

Brighton & Hove

# FOOD

Partnership

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## Emergency Food Network Annual Report



# Thank you!

The Brighton & Hove Food Partnership would like to thank all the organisations and volunteers involved for their enduring commitment to providing food for people in need, their tireless dedication, enthusiasm, and willingness to support each other.



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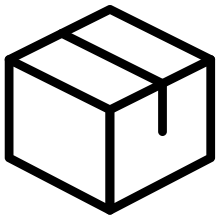
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# Summary

## In a week in July



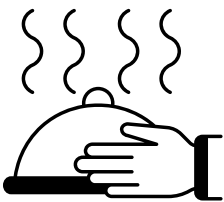
At least 5,159 people were supported by the different food providers



1,184 emergency food parcels were given out



658 affordable food shops purchased



2,548 meals were distributed



63% of people who accessed food help were doing so indefinitely



68% of organisations noticed an increase in lone-parent families



69% of organisations had a drop in donations  
66% said stock levels & supply significantly dropped  
63% spent more money than last year on the same amount of food

## Brighton and Hove Food Partnership

The Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP) is a non-profit organisation established in 2003. It has a long-term vision of a healthy, sustainable and fair food system and works with a wide range of partners including community organisations, statutory agencies, local businesses and individual residents.

BHFP runs a range of community food activities including cookery, healthy eating advice, waste reduction and food growing. It also runs networks for community food projects and campaigns on food issues at a local and national level.

## The Emergency Food Network

BHFP set up the Emergency Food Network (EFN) in 2013. This is a collaboration of food banks and other organisations that provide emergency food. The network provides the opportunity for organisations to come together and share problems, learn from each other's experiences and develop joint solutions.

## The Affordable Food Network

BHFP supported the start-up of the Affordable Food Network in 2020. This is a collaboration of community projects that provide discounted food. By affordable food project we mean:

- Projects that 'sell' food at a reduced cost or have a membership fee
- Projects that have a model that moves beyond emergency food provision
- Projects that aim to reduce long-term food insecurity

The network aims to assist local residents to access affordable food that is healthy, sustainable and culturally appropriate and helps alleviate the need for foodbanks by joining together organisations involved in affordable food provision to ensure an effective, coordinated approach.

## Community meal projects

BHFP also supports the work of community meal projects that provide low/no cost meals to people with health issues and/or living in poverty. This includes those that deliver food to people's homes, lunch clubs and pay as you feel cafes.

## Campaigning together

In 2022 the city's community food projects asked BHFP to co-ordinate a campaign to national and local government around the need to address the underlying causes of food poverty. This campaign has a clear message that people need help with household incomes and that emergency food provision cannot be relied on as the solution. This work continues and the findings from this survey will feed into [this work](#).



## The cost-of-living crisis

The ongoing cost-of-living crisis means the cost of fuel, food and utility bills is rising and people have less money to spend on food. Global factors including the Russian invasion of Ukraine has resulted in supply chain issues including an increase in the cost of staples such as sunflower oil and wheat products like bread and cereals.

## Introduction

Since 2014 BHFP has conducted an annual survey surrounding emergency food distribution in Brighton & Hove. The results from this survey enable BHFP to better understand and support organisations distributing emergency food and those who are experiencing food poverty. This survey took place from June-July 2022 and asked the organisations to give their numbers from the previous week. Forty-four different organisations working out of 50 locations around Brighton & Hove contributed to this survey.

## Emergency food in Brighton & Hove

Previously, the Emergency Food Network was made up almost entirely of food banks, however since the pandemic there has been a range of providers. This roughly breaks down into those who are giving vouchers instead of food, food banks where you get a food parcel, cooked meal providers and affordable food projects where you pay a small membership fee for a weekly shop. Many food banks are choosing to move to an affordable food model in order to cover their costs and to provide a more long term service.

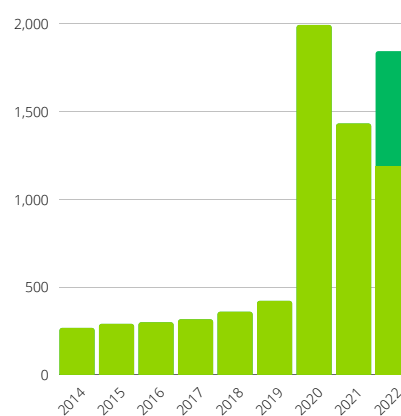
Although trends in food bank use can be used to assess current trends in food poverty, it only captures a small portion of the picture. Even in an emergency, some people do not access food banks for a number of reasons including: inability to get to the food banks; they do not know they exist, or how they can get a referral; they are put off due to the stigma associated with food banks.

“Need has gone up and food is more expensive. People are coming to us more so that they can offset the cost of food to be able to pay for bills. People are panicking more and taking more than normal for fear of running out and the service disappearing so we have had to make sure we are voicing that with the users and letting them know that we are a stable fixture. They are seeing other places shut down or have less sources and that is making them panic.”

The Old Boat

## Types of food provision

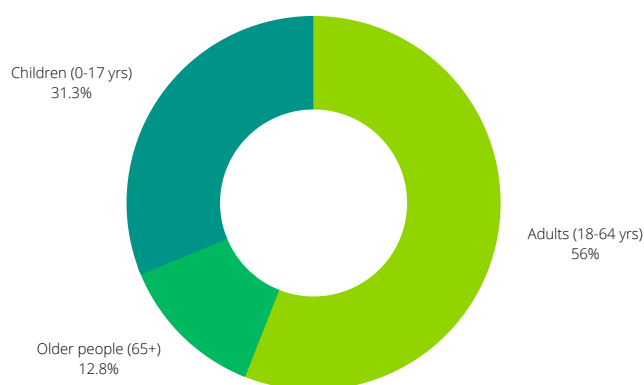
During a week in July at least 1,184 emergency food parcels were given out, as well as 2,413 meals and 658 affordable food shops. There was a drop in emergency food parcels from last year, but this is because some food banks have closed or moved to having an affordable food model.



Graph 1: The amount of food parcels distributed in a week across Brighton & Hove (light green emergency food parcels, dark green affordable food shops)

## Number of beneficiaries

All the emergency food, affordable food and meals helped to support at least 5,159 people in Brighton & Hove over the course of the average week. Of these people, we know 603 of them are aged 65 and over, 2,644 are aged 18-64 years old and the remaining 1,477 are children under the age of 18. This total is up from last year by 789 people when there were 4,370\*. This means the amount of people who use the emergency and affordable food networks in Brighton & Hove is up from last year by 18%.



Graph 2: The age demographics of service users

“The demand for places at our shared meals has increased and we now have a waiting list for transport to collect very isolated older people with reduced mobility from Hangleton, Portslade, Mile Oak and Hove. We are receiving new referrals weekly.”

Food & Friendship

## People using emergency food indefinitely

Emergency food use is changing. From being predominantly emergency food providers, on average 58% of users are now using their services indefinitely, an increase on last year's figure of 27%. Food banks historically used to be a short term solution and this is not the case anymore. This means that there are at any time in Brighton & Hove about 3,250 people who need ongoing help buying their food.

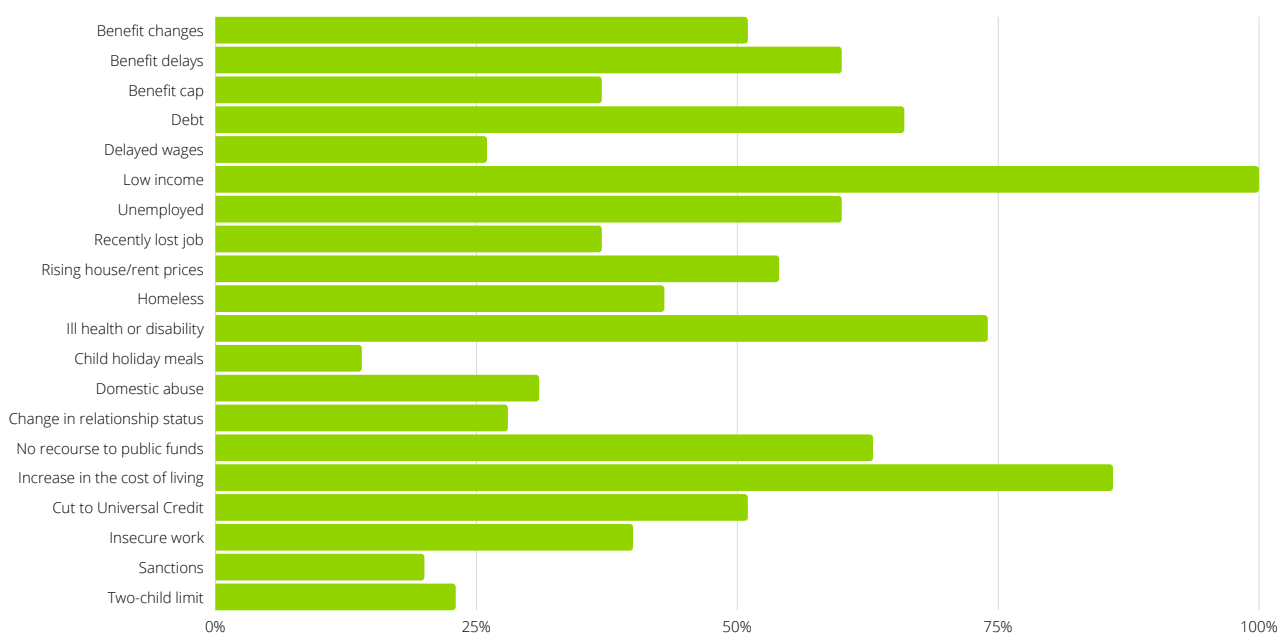
For the affordable food projects, we see an average of 78% of users using them indefinitely, which is expected as they are set up to provide a more long term solution. Meaning 63% of all service users are using them indefinitely.

## Reasons people need emergency food

We asked emergency food providers to highlight the main reasons that people come to them asking for help. 100% of emergency food providers said that low income was one of the main reasons their clients are accessing their services, an increase from 91% last year. This correlates with the high proportion of indefinite users, as if this group is receiving a regular low income they will be needing long-term support to get food.

Another main reason highlighted was the cost-of-living crisis with 86% of organisations listing it as a main reason, and the third reason at 74% was people with ill health and disability. Last year 77% of organisations said benefit delays was a main reason, compared to 60% this year.

66% also reported an increase in those with No Recourse To Public Funds, which could be indicative of the increase in refugees, migrants and asylum seekers shown in the next section.



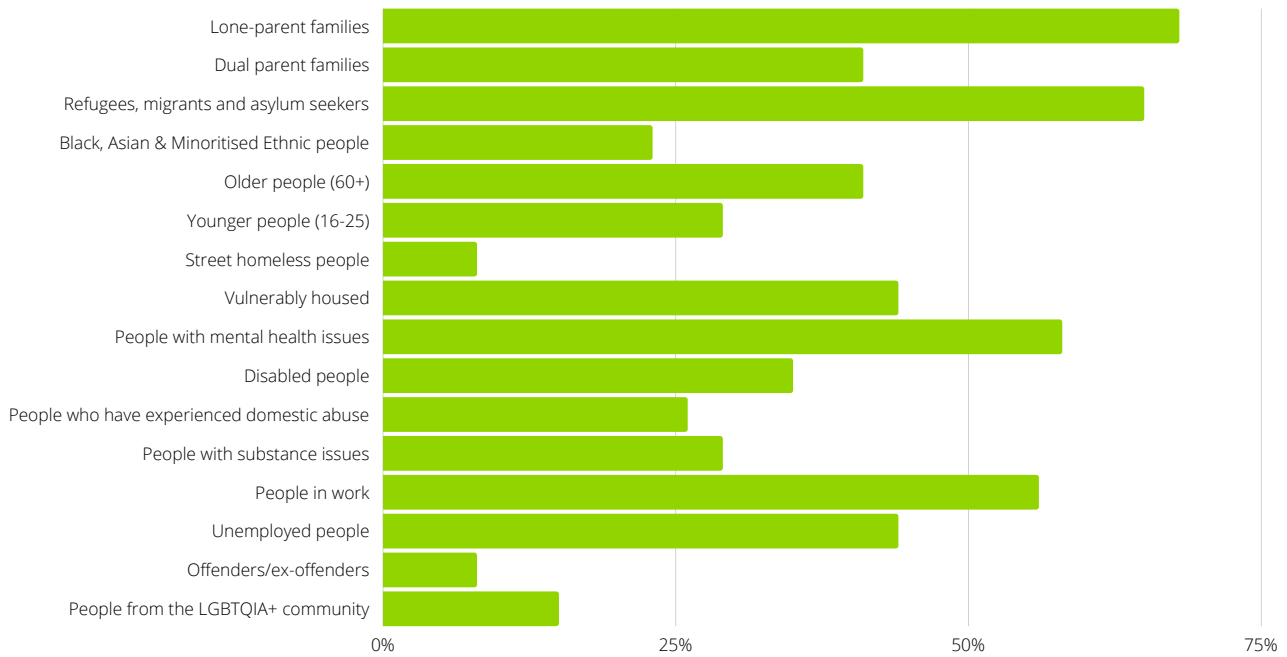
Graph 4: Which groups of you noticed an increase in since last year? (34 responses)

## Increase in demand from any particular groups

When the service providers were asked if they had seen a noticeable increase amongst certain groups of people, 68% had noticed a particular increase in lone parent families, as well as 63% seeing an increase in the number of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. Also 59% of respondents noticed an increase in people with mental health issues.

Notably, 53% organisations said they saw a particular rise in people who use their services who are in work, showing some people who are working are not earning enough to access food without using these services.

Last year, most organisations also had the same top two responses of an increase in people with mental health issues (63%) and lone parent families (57%). However this year the top third response of dual parent families (43%) was replaced by refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. At least 12 organisations indicated they have seen an increase of Ukrainian refugees needing their services, although this number could be much higher.

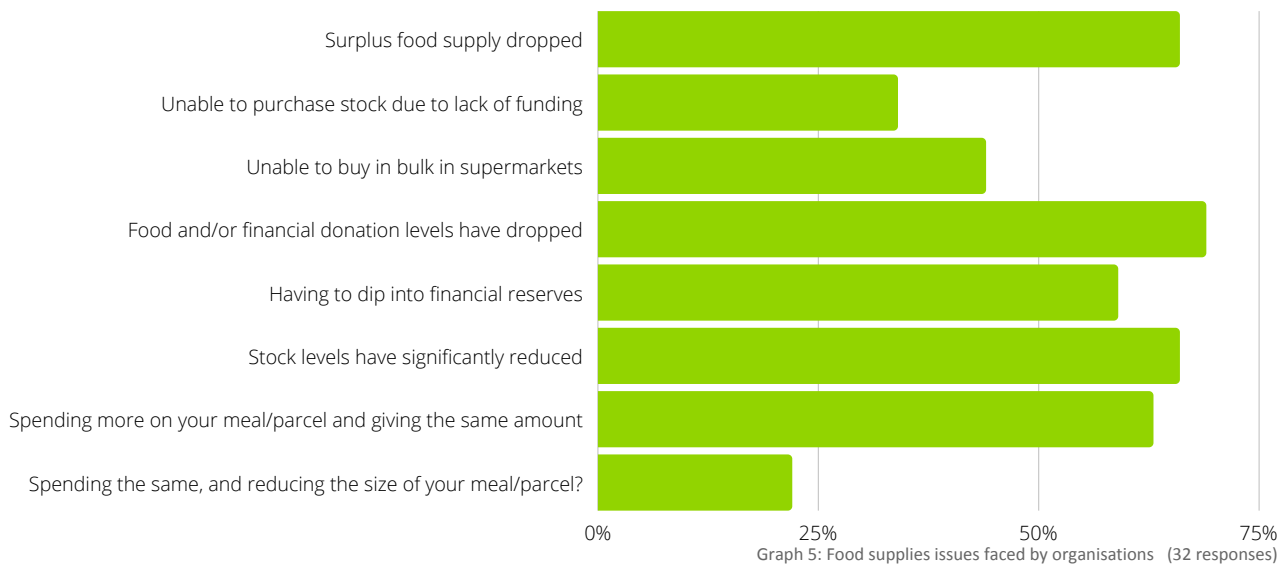


Graph 4: Which groups of you noticed an increase in since last year? (34 responses)

## Food supply issues

The cost-of-living crisis is not only causing an increase in food bank usage, but it means everyone's bills are going up and those who used to donate are now donating less. Donor fatigue could also be playing a part in this. Compared to this time last year, 69% of the service providers say that their food and/or financial donations have dropped.

This may explain why 66% of organisations say their stock levels have significantly dropped. With many also spending themselves to purchase food parcels and/or meals, 63% of them are saying they have to spend more money than last year on the same sized meal/parcel.



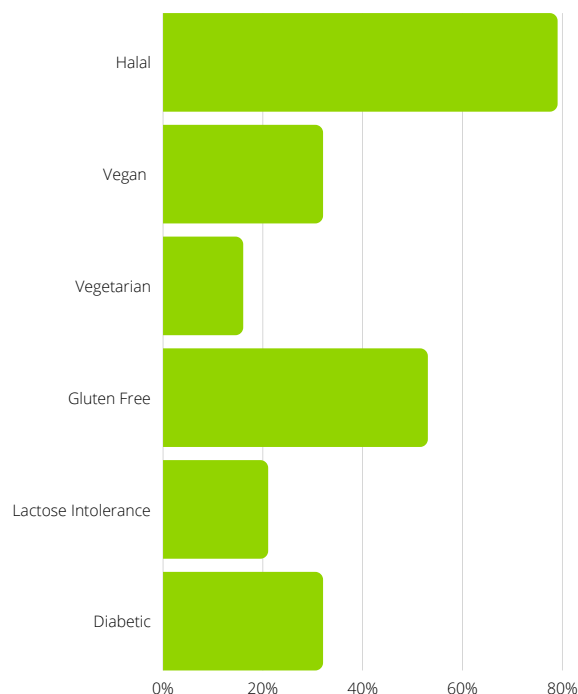
Graph 5: Food supplies issues faced by organisations (32 responses)





## Weekly food spend

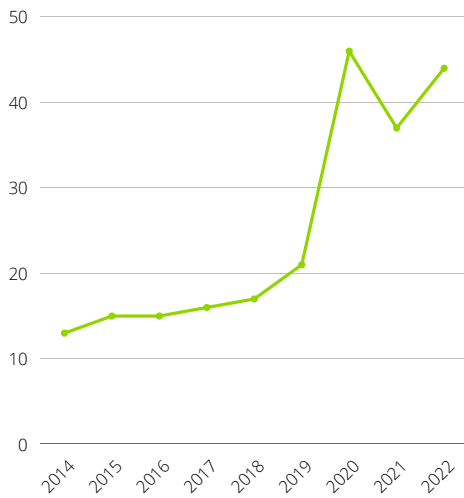
Thirty-one service providers gave a weekly figure on how much they spend to top up food parcels, or to make sure they have all the ingredients for the meals, which does not include what they already get from surplus or donated food. The total spent by the 31 organisations came to £9,988.92, which works out on average that each service provider spent £322.22. This means that the emergency food providers are spending over £500,000 a year just to buy in food or vouchers as they cannot meet all the dietary needs from surplus food alone. Even after topping up, the organisations still struggle to cater for all dietary requirements, as 79% struggle to provide halal food and 53% struggle to provide gluten free food.



Graph 6: Dietary requirements organisations struggle to cater for (19 responses)



## The number of emergency food providers

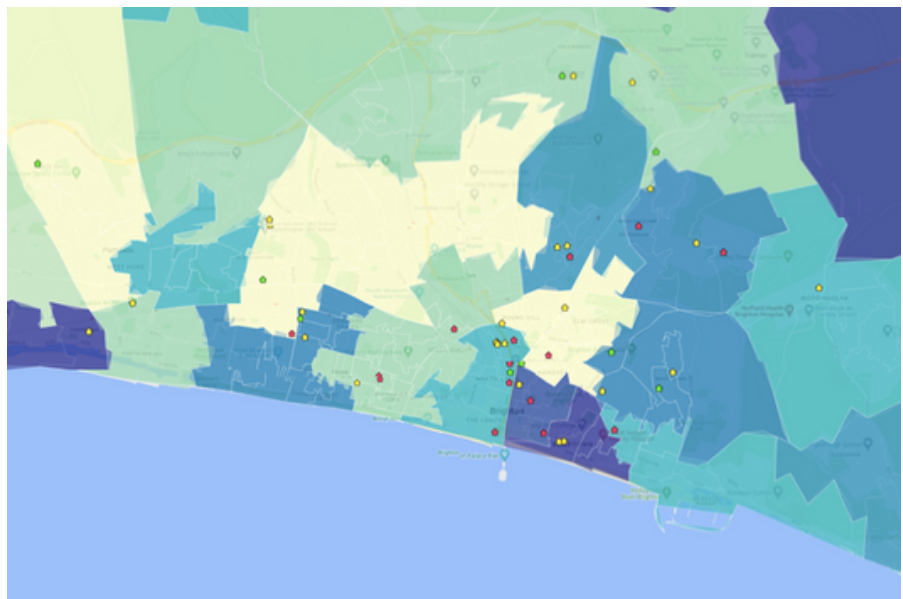


Graph 7: The number of food service providers since 2014

The Covid-19 pandemic saw exceptional increases in the amount and the use of the Emergency Food Network in Brighton & Hove, as mentioned in both the 2020 and 2021 Emergency Food Network annual reports. The current cost-of-living crisis means people are having to keep relying on these emergency and affordable food networks.

In 2019 there were 21 emergency food service providers. The pandemic brought this number up to 45 in 2020, which fell to 37 last year (2021), with a rise this year to 44. Out of these 44: ten are affordable food projects, eight of which were existing and two of which have changed from being emergency food to affordable food.

Despite the reduction in Covid cases affecting day to day life, and the end of government restrictions, approximately the same number of people still need help from food service providers and their number has stayed roughly the same. Having food providers based in neighbourhoods across the city and specialist services is important from an accessibility perspective.



Map 1: Map shows the emergency food providers (yellow), affordable food providers (green), and meal providers (red) across Brighton & Hove

"People are starting to queue about two hours before the doors open, it's a real sign of the times. Donations have also dropped."

The Real Junk Food Project



## Emergency food & voucher providers in Brighton & Hove

Please note many of these providers have a range of services

- Balfour Mutual Aid Food Bank
- Bevendean Food Bank
- Black & Minority Ethnic Community Partnership Food Bank
- BHCC Children's Centres
- Brighton Food Bank
- Brighton Women's Centre
- C.A.S.E
- CEDP Chinese Centre
- Clarendon Foodbank
- Cornerstone Community Centre
- Fresh Start
- Hangleton & West Blatchington Food Bank
- Hollingdean Food Bank
- Impact Initiatives Food Access Support Services
- Mutual Aid Vegan Food Bank
- Purple People Kitchen Food Bank
- St John the Baptist Food Bank
- Sussex Bakedown
- The Pantry (St Mary Magdalen Foodbank)
- The Salvation Army – Hove
- The Villas Food Bank
- The Whitehawk Foodbank
- Voices in Exile Food Bank

## Affordable food & other providers

- BrightStore (four locations)
- Cravenvale Food bank
- Hollingbury Foodbank at the Gathering Place
- Moulsecoomb Community Market
- Old Boat Corner Community Centre
- Pankhurst Pantry
- Phoenix Food Shop
- Woodingdean Food Hub
- Weald Allotments Community Fridge
- YMCA DLG Youth Advice Centre Brighton

## Community meal projects

- Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project
- Chomp, One Church Brighton
- Christians Against Poverty
- East Brighton Food Co-op
- Food & Friendship
- Lunch Positive
- Sussex Homeless Support
- Sussex Surplus
- The Bevy Community Pub
- The Trust for Developing Communities
- The Real Junk Food Project (four locations)



"We are really struggling to meet the needs due to lack of funding. We are using our reserve after shutting down for weeks and many people were calling every week to check when we are opening again."



"Clients do have fridges, but some aren't turning them on due to the cost of electricity."  
Phoenix Food Shop



"Older people on low incomes struggle to feed themselves - especially men."  
The Bevy



Coming here has really helped, with my husband on disability and having two young children, it helps with my food shop which I only need to top up a little bit. I'm not sure what we would do without it.  
User of the Phoenix Food Shop



"Sense of community comes first, centre and last."  
Cravenvale Foodbank

\*Last year we reported that "minimum of 5870 people benefits from the Emergency Food Network organisations in Brighton and Hove" due to miscalculations where the number of meals served was accidentally added to the total number of people, the actual figure from last year was 4,370 people.