Economic Affairs Select Committee inquiry on the UK's fiscal framework

Submission from Feeding Britain (December 2025)

About Feeding Britain

Feeding Britain is an award-winning charity with a vision of a UK where no one goes hungry. We support a national network of 140 regional and local anti-hunger partnerships comprising more than 700 frontline organisations – ranging from community centres and schools, to local authorities and social enterprises.

By piloting innovative and effective new projects, and showing how severe or chronic food insecurity can be prevented, we are designing a road map for eliminating hunger from the communities we serve. By sharing this knowledge with others, and using it to work for systemic changes at a national level, we will ensure hunger becomes a thing of the past.

Consultation response

What use should the Government make of the OBR's output? Is the focus on fiscal headroom appropriate or does it unduly constrain the Government's approach to fiscal policy?

We wish to see a fiscal framework that can deliver government policy effectively, particularly measures to address food poverty. An estimated 7 million adults across the UK continue to be impacted by food insecurity,[1] and the Government has committed to end mass dependence on emergency food parcels from food banks. To this end we wish to see more efficient and effective use by the Government of the OBR's output, in relation to the uprating of Universal Credit.

The DWP currently uprates benefits every April using the OBR's inflation figures from six months prior. As a result, claimants often experience a real-terms cut in the amount of money they receive, depending on how inflation varies between the time the OBR data is published and the time the DWP uprates the level of benefit. For example, for a single Universal Credit claimant aged over 25, in 2021/22 they had a monthly loss of £8.96, and in 2022/23 had a monthly loss of £17.75. There is a difference in the money they receive per month, compared to what they would receive if benefits had been increased using whole-year inflation figures instead of those from the previous September. Using the OBR's inflation forecast for 2025/26, the claimant faces a monthly loss of £4.68 – over £56 for the year. If they do not receive benefit calculated using up to date inflation figures, the money they receive does not keep pace with the current cost of living.[2]

The DWP has acknowledged the possibility of improving the uprating of Universal Credit to base it on more recent inflation data.[3] We wish to see this enacted to create a more effective social security

[1] Latest food insecurity tracker shows seven million adults going hungry | Food Foundation
[2] Why do benefits sometimes increase by less than inflation?
[3] Ibid.

system, that ensures those receiving Universal Credit are getting a better level of provision and are ultimately less likely to have to take recourse to food banks.