



# PRESS RELEASE

## NEW FOODBANK FEEDS FLOOD HIT FAMILIES

Less than three weeks after opening, North Lakes charity foodbank in Cockermouth was catapulted into action as severe floods hit hundreds of homes in the area. With the foodbank itself 8ft deep in water, all the food previously collected was ruined but within 24 hours of the floods hitting emergency food was already on the way from Trussell Trust foodbanks across the UK. North Lakes foodbank now has 10 times the amount of food originally collected and has helped hundreds of flood-hit families.

On Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec, 100 family-sized emergency food boxes containing 3 days of non-perishable food will be delivered to North Lakes foodbank from South West foodbanks, helping North Lakes foodbank to keep up their work providing relief as families continue to struggle. These food boxes will be added to food already donated by South Liverpool foodbank, Stourbridge foodbank, Waitrose and generous members of the public.

Andrew Robinson, North Lakes foodbank manager, says: 'We were able to give food and toiletries to a lady who lived in the house next to the bridge that collapsed. Her and her son were rescued from the house taking only the clothes they stood up in. I met her in a library with bags of food and we will be supporting her more in future as she starts to put her life back together.' North Lakes foodbank was one of the first relief agencies on the ground giving out emergency food in the worst hit areas of Cumbria. The day after the floods hit the foodbank team were giving out food and nappies in Northside, the side of Workington that was cut off from the main town after the bridge collapsed.

Andrew's wife Jane has been manning the phones and helping to run the operation whilst also caring for their four-week-old baby, she tells us: 'Having only just opened as a foodbank this has been a steep learning curve, but a very positive one. People really are desperate here and are so grateful for the food. We couldn't have imagined the support we have received from foodbanks and generous people around the country, we now have ten times the food we lost in the flood which is amazing!'

She adds 'It's been great to be here for people in the immediate crisis, but we are here for the long haul, people will have to start paying bills and moving back into their damaged homes and that's going to be tough so we have a lot more to do. Plus, we now need to find new premises and more food! It's not going to be easy but we are determined to make this work.' Ends

## Notes to the editor:

- Andrew and Jane, who initiated and now run North Lakes foodbank, are an inspirational couple who have given so much over the last two weeks. Despite having a very young baby and being new to the foodbank network they have committed to finding and helping those devastated by the floods. They are available for interview.
- Case studies of people helped by the foodbank in Cockermouth are available for interview, as are interviews with community centre leaders who have been able to give out emergency food thanks to the foodbank. Interviews with The Trussell Trust's Director or the UK Foodbank Network Manager are also available.
- The supply of food from Wiltshire and Hampshire based foodbanks will leave Salisbury foodbank today and arrive in Cockermouth tomorrow on Wednesday, media are welcome.
- The foodbank network is run by The Trussell Trust charity, which helps churches to launch foodbanks in their local communities. There are currently 56 foodbanks launched across the UK, and new ones are opening fast. Recession has seen a huge increase in the number of foodbanks opening nationally and in the number of people fed due to recession related problems.
- Foodbanks work with frontline care professionals to identify people in crisis and give them three days worth of food and support. Last year UK foodbanks fed 26,000 people in crisis. This year figures look set to rise to 35,000.
- All food given out by foodbanks is donated by members of the public: schools, churches, businesses and individuals.
- North Lakes foodbank is committed to providing longer term support to people as they start to rebuild their lives, they will need donations of food to make this possible.

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Reg. Limited Company No 5434524

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