



Newcastle Staffs Foodbank Press Release, November 2017

New figures show 1897 emergency food supplies given to local people by Newcastle Staffs Foodbank in six months.

Between 1st April and 30th September 2017, **1897** three day emergency food supplies were provided to local people in crisis by Newcastle Staffs Foodbank, compared to the same period in the previous year. Of this number, **627** went to children. The foodbank, a member of The Trussell Trust's network which has this month reported an increase in UK foodbank use, believes the local increase is due to people struggling with continued issues with benefit payments, low wages and insecure work.

In the months leading to Christmas a number of factors, such as cold weather and high energy bills, or foodbanks and referral agencies ensuring that people who are likely to hit crisis have food ahead of Christmas Day, mean The Trussell Trust's foodbank network traditionally sees a spike in foodbank use. Newcastle Staffs Foodbank is asking the community to help them prepare for their busiest time of year by **getting involved as a volunteer at the 3 day food collections at Tesco Trent Vale and Kidsgrove on Thursday 30th November, Friday 1st December and Saturday 2nd December.**

Newcastle Staffs Foodbank is concerned about the future rollout of full Universal Credit in the local area, following evidence from other foodbanks in The Trussell Trust's network about the issues people referred to them have experienced with the new system. The 6+ week waiting period for a first payment can contribute to debt, mental health issues and rent arrears. The effects of these can last even after people receive their Universal Credit payments, as bills and debts pile up. Newcastle Staffs Foodbank is preparing to help prevent local people affected going hungry but is troubled by the extra pressure this puts on food donation stocks and volunteers' capacity.

Kerry Dunstan, Pr and Communications Volunteer for Newcastle Staffs Foodbank said:

“Every week people are referred to us after something unavoidable - like illness, a delayed benefit payment or an unexpected bill - means there’s no money for food. It’s only with local people’s help that we’re able to provide vital support when it matters most, and whilst we hope one day there’ll be no need for our work, until that day comes we’ll be working hard to help prevent people going hungry. Thank you so much to everyone who already donates time, food and money to help local people. If you’re not already involved, we’d love to hear from you!”

Mark Ward, Interim Chief Executive at The Trussell Trust, said:

“We’re seeing soaring demand at foodbanks across the UK. Our network is working hard to stop people going hungry but the simple truth is that even with the enormous generosity of our donors and volunteers, we’re concerned foodbanks could struggle to meet demand this winter if critical changes to benefit delivery aren’t made now. People cannot be left for weeks without any income, and when that income does come, it must keep pace with living costs – foodbanks cannot be relied upon to pick up the pieces. Without urgent action from policy-makers and even more generous practical support from the public, we don’t know how foodbanks are going to stop families and children going hungry this Christmas.”

The running costs for the foodbank are approximately £8000 a year, all of which is raised locally to enable them to continue their work. Costs include warehouse space, to sort and stock donated food, and other overheads like utilities and insurances. The foodbank welcomes any new offers of help with funding – local businesses, organisations and individuals interested in supporting the foodbank’s work can find out more at www.newcastlestaffs.org.uk

ENDS

Newcastle Staffs Foodbank can be reached on:

info@newcastlestaffs.foodbank.org.uk or [07519 159061](tel:07519159061)

Notes to Editor

Newcastle Staffs Foodbank:

- Newcastle Staffs Foodbank has been providing three days emergency food and support to local people since 2012.

- Between April and September 2017, **1897** three day emergency food supplies were provided to people in the Newcastle Under Lyme Borough area by the foodbank. Of this number, **627** went to children. For UK-wide Trussell Trust foodbank statistics visit <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/>

17,698 Kgs (or 17 tonnes!) of food were donated by the local community in April to Sept 2017.

- Newcastle Staffs Foodbank is part of The Trussell Trust network. Trussell Trust foodbanks provide three days' nutritionally balanced food and support to people in crisis in the UK, and signpost people to other agencies and services able to help resolve the underlying cause of the crisis.
- The Trussell Trust is a charity motivated by Christian principles that runs the biggest network of foodbanks in the UK. For more on The Trussell Trust visit www.trusselltrust.org

