

The question is, are we happy to live in a world that d...

Published: January 12, 2026, 11:23 pm

Sir Michael Marmot, whose work I admire, has [an article in The Guardian](#) this morning, which he begins by saying:

What causes a famine? It isn't a lack of food. Nor does lack of food cause the kind of food insecurity, just short of a famine, that Britain is facing. In analyses of specific famines, the economist and philosopher Amartya Sen [showed](#) that social organisation and a lack of access to food for socially deprived people were the real causes of starvation.

As he then notes, the UK is not facing famine at present, but it does have one million children and well more than two million adults living in destitution, which means that they cannot afford at least two of these six basic necessities:

- * Housing
- * Light
- * Heat
- * Food
- * Appropriate clothing
- * Toiletries

Food is high on the list of things that people are going without.

As bad, many are getting their calories from food that has implicit within it long-term health issues because of the high levels of salt or sugar that they contain. [Another Guardian article today](#) highlights the massive potential health problems that might result from the growing dependence on so-called 'super noodles' around the world.

There is, as Sir Michael Marmot argues, no reason for this. We could feed the people of the UK and the world appropriately. We could take people out of destitution. We would

end the threat to people's health from poor diets. We could save the cost of doing so in healthcare terms in all likelihood.

But we do not do that.

That is because big pharma does not want us to do so.

And it is because big sugar does not want us to do so.

And it is also because neoliberal politicians do not want to change this situation, which they helped create. George Osborne bears the greatest responsibility for destitution in the UK today because of his austerity programmes. The data is quoted in Michael Marmot's article.

The question is, are we happy to live in a world that deliberately creates destitution for some?

And what is Labour planning to do about this? So far, I have heard nothing at all from them that gives me the slightest bit of hope.