

WORKING TOGETHER TO SERVE THOSE IN NEED

As part of The Trussell Trust network of foodbanks we are fast approaching the end of four years of serving those in need. At our location on the first floor of the Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project building, we have been warmly welcomed as we have settled within the neighbouring communities of Suffolk and Lenadoon.

It's a privilege to be serving both communities since our set up in November 2015. Over the course of two sessions per week our volunteers have fulfilled vouchers for 5,086 individuals and families of which 2,484 were children. This is a pretty stark reality and a sign of the times particularly in this age of welfare reform. This is in direct contrast to the vision that the Trussell Trust had when first setting up foodbanks across the UK, which was that foodbanks would only exist for a short time providing short term help to those in crisis.

Yet, foodbanks have almost become the norm and are often providing longer term assistance, such as with new claimants of Universal Credit having to wait up to five weeks before they receive any kind of help or finance. Of course there are other crisis situations that are driving people to use foodbanks—those on low income are listed as a high proportion of clients, as well as those in debt, those who through sickness/illness are unable to earn a living, and those who go through life crises such as unemployment and bereavement.

Generosity from the local community

We are continually amazed and touched at the level of generosity in the community. We have received many donations from schools, churches, businesses, community organisations and individuals. Food comes in, or is donated, then it goes out back into the community to



Edel Diamond—Foodbank manager

those most in need. We like to call this the 'circle of giving', or 'neighbour feeding neighbour'.

We feel very blessed to have the support and partnership of our local supermarkets Asda Westwood and Sainsburys Kennedy Centre. Sainsburys have a permanent collection point and we have received an abundance of generous food donations from the public. We have regular food collection days as Asda, as well as a new collection permanent point there too. These collections are all vital and provide us with the necessary food items so that we can provide nutritionally balanced food parcels for those in need.

Referrals from professionals

We feel reassured to know that the range of organisations and agencies assisting those in need are also doing great work in referring clients to the foodbank. These include health service workers, advice organisations and family support workers. And indeed we feel grateful for the trust and friendships that we have gained from working in partnership with them. We are confident that clients are in capable hands in regards to whatever crisis they are facing. In fact we feel that the process of being referred by professionals who are in direct contact with those most in need, rather than self-referral, safeguards both clients and foodbank. Referral organisations are getting to the heart of the problem of food poverty by referring clients, which ensures that food gets to those who most need it.

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

The very idea for some people to even think of coming to a foodbank fills them with dread and embarrassment. We understand how hard it is to ask for help, how vulnerable people can feel when they can't provide for their families and sometimes by offering something as simple as a smile and a cuppa when they come through the door makes a huge difference.

For clients who have come there is immediate relief that they have received help with food. But it's more than that—they see a glimmer of hope that things may get better. Volunteers offer a warm and caring welcome, a listening ear, and support such as signposting to various other organisations that may help, where practical.

"I keep the kids off school the last few days before summer break because I can't afford to buy the teacher presents from them"

The rollout of Universal Credit has plunged many into despair. Being offered loans while getting no benefits for five weeks often results in client's benefits being almost halved when they eventually do receive them. This results in many getting into debt and we have seen clients return to receive some much needed signposting in the direction of debt help agencies whether that might be CAP (Christians Against Poverty) or Advice NI. Many

"By the time I have paid my electric and gas and food and travelling, I have hardly anything left"

clients have also been plunged into food poverty crisis through the move from DLA to PIP.

"I'm not needing the foodbank any more, but I'm glad that it was there when I needed the help"

Hope is on the horizon for some clients and good news does come their way. Some have been successful in benefit appeals, have been housed, gained employment, and others have become debt free—through the expertise and help from referral and signposting organisations.

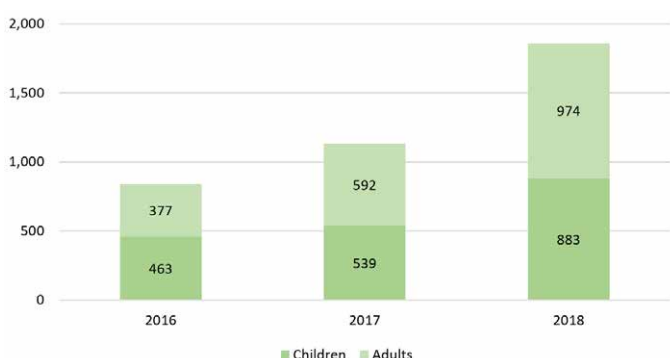
We value our community and the relationships we have built on. Through St Vincent De Paul emergency food boxes go out across the parishes to provide for those in need.

"The reality is that all of the foodbanks in the Trussell Trust network offer so much more than food. Beyond the emergency food parcel is a wealth of compassion, experience and drive to help clients move past their current crisis and give other practical support during a crisis"

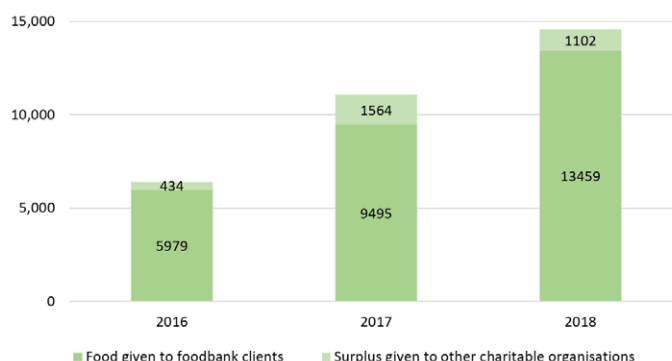
It has been encouraging to see that some of the most generous donors of food at supermarket collections have been people who have received help from foodbanks in the past themselves. It is also so encouraging to see the generosity of people in the community towards their neighbours who are in need.

During 2018, a total of 1,857 people were provided with 3 days' food (some were repeat clients). The total weight of donated food given out to foodbank clients was 13,459 kg. Surplus of some stock that we receive too much of (beans, soup, cereal) was also given to other charitable organisations (e.g. homeless organisations, hostels, soup kitchens). The total given out was equivalent to £25,482 worth of food generously donated by the public (using the Trussell Trust standard conversion rate of £1.75/kg).

No. of people provided with 3 days' food



Weight of food distributed (kg)



FUNDRAISING

Of course we couldn't continue without the financial support that we receive from those contributing in different ways. We depend solely on donations to run the foodbank. We are so thankful for those who donate through regular standing orders, collection boxes at local businesses, various fund-raising initiatives by local businesses and workplaces, churches, local schools and individuals. These donations cover the costs of running the foodbank.

We have been running for 'team foodbank' for the last three years at The Belfast Marathon and we appreciate the work put in by all involved. This year we had two teams running (pictured). We're thankful for all who donated in different ways, through street collections, a swimathon, and car boot sales. We also welcome donations of good quality adult clothing and shoes to sell on eBay to raise funds.

To make **one-off** or **regular** donations, or **fundraise** through JustGiving or when selling on eBay, visit:

www.southwestbelfast.foodbank.org.uk/donate



FOOD DONATIONS

We only take non-perishable food, such as food in cans and jars (e.g. tinned meat, pasta sauce), or dried food (e.g. biscuits, powered mash). We don't have the facilities to store perishable food such as fresh vegetables, meat or cheese. Non-perishable food is very nutritional, and much easier to store.

Using the Trussell Trust's nutritionally balanced food lists, people can receive not just lots of beans and soup (we receive a little too much of these), but a good range of food. Some of the least donated, and nevertheless still needed items are listed to the right. It is good to remember toiletries and (larger size) nappies too, since those in food crisis often need those as well as food.

The easiest way to donate food is at one of the permanent collection points after the checkouts at Asda (Westwood) or Sainsbury's (Kennedy Centre). For one-off donations from individuals or businesses, contact foodbank manager Edel Diamond (details below) to arrange a suitable time.

MOST NEEDED SHOPPING LIST

Fruit juice (long life)

Milk (UHT)

Pasta sauces

Tinned rice pudding

Tinned custard

Tinned fruit

Tinned meat

Tinned fish






Tinned veg

Mash potato (powdered)

Tomatoes

Toiletries



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 1st Floor, 124 Stewartstown Road, Belfast, BT11 9JQ  www.facebook.com/swbfoodbank

South-West Belfast foodbank is run by Colin Glen Christian Fellowship
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THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

It has been said that “it is more blessed to give than to receive”. This is true not only for those who donate food, but also for those who volunteer at the foodbank. Volunteers really enjoy not only helping others but also the benefits from working together as a group. (The photos below show some of our volunteers.)

We have two great teams of regular volunteers on Tuesdays and Thursdays (some are shown in the photos below). They check incoming food to ensure that it is within its use-by date and is not damaged. They then sort different food types into different crates, and then store them for later distribution to clients. When clients arrive, after their food needs have been discussed in the client room, they then use the food lists to gather up the food that each client needs. They also pack emergency boxes which are given to organisations to make food available outside of foodbank opening hours.

Volunteers also help out at supermarket food collections, giving out leaflets to the public and receiving food from them as they leave, as well as loading and transporting food to the warehouse. Lots of other admin work is also done, such as liaising with referral organisations and recruiting volunteers, annual stock checks (thanks also to help from boys from St. Mary's), transporting food from supermarkets, and packing Christmas hampers.

Current vacancies exist for transporting food from supermarkets, and to help for the Nov-Jan Christmas period.



HOW DOES SOUTH-WEST BELFAST FOODBANK WORK?

Step 1

FOOD IS DONATED

Non-perishable food is donated at supermarkets, schools, churches, businesses and directly by individuals.

Step 2

FOOD IS SORTED AND STORED

Volunteers sort food to check that it's in date and store it, ready to be given to people in need when they visit the foodbank.

Step 3

PROFESSIONALS IDENTIFY PEOPLE IN NEED

Foodbanks partner with a wide range of care professionals such as doctors, health visitors, social workers and police to identify people in crisis and issue them with a foodbank voucher.

Step 4

CLIENTS RECEIVE FOOD AND FURTHER SUPPORT

Foodbank clients bring their voucher to a foodbank centre where it can be redeemed for three days' emergency food. Volunteers signpost people to agencies able to solve the longer-term problem.



Thank you to all our donors, supporters, volunteers and partner organisations