

# Newsletter



## Harvest Festival Collections

Harvest Festival is one of the oldest festivals celebrated today, and is celebrated to thank God for food during harvest. It is also a day on which many Churches and Schools show solidarity to those without food and distribute the harvest donations they have collected among the local community.

We want to say a '**big thank you**' to the many donors who have currently donated over 2.5 tons of food during Harvest. They include Barley Mow Primary School whose pupils in assembly celebrated and talked about how we use the things which God has given to us and the importance of sharing food. They collected food shown in the picture below and helped pack the food onto the Warehouse van, which then head off to be sorted by our volunteers at the Warehouse.

## Prayer Points

At this harvest time please pray for:

- People in Gateshead who do not have enough for even one proper meal a day;
- The work of Gateshead Foodbank, providing food for those in need;
- Help to buy local produce and fairly traded goods so that everyone can work with dignity;
- Help to protect your creation by being careful about how we use your resources



## Food Stats for September 2022

Food donations received: 13,319.62 kg

Food given out: 10,632.05 kg

Number of people fed in our distribution centres at Birtley, Blaydon and Gateshead in total: 938 people

Number of adults fed (age 17 years upwards) = 601

Number of children fed (age up to 16 years) = 337

These figures show that well over half of Gateshead Foodbank users last month were aged under 17 years old. They included 181 children aged between 5 and 11 years, and 79 children up to the age of 4. Food poverty in Gateshead is therefore cross-generational, and shows that we're still reliant on your support. Money donations can be made on line, and food donations at the many locations listed on our website.

### Trussell Trust Campaign

On 17th October representatives of the Trussell Trust, Feeding Britain and the Independent Food Aid Network delivered a letter to Downing Street. These three organisations together represent more than 2,000 UK foodbanks. They wrote in their letter that people who were already unable to afford food are being hit the hardest by relentless rises in energy, food, and travel costs. Every day they meet people who are skipping meals so they can feed their children and turning off their cooker or fridge so they can cover other essential costs. People who used to donate to foodbanks are now needing to seek their support.

The letter went on to say that foodbanks are struggling to meet unprecedented demand. Many foodbanks are at breaking point, they said, leaving staff and volunteers overstretched and exhausted.

The Downing Street letter coincided with the release of the Food Foundation's latest tracker. The Food Foundation has tracked food insecurity since just before the pandemic. Using nationally-representative surveys of more than 4,200 adults, the tracker showed that since January, rising food and energy bills, coupled with the removal of Covid support, has precipitated a sharp rise in hunger.

Despite the introduction of Government's cost of living support measures, more than two thirds of food-insecure families said they cooked less or turned off fridges to cut energy costs. Last month, more than 18% of UK households said they had reduced the size of meals or skipped them altogether, 11% reported not eating despite being hungry, and 6% said they had not eaten for a whole day. Food insecurity was highest in larger families, the tracker found. Cash-strapped families were not only buying less food but cutting out healthier produce they deemed unaffordable.

The Downing Street letter was signed by over 3,000 people working or volunteering with charitable food aid providers operating across the UK including many of us from Gateshead Foodbank. It was reported in the national newspapers at the same time as the Food Foundation's tracker. It shows that if together we add our voices to this kind of campaign, it has a tangible impact which cannot be ignored. We'll give you details of similar campaigns in future editions of the newsletter.



### Asda and Tesco Collections

As trailed in September's newsletter, our latest supermarket collection was at Asda at the Metrocentre on Saturday, 22 October. We had a great response from Asda customers and collected over 1,400 kg in food donations. Our next collection will be at Tesco, Trinity Square between Thursday 1st and Saturday 3 December.

Christmas is a really busy time at Gateshead Foodbank, and these events are a vital way to help provide food to people in Gateshead when they need it most, so please note the Tesco dates in your diary and email us on [info@gatesheadfoodbank.org](mailto:info@gatesheadfoodbank.org) if you can come help us.