

UK Turns to Unhealthy Food as Credit Crunch Takes Hold

Over half (53%) UK in worse financial state than last year as older generation bears the brunt

One in three (32%) of us are eating less healthily than last year due to food price increases, a specialist debt counselling charity warned today, as survey results showed how we're turning to cheap, processed foods as the financial crisis gathers pace.

Christians Against Poverty, the national debt counselling charity, commissioned YouGov to carry out the research among over 2000 UK residents, with results providing strong evidence that the economic downturn is having a profound effect on people's finances. More than half (53 per cent) of the UK's population believe their finances are now in a worse state than this time last year with one in five of those respondents, saying they were much worse.

What's more, nearly half of all 35 to 44 year olds confess that their diet has deteriorated in the last twelve months, as the credit crunch threatens to undo the best efforts of the government to get us to eat more healthily. In response, the charity has issued its top ten tips on how to cut down on food expense whilst still eating healthily, with recipes to feed a family of four for £4 also posted on its website – www.capuk.org.

As news of a property crash and recession continue to grab the headlines, the charity, which operates through a national network of 82 debt counselling centres, also revealed that those under 25 are managing to weather the financial storm more effectively than the over 45s. Nearly 60 per cent of 45 to 54 year olds believe they are in a worse financial state than last year, but this figure dropped significantly to only 41 per cent of 18 – 24 year olds.

Evidence of the North-South divide was also revealed by the survey, as nearly sixty per cent of people from the North believe their finances have worsened in the past 12 months, with this falling to less than half (48 per cent) of people from London.

In news that could worry the government as it looks to tackle the growing problem of obesity, nearly half of all the 2057 respondents (48 per cent) stated that they have not let food price increases affect their diet, but as a result their budget is really being stretched. However, with further food and fuel price increases predicted, the charity is concerned that these people will soon be forced to alter their diet to avoid falling into debt too.

Matt Barlow, UK CEO, Christians Against Poverty, said: “These results are truly shocking and evidence that we are slipping further into financial difficulty as a country. However, whilst many would concentrate solely on the impending crisis, we want to underline how there is a solution for those trapped by debt in the UK.

“Through our national network of 82 church-based debt counselling centres, we are seeing people turn their finances around from Aberdeen down to Penzance; evidence too that with the right support, guidance and sound financial principles, people can avoid the worst excesses of this economic downturn and work their way out of debt.

“As property prices continue to fall and the world markets face difficulty, we would urge anyone at all concerned about their debt situation to contact us through our website or freephone number – 0800 328 0006. Our service is completely free and we work with all members of the local community, regardless of faith, so please contact us.”

For more information, visit www.capuk.org or call 0800 328 0006

ENDS –

Notes to editors:

All figures unless otherwise stated are conducted by YouGov 12th – 15th September, 2008. 2057 respondents. Results are weighted to be representative of the GB population aged (18+). Survey was carried out online.

For more information about Christians Against Poverty, please contact Jonathan Priestley at the press office on 01274 760833 or jonathanpriestley@capuk.org

Further informationAbout Christians Against Poverty

CAP aims to show God's love in action by providing sustainable poverty relief through debt counselling, advice and practical help. CAP's unique 'hands on' approach empowers people to help themselves out of poverty and be released from the fear, oppression and worry generated by overwhelming debts. Vital financial and budgeting life skills are developed through our services, thus ensuring poverty relief is sustainable.

The charity operates through a growing network of centres based around the UK, all opened in partnership with a local church. Over the last ten years, the charity has grown from one man working from his home with a donation of £10, to a national charity with 82 centres across the country and an annual turnover of £5 million.

CAP's vision is to answer the national problem of debt in the UK by having at least one CAP centre operating in every major town and city by the year 2021.