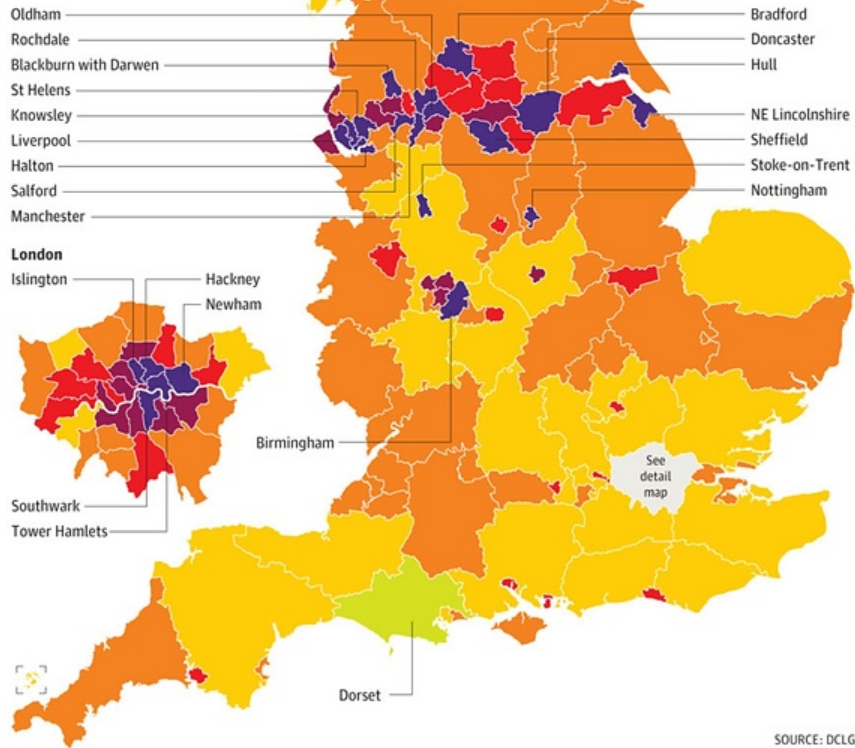
## Local authority budget cuts

Reductions in local authority budgets for 2011-12

Highest

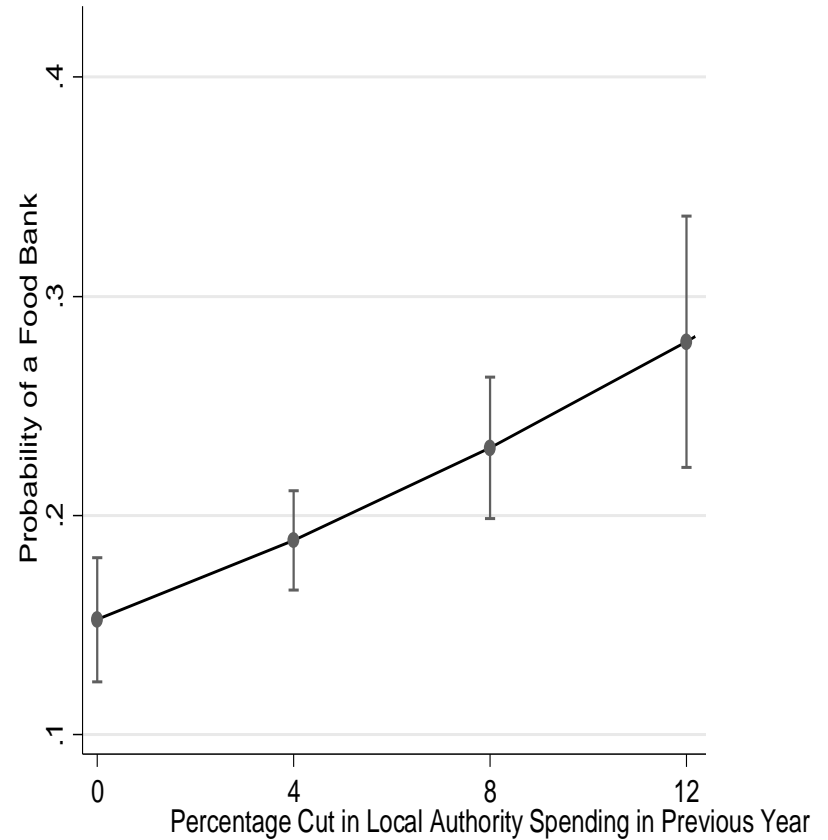


Lowest



SOURCE: DCLG

Figure: Probability of food bank opening given spending cut in previous year.



# Analysis 2

- Food parcel distribution:
  - Linear regression model
    - N=575 local authority-years included where food banks were operating over 2010-2013.
    - Clustered standard errors by local authority
  - Predictor variables:
    - Socioeconomic conditions and spending reductions in contemporaneous year
  - Include measures of “supply-side”
    - How long and how many food banks operating

Table: Factors associated with food parcel distribution, 2010-2013, 251 local authorities with food banks and 575 local authority-years.

	Percentage point change in food bank use (95% CI)
<i>Socio-economic factors</i>	
Each 1 percentage point higher rate of sanctions per claimant	0.09* (0.01 to 0.17)
Each 1 percentage point higher unemployment rate	0.06** (0.02 to 0.09)
Each 1 percent cut in central government welfare spending	0.16*** (0.10 to 0.22)

*Notes:* Model also adjusted for number of food banks operating, years foodbanks operating, local authority spending cut, Gross Value Added, and % of population identifying as Christian.

95% confidence intervals based on standard errors clustered by local authority to reflect non-independence of sample units.

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

# Summary

- The expansion of food banks across the UK associated with socioeconomic conditions and local spending cuts in local authorities.
- Higher rates of food bank use where more people unemployed, more benefit claimants sanctioned, and deeper cuts to benefit spending.
- Together, suggest rising problem of insecure food access in UK population.



“We have looked at this issue extensively and we agree with the conclusion reached by the All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger, that the reasons for food bank use are complex and overlapping. There is no robust evidence that directly links sanctions and Food Bank use.”

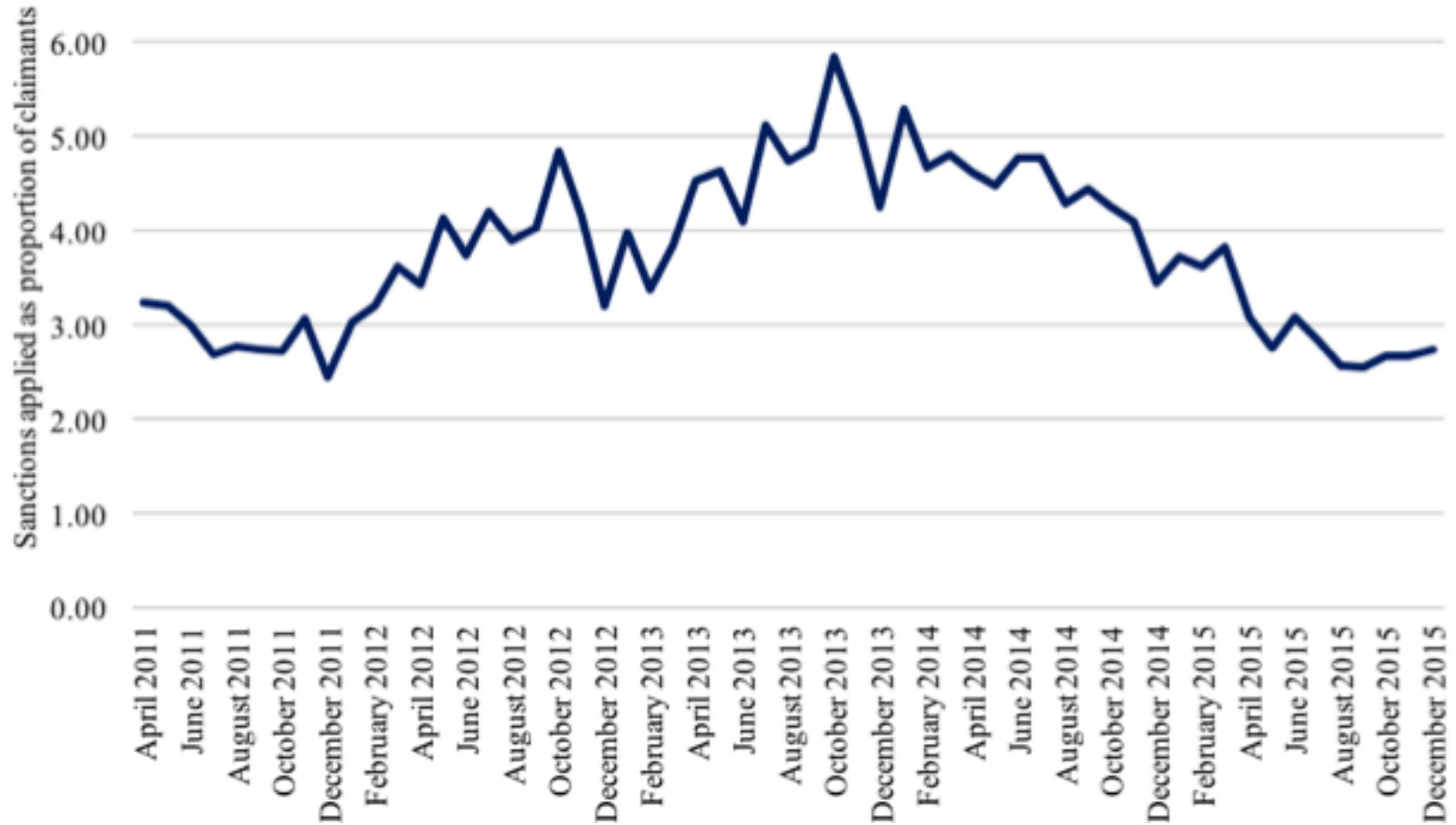
Priti Patel  
Former Minister of State for  
Employment, 2015

# **CLOSER EXAMINATION OF SANCTIONING**

# Increasing Conditionality and Tougher Sanctioning Under Coalition Government

- January – August 2011: Introduction of “Back to Work” schemes
  - Mandatory and non-mandatory work and training requirements
- New sanction regime, October 2012
  - Longer duration and faster implementation
  - Minimum sanction period introduced (4 weeks), longest up to three years
- Emphasis on conditionality by current government
  - Roll-out of “Claimant Commitment” in 2013
- Sanctioning targets?

# Sanctions applied to benefit claimants





# Analyses: quarterly rates of food bank usage

## 1. Local authority Fixed-effects

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Fed}_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Sanctions}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Claimants}_{it} + \\ & \beta_3 \text{Season} + \beta_4 \text{First} + \beta_5 \text{Distribution}_{it} \\ & + \beta_6 \text{Hours}_{it} + \mu_i + \epsilon_{it} \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

## 2. First difference disaggregating increase and decrease in sanctions

# Rates of food bank usage higher where more sanctions applied

<b>Covariates</b>	<b>Adult food bank users each quarter per 100,000 adults</b>		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
10 additional sanctions per 100,000 adults	6.14** [0.87]	6.35** [0.87]	3.36** [0.84]
JSA Claimants	Y	Y	Y
Distribution sites	N	Y	Y
Hours open	N	Y	Y
Linear and quadratic trends	N	N	Y
Local-authority quarters	3041	3041	3041

Robust standard errors in brackets. Models include dummy variable for season, dummy variable for first quarter a food bank operated, and local authority fixed effects. Constant not shown. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

# Food bank usage rises and falls with the number of sanctions applied each quarter

<b>Covariates</b>	<b>Adult food bank users each quarter per 100,000 adults</b>	
	(1)	(2)
10 additional sanctions per 100,000 adults	5.20** [1.12]	
10 fewer sanctions per 100,000 adults		-1.79** [0.73]
JSA Claimants	Y	Y
Distribution sites	Y	Y
Hours open	Y	Y
Linear and quadratic trends	Y	Y
Local-authority quarters	2918	2918

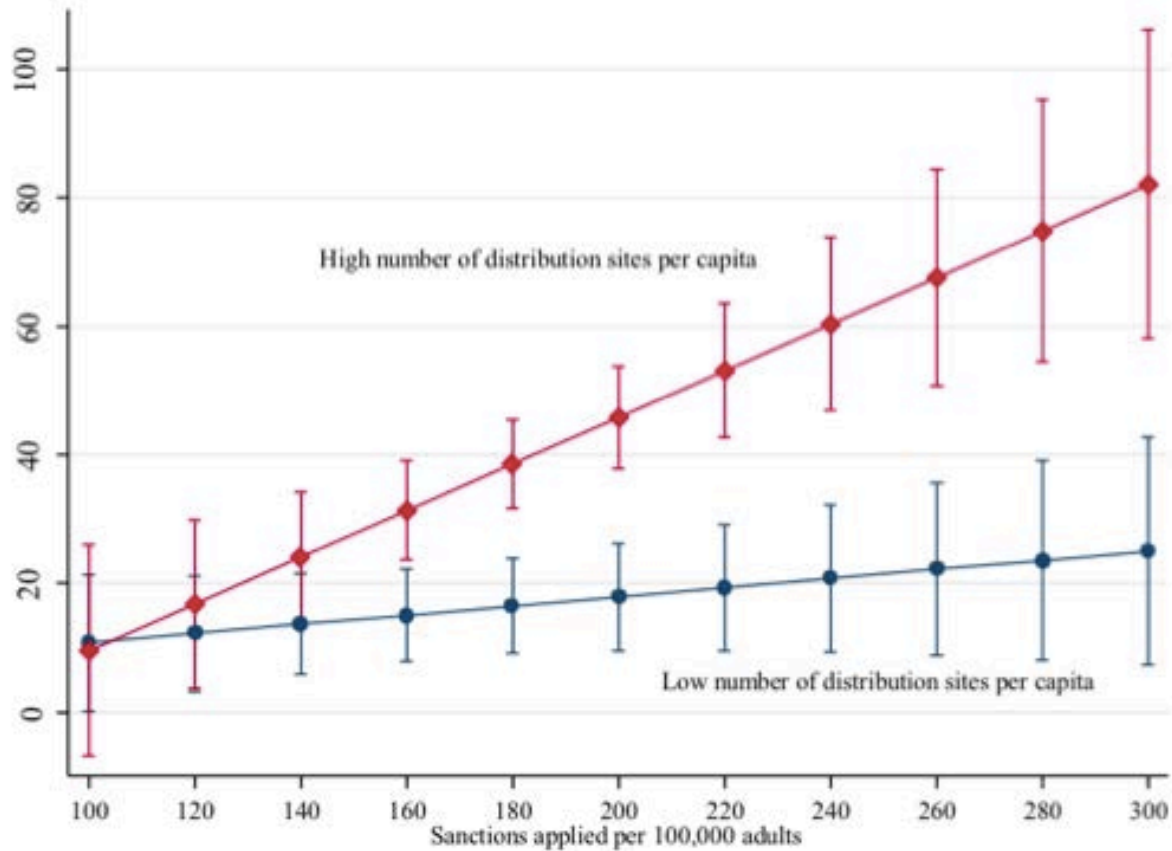
Robust standard errors in brackets. Models include dummy variable for season, dummy variable for first quarter a food bank operated, and local authority fixed effects. Constant not shown. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

# Analyses: evidence we are not seeing full impact of sanctions?

3. Does distribution moderate sanctions-fed association?

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Fed}_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Sanctions}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{Claimants}_{it} + \\ & \beta_3 \text{Season} + \beta_4 \text{First} + \beta_5 \text{Distribution}_{it} \\ & + \beta_6 \text{Hours}_{it} + \beta_7 \text{Sanctions}_{it} \times \text{Distribution}_{it} \\ & + \beta_8 \text{Sanctions}_{it} \times \text{Hours}_{it} \mu_i + \epsilon_{it} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

The effect of sanctions on underlying problem of food insecurity only “visible” where Trussell Trust food banks operate.

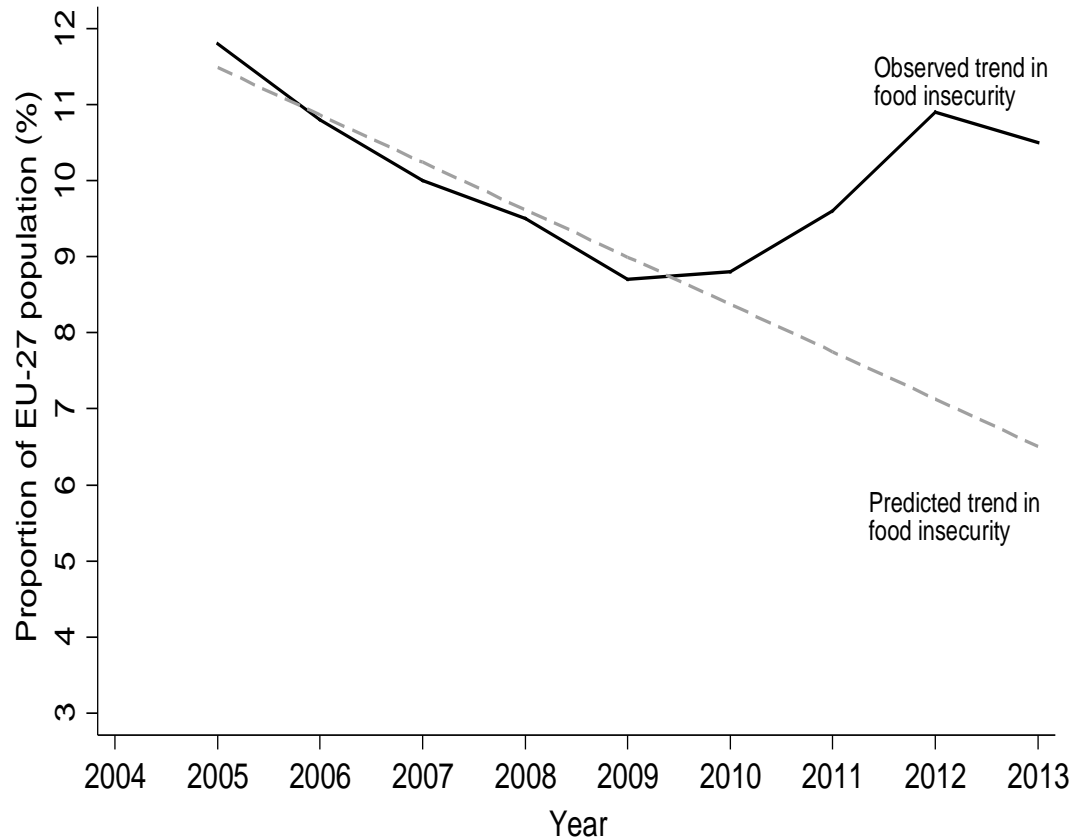


# Summary

- For 10 sanctions applied, about 5 more instances of adults fed by Trussell Trust food banks.
  - Strong dynamic link suggests sanctions lead to a significant number of people having to turn to food banks.
  - Decline in number of sanctions not as strong: longer sanction penalties? cycle of long-term hardship?
- The full impact of sanctioning on the inability of people to afford and access food likely hidden where few food banks operate.
- Need for monitoring of household food insecurity in the population and potential limits of a charitable food response to hunger in the population.

**WHY IS SOCIAL PROTECTION SO  
IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY AT TIMES OF  
ECONOMIC DOWNTURN?**

# Insight from EuroStat: Rising inability to afford food in EU

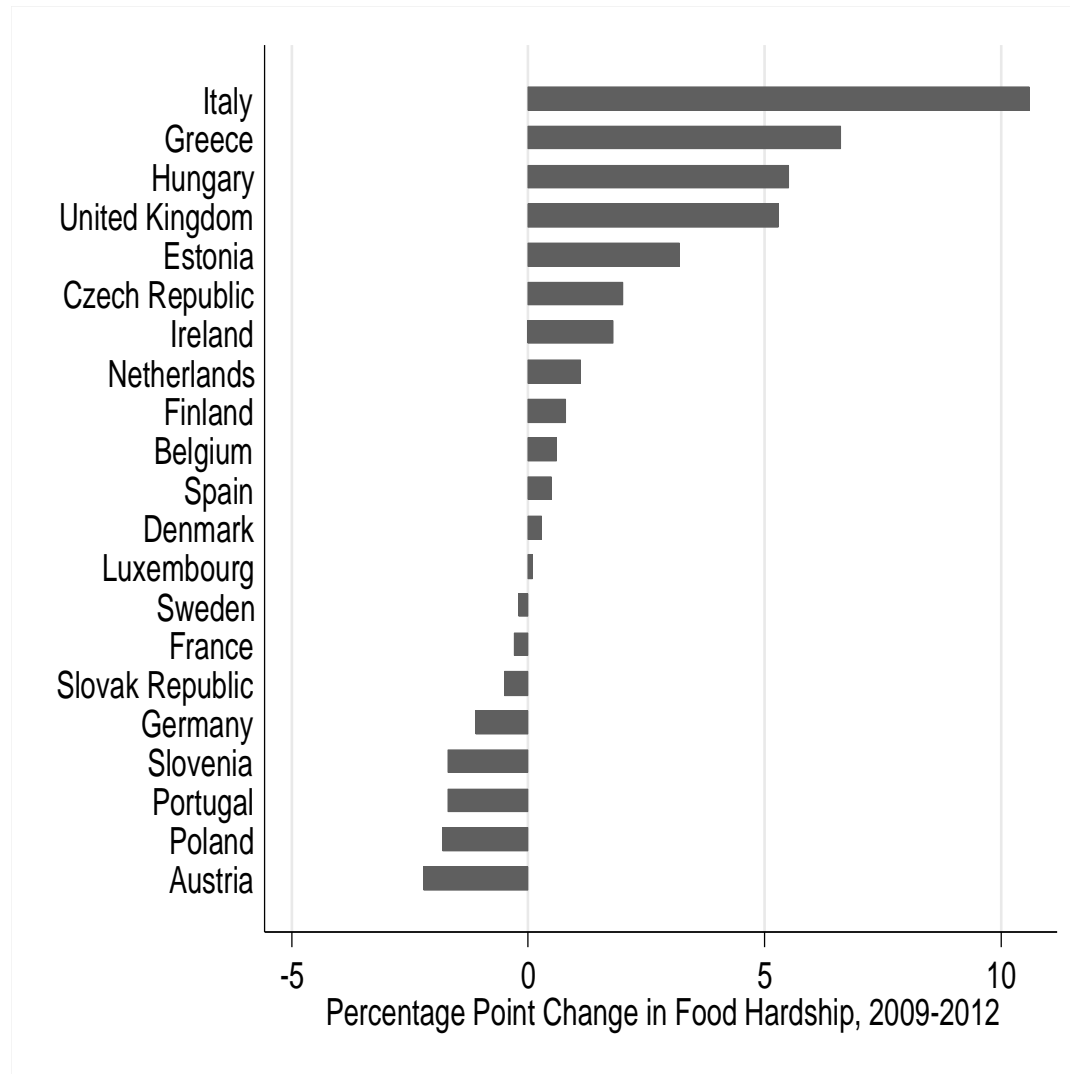


- 2005-2010: food hardship decreasing each year by 0.51 percentage points.
- Estimated excess in food hardship since 2009: 2.71% of EU-27 population, 13.5 million people.

Source: Eurostat. Report of inability to afford meat, chicken, fish, or vegetarian equivalent every other day.



# Percentage point change in food hardship 2009 to 2012



# Research Questions

What explains within-country changes in food hardship?

– Hypothesis 1:

- Unemployment and declining wages increase food insecurity.

– Hypothesis 2:

- Level of social protection spending will buffer macroeconomic drivers.

# Social Protection across Europe

- Classified according to 8 functions:
  - **sickness / healthcare** —including paid sick leave, medical care and the provision of pharmaceutical products;
  - **disability** — including disability pensions and the provision of goods and services (other than medical care) to the disabled;
  - **old age** — including old age pensions and the provision of goods and services (other than medical care) to the elderly;
  - **family / children** — including support (except healthcare) in connection with the costs of pregnancy, childbirth, childbearing and caring for other family members;
  - **unemployment** — including vocational training financed by public agencies;
  - **housing** — including interventions by public authorities to help households meet the cost of housing;
  - **social exclusion** not elsewhere classified — including income support, rehabilitation of alcohol and drug abusers and other miscellaneous benefits.

# Data & Analysis

- Compiled longitudinal cross-country database across EU-27 countries; complete panel data for 21 countries, 2005 to 2012
  - GDP, unemployment (Eurostat)
  - Average annual wages (OECD)
  - Food hardship: report of inability to afford to eat meat (or vegetarian equivalent) every other day. (Eurostat)

$$\Delta \text{Food hardship}_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta \text{GDP}_{it} + \beta_2 \Delta \text{Unemployment}_{it} + \beta_3 \Delta \text{Wages}_{it} + \text{Year} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

- Interaction with level of social protection spending

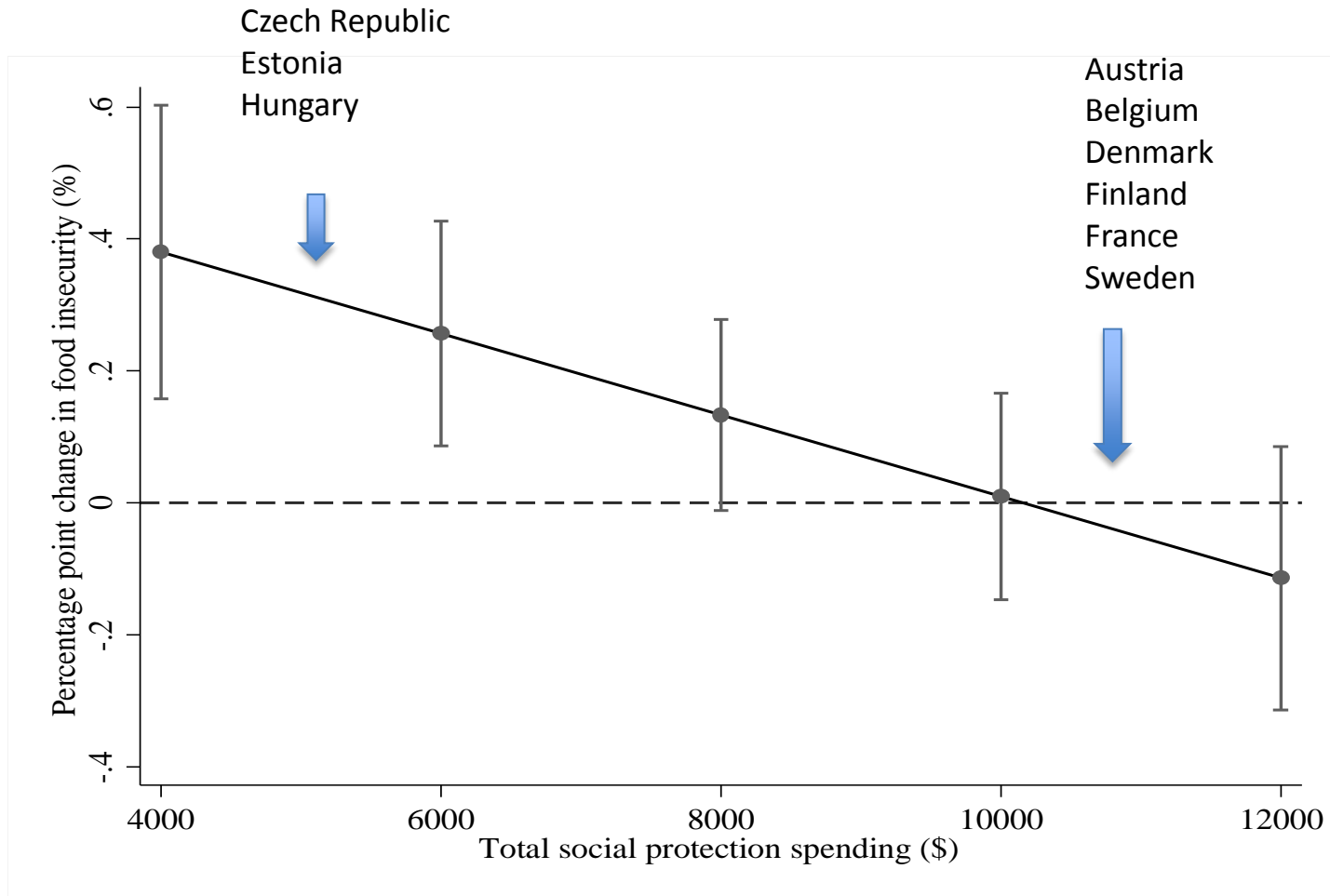
# Rising unemployment and falling wages linked to rising food hardship.

	Percentage point change in food insecurity
Per \$100 rise in GDP per capita	0.0098 (0.012)
Per 1 percentage point rise in unemployment	0.42** (0.14)
Per \$1000 increase in average annual wages	-0.29* (0.13)
Country-years	166
$R^2$	0.281

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

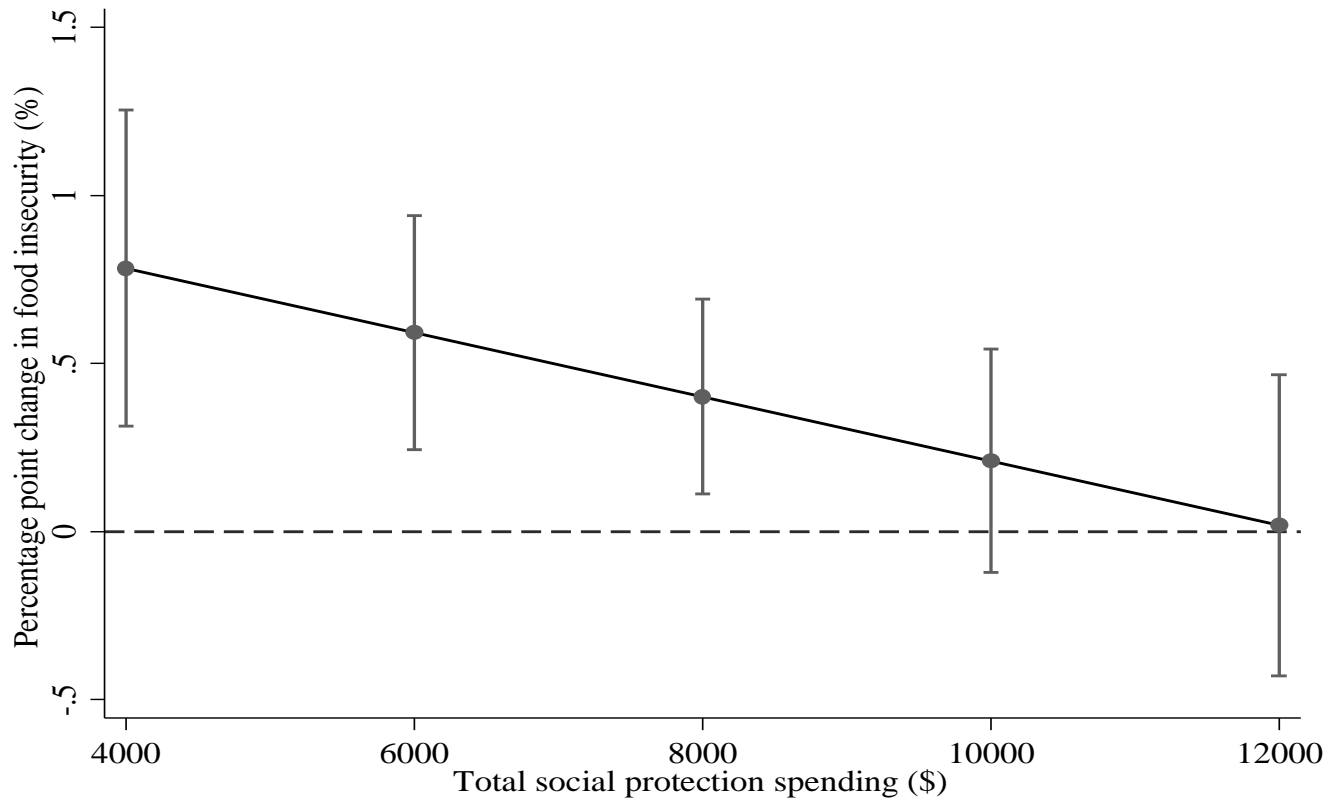
Notes: All models adjust for a linear time trend. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses.

Figure: Predicted change in food hardship by change in unemployment rate and level of social protection spending.



Notes: All currency in constant international dollars adjusted for purchasing power parity.

Figure: Predicted change in food hardship for a \$1000 decrease in annual average wages and level of social protection spending.



Notes: All currency in constant international dollars adjusted for purchasing power parity.

# **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN UK/EU**



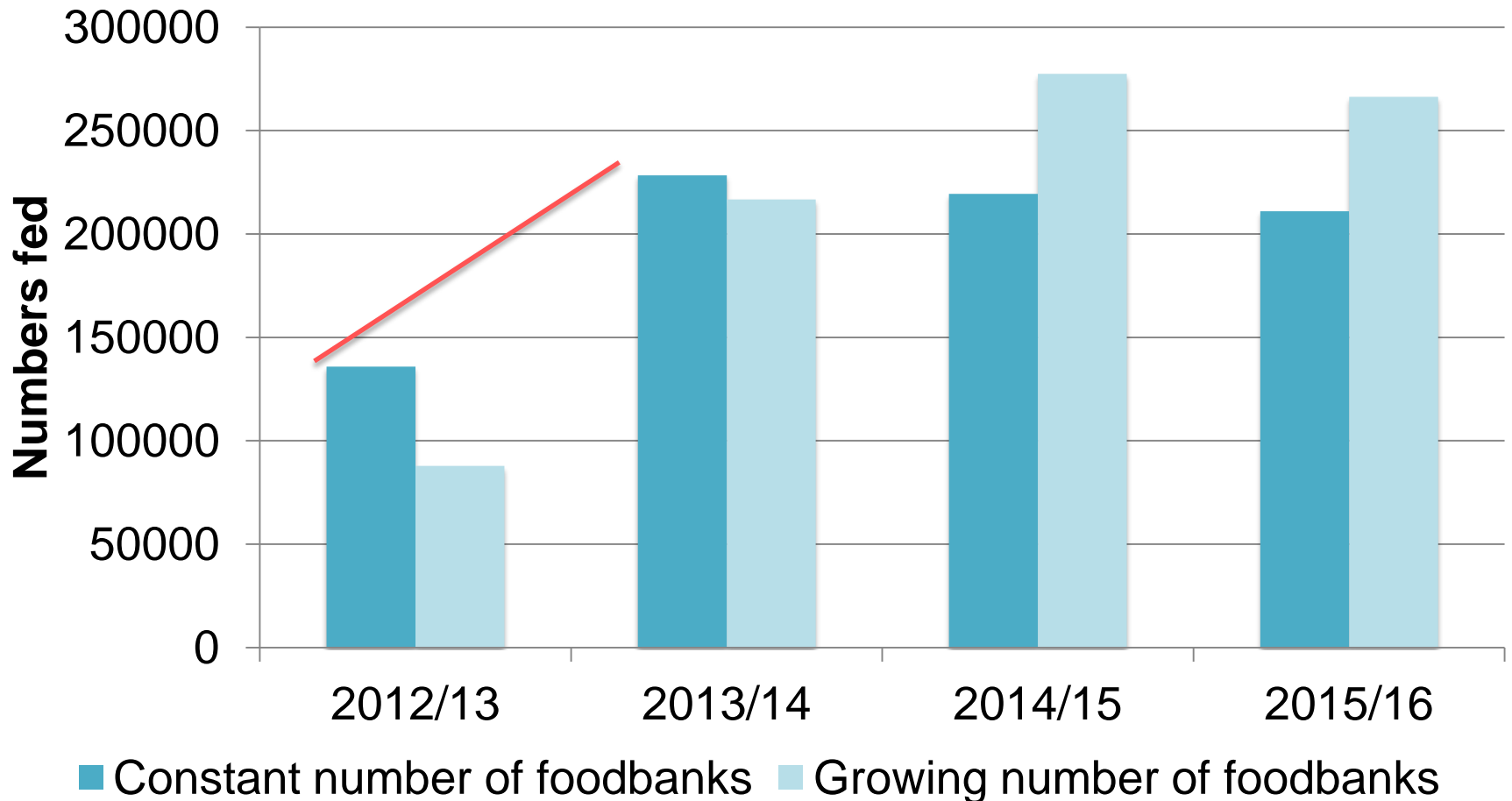
# Government dismissal of evidence

House of Commons, November 2016:

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his Department's policies of the conclusions of sociology working paper 2016-03, published by the University of Oxford on 27 October 2016, on the impact of benefit sanctioning on food insecurity:

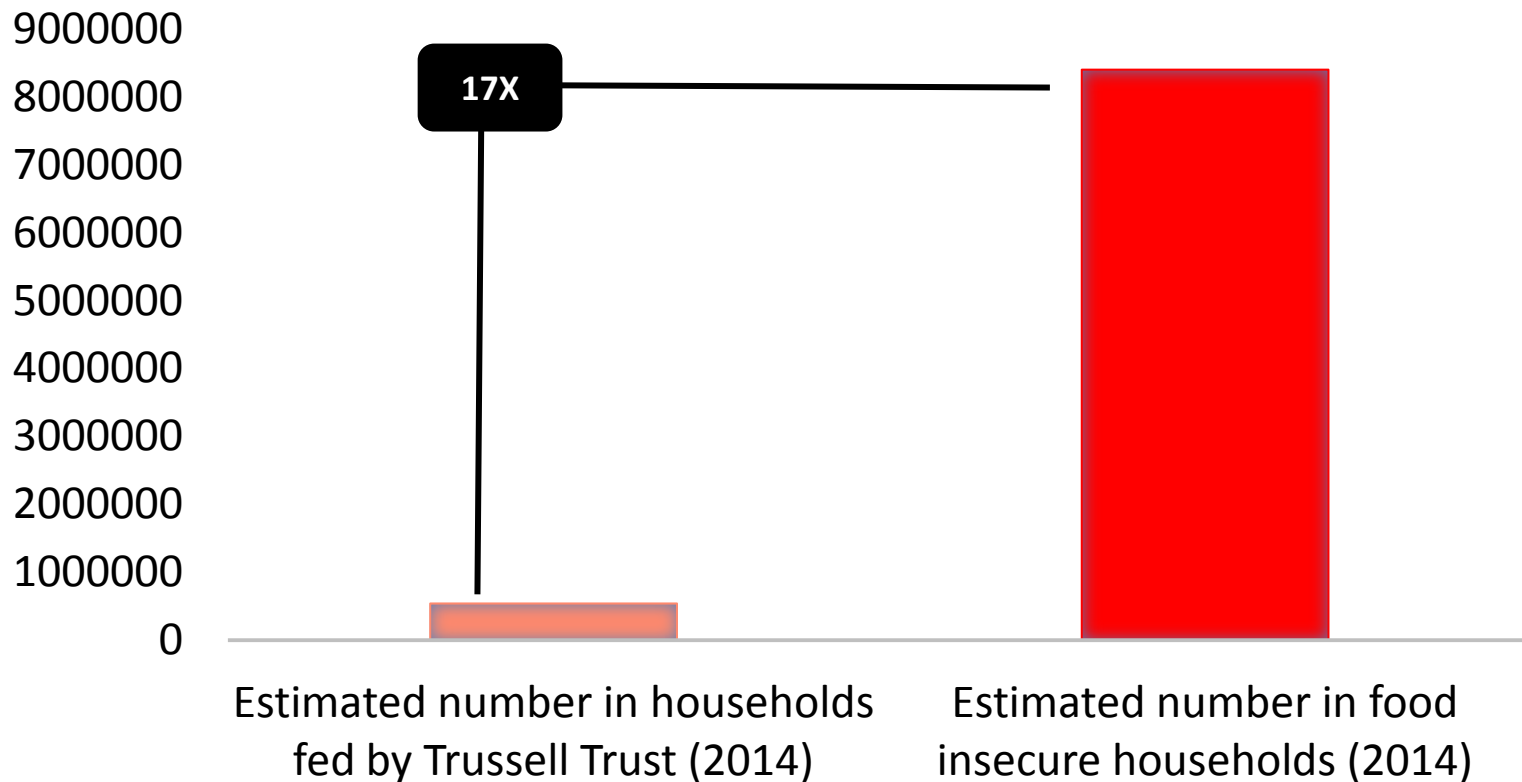
“The report the honourable member cites does not provide evidence of a causal link between sanctions rates and the use of **food banks**.”

# Reliance on country-level food bank data: insufficient to understand changing underlying need.



# Reliance on food bank data: underestimating need.

**Number fed by food banks vs. number of food insecure**



\* Food insecurity estimate from Gallup World Poll sample in UK. Validated measure of food insecurity.

# Government resistance to taking a closer look

Asked about measurement of household food insecurity:

“We do not intend to measure household food insecurity because there is no single definition of food insecurity.... There are multiple indicators such as quality, variety and desirability of diet as well as total intake, not all of which are measured consistently. It is therefore very difficult and potentially misleading to develop a single classification of food insecurity.”

# Conclusions

- Media attention has brought question of hunger to forefront of political debate in UK
- Yet, danger that food bank usage data will continue to be used as barometer of hunger in absence of monitoring; and that attention will focus on strengthening food bank networks.
- Effectiveness and reach of charitable food assistance yet to be evaluated in UK.
- Early view from EuroStat data and FAO data suggest food insecurity highly prevalent, yet need for uptake of food insecurity measurement on national surveys to better understand causes and consequences.

# THANK YOU

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