

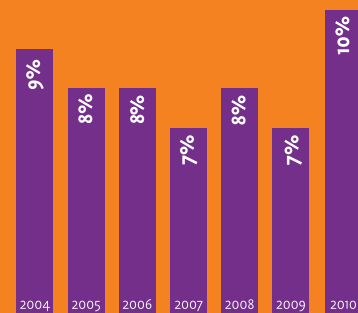
# FOOD POVERTY INDICATOR

## THREE KEY FOOD DEPRIVATION FACTORS

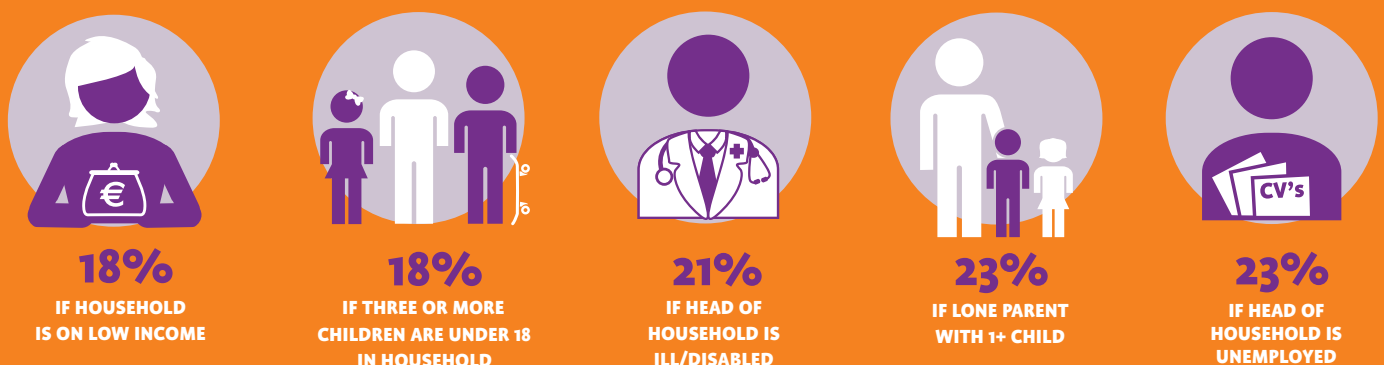


**ONE IN TEN PEOPLE**  
**IN IRELAND**  
**ARE LIVING**  
**IN FOOD POVERTY**

Percent of the population experiencing one or more of the three food deprivation items



### HOUSEHOLDS VULNERABLE TO FOOD POVERTY



# MEASURING FOOD POVERTY IN IRELAND

## THE INDICATOR AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

### What is food poverty?

Food poverty is one element of the poverty experience. It has been defined as the inability to have an adequate and nutritious diet due to issues of affordability or accessibility. Food poverty is a complex issue

with many health and social dimensions. Households experiencing food poverty consume less nutritionally balanced diets and suffer from higher rates of diet related chronic diseases.

### Where does this indicator come from?

The food poverty indicator was developed from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) data - a household survey conducted annually by the Central Statistics Office. The sample size for SILC is ~5,000 households. This briefing document draws on new research from Carney & Maître (2012)<sup>1</sup> which was published by the Department of Social Protection and uses SILC data from 2004-2010. It provides a first step in creating public and policy awareness of the number of people in food poverty in Ireland. The research is supported by a multi-agency group.

### What did this research deliver?

- A food poverty indicator
- A means to measure food poverty
- Identification of groups vulnerable to food poverty
- A means to monitor food poverty trends on an annual basis

### What are the indicators of food poverty?

People are in food poverty if they are deprived of food as measured by experiencing one or more of the following:

- Cannot afford a roast or vegetarian equivalent once a week
- Missed a meal in the last two weeks due to a lack of money
- Cannot afford a meal with meat or vegetarian equivalent every second day.

### How many people are affected?

In 2010, 10% of the population in Ireland were in food poverty (almost 450,000 people). This was an increase of over 3% from 2009.

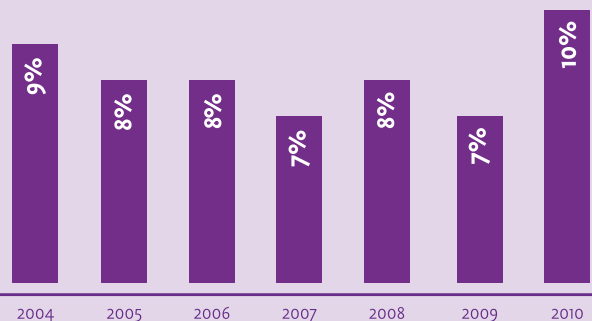
**This is the largest rate of year-on-year increase since 2004.**

#### Who is at risk?

Households at risk share a number of characteristics. The head of the household is:

Young (aged under 40 years)	Educated to Inter/Junior Certificate or lower	Has three or more children under 18 years	Lone parent with 1+ child
Single/divorced/separated	Reports having bad health or a chronic illness	Unemployed, ill or disabled	In social housing

#### Percent of the population experiencing one or more of the three food deprivation items



### What are the implications?

#### Public policy

- Food poverty needs to be addressed by a range of measures at both community and policy level.
- There should be an official measure of food poverty in Ireland.
- Food poverty is inextricably linked to issues of finance, education, transport, literacy, culture, planning and retailing and as such its solution needs a multi-sectoral approach across all relevant Departments.
- Food poverty is not an isolated issue that results in poor dietary intake but an outcome of the wider effects of social exclusion.

- Structural issues such as income adequacy need to be addressed to ensure that people can afford healthy and nutritious food and improved regional planning and access to shops etc.
- This research could be extended to the North of Ireland so that there is an all-island measure of food poverty.

#### Public health

- The immediate effect of food poverty is people having a poor diet in everyday life.
- The long-term consequences are ill-health. People who are in food poverty are more likely to suffer nutrient deficiencies such as anaemia and diet related diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity and certain cancers.

#### To download a copy of the full report

<sup>1</sup> Carney C and Maître B, (2012) *Constructing a Food Poverty Indicator for Ireland using the Survey on Income and Living Conditions*, Technical Paper # 3, Dublin: Department of Social Protection.

[www.welfare.ie/EN/Policy/PolicyPublications/SocialInclusion/Pages/SocialInclusionPolPubs.aspx](http://www.welfare.ie/EN/Policy/PolicyPublications/SocialInclusion/Pages/SocialInclusionPolPubs.aspx)

#### To download a copy of safefood's research report

*Food on a low income — Four households tell their story.*

Visit [www.safefood.eu](http://www.safefood.eu)