

# Tory welfare cuts increasing food bank use

## UNIVERSAL CREDIT 'KEY DRIVER' OF INCREASING NEED FOR FOOD PARCELS

The number of emergency parcels handed out by food banks in Scotland rose by nearly a quarter over the last year, according to the UK's largest food bank provider.

[The Trussell Trust](#) said its food banks provided more than 210,000 packages to people in crisis in Scotland in 2018-19 – up 23% from the previous year. In Edinburgh, 19,128 of three day emergency food supplies were provided to people in crisis by food banks.

The food bank provider said that issues with the Tories flagship welfare reform Universal Credit were a “key driver” of increasing food poverty.

In Scotland, 42% of food bank referrals made due to a delay in benefits were linked to Universal Credit.

DWP ministers recently admitted the direct link between Universal Credit and soaring food bank use – something which Tory MSPs have consistently denied.

The Trussell Trust's chief executive Emma Revie said: “What we are seeing year-upon-year is more and more people struggling to eat because they simply cannot afford food. This is not right.

“Enough is enough. We know this situation can be fixed – that's why we're campaigning to create a future where no one needs a food bank. Our benefits system is supposed to protect us all from being swept into poverty. Universal Credit should

be part of the solution but currently the five week wait is leaving many without enough money to cover the basics. As a priority, we're urging the government to end the wait for Universal Credit to ease the pressure on thousands of households.

"Ultimately, it's unacceptable that anyone should have to use a food bank in the first place. No charity can replace the dignity of having financial security. That's why in the long-term, we're urging the Government to ensure benefit payments reflect the true cost of living and work is secure, paying the real Living Wage, to help ensure we are all anchored from poverty."



Gordon Macdonald MSP

SNP MSP for Edinburgh Pentlands, Gordon Macdonald, said: "The botched roll-out of Universal Credit has been a disaster – driving people into poverty and forcing families to rely on food banks.

"In a country as wealthy as ours it's unacceptable that emergency parcels and food banks have become commonplace – and we know, beyond any doubt, that Tory policies are to blame.

“It is unacceptable for the UK Government to keep side-lining this issue while families go hungry. The SNP has long made the case for a halt to the roll-out of Universal Credit but those pleas fell on deaf ears.

“The disastrous Tory record on welfare shows why Scotland should have the power to take our own approach – rather than leaving these powers at Westminster.”