

# Addressing Food Insecurity: Research, Practice and Actions for Dietitians

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# Food Insecurity in The United Kingdom

- Food insecurity is a rising public health concern
- People in poverty struggle to afford enough food (nutritious options)
- Most common among children and people in lone-parent families
- **Dietitians are key players in addressing food insecurity**

Joseph Rowntree Foundation. 2026. Food insecurity. Available at [Food insecurity | Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)

# EFAD ESDN (Public Health)

## FEED Europe

Food security Education & Empowerment for Dietitians

*“Food insecurity remains a **persistent and widespread issue** across Europe, **affecting millions of individuals and families**. In response to this critical problem, we have developed an ambitious initiative designed to **empower dietitians** with the knowledge and resources needed to **combat food insecurity** effectively.”*

**EFAD**

The European Federation  
of the Associations  
of Dietitians

# Outline of Study

- Focus Groups: N = 32 (25 UK dietitians and 7 dietetic students)
- Recruited via LinkedIn and BDA communications
- Thematic analysis with Nvivo Pro 12
- Main themes: Understanding and Education; Challenges for Dietitians; Responsibility and Collaboration



# Summary of Findings and Actions for Practice

1. Dietitians have inadequate knowledge of food insecurity

**Read research and engage in discussions on the topic**

2. Dietitians do not routinely screen for food insecurity

**HungerVital Sign Screening Tool – consider limitations in practice**

# Summary of Findings and Actions for Practice

3. Dietitians have low confidence – embarrassment and discomfort

**Practicing and opening discussions with patients – reflection**

4. Some Dietitians don't perceive their role as public health

**HCPC Public Health Guidelines and AHP Public Health Strategic Framework**

# Sustainability?

- Understanding of agriculture's role was very limited
- Resources that would help “anything”
- *“I think food banks are very important in some respects, but they shouldn't be looked upon as a permanent solution. It should just be a stepping stone.”*
- *“I don't feel I know enough about the agricultural system to answer this question fully”*



# Food Insecurity Working Group – BDA PHSG

**Goal 1:** Create a food insecurity course

**Goal 2:** Position statement

**Goal 3:** Food insecurity hub

**Goal 4:** Food insecurity webinar

**Goal 5:** Entries and promotion in BDA PHSG Newsletter

# What can you take from this?

- HungerVital Sign tool - a simple way of screening
- More familiar with resources in your area allows signposting
- We need more dietitians completing research in this area
- EFAD ESDN Public Health: Food insecurity club and handbook
- Get involved with the BDA Public Health Specialist Group - £20
- Get involved, food insecurity working group – bring ideas!



# Further Resources

[The Hunger Vital Sign™ - Children's HealthWatch](#)

[The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2025 - UNICEF DATA](#)

[United Kingdom Food Security Report 2024: Theme 4: Food Security at Household Level - GOV.UK](#)

[Food poverty: Households, food banks and free school meals - House of Commons Library](#)