

Latest News from IFAN

IFAN's letter to the new Prime Minister

Immediately after the election of the Labour Government on the 5th July, the [Independent Food Aid Network \(IFAN\)](#) sent the new Prime Minister a [letter](#) signed by its frontline member organisations. This was also published online: "Your new government now has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reverse the tide of poverty that has swept the country. We urge you to take much-needed actions as swiftly as possible." The contents of the letter were covered in [this Big Issue piece](#) and it was also referenced in an [opinion piece](#) by IFAN's Sabine Goodwin on the need for the new Labour Government to prioritise poverty.



Image 1: Westminster Bridge and the Houses of Parliament

Eradicating food insecurity while ending the need for food banks and other forms of charitable food aid in the UK

IFAN also put together a policy briefing: ["Eradicating food insecurity while ending the need for food banks and other forms of charitable food aid in the UK"](#). This is aimed at all new and existing MPs outlining IFAN's urgent concerns about the UK poverty crisis and the immediate actions needed to reduce food insecurity. IFAN hopes that MPs will do their utmost to reduce the impossible burden that is being placed on people facing hunger as the winter approaches as well as charitable food aid teams contending with burnout and lack of supplies and funding. The recent extension of the Household Support Fund is welcome but represents a drop in the ocean in terms of what is needed as IFAN's Sabine Goodwin writes [here](#) for the Big Issue.

IFAN's AGM

Ahead of the election, IFAN held its annual AGM. Highlights included an invaluable contribution from and question and answer session with [Sir Stephen Timms MP](#), former Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee and now Minister of Social Security and Disability, as well as a session led by [Let's End Poverty](#). Sir Stephen talked about the importance of local crisis support being available in all areas of the UK and answered questions about the need for the Household Support Fund to be extended beyond September 2024 as well as other topics linked to food insecurity and poverty. Let's End Poverty ran an interactive session for our members on how to engage with their prospective parliamentary candidates ahead of the July election. You can read more about the future of crisis support [here](#).



Image 2: IFAN 'Worrying about money?' leaflet for Haringey

'Worrying About Money?' cash first referral leaflets and Money Counts training

IFAN has continued to publish new ["Worrying About Money?"](#) or [cash first referral leaflets](#). The leaflets, and their alternative versions, are aimed at helping people facing financial insecurity as well as support workers and volunteers to navigate their way towards local cash first or income-focused solutions. "Worrying About Money?" leaflets as well as interactive, poster, translated, Easy Read, and BSL versions are now available in 127 local authorities across the UK. Since April 2024, "Worrying About Money?" leaflets have been co-created and published for the first time in [East Suffolk](#), [Ipswich](#), [Westmorland and Furness](#), and, for the first time in Northern Ireland, in [Lisburn and Castlereagh](#).

Around every 6 months, IFAN collaborates with local partners to update each individual "Worrying About Money?" leaflet. The IFAN team verifies that all details are correct, checks in with local groups to ascertain if any changes need to be changed in terms of the area's context including establishing if there is a need for alternative formats.

In England, IFAN has recently updated "Worrying About Money?" resources covering Arun and Chichester, Babergh and Mid Suffolk, Bath and North East Somerset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Bristol, Calderdale, Cheltenham, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Cornwall, Cumberland, East Herts, East Lindsey, Boston, South Holland South Kesteven, Epsom and Ewell, Evesham, Forest of Dean, Fylde, Gloucester, Hartlepool, Herefordshire, Huntingdonshire, Kirklees, Lancaster, Mole Valley, North Somerset, Plymouth, Reigate and Banstead, Shropshire, South Hams, Stroud and Cotswold, Tewkesbury, Uttlesford, West Suffolk, York, Barnet, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, and Westminster.

In Scotland, IFAN has updated resources covering Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Arran, Clackmannanshire, Dumfries and Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Eyemouth/Scottish Borders, Falkirk, Fife, Glasgow, Inverclyde, Lewis and Harris, Midlothian, Moray, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, Shetland, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, Stirling, Uist and Barra, West Dunbartonshire, and West Lothian. In Wales, updated "Worrying About Money?" resources covered Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

Money Counts training linked to the "Worrying About Money?" leaflets aim to provide participants with the confidence to start conversations about money worries and to use the leaflet as a tool to provide cash first or income-focused support. The training was originally developed by the Highland Money Counts Partnership (HMCP) following the development and publication of their local ["Worrying About Money?" leaflet](#). Online sessions are usually co-delivered with local advice agencies and include discussion about the root causes of poverty, [a cash first approach](#) to food insecurity, using the ["Worrying About Money?" leaflet](#), locally available advice options, and how to approach conversations about money worries. Participants get a chance to network, share their experiences, and learn from each other for around an hour. The sessions can also be delivered in person. IFAN ran a Money Counts training session for Haringey in May which was well attended and has led to further engagement in the borough on the [Haringey "Worrying About Money?" leaflet](#). You can sign up for an upcoming Money Counts online training session in [Lewisham](#).

The independent social research organisation, [ScotCen](#), is currently undertaking an evaluation of the cash first referral leaflets project in Scotland thanks to funding from the Scottish Government. Their research has focused on the lived experience of people needing to use their local "Worrying About Money?" leaflet. ScotCen's report is due to be published in October of 2024. You can read [ScotCen's previous "Worrying About Money?" leaflet evaluation](#).



Image 3: IFAN and Trussell Cash First Communities South West online event

Cash First Communities in the South West online conference

It isn't right that people don't have enough money to afford the essentials such as food. We all have a role to play in building a society where nobody needs to turn to charitable food aid to be able to eat.

Following successful joint conferences in Scotland ([A Cash First Future](#) and [Cash First Communities](#)), IFAN and [Trussell](#) are running an online event during [Challenge Poverty Week \(England and Wales\)](#) to highlight cash first/income-focused practices to poverty and food insecurity in the South West of England and share learning from Scotland. [The online event](#) will take place on Thursday 17th October from 2pm to 4pm.

Take action this Autumn

- You can take action by adding your voice to IFAN's calls for change. [Ask your MP to address the poverty](#) causing more and more people to have to resort to using food banks and other forms of charitable food aid. Use IFAN's [template letter](#) and find your MP's [contact details here](#).
- [Share IFAN's infographics](#) and find out more about [a cash first approach to food insecurity](#).
- You can [donate to IFAN's campaigning and advocacy work](#) and/or find a local IFAN member organisation to donate to [via our members map](#).

Get in touch

If you have any questions or would like to find out more please get in touch with IFAN at admin@foodaidnetwork.org.uk.