



“Thank you” to all volunteers

A big thank-you! That was the message from John McCorry, our Chief Executive and his team, to scores of food bank volunteers at a garden party in our Benwell market garden in mid-June. Beside the raised veg beds, emerging orchard and greenhouse, he welcomed

guests – including two local MPs – and a fair number of our 80-odd volunteers to an event which underlined our importance to Newcastle and Tyneside.

We are now a food bank-plus. From the community garden, providing – literally – field-to-fork food for our adjoining kitchen (cooking 50 fresh and frozen meals weekly), to our ‘Pathways’ project delivering guidance and direct links to a range of organisations: financial help, advocacy for clients to get their entitlement, housing and health advice, for instance. By necessity, we are embracing a wider agenda. We help those in need – and that includes people seeking refuge from persecution abroad. So we were privileged to become the first food bank in the UK to be given a ‘City of Sanctuary’ award – presented by Rosie Tapsfield from Newcastle City Council at the garden party (Newcastle is proud to be a city of sanctuary).



Two of our Newcastle MPs – Catherine McKinnell and Chi Onwurah – cheerfully mingled with volunteers and guests...again underlining our importance to the city. Catherine is co-chair of an all-party parliamentary group holding an inquiry entitled “Cash or Food? Exploring effective responses to destitution” which is exploring how the government and communities

should address the need for food banks. Representatives from the food bank will be attending, including a new staff member, Jemima Short (Campaigns and Communications Manager) tasked with campaigning and lobbying.

We can thank so many – tireless volunteers, funders, food retailers, donors, the Newcastle United friends of the food bank – that it’s invidious to single out individuals. But, for the wonderful garden party, special thanks to the kitchen team of Pat B, Pat K and Rosemary, and to Chris, executive chef from the Marriott, Gateshead, and his assistant Lynsay. Thank you to our volunteers Somita, Hadis and Javad who helped set up the garden party and donated Iranian delicacies. Thanks also to Barbara, and the late Laurie Vest, inspirations behind the kitchen garden, which provided the colourful space for the party...and its powerful message: Volunteers are at the heart of the food bank, and we need help more than ever to provide food, and our growing range of services, in this most challenging of times.



May donations & food parcels

In May 2022, 21,812kg of food, 6,204kg more than in May 2021 was distributed. This was across our sites at Benwell, Bede, Lemington, Galafield, Heaton Baptist Church, St Silas, Building Futures East, and Denton.

Pathways progress

From May we had seven Mental Health Practitioners working across four sites. This is a culmination of 18 months of preparatory and partnership work by the Pathways Manager, local G.P.’s and a charity - Mental Health Concern. This vital service ensures that any client presenting with mental health issues can be seen on the day by a professional mental health worker who is able to triage and assist with getting vital help to the person without delay.

Supplies needed

While all donations are appreciated, we’re currently short of the following:

- Soup
- Tinned Fish
- Cereal
- Tinned Fruit
- Instant Mash
- Long life Milk
- Tea
- Coffee
- Rice

Donations of these would be really helpful.