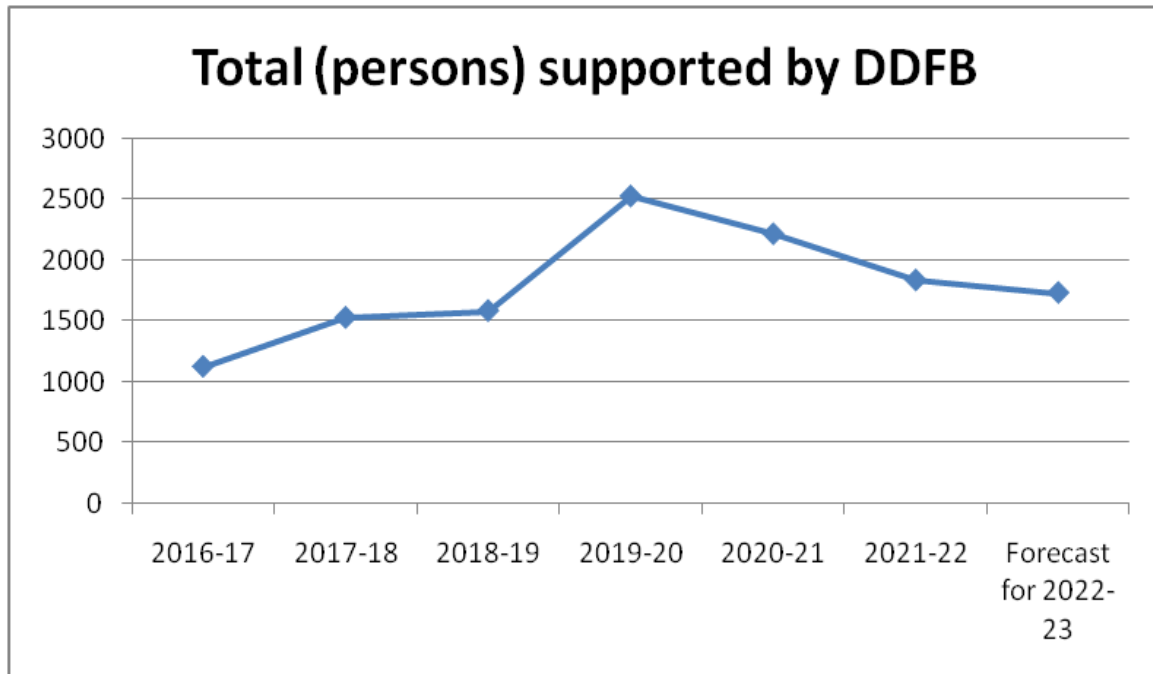


Devizes and District Foodbank (DDFB) – Devizes Area Board – 05/12/22

- 1245 individuals have been helped by Devizes and District Foodbank (DDFB) from 1st April to 21st October 2022.
- The below graph was made in July 2022, and shows a sharp peak in demand with the first COVID-19 lockdown, followed by a drop, with numbers remaining higher than pre-COVID levels.
- **Using data from October 2022, the prediction for 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 will be much higher than forecast, at over 2,600 individuals**

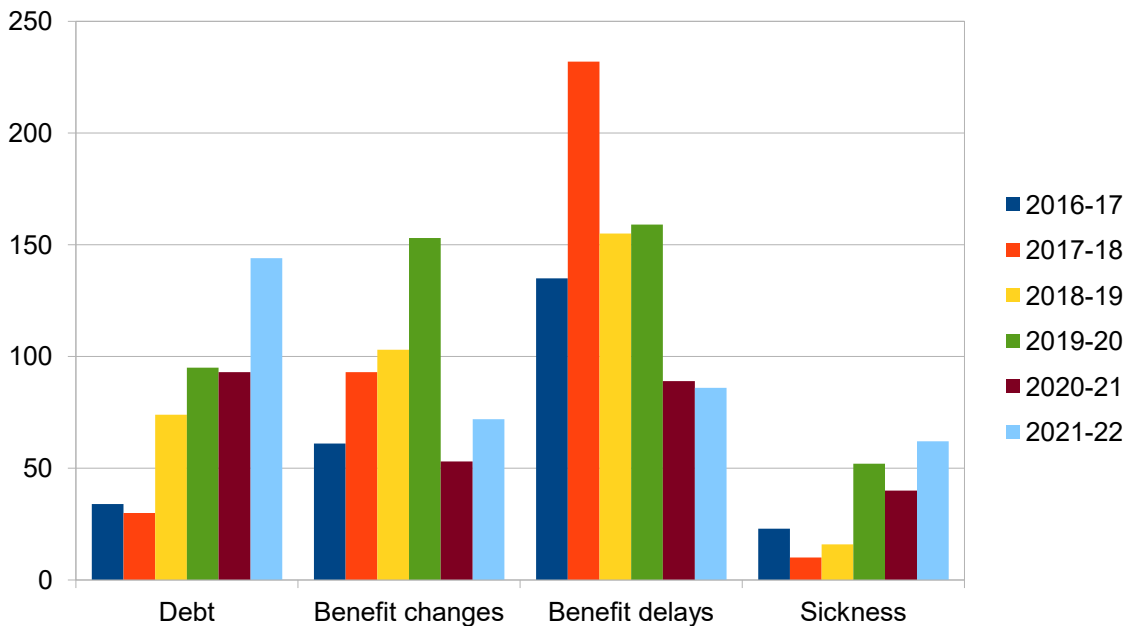


This reflects the steep rise in utility and food costs over the last year, and the impact of insufficient wages and benefit levels. It matches the national Trussell Trust [data](#), released on 10th November, showing an unprecedented level of food bank-use over the six months from April to September 2022, with **1.3 million** food parcels being given out across the UK. This is especially unusual in the summer months, where referrals are generally lower than in winter. DDFB gave out a record four tonnes of food over the summer to families on free school meals.

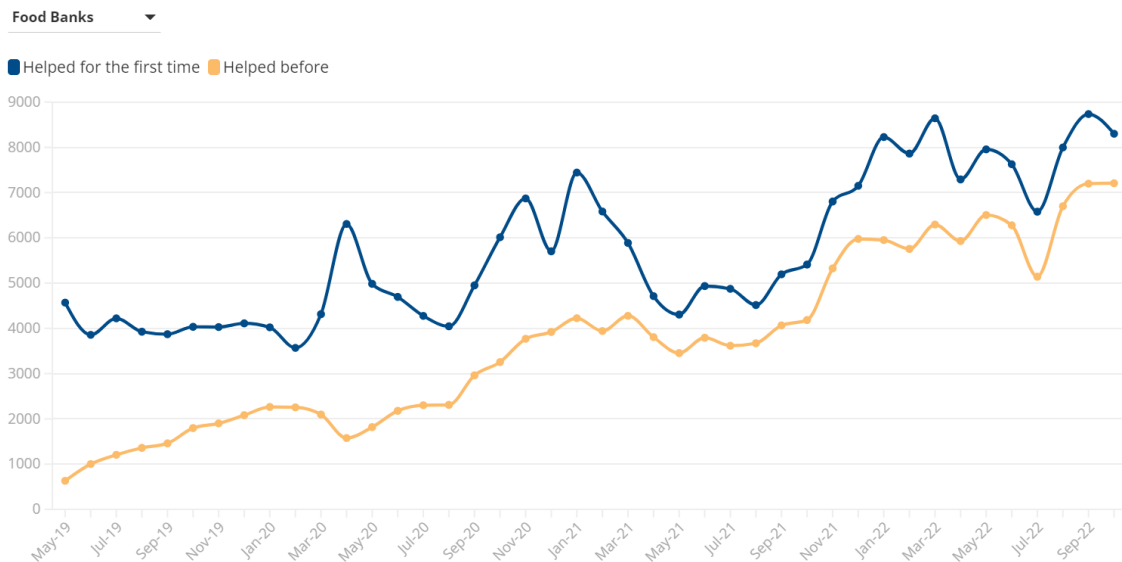


Devizes and District Foodbank (DDFB) – Devizes Area Board – 05/12/22

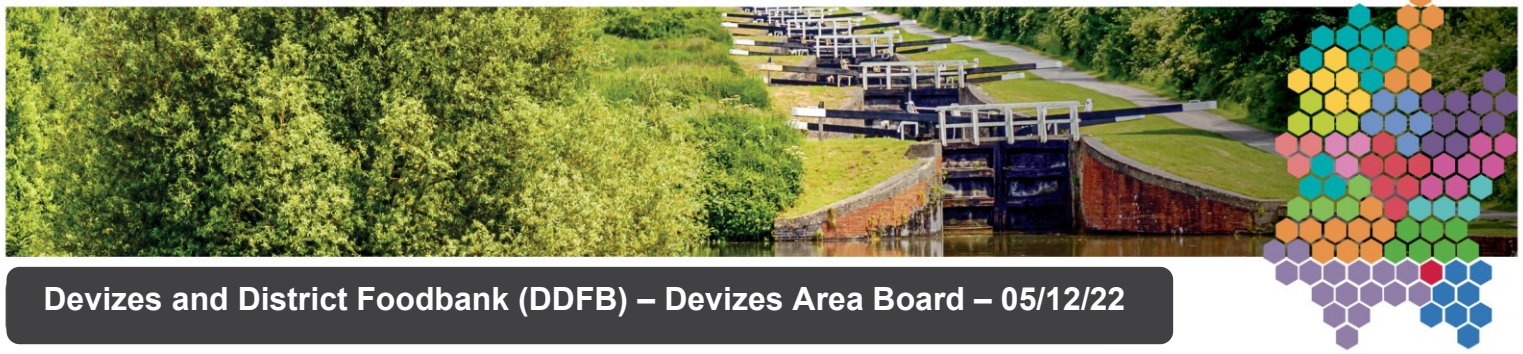
Primary cause of foodbank referral over time



Number of people who've been helped for the first time, or helped before, with food banks or charitable support

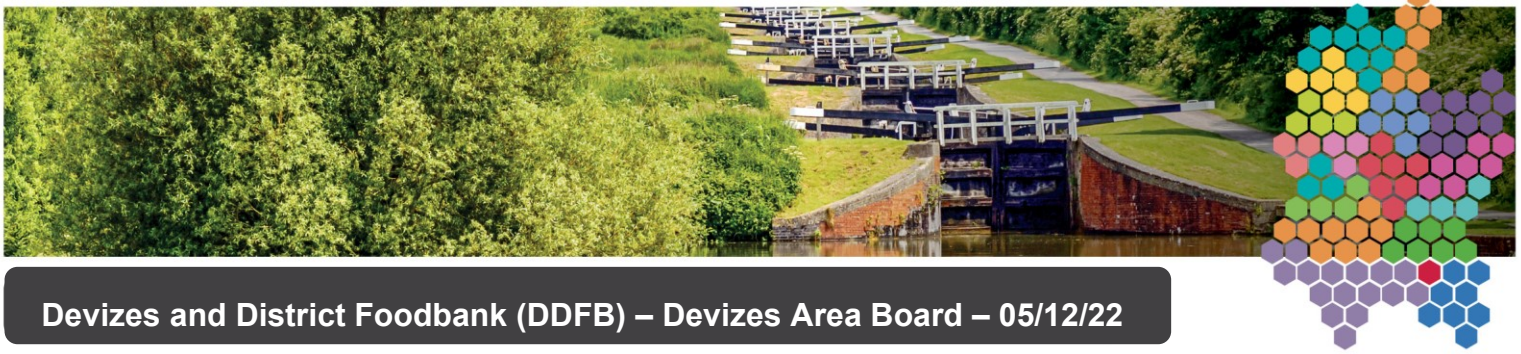


The above graph shows the top primary causes of referrals to DDFB, as recorded by our referral agencies. Debt is particularly an issue, as also demonstrated by national Citizens Advice data, where more people had been unable to top up their prepayment meter by November than in the whole of the last five years combined (just over 20,000 individuals). Council Tax arrears continue to be the top cause of debt in Devizes.



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- Although DDFB does not collect data on how often individuals are having to use the food bank, national Citizens Advice data suggests more people are having to use food banks and charitable support for the first time, including families with one or more working adults. This is despite several Government schemes such as the Cost of Living payments, Council Tax Energy Rebate scheme, Energy Bills Support Scheme, etc.
- The significant work of Wiltshire Council in distributing the third instalment of the Household Support Fund (October 2022 to March 2023) is recognised, and anecdotally, supermarket vouchers and direct payments have been well-received by households. However, the short-term nature of the funds has limited their impact, and the Trussell Trust recommends a significant proportion of the fund is “cash first” rather than supermarket or utilities vouchers, or distribution to charities. This could also apply to Local Welfare Provision in Wiltshire.
- **Cash payments allow for debts and arrears to be paid and for more dignity, choice and flexibility for recipients in meeting their own needs.** Leeds City Council recently trialled a cash-first [local welfare scheme](#) from October 2021 to April 2022, involving regular or one-off cash payments made to 283 people to a total sum of £45,450. 94% of recipients said they preferred cash to vouchers or a food bank referral, and 91% reported improved finances in the period receiving payments. **Significantly, 86% of recipients did not need to use a Trussell Trust food bank during the trial.** There was no evidence of mis-use of payments, and several households used them to pay off loans, or towards gas, electricity and council tax. Leeds City Council stated that the budget required for cash payments was the same as that which they normally spent on supermarket vouchers and refurbished goods, but cash could be distributed far more efficiently via Cash Perks SMS messages redeemed for cash. The [London Borough of Barking and Dagenham](#) also adopted a cash first approach to its local welfare scheme in 2020, and more local authorities are adopting this approach.
- **Citizens Advice data suggests that cash payments are a way to prevent individuals from having to use a food bank**, where choice is limited and financial inclusion services are not always available, as the first Cost of Living payment in July saw a significant dip in referrals to food banks through Citizens Advice.
- Several local authorities across the UK, including [Cambridge City Council](#), have declared a Cost of Living emergency, with policies in place specifically to support households struggling with bills, low wages and an inability to afford food. The work of Wiltshire Council in its Council Tax Reduction scheme, Warm and Safe Wiltshire scheme, and coordination of warm spaces is welcome, but there are still many households falling through the gaps. These include young people,



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households paying mortgages, and people who have never had to seek financial support before. Schemes could be better advertised and made clearer and more concise across the Wiltshire Council website, social media and through voluntary sector organisations. Condensing application forms and making eligibility requirements clear would allow more people to receive support such as Local Welfare Provision.

- Individuals living in Wiltshire can receive support from DDFB in the form of three days' worth of nutritionally balanced food, although a referral voucher is essential as we cannot offer a food parcel without one. Details of this process are on our website at [How to get help | Devizes & District Foodbank](#). We operate on a delivery model to postcodes SN8, SN9 and SN10, as we are now based in Hopton Industrial Estate, although clients can still collect food parcels. We have a rough rule of no more than three food parcels a year, although flexibility is possible if financial issues are being resolved.
- At the moment, our finances are sufficient, as we have received two lots of funding from the Household Support Fund, and our stock levels are also sufficient. We do not know what to expect this winter, but other Trussell Trust food banks such as Salisbury Foodbank are seeing much higher levels of demand than usual, so our situation might change.

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Organisation name: Devizes and District Foodbank

Date: 24/11/22