

Current and Future situation in relation to Food Insecurity in BCP

The pandemic, Brexit and other economic factors have made food insecurity a higher risk for many families.

Despite the health situation due to the pandemic improving, the removal of protections provided to help those who might find themselves in financial difficulty as a result of the pandemic is likely to mean many find themselves worse off. This coincides with other economic shocks such as the energy price rises, and potential price rises on other products due to supply issues related to the HGV driver shortage and Brexit is likely to create a period of financial stress for those on lower incomes. In a locality where housing costs are higher than average but incomes are lower than the national average it will inevitably lead to families having to make stark choices between essentials such as heat or food.

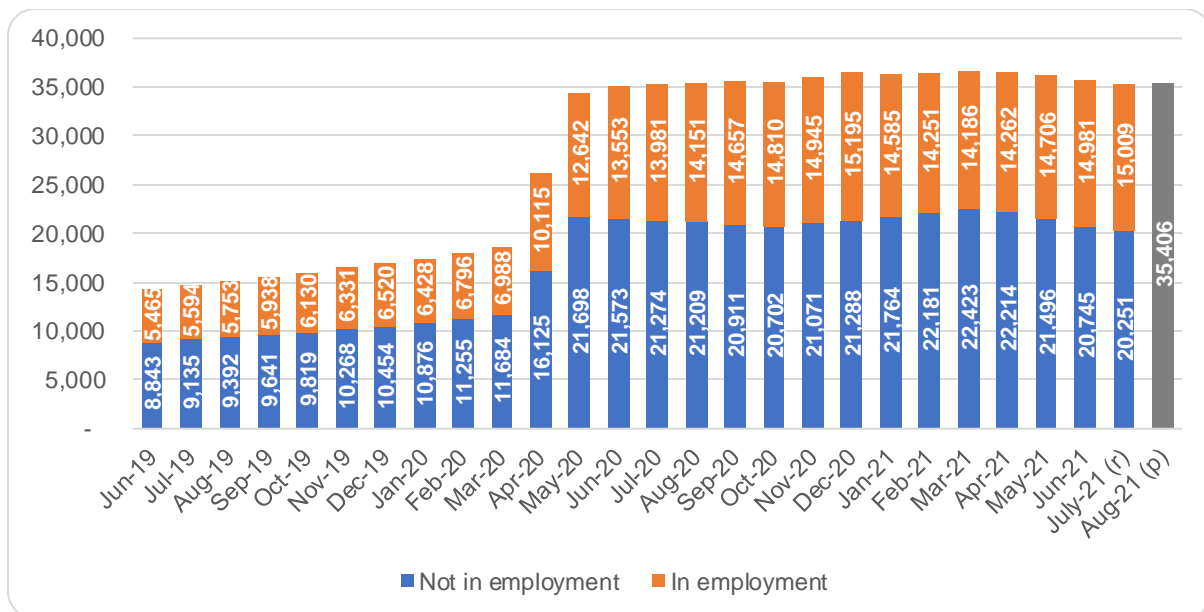
Universal Credit

In BCP although the claimant rate has decreased in recent months currently standing at 5.8% compared with 6.5% in England (August-21), this represents 11,780 individuals. In addition, as at the end of July there were still around 9,000 people on furlough with the scheme ending at the end of September. Although month on month the numbers are declining its likely there will still be a significant number at the end of September who are likely to face redundancy. As we move into Autumn seasonal jobs will also come to an end potentially increasing unemployment.

The numbers of families with dependent children on universal credit has increased significantly since before the pandemic. In March 2020 there were 7,380 families with dependent children on Universal Credit and the latest provisional figures for May 2021 give a figure of 11,401 families, an increase of over 54%. For all families on universal credit the number has increased to 30,296, an increase of nearly 83%. With the threat of the £20 reduction of Universal Credit (introduced at the beginning of the pandemic) due to be implemented on the 6th October 2021, this is an increased pressure for all families.

More recent statistics for individuals on Universal Credit suggests that since March 2021 the total numbers have been falling in BCP but at a very slow rate and indicates that while the number of those “not in employment” is falling the number of those claiming universal credit “in employment” has increased. This may indicate that while those claiming have found work they are earning below the threshold that means they are still eligible for universal credit.

Numbers of individuals on Universal Credit



Weekly median earnings of Full-time workers resident in the area, 2020,ONS

BCP- £537

South West £558.40

England-£589.80

Median monthly private rental sector rent- 2020/21, ONS

BCP -£850

South West-£750

England- £730

House price to residence-based earnings ratios, 2020, ONS

BCP-9.73

SW-8.66

England-7.84

Free School Meals

Eligibility for Free School Meals is another indicator of numbers of households in financial stress. In the 2018/19 Spring Term 13.9% of pupils in BCP were eligible for free school meals. In Summer Term 2020/21 that figure had increased to 17.3% with 8,999 eligible.

Fuel Poverty

This is another indicator of the numbers likely to be in financial stress. Pre-pandemic data from 2019 estimated that around 10.3% of households in BCP (18,889) were considered to be in fuel poverty¹. This number is likely to have increased during the pandemic with the current record price increases in energy costs likely to put

¹ The new fuel poverty metric Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) was set out in the Fuel Poverty Sustainable Warmth strategy published in February 2021. The LILEE indicator considers a household to be fuel poor if: • it is living in a property with an energy efficiency rating of band D, E, F or G as determined by the most up-to-date Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating (FPEER)³ Methodology; and • its disposable income (income after housing costs (AHC) and energy needs) would be below the poverty line. The poverty line (income poverty) is defined as an equivalised disposable income of less than 60% of the national median.

increased financial pressure for many households but particularly those on low incomes.

Rent arrears

A poll undertaken by the debt charity StepChange and YouGov suggested that 10% of private renters could owe rent. The charity estimates they owe on average £800 each. In October the notice landlords have to give to tenants reverts to the two-month period that was the requirement prior to the pandemic (during the pandemic tenants had extra protection from eviction). BCP has a large private rented sector and higher than average rent levels that are likely to mean significant number of households will be struggling to pay rents and avoid eviction.

		Reason for loss of housing - Rent Arrears			Eviction Notices	Cases
		Assured Shorthold Tenancy	Social Rented	Supported Housing	Valid Section 21 Issued	Total Cases Opened
2019	Aug	21	4	4	38	497
	Sep	18	4	1	38	492
	Oct	29	4	0	27	621
	Nov	22	3	2	32	596
	Dec	16	4	1	20	442
2020	Jan	23	6	1	35	665
	Feb	18	4	2	29	594
	Mar	15	7	1	38	740
	Apr	16	2	0	4	601
	May	5	0	2	7	601
	Jun	10	1	3	18	772
	Jul	8	2	1	12	829
	Aug	9	2	0	13	635
	Sep	11	1	2	20	617
	Oct	8	2	0	19	638
	Nov	8	0	2	17	619
	Dec	7	2	0	15	490
2021	Jan	8	0	1	12	595

	Feb	6	1	0	21	573
	Mar	11	0	0	24	763
	Apr	9	0	0	22	645
	May	6	0	0	17	607
	Jun	26	3	0	49	952
	Jul	11	0	3	29	811
	Aug	4	0	0	13	680

Employment

The latest furlough statistics were released on the 9th September 2021 and provide provisional figures to the end of July 2021. Across England the take-up rate was 6%, with a 5% take-up rate in both BCP and Dorset. This amounted to 9,000 employments in BCP and 6,600 in Dorset. The figure for BCP to the end of June was 11,600 employments on furlough with numbers looking like they are continuing to fall with two more months of data to be released after the scheme ends. Across the sectors the figures for BCP to the end of June suggest that just under a third of the furloughed jobs are in the wholesale and retail and accommodation and food services sectors but furloughed jobs in other sectors are fairly evenly spread.

On a more positive note for those searching for work demand for staff is currently at levels nationally not seen for a number of years so this may help some; particularly as this may encourage employers to offer higher salaries and offer more flexible ways of working in order to recruit, however there may be a skills mismatch so retraining may be necessary.

Calls made to Crisis Advice Line

Crisis Payment Scheme	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21
No of calls	46	48	52	48	52	41	64	42
No of missed calls	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total number of grants	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Food bank vouchers awarded	25	36	25	25	27	28	33	27
Grants total value (£)	0	0	0	34	0	0	0	0

“I spoke to one individual several weeks ago who did the same shop week on week with Asda online and they said the same ‘basket’ which used to be £42 per week is now £57 with no extra’s added in.” Donna Jefferies, Contact Officer

