

Trussell Trust reports huge rise in emergency food parcels and calls for more direct funding

Last month the need for emergency food parcels rose by 47% and those for children rose by 62%. There are many organisations which are busy distributing meals, sandwiches and food packs every day in Edinburgh and all across the country.

The Trussell Trust has reported its busiest ever month at its network of food banks, and calls for direct financial boosts for low income families. They want a lump sum payment through the Best Start and School Clothing Grant, an extension of cash payments for children eligible for free school meals until August, and a continuation of the Coronavirus Emergency Income Support Scheme.

Head of Scotland at the Trussell Trust Polly Jones said: "Following this steep increase in people needing food banks in Scotland, we must ensure funding is available to stop children from falling into poverty. Cash grants are the quickest way to distribute money in an emergency and could be the difference between someone being able to afford to put food on the family table or not. This would be part of an emergency scheme to ensure people already struggling to keep

their heads above water can stay afloat. We have the power to make sure support is there to stop any of us being swept into poverty during this emergency.”

The Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) supports around 300 food aid organisations, and it has identified that around 40% of UK food banks are operating on top of the 1200 run by Trussell Trust.

They have reported increased demand on their network and join Trussell Trust in making the call for more aid.

The charities say this is the time to act to ensure that nobody is left behind during this crisis.

Coordinator of the Independent Food Aid Network Sabine Goodwin said: “We welcome the Scottish Government’s investment in the Scottish Welfare Fund and its prioritisation of a ‘cash first’ approach but today’s figures show much more needs to be done.

“The scale of the increase in emergency food parcel provision is unmatched and we know that our joint figures only represent part of the charitable food aid picture. People need to be able to afford to buy food for themselves and their families and we urge both the Scottish and UK Government to do all they can to address the poverty driving food bank use.”

Associate director Scotland at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) Jim McCormick said: “It’s just not right that the number of people in Scotland having to turn to food banks has risen so steeply – especially for families with children. We all want to help each other weather this storm, but these figures show the combined support of the UK and Scottish Governments so far is still not providing a secure lifeline to families in crisis who are unable to afford the basics.

“As an urgent step, an emergency investment through Social Security Scotland and local authorities would enable many more low-income more families to keep their heads above water.

Alongside this, support in place of free school meals should now be extended during the summer break. Families in Scotland need the same certainty as those in Wales of knowing this lifeline will continue until schools re-open.”

The figures are based on data provided by 40 of the 48 food bank charities in the Trussell Trust network in Scotland. These food banks represent 83% of those in the network and, in normal times, they feed 78% of those who need a Trussell Trust food bank in Scotland.



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