

A Right to Food

Desperate times demand concerted action. Across the political spectrum, there's a recognition that those with least, from the working poor to the unemployed and those unable to work, need extra help as energy bills rocket and food prices increase by 14% in a year – with the prospect of worse to come.

Facts and figures speak volumes. Our Foodbank, one of the busiest in the country, issued a record number of food parcels – 2,019 – in September, compared with 1,375 in the same month last year. The grim fact is that donations, from people, businesses and organisations, are down by around half – while demand is rising dramatically. The Trussell Trust found recently that 40% of people claiming Universal Credit are skipping meals to survive. For those on the lowest incomes, food inflation is much higher, and a higher percentage of income is spent on food. The Food Foundation, a research and lobbying group founded by former Conservative MP Laura Sandys, finds that hunger levels have more than doubled since January. While there are several ways of measuring need and disadvantage in society, one figure stands out: 48% of children in Elswick, Scotswood, and Benwell live in poverty.



Volunteers at a supermarket donation drive

Positive news

Our *Pathways* programme enables all clients to access help and advice for anything that may be worrying them including debt, welfare benefits, and housing. The team helped 300 people in this quarter generating over £200,000 in benefits due to them and additional monies. On top of this, Pathways helped 227 clients access £200 each from the Household support fund. And by March 31st 2023, we're on target to reach a total of almost a million pounds in welfare 'gains' for clients.

Campaigning for Change

Led by Catherine McKinnell, MP for Newcastle North, an All-Party Parliamentary Group is holding an inquiry into ending the need for food banks, like ours, by looking at ways to tackle food poverty. Jemima, our Campaigns and Communications Manager, attended a session of the group in October and was impressed by a commitment to push the issue higher up the political agenda. This raises a fundamental question: if we elect governments to keep us safe and secure, should the right to affordable food – a basic necessity, after all – be embedded in local and national policy? As part of the approach to push food security for all higher up the agenda, we're looking for volunteers to help with campaigning. Volunteers will bring creative ideas to the table, help organise events, promote our work on social media, and build connections in our communities. Those interested in applying can visit our website:

<https://newcastlewestend.foodbank.org.uk/news/>



Our volunteer induction in October

Thank You to our Volunteers

Our latest round of volunteer inductions took place in October, with another planned for the New Year. Thank you to all of our volunteers for their amazing work supporting the Foodbank.

Newest Member of the Team

Welcome to Jack King who joined the Foodbank in October! Jack is our new Advocacy and Wellbeing Support Worker for Pathways.

Supplies needed

All donations are much appreciated. We are currently most short of the following items:

- Tinned Fruit
- Rice
- Tuna
- Long-life (UHT) Milk
- Curry sauce

Upcoming Donation Drives

We will be collecting donations at the following dates and locations:

19th November,
Morrisons Killingworth
1st-3rd December, Tesco
Kingston Park and Tesco
North Shields
10th December, Morrisons
West Denton
Volunteers needed, please contact our office.