

Newsletter



Trussell Trust Annual Statistics

In May, the Trussell Trust released their latest annual statistics. Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, foodbanks in the Trussell Trust's UK-wide network (which include Gateshead Foodbank) distributed more than 3.1 million emergency food parcels to people facing hardship – this is the highest number of parcels which the network has ever distributed in a single year. It represents a 4% increase on 2022/23 and an increase of 94% over the past five years. These figures are far above the levels seen before the rapid increase in the cost of living in 2021/22, when 2.18 million parcels were provided. 655,000 people used a foodbank for the first time between April 2023 and March 2024.

The significant increases in need seen over the last few years are linked to the soaring cost of living for people across the UK and the fact that people's incomes (especially from social security) have failed to keep up with these costs. The high level of food inflation alone over the last few years means food prices were 24% higher in March 2024 than in March 2022. When surveyed in February, more than half (55%) of people receiving Universal Credit said that they had run out of food in the last month and couldn't afford more.

Overall, nearly two thirds (65%) of the support provided by foodbanks in the year to March 2024 was for families with children. Families with three or more children are especially likely to face severe hardship, with 30% of parcels provided by foodbanks in the last year being distributed to families with three or more children. More than 1.1 million of the food parcels which were distributed in 2023/24 were for children.

As regards Gateshead Foodbank, in the year to 31st March 2024 we provided emergency food parcels to a total of 8,454 people. Of these, 5,760 were adults and 2,694 were children. Virtually a third of people receiving emergency food from us were children.



Blue Moon Marketing and North East Roofing Contractors

North East Roofing Contractors (based in Saltmeadows Trade Park) are supporting Gateshead Foodbank with fundraising, food donations and transport. You may remember from the January/February edition that NERC's founder, Ian Hogg began by raising over £1,000 running the Druridge Bay Beach Trail Run.

NERC in collaboration with Blue Moon Marketing will be providing additional support to the Foodbank. Blue Moon (who are based in Sunderland's Doxford Park) are offering monthly marketing support, starting with our Instagram and Facebook accounts, followed by continuing help on an as required basis. Please now like and follow us on both!

Many thanks to both NERC and Blue Moon. We're looking forward to a successful partnership over the coming months and years.



Why People come to the Foodbank

It's hard to generalise on the specific reasons why people are forced to use Gateshead Foodbank. Here's a handful of examples which have been collected by our volunteers:

- A person who was in and out of the care system, currently is living with a family member and is on the Council waiting list but can't get a job due to poor mental health;
- A Chef who is out of work due to English not being their first language;
- A couple who both did low wage work in a call centre and whose employment was terminated due to ill health absence and are waiting for Universal Credit which take will take 5 to 6 weeks;
- A Local Authority foster carer who was unable to take any placements because of sickness and who was therefore not being paid anything;
- A person with a broken ankle and on crutches, living in a hostel and having issues with benefits and sick pay;
- A person who was mugged and had their money and bank card stolen. They were recently diagnosed with oral cancer and spent Christmas in hospital after the mugging and received 4 staples in their head;
- A victim of arson, currently homeless and with multiple physical and mental health problems;
- A husband and wife living in tent which was provided to them by the People's Kitchen. The tent and all of their possessions are soaked through. They've been homeless 18 months. People kick and wee on the tent.

These examples show that the great majority of people who are forced to use the Foodbank do so through no fault of their own. Most of the people we encounter coming to the Foodbank would rather not have to use our service.

Supermarket Collections

A very big thank you to everyone who volunteered, donated and supported our food drive collection at Asda Metrocentre on 1st June. We received 550 kilogrammes of donations which is enough food to provide nearly 700 meals.

Our next supermarket collections will be at Morrison's, Birtley on Thursday 4th July; Tesco, Trinity Square on Friday 12th and Saturday 13th July; Asda, MetroCentre on Saturday, 7th September and Tesco, Trinity Square on Thursday 28th to Saturday 30th November.

Please come along to support us or make a donation of food or money. If you want to help out get in touch at info@gatesheadfoodbank.org



Stoneacre Gateshead

We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone at the Mazda car dealership, Stoneacre Gateshead. The service manager, Shaun McCoy and his team put together a large donation of food and toiletries as well as cat and dog food. We're really grateful to Stoneacre Mazda for their continuing support.



Tales from the Warehouse 3

When I wrote my first two pieces for this newsletter I reflected on current world events. The world has moved on; there is now a devastating war in Gaza, we are becoming more and more aware of the effects of climate change, there will be a General Election in the UK and a presidential election in the USA. Yet what has remained constant is that there are many hungry people in Gateshead who need support from Gateshead Foodbank.

I have continued working at our warehouse on a Wednesday morning, and also packing food trays

for our distribution centres. As well as our standard food trays we also pack trays for clients with special requirements and diets.

Our kettle trays are designed for people who have no cooking facilities and/or are homeless. They contain items which only require a kettle of hot water to reconstitute such as cuppa soups, instant porridge and pot noodles. Also included are food items which can be eaten cold such as tins of cold meat, tinned fish, tins of baked beans and tins of fruit. We are careful to ensure that all of the tins have ring pulls in case people don't have a tin opener. Long life juice and milk are included, along with a few treats such as a bar of chocolate, a packet of sweets and packets of crisps. We welcome donations of tin openers and hot water bottles for these food parcels.

Our Halal trays have been designed with the help of focus groups from our local community who follow a Halal diet. They include items such as flour, oil, lentils, nuts, condensed milk and coconut milk. We also include Halal sweets. Usually, if we have a family with Halal requirements, we give a Halal tray along with the requisite number of vegetarian trays. Vegetarian trays have the same content as our standard trays except that meat and fish products are substituted with items such as tins of beans, chick peas, vegetarian curry and macaroni cheese.

We pack these 'special' trays in a very systematic way, as you can see in this photo of Jean Wood and I in the middle of packing kettle and Halal trays. Mel Lee always says it looks like we are playing shops!

It makes me sad and angry in equal measure that people still need to come to Gateshead Foodbank. However, from a personal point of view, I love working with all of my friends at the Foodbank and feeling that, in some small way, I may have made someone's life a little better, albeit for a short time.

Susan Le Jeune



Prayer Points

Please give thanks for the generosity of businesses, churches, schools, and individuals who donate food and money to the foodbanks in our network to help people in crisis.

Please give thanks also for the work of our trustees and volunteers who work to help people in our community facing hardship.

Please pray for the day when foodbanks will no longer be needed in our country.

Foodbank centre helper (At our Central Distribution Centre at Gateshead)

We are looking to recruit volunteers in our central distribution centre in Gateshead to play a vital role giving direct support to people who use the Foodbank, meeting and greeting people coming into the Foodbank, packing their food parcels, making them feel comfortable and providing further signposting support where appropriate. In this role you can make a real difference to people’s lives providing vital help and support to those in crisis in your local community.

If you are interested in joining the team or hearing more about the role then please email our Project Manager, Leslyann Watson on projectmanager@gateshead.foodbank.org.uk or call **07496 840720**.

Eva’s Fundraiser for Gateshead Foodbank

You may remember that we featured young Eva Milburn twice last year when, at only 9 years old, she arranged coffee mornings and bake sales for Gateshead Foodbank, and then followed this up with a 14 mile sponsored walk from Eva’s home in Sunderland to the Durham and Sunderland Foodbank Warehouse in Chester-le-Street, on to the Angel of the North for a picnic with family and friends and finally to our Team Valley warehouse. Altogether across last year, Eva raised £4,000 and 400kg of food!



Eva has decided this year to surpass that amount with one BIG event! One BIG challenge! On Friday 16th August she and her Dad, Mark will be walking 20 miles to raise money for Gateshead Foodbank (and Sunderland and County Durham Foodbank).

So, if you want to help Eva to make even more in donations this year than last then you can donate by searching for Eva Milburn on JustGiving. Also, you can follow Eva’s progress and find chances to support and get involved with the walk by searching “Eva Foodbank Fundraising” on Facebook.

Very best of luck to Eva with this amazing challenge.

Emmanuel College tackling Period Poverty

People in poverty don’t need only food. They also need basic toiletries which, for women and girls, include sanitary products. We are therefore grateful to Emmanuel College for setting up a regular donation of sanitary products to Gateshead Foodbank so that together we can work to tackle period poverty.



EMERGENCY FOOD FOR LOCAL PEOPLE IN CRISIS

Could you stop someone in Gateshead going hungry by donating an item from the shopping list below?

SHOPPING LIST

- Milk (UHT or Powdered)
- Sugar (500g)
- Fruit Juice (Carton long-life)
- Soup
- Pasta Sauces
- Sponge Pudding (Tinned)
- Tomatoes (Tinned)
- Cereals
- Rice Pudding (Tinned)
- Noodles
- Chocolates/Sweets
- Tea Bags
- Instant Coffee
- Instant Mash Potato
- Rice
- Fish (Tinned)
- Meat (Tinned)
- Fruit (Tinned)
- Jam
- Custard (Tinned)
- Biscuits
- Toiletries

Why not start up your own collection point?

Start a collection point at your workplace, with your street, at school or your church.

All of the food distributed by Gateshead Foodbank is donated by the public, either directly or via financial donations. That’s why your food donations are absolutely vital to our ability to give everyone referred to us a balanced and nutritious supply of food with up to seven days’ worth of food and toiletries .

We can provide lists/a poster of the types of foods we need for you to create your collection point. Visit our website to view other ways to give help at <https://gateshead.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/> or give us a call to have a chat.