

Norwich City Council

Food Poverty Inquiry

An overview

Joanna Mack

J.Mack@open.ac.uk

www.poverty.ac.uk

Food poverty is the inability to afford, or to have access to, food to make up a healthy diet.

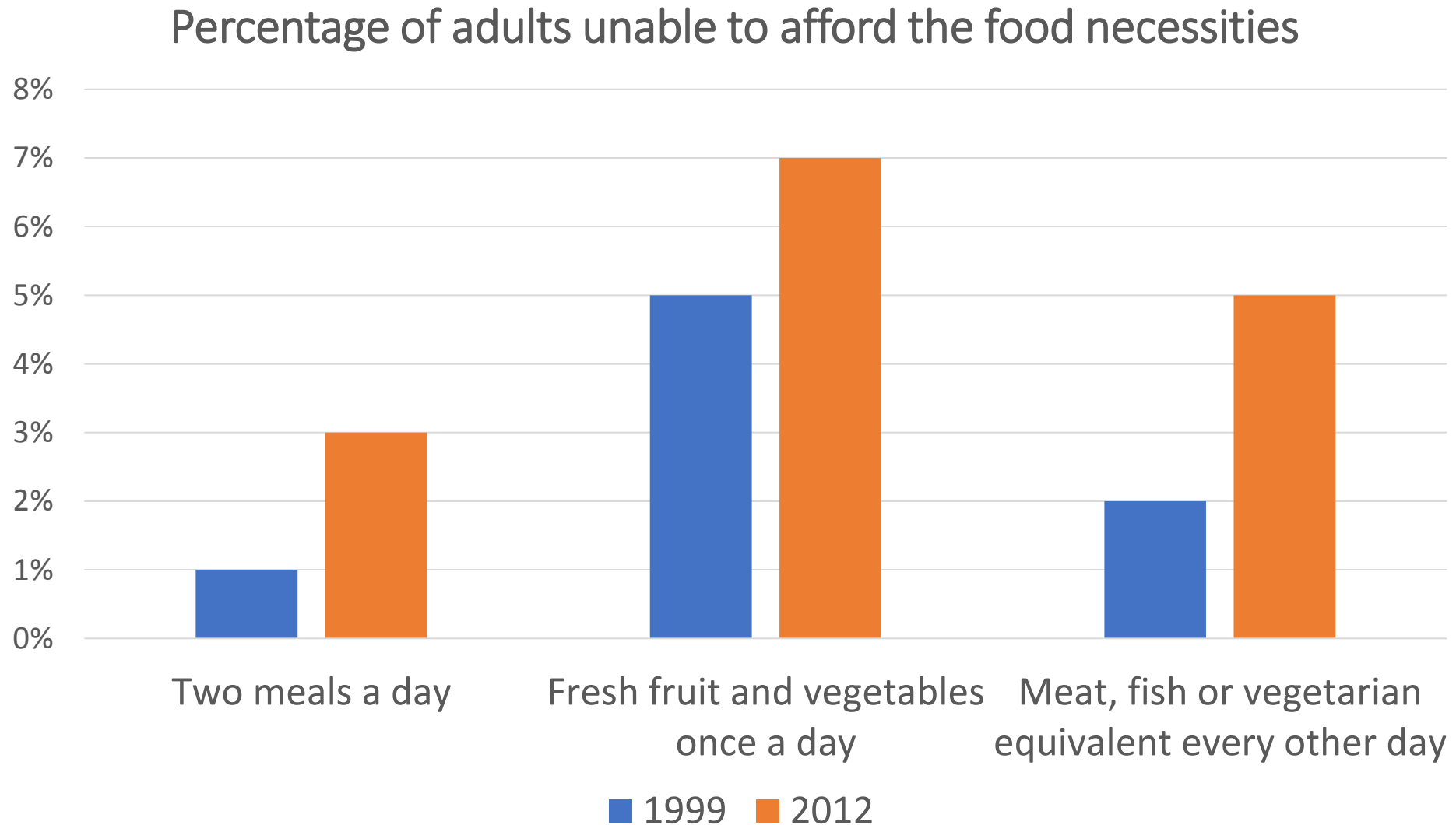
Department of Health, England

Minimum food standards

	Percentage thinking item is a necessity
Adults	
Two meals a day	91%
Fresh fruit and vegetables every day	83%
Meat, fish or vegetarian equivalent every other day	76%
Children	
Three meals a day	93%
Fresh fruit and vegetables at least once a day	96%
Meat, fish or vegetarian equivalent at least once a day	90%

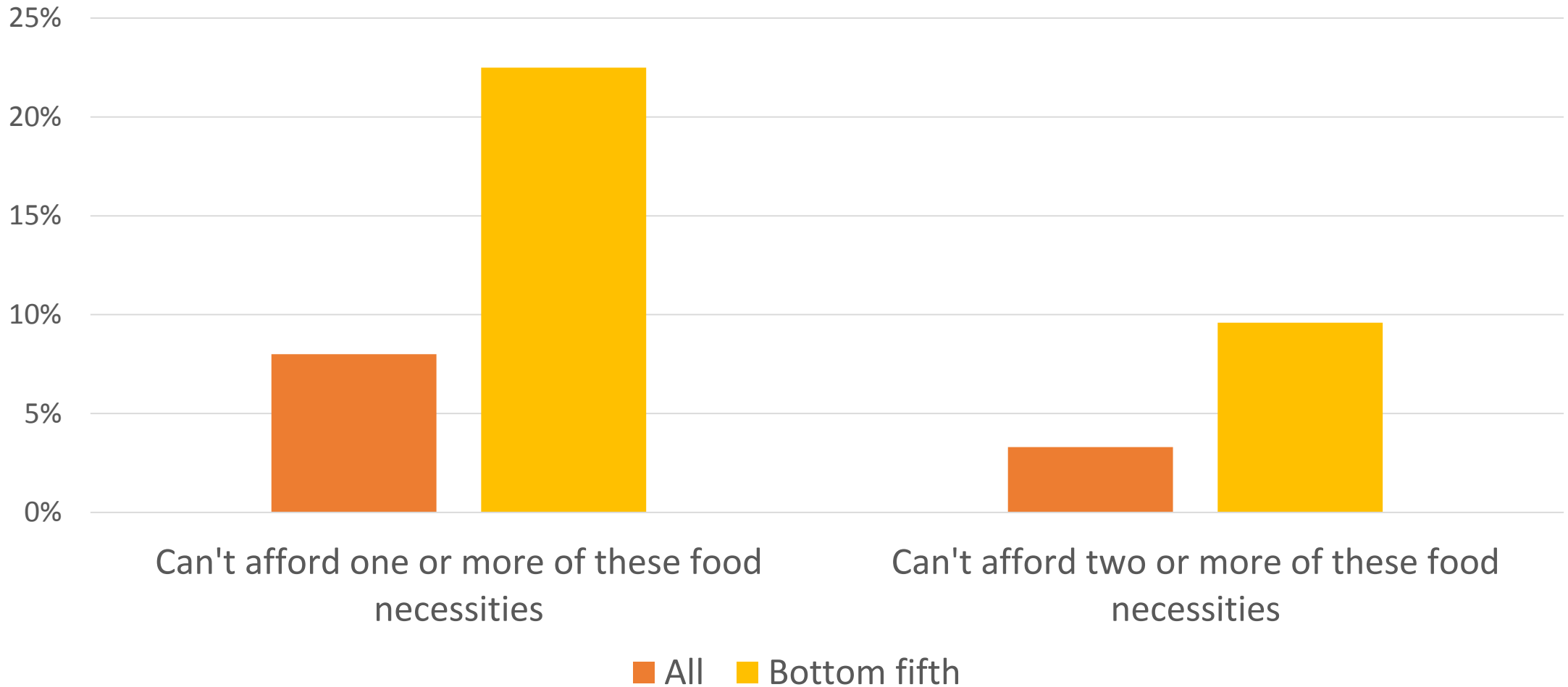
Source: Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK survey, 2012

Rising food poverty



Source: *Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK survey, 2012; Poverty and Social Exclusion survey, 1999*

Percentage of adults with an inadequate diet



Source: Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK survey, 2012

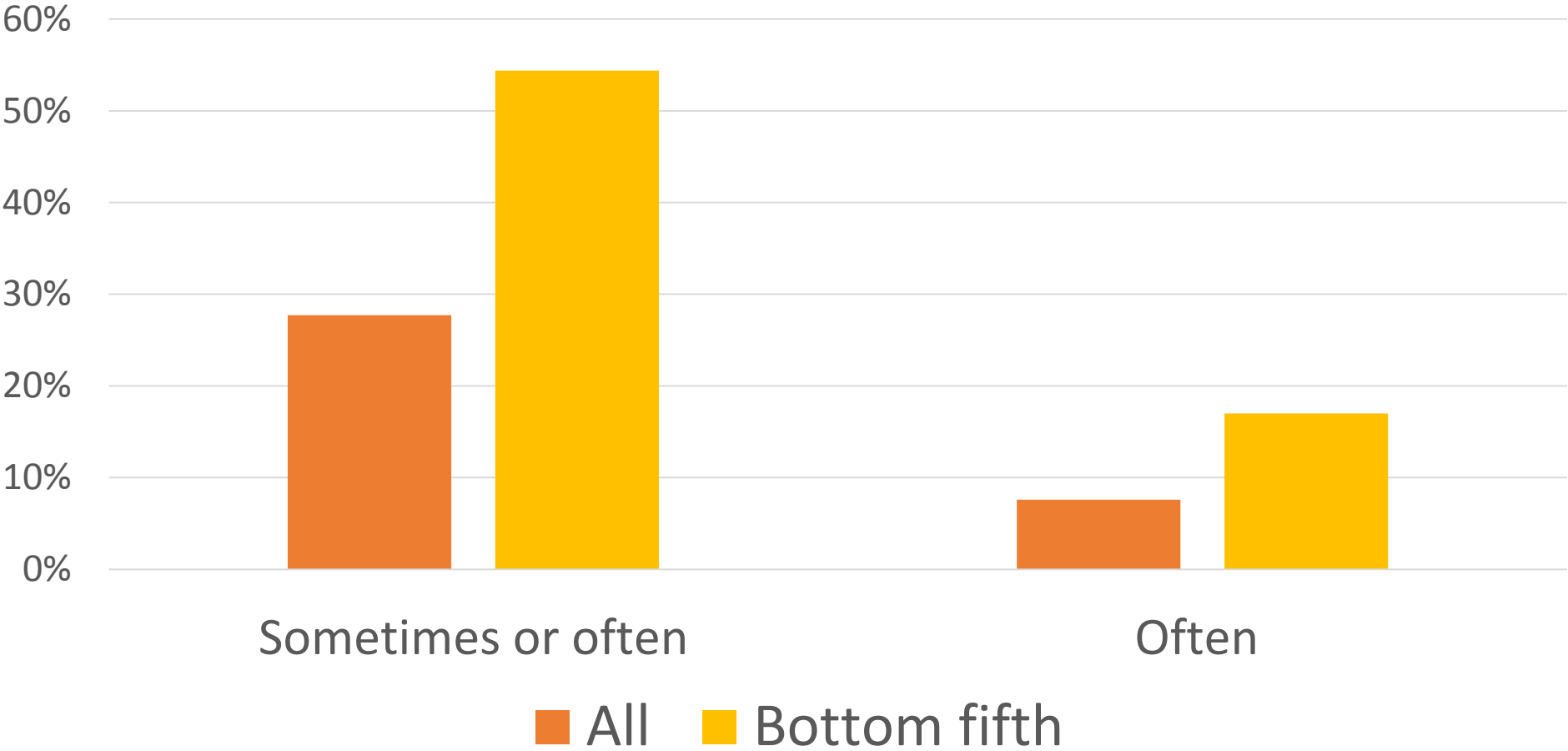
Prioritising the children



I only tend to eat one meal a day and that does me, cos I like to make sure I got for my children.

Jennie, single parent

Skimping on food so that others have enough to eat



Source: Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK survey, 2012

Food poverty today

- 3.5 million adults are not properly fed
- 0.5 million children are not properly fed
- Nearly one in five of the poorest have an inadequate diet
- Nearly one in ten have an extremely inadequate diet
- Over half of the poorest skimp on food sometimes or often

Poor diet - poor health

Poor diet contributes to nearly half of coronary heart disease and a third of cancers.

In all age groups, people living on a low income have higher rates of diet-related diseases than other people.

The Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom

Unhealthy but cheap

Sometimes we eat the wrong thing – cos you go for what's cheap and that isn't always the healthy option.

Disabled couple

They say you should eat 5 a day, I am lucky if eat two a day I will admit it, because everything is so dear in the shops today.

Unemployed Male

It tends to end up being things I don't want to be eating and things I don't want my kids eating, but we have no choice really because it is cheaper'.

Lone Parent, Female

Cutting back among the poorest

Percentage of adults in bottom fifth of households who:	Often	Often or sometimes
Skimped on food so others would have enough to eat	17%	54%
Postponed visits to the dentist	25%	46%
Continued to wear worn out clothes/shoes	29%	67%
Gone without or cut back on social visits	49%	77%

Source: Poverty and Social Exclusion in the UK survey, 2012



PSE

I just couldn't deal with all the stress from worrying about money, food on the table, heating, bills, I just couldn't do it.

Marc, young job seeker

Source: www.poverty.ac.uk

Other factors: access to shops

Of those who do 'not always having the kind of food they wanted':

- 38% mention 'poor availability or quality in local shops'
- 33 % mention 'difficulty getting to the shops'

Lack of food = lack of money

Of those who sometimes or often do not have enough to eat:

98 % say this is down to not having enough money

The growth of low paid work



Cartoon: Pinterest

- 21% of employees are in low paid work – up from 13% in 1979
- 5.1 million employees are low paid

Low pay is taken as two-thirds of gross hourly median pay

Rising job insecurity and underemployment

- Over 3 million describe themselves as in insecure employment
- Nearly 1 million workers are on zero hours contracts
- 5 million workers are self-employed - a record high
- 8.5 million are part-time workers - a record high

TODAY

Most people in poverty are in work

Source: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 'Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2016'

Government support for the poor

- Rise in spending on means-tested in-work benefits
- Rise in spending on housing benefit
- Fall in value of out of work benefits from 20% of average earnings in 1979 to 11% in 2013

Overall spending on benefits has remained steady for last 40 years at around 12% of national income.

The 'austerity' cuts

50% of all cuts fall in two areas:

Local government

Benefits

Equality of SACRIFICE



From "PLUMS" (the Organ of the N.C.L.C.)

Cartoon: Independent Labour Publications

The post-2010 tax/benefit reforms

The incomes of the poorest households with children:

- Dropped 6% between 2010 and 2015
- Will drop by around 10% between 2015 and 2019

Working-age social rented tenants are particularly hard hit.

Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies; Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield

More and tougher benefit sanctions

1.9 million

decisions to sanction claimants between
October 2012 and the end of 2015

Source: DWP quarterly statistical summary, May 2016

The rise and rise of food banks



I was crying on the phone to them [the DWP] telling them I am pregnant. I don't want my baby coming home to a house with no gas or electric. We have laminated floor and it's so cold.
Gemma, food bank user

Over 1.1 million three-day emergency food supplies from Trussell Trust food banks in 2015/16

What can be done? Some ideas...

Short-term

- Support benefit claimants to maximise and stabilise their incomes
- Map food access problems
- Consult with local communities

Longer-term

- Work with 'anchor' institutions to establish a social value procurement framework
- Work with local employers and unions on an employment charter
- Boost local food production and distribution