

Supermarkets should allow online donations

Christine Jardine MP has called for all UK supermarkets to offer online donation facilities for people who want to help food banks supporting the most vulnerable.

Most supermarkets have in-store food bank donation points but during Covid-19 there has been a dramatic increase in people shopping from home.

Ms Jardine has written to the heads of major UK supermarkets asking them to add an online option to their in-store facilities. Stores often work in partnership with organisations like FareShare and The Trussell Trust, who have provided more than a million emergency food parcels between April and September.

In calling for an online initiative, the MP for Edinburgh West said: "None of us want food banks to be necessary but many, many people who want to help them are finding it more difficult in this crisis.

"If you are not able to go to the supermarket, but want to donate food or essentials it would be useful if websites could include a section for you to do that.

"We know it's possible, and there have been periods where some have done it, but it would be helpful if the supermarkets could make this a permanent feature and I have written to them asking them to do so.

"I recently visited the foodbank at Gogarburn which has been doing amazing work for communities across the capital by distributing food, clothes and other essentials and so many people want to be able to help the more we can do to facilitate it the better.

"Alarmingly, we know food bank usage is projected to increase further due to the continued economic situation and second covid wave, and this would be a way of helping meet that greater demand."

Ms Jardine wrote:

I am writing about food collections at Tesco in the hope that you will consider implementing an online donation initiative to support the most vulnerable this winter.

Currently, not everyone is able to drop off donations at the supermarket or foodbanks and there is now a heavier reliance on online shopping. I am an online shopper and would happily donate via your site either by adding a set donation amount or rounding up to the nearest pound for the benefit of foodbanks.

I recently visited the foodbank at RBS Gogarburn, where in conjunction with Trussell Trust and Social Bite, they have been delivering food parcels throughout the pandemic to support people struggling to afford essentials.

The Trussell Trust provided 1,239,399 emergency food parcels between April and September this year. Alarmingly, food bank usage is projected to increase further due to continued economic situation and second Covid wave, as such there will be a greater demand for food donations and essential items.

We all need to do what we can to provide communities with tangible support and this accessible initiative would be warmly received by your customers and greatly appreciated by the foodbanks.

I look forward to your response.

Best wishes,

Christine Jardine MP