

Foodbank Update: After the very busy Christmas period the Foodbank continues to receive and supply food parcels to those in need within our local community.

In the last 3 months not only have we helped families and individuals referred from our referral agents; surplus stock has been donated to various local community organisations including North Herts Sanctuary and The Haven (hostels for the homeless), the Salvation Army and Howard Garden Day Care Centre, Letchworth.

The Howard Day Care Centre plays a vital role in overcoming isolation for elderly people. It is open 5 days a week, providing cooked lunch & social activities. The Centre Members wanted to say Thank You to the Foodbank for the tinned food and dry goods donated to the Centre.



Lunch service at Howard Garden Day Care

A further thank you was received from a Syrian refugee family who the Foodbank provided with an emergency food parcel. Their support worker who delivered the food parcels said - the mother was overwhelmed by the generosity. The family had been eating only rice and not complaining but said they would now have a comparative feast and get back to feeling normal, which means so much. Thank you.

We have continued our links with the Euston Foodbank, sending 2,400kg of food to help support with their need.

Reflection on Foodbanks The Trussell Trust recently published its annual report; it highlights a **13% increase** in distribution of emergency food supplies compared to the previous year. Plus; a growing proportion of foodbank referrals are now due to benefit levels not covering the costs of essentials such as housing and food

One of our Management Committee has reflected on the current situation and asked: –

Where is the continued growth of foodbanks - now over 1,200 in UK – leading us? Are we following the same path as the US, where up to 70,000 ‘food pantries’ – their euphemism – are now distributing food to the ‘poor’?

The Trussell Trust figures show the number of foodbank users reached almost 1.4 million last year. Serious analysis of the situation must reflect on two fundamental questions – **who uses Foodbanks? And why?**

A recent study by Oxford and London Universities, in which our Network food bank took part, shows that two-thirds of users are single, 40% single men, followed by single mothers and single women totalling 25%. Users regularly go without meals, heating & electricity. 20% have recently slept rough. They are usually middle-aged with an average weekly income below £80. Five out of six are jobless and depend on benefits. Ill health is a common feature affecting two-thirds of users, half of whose households include a disabled person and one-third has someone with mental health problems. Almost 90% of users are UK-born.

The root causes are varied and complex. Low income, low wages and insecure employment, together with benefit changes and payment delays account for 80% of reasons people use foodbanks. Trussell Trust’s research shows that in areas where the ‘universal credit’ benefit system has been fully rolled out, demand for charity food parcels grew by 52%. North Herts is due to be enrolled in this system by October.

Faced with these challenges, Trussell Trust’s three priorities are to continue supporting foodbanks provision of emergency food; to expand its foodbank-based ‘More Than Food’ services, to provide debt, benefits and health advice to clients and via its new 3-year ‘State of Hunger’ research project, to build an evidence-based case showing policy changes necessary to move towards ending the need for foodbanks.

Further information visit: www.trusselltrust.org/newsletter

We're on Facebook! Through the power of social media, a small group of the Foodbank team have been working to make our service more accessible to those who need it most. It is hoped that through this platform we will be able to raise awareness, increase our accessibility, and target supporters more effectively.

People searching for the Foodbank will now be welcomed to our Facebook page, which has all our information and FAQ's in one place. We're going to be posting about our latest statistics, items most needed, donations, any fundraisers, and anything else Foodbank related. If you're planning an event for the Foodbank, or have anything you want to say Foodbank related, please let us know so we can rally support online.

Last, but not least, if you're a Facebook user yourself, please give us a like and show your support, we want to reach as many people from the community as possible!

To find us on Facebook, search @LetchworthFoodbank

Martin Burke a caterer from Hitchin supports the Foodbank.

Martin supplies the Foodbank with freshly made vegetarian dishes every Friday. Our clients are extremely grateful for his generosity. Martin said "It is my honour and duty to be part of the community stepping in to help at times of such unnecessary hardship. Food is a basic human right, especially when we live in a society of such excess. I am delighted to offer solidarity to those visiting the foodbank and respect to all the wonderful volunteers"

Martin(Left) delivering fresh made vegetable pasties.



General Data Protection Regulations:

The Foodbank Management Committee have been working to ensure the Foodbank is compliant with the new data protection regulations. All data is held securely and a data privacy statement for the Foodbank is available on request.

The Foodbank holds the names, postal addresses and email addresses of volunteers and known supporters. This data is only used to send communications and newsletters or similar, to volunteers and supporters. Under data protection regulations, these communications are sent to you because the Foodbank has a "legitimate interest" in keeping you informed.

Supporter data is not accessible to any other people and is not used for any purpose other than sending volunteer communications and newsletters. It is never shared with any other organisation.

Supporters can unsubscribe from the list at any time they wish. The Foodbank keeps a record of supporters who have unsubscribed, to make sure they are not accidentally included in later communications. Thank you

FOODBANK QUARTERLY STATISTICS

Summary for January 1st– March 31st 2018

No. of referral vouchers fulfilled: 290 Number of People supported: Adults 419; Children 334

Reason for referral	%
Low Income	41
Benefit changes & delays	40
Debt & delayed wages	8
Sickness (affecting income)	2
Other e.g. homeless, domestic abuse	9

Distribution Centre	No. of Vouchers	No. of Clients
Letchworth (Howard Memorial Hall)	143	393
Hitchin (Scout Hut Our Lady Church)	125	312
Baldock (St. Mary's Hall)	13	33
Other	9	15
Total	290	753

Newsletter Feedback

Please email Susan Kostrzewska, Foodbank Newsletter Editor. susan.kostrzewska@hotmail.co.uk

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