

# What are the benefits of a more than food approach to addressing food insecurity

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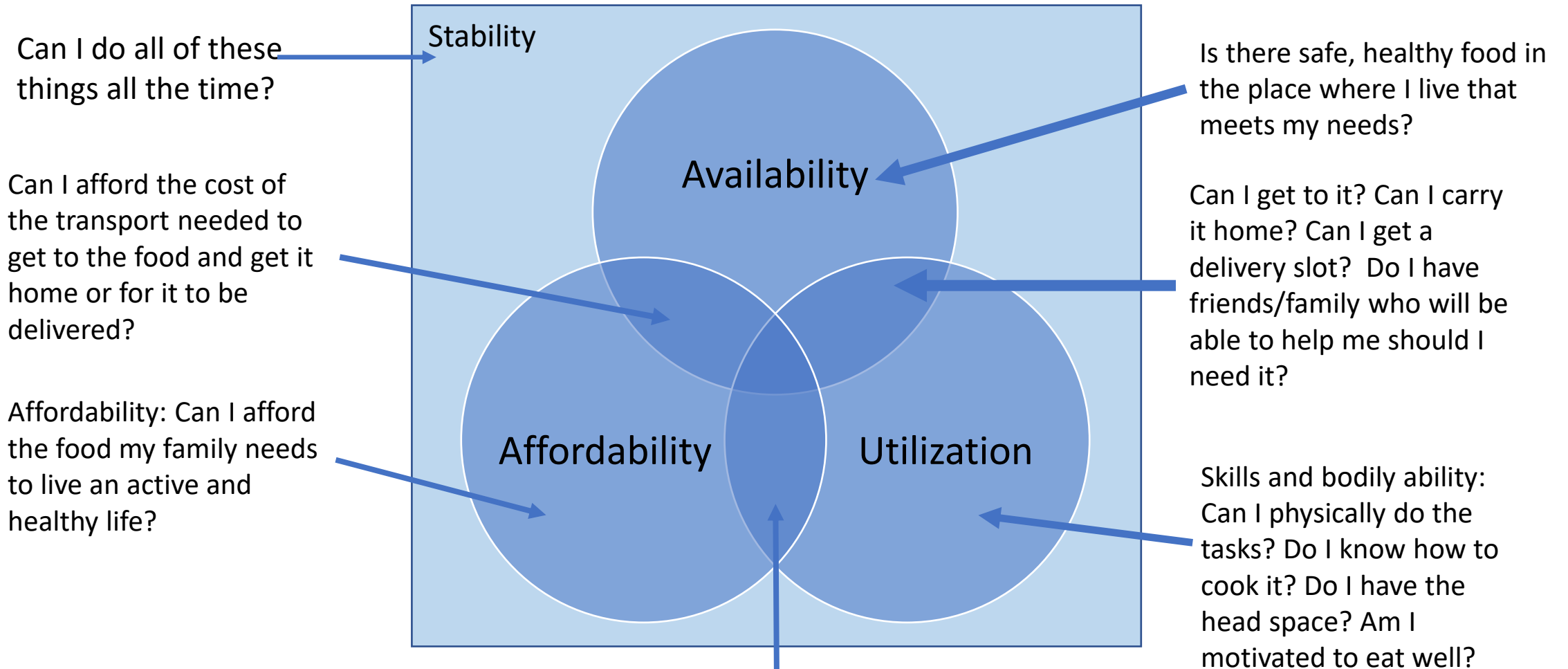
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# My research focus

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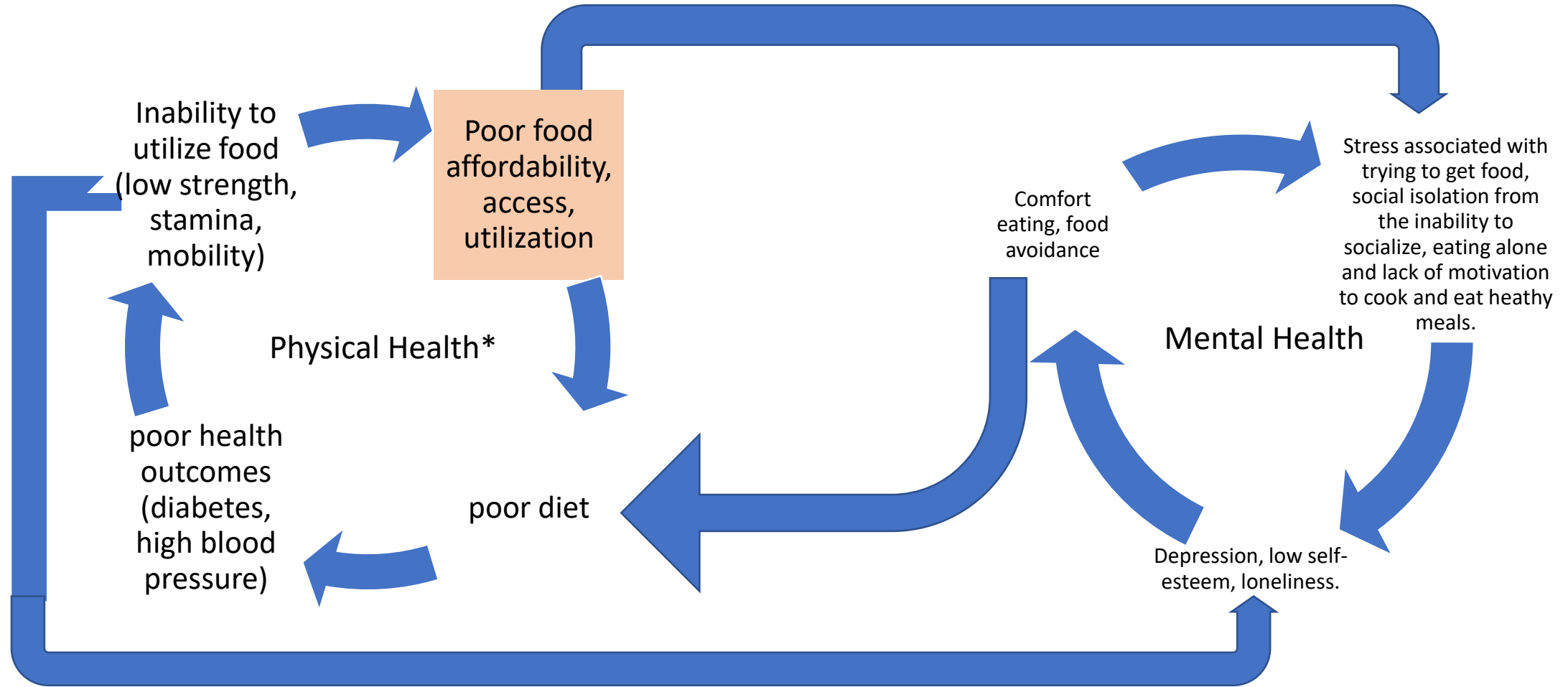
- Food insecurity in wealthy contexts as more than just affordability.
- Food insecurity effects: Foodscapes and bodies
- System solutions toward food security. More than food.
- Food Ladders: a good framework, still need further evidence of durability and effectiveness of interventions at different levels.

# UN Pillars of Food Security



Do I have the tools that I need? Can I afford to use the energy required?  
Do I have the knowledge to diversify my diet and can I afford to act on it?  
Can I afford to socialize in order to maintain reciprocal relationships?

# Physical and mental health\*\*



\*Berlant, 2011: downward and reinforcing spiral of the relationship between food security and physical health

\*\*Kinard and Blake, forthcoming, **Stretched, Struggling, and Stressed: The Lived Experience of Food Insecurity during COVID**



## Food Insecurity: Place Based Effects

- Cumulative loss of foodways and food knowledges
- Loss of local support networks
- Reduced resilience
- Degraded Food landscapes (Foodscapes) that provide limited access to healthy food options
- Leaves people Stretched, Stressed and Struggling

Diane's story (40-50, unemployed, domestic abuse survivor, mental and physical health issues)

*I'm struggling to get food. I've had to spend quite a bit at my local shop. I've often sent people [NHS volunteers] to the local shop, which costs three times more than it does in the supermarket.*

*I used to be a social butterfly. Now I'm not. I feel so isolated and so alone, nights, it's oh so hard. I started getting my anxiety and depression back again because I'm not seeing anybody. I've not seen anybody physically, which it sounds daft, but it's such a primal thing.*

# Why food (or money) is not enough: Liam's Story (40-50, Unemployed)

*If we could have gone out and done stuff, maybe it would have been a little bit different. Just being locked in for all this amount of time, yes, I should imagine that caused what it caused [getting kicked out of the house]. That's why I'm here today [in the shelter]. The first day I got in here [emergency accommodation], I just couldn't believe where my life had gone, to be fair. The amount of days that I've just been in tears and not having a clue what to do, and just thinking shall I bloody end everything?...It's caused me to drink a few cans every night because I've stopped with - why I ended up here in the first place [drinking]. I haven't got bottles of vodka every single day. I've really reduced my alcohol intake, but I still like to have it in in case I feel as though I need a bit. The money situation is just horrendous at the minute. I just struggle and struggle and get so uptight and stressed about it.*

## Highlights of TBBT impacts and vulnerabilities Nov 2021 survey:

- The ability to **save money** is a key impact but some still struggle to realise these benefits...
  - those with few cooking skills
  - those with the greatest financial struggle
- Those with lower levels of **cooking confidence** are less likely to indicate they are cooking more healthy meals at home.
- But, people, regardless of their drivers of food insecurity (e.g., locational effects such as living in a food desert, capability effects such as cooking skills, or financial effects such as affordability) are eating **more fruit and veg**.
- People who **volunteer** are more likely to know about and access the additional services on offer.
- Economic issues are key for all members with regard to belonging to TBBT, but **older people** are more likely to indicate environmental, dietary or social reasons as their motivation.

# Distinguishing characteristics of worried groups as compared to those not worried about energy costs

- Worry about energy costs is linked to experiences of food insecurity (Skipping meals and living in a food dessert), only those who are likely won't have enough money are going to the food bank, suggesting that they they do not have access to loans and don't feel they can cut back any further.
- Internet confidence is also linked to worry about energy costs, which suggests that information about energy support is best distributed through familiar internet channels (e.g., social media platforms) in person or over the telephone. Support services should be provided in person or over the telephone.
- The likelihood of borrowing to pay the bill is increased for those who have 3+ Children, are on zero-hours contracts, have limited cooking skills, and/or receive benefits compared to those who are not worried.
- The likelihood of going without or going into debt to the energy company are is increased for those who live in private rental accommodation, receive benefits, and have 3+ children at home.

When the following are true ...	The probability of <b>restricting use</b> is more likely by a factor of...	The probability of <b>borrowing money</b> is more likely by a factor of...	The probability of <b>not having enough money</b> is more likely by a factor of...
I skip meals not out of choice	1.54	3.11	4.61
I currently go to the food bank	Not significant	Not significant	1.37
Before joining TBBT I struggled to access affordable Fruit and Vegetables (food desert)	1.93	1.58	1.71
My health has been poor in the last 12 months	1.36	1.55	1.47
My cooking skills are limited	Not significant	1.68	Not significant
I am not very confident using the internet	1.828	Not significant	1.41
I work a zero hours contract	Not significant	2.81	Not significant
I live in private rental accommodation	Not significant	Not significant	1.43
I am receiving JSA, Universal Credit, or Disability Allowance	Not significant	1.80	2.55
There are three or more children living in my home	Not significant	1.92	1.49



# Households where children receive free school meals (households with children under 18)

- As the number of children in the household increases so does the worry about energy costs and the proportion of people who will borrow to pay the bill. People with three or more children are twice as likely to borrow compared to people with no children. The two-child benefits cap may contribute to this increase.
- The differences between those households receiving FSM and those that do not are not significant. This suggests that while Free school meals are helping those families that receive them, but also that the threshold for free school meals eligibility is too low.

Number of children in household (0-18)	Not worried	Will restrict use	Will borrow	Will not have enough money
No Children	15%	54%	7%	25%
One Child	15%	50%	10%	25%
Two Children	16%	43%	12%	30%
Three or more children	13%	40%	14%	34%

Free School Meals (only includes households with children aged 5-18)	Not worried	Will restrict use	Will borrow	Will not have enough money
No Free School Meals (1966)	14%	45%	12%	30%
Free School Meals (165)	16%	40%	11%	33%

# Benefits Support and Energy Worry

- Most people are worried, but those receiving UC/JSA or Disability benefit are twice as likely to be worried.
  - People receiving UC/JSA are nearly 2x more likely to borrow money to pay the bill.
  - People who do not receive these benefits are half as likely to say they won't have enough money for the bill, though nearly 1 in 5 people in this category still expect to struggle.

Benefits	Not worried	Will restrict use	Will borrow	Will not have enough money
Not receiving UC, JSA or Disability benefit (848)	20%	56%	6%	18%
UC or JSA (860)	11%	40%	14%	35%
Disability benefit (423)	10%	48%	8%	34%

Food Bank Use	Never since TBBT	Sometimes since TBBT	Often Since TBBT
Never before TBBT	52%	5%	4%
Sometimes before TBBT	14%	13%	3%
Often Before TBBT	2%	6%	2%

**Foodbank use:**

- Since joining TBBT: 68% Do not use foodbanks; 25% Sometimes use a foodbank; 9% use a foodbank often
- 16% have stopped using foodbanks since joining TBBT.
- 6% have reduced their foodbank use from often to sometimes.
- 12% have increased their foodbank use (5% from never to sometimes; 4% from never to often; 3% from sometimes to often)
- The net reduction of foodbank use is 10% as a result of joining TBBT

**Skipping meals since joining TBBT not out of choice:**

- 25% said they never skip meals
- 47% said they sometimes skip meals
- 27% said they often skip meals

Compared to those who do not skip meals, if I ...	The likelihood I will Sometimes skip is...	The likelihood I will often skip is...
Have a long-term health problem	1.4 times greater	2.14 times greater
Had poor health in the last 12 months	1.72 times greater	2.88 times greater
Am struggling financially	2.54 times greater	5.35 times greater
Struggled to access F&V where I live	3.31 times greater	4.46 times greater
Have no or few cooking skills	Not significant	1.56 times greater

# Food (in)security and foodbank use: Whole TBBT

**Worry that food would run out because of lack of income since joining TBBT (affordability):**

- 36% said they are never worried
- 60% said they are less worried about running out of food

**Struggled to access affordable fruit and veg in the place where they live before joining TBBT (Food Desert or availability)**

- 15% never struggled; 82% of this group say they eat more fruit and veg since joining.
- 68% sometimes struggled; 78% of this group say they eat more fruit and veg since joining.
- 18% often struggled; 65% say they eat more fruit and veg since joining

**Cooking skills (Food Utilization):**

- 26% indicated their cooking skills are low (not at all and just a few things)
- 54% indicated that they had some cooking skill (not bad)
- 20% indicated they were confident cooks (brilliant)

# Ongoing and future research

1. Fresh Street—weekly, area-based Fruit/Veg voucher scheme in Tower Hamlets, Doncaster and Bradford. Entering full trial. I will update with the results.

2. Proposal to work with TBBT to understand:

- Health benefits of pantry schemes and potential financial savings to the public purse.
- Understand the experiential differences between pantries and foodbanks (e.g., willingness/ability to join the scheme, but not access a foodbank).
- How people incorporate pantry schemes into their household food strategies (e.g., alongside other shopping/ food bank use) and cooking/eating practices.
- Understand the benefits/disadvantages of the scheme and how this might change over time. (e.g., is social benefit something that is quickly realized and then no longer needed, is dietary change long-lasting, does membership become purely about money after a period of time, etc).

I would very much welcome your input in terms of what in this area would be useful for you. Please get in touch.

# Read more and get in touch—

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- See also online articles in The Conversation, Impaktor, The Mint Magazine
- Personal Blog: [Http://GeoFoodie.Org](http://GeoFoodie.Org)