

30th October – for immediate release



FOODBANKS TO ROLL OUT REVOLUTIONARY 'FINANCIAL TRIAGE' PROGRAMME NATIONWIDE FOLLOWING £500,000 PERSONAL DONATION FROM MARTIN LEWIS

A £500,000 personal donation from 'MoneySavingExpert.com' Martin Lewis will allow the Trussell Trust, which runs a network of over 420 foodbanks across the UK, to roll out its ground-breaking 'financial triage, debt and money advice' to 30 foodbanks across the UK, helping thousands of people.

Debt advice and money management in the UK is often hard to access. Many people already struggling with a low income and debt are left with a month or more to wait before seeing an advisor. The longer they have to wait for help the more serious debt and money problems can become.

In early 2015, with financial support from Martin Lewis, the Trussell Trust ran eight pilot projects, working with specialist debt charities. This offered immediate access to household budgeting and money advice in foodbanks, helping hundreds of foodbank clients identified as most in need of support to get same day access to specialist advisors. In one foodbank, after two months, over 90 percent of clients receiving advice had either resolved their issues or were close to having done so.

This initiative is part of the charity's revolutionary 'More than Food Programme' designed to help food banks extend on the ground support beyond emergency food provision to address some of the underlying causes of food poverty.

The eight pilots, in different regions, were designed to investigate the effectiveness of introducing a Financial Triage service in foodbanks which ensured clients could directly access free debt and money advice and seek professional help to: manage their finances and household budgets, avoid pay day lenders and structure their debt to prevent the situation from getting worse and help them to break out of this crisis.

The triage approach enabled The Trussell Trust to work with a number of specialist partners including CAB, Community Money Advice, Advice Northern Ireland, Advice UK, Christians Against Poverty, Stepchange, Turn2US, Money Advice, Trust and local independent advisors to deliver additional much needed services.

As a direct result of the pilot findings Martin Lewis has agreed to donate a further £500,000 to roll out the programme to Trussell Trust foodbanks across the UK.

With Martin's help, the Trussell Trust now plans to fund a nationwide expansion of the financial triage approach, ensuring 30 foodbanks are able to offer debt/budgeting /welfare and housing support services, commencing in early 2016. This group of foodbanks, already helping tens of thousands of clients with emergency food, will now

be able to help thousands of those most in need of debt and money advice to transform their lives.

David McAuley, Trussell Trust Chief Executive said:

“These pilots have been a huge help to some of our most vulnerable clients. People struggling with housing payments, redundancy or illness whilst on a low income were helped by advisors to have the confidence to tackle their finances and turn their lives around.

“We’re very grateful to Martin for his extremely generous donation and look forward to working with more foodbanks to extend the pilot.”

Bev Anderson, Trussell Trust’s More Than Food programme manager said:

“The pilot study has shown the value of having volunteers trained in a triage approach and being able to offer access to specialist advisors there and then. In one foodbank 90% of the clients referred directly to the advisors had solved their problem or were in the process of doing so two months later. That’s a great result.”

The eight pilots were run at Trussell Trust foodbanks in:

Cardiff
Coventry
Dundee
Durham
Hammersmith & Fulham
Stroud
Bangor
Newry

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Photo assets:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/mtfx0p1ze83ht5u/MG_0006%20%C2%A9Alexandra%20Smart%202015.jpg?dl=0

[a foodbank volunteer talks to a client at a foodbank, photo credit, Alexandra Smart, Trussell Trust]

About the pilot:

- A new programme has been in development by the Trussell Trust since early 2014, to provide foodbank clients with help beyond an emergency food parcel, to empower them to address the underlying causes of their referral to a foodbank. This programme is titled “More Than Food”. The financial triage pilot forms a key part of this programme.

- Debt advice and money management are two areas which are seen as having the potential to help significant numbers of clients and they are areas in which some members of the foodbank network already have various degrees of experience.
- 34% of clients think they are not receiving active help from the referring agency therefore a significant proportion of clients can benefit from the enhanced signposting that is offered by foodbank volunteers.
- There were high levels of client engagement and problem resolution: In one foodbank, of those referred to advisors, 50% were still engaged with the agency after 2 months and 40% had resolved their problem in less than that time period. 34% of clients think they are not receiving active help from the referring agency therefore a significant proportion of clients can benefit from the enhanced signposting that is offered by foodbank volunteers.
- There were high levels of client engagement and problem resolution: In one foodbank, of those referred to advisors, 50% were still engaged with the agency after 2 months and 40% had resolved their problem in less than that time period.

About the Trussell Trust:

- The Trussell Trust runs a network of over 420 foodbanks in the UK, helping communities work together to stop UK hunger. Thirteen million people in the UK live below the poverty line. One in five parents skip meals to feed their children. People are going hungry every day for a range of reasons, from benefit delays to receiving an unexpected bill on a low income.
- In 2014/15, the Trussell Trust's 420+ strong network of foodbanks provided three days' emergency food and support to 1,084,604 people (including 397,997 children) in crisis.
- 90% of food given out by foodbanks is donated by the public and everyone who comes to a foodbank is referred by a frontline professional or agency, such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau, healthcare workers and children's centres.

Find out more: www.trusselltrust.org or Facebook: Trusselltrust twitter: [@TrussellTrust](https://twitter.com/TrussellTrust)

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