

Helping Local People in Crisis

As we look forward to summer, we also know this is a difficult time for many, with no further cost of living payments this year and upcoming summer school holiday costs. We are therefore continuing to develop our 'more than food' initiatives to support those without enough money to live on, aware that hunger is not a food problem - it is an income problem.



Foodbank News

Mayors Award to Companies 2024



We were absolutely delighted and honoured to receive the Mayor's Award to Companies from the outgoing Mayor, Councillor David Leeks, at the Mayor Making Ceremony. The award was presented to us for our contribution to the wellbeing of the borough.

This reflects all the hard work of our dedicated team and volunteers who work tirelessly all year round, and all those who kindly donate food, finance and other essential items, without which we could not support our local residents who are struggling to afford the basics.

This is a great acknowledgement of all the work we and the community of Basingstoke do.

Thank You For Your Support

We are grateful for the many local and national businesses and community groups who support us through office collections and charity support schemes. A few examples are Earth Breeze who have donated 400 packs of laundry sheets, The Country Food Trust, who gave a pallet of venison bolognaise, and Basingstoke RSPCA who secured a grant for us and were able to deliver £300 worth of pet food. We are also grateful to the Chineham Park Running Club who raised over £1600 by organising a pub quiz. There are many more of you who we haven't mentioned - Thank you all so much!

Updates

End Of Year Stats

The new figures from Trussell Trust show that across the UK, the network provided more than 3.1 million people experiencing hardship with emergency food parcels over the past 12 months – with over 1.1 million parcels going to children.

Inflation may have started to fall, but the number of people going without the essentials continues to be higher than ever before across the UK. In fact, this year's figures, still represent a 4% increase compared to last year, when inflation was higher.

In Basingstoke and Deane, we fed over 7600 people over the last year, including 3034 children. Compared to five years ago, when we fed just over 4100 people, it is clear that locally we are also seeing a significant increase in people struggling for essentials.

We would like to continue to thank all of you who support us and make it possible for us to meet this increasing need.



School Holidays



As in previous years, we will be encouraging our partnered schools and family support agencies to refer those who are particularly impacted by the expense of the summer holidays to refer clients to us over August. Having the children off school can mean additional childcare costs or loss of earnings to look after them as well as increased food costs without free school meals.

We will therefore offer fortnightly food parcels over the holidays which provides food for the whole family for three days as well as toiletries and other household basics. This should significantly help with weekly shopping costs so these families don't go hungry.

What are Pulses and Why Should I Eat Them?

We find that many people don't know what pulses are or how to use them so we have been sharing some simple recipes, such as shepherds pie, bean burgers, soup and stir fry with our clients to show them some ways to make use of beans, lentils and chickpeas.

All tinned or dried beans, peas and lentils are pulses. They're great to add to your diet, because they are high in protein and fibre, low in fat and cheap to buy. That means they can help with saving money, managing weight and keeping the digestive system healthy.

They're good for the environment too. They don't need much water or fertiliser, and they even improve the soil for other crops.



Foodbank Food Journey

The Journey of a Tin of Peaches

From the shelves of supermarkets to the hands of our clients, the items you donate go on a journey. **Have you ever wondered how it all happens?**



It starts when you buy a tin of peaches at the supermarket and pop it in our collection point on your way out.

There it waits until one of our collection volunteers comes into the shop and picks up your tin along with the other items to bring to our warehouse in Houndmills.



The donations are weighed in and sorted by type and date, with the peaches being placed in a tray with other tinned fruit.

Each day, volunteers prepare the stock needed to be taken out to the foodbank centre, taking the trays of requested food and stacking them ready to be delivered to the centre. Today, the tin of peaches is picked, and stacked ready with the other items.



The food is stacked into our little blue van to be driven over to the centre.

With the order at the centre, the cupboard shelves are restocked ready for clients to arrive.

The tin of peaches sits on the shelf with the other tinned fruit, tinned veg to the left and pulses on the right.



Each of our seven centres are open for two hours a week. Clients will arrive, receive refreshments and sit down with a volunteer to go through their list of food choices.

Today, one of our volunteers, Richard, sits down with a single mother of four children. They go through the choices - she would prefer tea over coffee, cereal to porridge and definitely doesn't want marmite! She confirms she would like tinned fruit and veg and they continue to go through her other choices. This list is then passed to another volunteer to pack the items while Richard takes the client to choose fresh bread, eggs, fruit and veg as well as offering other extra items we have been donated, such as spices and sauces.



Returning to their table, Richard and the client chat about the difficulty she has been having paying the increasing cost of her energy bill. Richard tells her about some of the local support available, such as hitting the cold spots and LEAP, providing contact information so the client can give them a call and work towards reducing these costs.

The food has been packed, the tin of peaches included, and is brought over to the client ready to be taken home.

With food for at least three days, toiletries and household essential items she leaves the centre knowing that the children will not be going hungry tonight, but enjoy a good dinner followed by peaches. She also has a way forward to reduce her bills so that her money can stretch that bit further.

What Our Clients Have Said:

” *I was anxious at first. But everyone there was very welcoming and very kind. They were really helpful and super happy to help.*

” *We came there with a lot of hesitation. However the people there put us at ease very quickly and we felt warm and welcomed. We were treated so good and we had lots of food to take home.*

” *They are very helpful and accommodating. They're welcoming and not judgemental.*

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