

CAS Food Insecurity Pilots

Piloting short-term crisis support alongside holistic advice.

The Food Insecurity Pilots are being delivered by Citizens Advice Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government. They are currently at the half-way point, having started flexibly in June and are due to end by the end of November.

Service Aims

Our approach is building upon research from the [Independent Food Aid Network](#) and a previous [Shopping Card Pilot](#) delivery in 2021-2022. When someone needs to use a food bank, there is usually a need for welfare rights and money advice. The CAB network supports these pilots as our network of generalists, money and debt advisers in local Citizens Advice Bureaux take a holistic, person centred approach to people’s financial health.

Vouchers, shopping cards and charitable cash grants cannot address to poverty, hunger and destitution in the long term. These responses are not intended to replace referrals to the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF), but to provide an immediate source of complementary support at the point of need – including for those who may not be eligible for SWF support. The hope is that by providing this immediate support alongside money advice that the need for food banks and other forms of charitable food aid will be reduced.

The pilot will be evaluated via evaluation report due to be submitted to the Scottish Government in January 2024. Data from delivering bureaux, clients and partners will be integrated into the report.

Service Structure

Below is a table detailing the 9 pilots involved.

Area of Delivery	Card/ Cash delivery	Area of Delivery	Card/ Cash delivery
Clackmannanshire	Cards / Avg. 60 per week	Stirling	Cards / Avg. 30 per week
East Renfrewshire	Cash / Avg. 60 per week	West Dunbartonshire	Cards and cash / Avg. 60 per week
Motherwell and Wishaw	Cards / Avg. 60 per week	West Lothian	Cards and cash / Avg. 60 per week
Musselburgh	Cash / Avg. 60 per week	Western Isles	Cards and cash / Avg. 30 per week
Scottish Borders Consortium Roxburgh and Berwickshire (lead) Central Borders Peebles	Cash / Avg. 30 per week		

The participating bureaux present options of a food bank referral, cash grants and/ or shopping cards to clients in need of food aid alongside offer of money advice and support to apply for Scottish Welfare Fund – Crisis Grant.

- Clients can approach CAB themselves or be referred by a partner organisation.
- Clients in need of emergency food aid will be able to choose between access to cash grants and/or shopping cards alongside a food bank referral.

- Clients can receive a shopping card and/or cash grant at the value of £25 per person in their household.
- Shopping cards and cash grants will always be presented to the client as an option to choose alongside a food bank referral.
- Clients will be offered wrap around support with their money and other issues to help prevent future emergency food need.

Findings to Date

Since launch, the CAB have distributed **3,415** cards and cash grants equating to **£85,375** to **1,217** clients. 1,300 clients have been advised about the pilot, whether they chose support from the pilot or not.

Reasons for need: Cost of living, benefit wait, unexpected costs and debt have been cited as the top 5 reasons for need by clients accessing Food Insecurity Pilot support.

Scottish Welfare Fund

- Majority of clients have either not made an SWF application before accessing the bureau or have made 3 applications already.
- Majority of clients have either had either none or 3 successful SWF applications.
- At the point of advice, most clients do not wish to apply for a crisis grant. The second largest cohort of clients prefers to apply themselves, closely followed by clients who have already exhausted their entitlement.

Client feedback

- 99% of respondents have found the service 'useful' or 'very useful'.
- Our clients said of the pilot: *'I can make the choices my family need'* and *'I can access Aldi locally and no one will know the vouchers are a donation'*.
- Barriers to food access reported by clients include cost (52%), location (41%) and choices available (22%)

Next Steps

The pilot evaluation will be bringing these findings together alongside other data collated throughout the pilot. This will include client demographics, holistic advice take-up, considerations of urban vs rural access to food support, as well as partner perspectives and other data. We would be grateful if you could contribute to this by completing the [partner survey](#) by **3 November 2023**.

We will be re-engaging with yourselves directly again closer to the end of the pilot to gather end of pilot feedback. You can always provide feedback throughout the pilot through your partner CAB or your organisation's Citizens Advice liaison.