



PRESS RELEASE

Record numbers fed by charity foodbanks as recession deepens

Charity foodbanks across the UK are feeding an increasing number of people in crisis as the recession continues to bite. This year The Trussell Trust's foodbank network has experienced a 71% growth in the number of people fed compared to last year, with a 100% increase in enquiries from churches wishing to set up new foodbanks in their towns.

Foodbanks work with local care professionals to provide three days emergency food relief to people experiencing crisis. More and more people are coming to foodbanks due to redundancy and benefit delay as a direct result of the economic downturn. The response of churches and communities to this growing need has enabled UK foodbanks to feed over 24,000 people in the last year compared to 14,000 in the previous year.

Christian charity The Trussell Trust runs the UK foodbank network and last year launched 14 new projects, an increase of 60% compared to 07/08.

Foodbank network manager, Jeremy Ravn, writes:

'Recession means more people who would never have thought they'd need help are hitting a crisis forcing them to go without food. The UK public is beginning to understand hidden hunger in the UK and, through the foodbank project, is responding to meet this growing need.'

'We are so encouraged by the rising number of foodbanks opening across the UK, and by increased community participation in current foodbank projects: in the last year alone communities have donated over 200 tonnes of food to help feed people in crisis.'

Ends

Notes to the editor:

- Currently 50% of Ebbw Vale foodbank's clients are referred due to redundancy.
- Gloucester and Highland (Inverness) foodbanks have each fed over 1,000 more people in 08/09 compared to 07/08. Gloucester foodbank has also seen the number of clients referred due to benefit delay rise from 28 % to 42%.
- All food given out is donated by members of the public: schools, churches and individuals.
- Clients are referred to foodbanks by frontline care professionals who are best positioned to identify people in crisis. Care professionals issue their client with a foodbank voucher which can be redeemed for three days emergency food.
- Foodbanks also provide signposting to agencies that are able to help provide longer term solutions to any problems, for example, debt counseling.
- Clients are referred to foodbanks for a huge variety of reasons, including: redundancy, benefit delay, unemployment, illness, debt, an unexpected bill, bereavement. Most people who use the foodbank are not homeless.
- Foodbanks also provide food in bulk to organizations such as women's refuges.
- The majority of foodbanks are run by churches, with help from the wider community in terms of volunteer support and food donations.
- Currently, there are 40 foodbank projects launched across the UK, many of which are open and feeding people, others of which are still in training.
- The Trussell Trust hosted its annual foodbank network conference on Weds 29th April which was attended by over 100 people involved in setting up and running foodbanks across the UK.
- The Trussell Trust anticipates seeing at least 50 foodbanks launched by 2010.
- The Trussell Trust is a Christian charity launching sustainable community-based projects in the UK and Bulgaria.

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