

Newsletter Gateshead foodbank



NUFC's Callum Wilson visits Gateshead Foodbank!

On 18th April we were delighted to receive a visit from the Newcastle United and England footballer, Callum Wilson to our central distribution centre in Gateshead. As any Magpie fan will know, Callum wears Newcastle's famous Number 9 shirt. (This is one of football's most iconic shirts, having been worn in the past by other great strikers like Jackie Milburn, Malcolm Macdonald and Alan Shearer.)

Callum knows what it's like to go hungry. During his visit he described how, as one of six children, he grew up in a one parent household in Coventry and remembers his mother receiving regular food parcels which helped to hold the family together. Callum and his siblings particularly looked forward to receiving tins of fruit salad and he told us how they would argue over who got to eat the cherry! He also spoke about getting stamps at the local post office to use in exchange for bread and milk. He wanted to visit the foodbank to say thank you for the work of our trustees and volunteers, and to raise awareness of the latest foodbank usage statistics released by the Trussell Trust (see page 2).

We were really impressed by Callum's understanding of the hardships being faced by so many people every day, and of the shocking increase in the number of foodbank users across the UK. He spoke to us about how Universal Credit is simply not enough for people to be able to buy everyday essentials, and how the work of Gateshead Foodbank is about bridging the gap between what people need and what they receive in state benefits or wages.

We are truly grateful to Callum for spending a whole afternoon with us. He spent time talking in depth to our Chair, Jackie Beeley and our Distribution Manager, Lesleyann Watson. He also received a demonstration from two volunteers of the kind of emergency food parcels which we provide to foodbank users.

Callum's visit was featured on Sky Sports News and will be on the BBC's Football Focus and MOTDx. The Daily Mirror had a two page spread covering the visit. There were also representatives of the Trussell Trust present. Our central distribution centre has never been as crowded as it was on that day!

It was a day which none of us will forget. It was wonderful to have the support of such a prominent and popular sports personality. Here's a picture of Callum with a tin of fruit salad which Jackie gave him to say thank you.



Trussell Trust Annual Statistics

Although Gateshead Foodbank is an independent charity, we're a member of the Trussell Trust network which makes up the largest provider of emergency food in the UK, with over 1,300 foodbank centres - that's more than the number of McDonald's restaurants in the UK. Using an online system, foodbanks enter data from each foodbank voucher and the total number of emergency food supplies is recorded across the TT network. New data



collected by foodbanks in the TT network and released on 26th April cover the year from 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023, and show the following shocking statistics.

2.9 million emergency food parcels were provided to people facing hardship between April 2022 and March 2023, with more than a million of these parcels provided for children. This is the most parcels foodbanks in the TT network have ever distributed in a single year, and represents a 37% increase compared to last year. Alarming, the number of parcels provided this year is more than double (120% higher) the amount distributed by foodbanks in the TT network five years ago, in 2017/18.

The annual statistics also show that as an increasing number of people struggle to afford the essentials, more than 760,000 people used a food bank in the Trussell Trust network for the first time – this is more than the population of Sheffield and a 38% increase in people who have needed support for the first time, compared to the same period last year.

The levels of need were particularly acute in winter. December 2022 was the busiest month on record for the network, with a parcel being distributed by staff and volunteers across the country every 8 seconds.

Across the regions and constituent countries of the UK, the North East of England saw the largest percentage increase (54%) in the number of emergency food parcels distributed in 2022/23 compared to last year. This is in line with the most recent official poverty data, where the North East was found to have the highest poverty rate out of all of the nations and regions (26%).

TT has joined with Joseph Rowntree Foundation in urging the UK Government to embed in law an 'Essentials Guarantee' that would make sure Universal Credit payments always, at a minimum, provide enough to cover the cost of essentials such as food, utilities and vital household goods. Research by the two charities reveals that the £85 weekly Universal Credit standard allowance is at least £35 less than the weekly cost of essential items for a single person, contributing to hundreds of thousands of people being forced to use foodbanks because they can't make ends meet. Essential items such as water bills, gas and electricity, travel expenses, food items such as bread, rice and vegetables, and hygiene and cleaning products like toothpaste and washing up liquid currently cost approximately £120 per week for a single person. The Trussell Trust and JRF's research estimates that, if the 'Essentials Guarantee' was adopted, it would have a positive impact on 9 million families. Around 1.3 million people would no longer be in the deepest poverty, including 400,000 children.

To help ensure that everyone has the income they need to afford the essentials, the Trussell Trust is calling for the UK Government to act now to strengthen our social security system. To find out more about the campaign, visit the Trussell Trust's website.

Gateshead Foodbank Statistics

The latest annual statistics from Trussell Trust reported on page 2 showing an increasing use of foodbanks are consistent with our own experience at Gateshead Foodbank. In the 12 months to March 2023, we gave out 9,671 emergency food parcels - 3,433 of these went to children. By comparison, we provided 4,892 food parcels in the previous year (including 1,545 to children). The total figure for 2022/23 represents an increase of 97%.

At the same time we have seen a significant decrease in food donations so that we are having to buy in 80% (and sometimes 90%) of the food which we provide. We therefore need our supporters' help now more than ever.

The year ahead is forecast to be more challenging, but with the support of our community and the team of volunteers we will ensure that we keep on fighting food poverty.

Thank you The Felix Project!

The Felix Project is a London-based food redistribution charity set up to tackle both hunger in the UK and the fact that the food industry generates three million tonnes of good, edible surplus food each year. They rescue good, surplus food and then sort and deliver it to almost 1,000 front-line charities, primary schools and holiday programmes.

In March they donated a wonderful upright freezer to Gateshead Foodbank. We keep this at our main central Gateshead distribution centre and stock it with things like frozen vegetables, vegan food and set meals. This means that we are now able to distribute not only fresh fruit, bread and non-perishable food items but also frozen food too. Thank you Felix Project!



Massive Thank You to Everyone Involved in Asda Metrocentre Collection

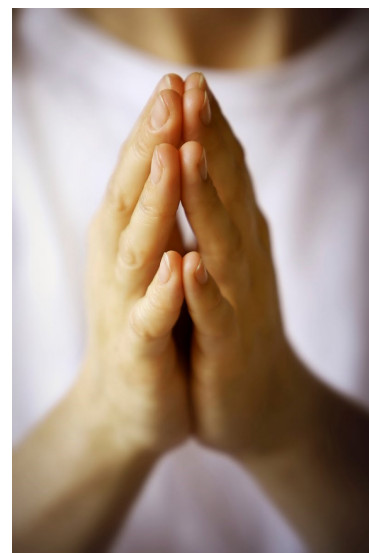
We want to say a big thank you to everyone involved with the supermarket collection at Asda Metrocentre on Saturday, 15th April. We collected 1,116.10 kg of donations. Thanks to Asda, our volunteers and those who have donated.

We will be having more collections at Asda and at Tesco Trinity Square during the year – details to follow in the next newsletter.

Prayer Points

Please pray for:

- People in Gateshead who are facing unemployment, ill-health, isolation or money worries at this time, especially for those who are unable to afford enough to eat;
- the work of Gateshead Foodbank trustees and volunteers as they continue to provide food for those in crisis; and
- the success of the Trussell Trust 'Essentials Guarantee' campaign for the UK Government to act now to strengthen our social security system to ensure that everyone has the income they need to afford the essentials to survive



Marian Door & Shutters

Marian Door & Shutters is a long-established firm offering a range of security door and shutter solutions for all requirements, large or small. They are based in Birtley and have over 60 years of specialist experience in doors and shutters. In March they made a generous donation to Gateshead Foodbank of £2,000. It's with this kind of wonderful generosity from all of our donors (both large and small) that we are able to help to feed people are going hungry in Gateshead.



Well Done Eva!

This is Eva. She is nine years old and goes to Fellside Church in Whickham. Back in November last year one of our trustees, Carol Thompson was a guest speaker at one of Eva's online Junior Church meetings. Eva was sad to hear about how some families in Gateshead were struggling with the cost of living crisis and how some children did not have enough to eat. She decided to do something about it and a few weeks later took to the microphone at the front of church to encourage others to donate food into a basket which she had placed at the front of the church. Within hours it was full.

In total Eva delivered 25 kilos of donations to our warehouse with her Mum, Stevian. She was given a tour and learned about how food banks support people in need. Eva asked if she could volunteer to help but was too young as you have to be over 18. She is therefore going to collect even more food to donate.

Eva held a coffee morning at the church in February which raised £327 for Gateshead Foodbank and she collected even more food donations. She also gave up chocolate for lent and asked the congregation to support the food bank with Easter eggs for children.



Here's some pictures of Callum Wilson's visit on 18th April. What a day to remember!

