One in nine British adults missed out on celebrating a birthday or other special occasion last year because of a lack of money, according to new research published today by Church Urban Fund.
Research commissioned by the charity into the extent of food poverty and financial distress in Britain has shown that 11% of adults missed celebrating a birthday, Christmas, or other special occasion because they were unable to afford items such as presents or celebratory food in the previous 12 months from January 2017 when this research was conducted.

The survey of 2,048 adults, conducted by ComRes, found that during 2016, 5% of adults had gone without meals because they could not afford food and one in 50 British adults, amounting to almost a million people, (0.95 million), said they had used a food bank.

A total of 4% of adults (one in 25) said that in 2016 they had gone without meals so that their children or other household members had enough to eat.

One in eight, or 13%, said they had experienced anxiety or worry about being able to afford enough food for themselves and their family during 2016. Of those interviewed, 14% said they had cut down on the amount of fresh food they buy such as fruit and vegetables to save money.

While almost one in ten Britons aged 25 to 34 years old, (8%) said they had gone without meals in 2016 as they were unable to afford food, just 1% of those aged 65 and over reported having done so.

Church Urban Fund Executive Director Paul Hackwood said: "These findings reveal a deeply troubling picture of food insecurity throughout Britain. Those affected don't just go hungry or poorly nourished - they suffer isolation, are excluded from participating in social activities and experience considerable anxiety.

"Church Urban Fund is working hard alongside other charities, churches, faith groups and community organisations to support those affected by food poverty, isolation and financial difficulties. But we cannot solve this problem alone. We are calling on all those with the power to make a difference to play an active role in resolving this urgent issue."

Bishop Tim Thornton, a trustee of the Feeding Britain charity, said: "Thousands of volunteers, most of them, but not all coordinated by churches have come together in recent years to get involved in food banks and other services for people struggling financially.

"This survey confirms that they are responding to a widespread and pressing need and that food poverty extends far beyond food bank use alone. Urgent and concerted action is needed across government, the private sector, civil society and statutory agencies, in order to tackle this problem."

Church Urban Fund’s Together Network supported more than 550 community projects and activities last year through its member organisations across England. These projects range from winter night shelters to food banks and summer holiday clubs for children providing food and activities: many of them are responding to the financial, relational and political dimensions of food poverty.

Other projects supported by the Together Network have included help for food banks to develop welfare rights support, coordinating a network of more than 70 organisations involved in responding to food poverty in Lancashire and helping launch Feeding Liverpool, a programme raising public awareness of food poverty in the city.
Notes to editors


ComRes interviewed 2,048 adults in Great Britain online between 4th and 5th January 2017. Data were weighted to be representative of all adults in Great Britain aged 18+, by age, gender, region and socio-economic grade.