

Rising food bank support all over Scotland highlighted by The Scottish Beacon

Scottish communities rally to support increasing number of people requiring food assistance.

Food bank provision across Scotland is on the rise. As one of the members of the Scottish Beacon, we share what's happening in communities in Scotland by bringing together stories from our publication partners.

The Trussell Trust charity recently revealed that they had distributed 128,490 emergency food parcels in Scotland between April and September this year. This is more than ever before for this six-month period and a nine percent increase compared to the same period last year. Of this number, 59 percent went to families with children.

Some of the reasons cited for this need included 'low incomes, especially from social security, debt, health conditions, and issues with social security payments such as delays or sanctions'. Many people are using a food bank for the first time as they find themselves unable to afford essentials. The trust predict that things will continue to get worse over winter.

Polly Jones, head of the Trussell Trust in Scotland said: "A generation is growing up believing that it's normal to see a

food bank in every community. This is not right.

“Rising hunger and hardship have devastating consequences for individuals and our communities, damage the nation’s health and hold back our economy. People in work, as well as people who cannot work, are increasingly being pushed into debt and forced to turn to a food bank to survive.

“Despite this, there are some positives in Scotland. The Trussell Trust recently welcomed The Scottish Government’s support for an Essentials Guarantee, the publication of its plan, Cash First: Towards Ending the need for food banks, and the launch of its Cash First Fund. These are significant steps towards a future where no one needs to use a food bank.

“However, at a time when need for emergency support is greater than ever, the scale of the hunger and hardship faced by thousands in Scotland must be met with significantly scaled up action this winter and beyond.”

As partners of The Scottish Beacon, we are in the unique position of being able to share what is happening in communities all over Scotland by bringing together stories from some of the 22 independently owned-community based publications which are our partners.

Free food provision in communities around Scotland

In our most northerly region, [Shetland News heard that as the demand for emergency food parcels during the ongoing cost of living crisis rises](#), thanks to the generosity of local people the shelves at its St Magnus Street base continue to be well stocked, so that the volunteers can distribute more than 1000 emergency food parcels to local people annually.

[The Edinburgh Reporter spoke to the Association of Ukrainians Great Britain in Edinburgh](#) who have been supporting Ukrainians

displaced by the war to connect through food, whether at communal meals or on fruit picking outings. They also partner with Edinburgh Community Food to provide culturally appropriate food parcels and signposting to information services.

Also in Edinburgh The [Broughton Spurtle found out how the Edinburgh Food Project hands out around 2000 food parcels each month](#) and has seen use more than double in 2023 compared to the previous year.

Many local community organisations rely on the support of donations and volunteers. [C&B News included a story from the Currie and Balerno District Round Table have supported their local food project](#) with a donation of £3,000.

In Glasgow, religious institutions such as the faith-based emergency relief charity Al Khair and the Queen's Park Govanhill Parish Church providing much needed food parcels to those in need around the Southside of the city.

Also in Glasgow, [Migrant Women Press went along to the Garnethill Multicultural Centre](#), which extends a warm invitation to its diverse community with three weekly free vegetarian community meals where New Scots, those seeking asylum and the local community converge.

Food banks are not the only means of free food provision. Food larders offer a community solution, and do not require referrals, but instead aim to serve the whole community – no matter what the personal circumstances are – and reduce food going to landfill. [The Kyle Chronicle reports how, in Sutherland, a number of food larders are set up to serve rural communities](#).

[Crail Matters reported how residents must travel three miles to reach the nearest food bank](#). However lunch clubs and community groups provide a much needed service that helps to counter isolation and provide hot meals to those in need.

Charities providing emergency food aid in West Dunbartonshire, have seen an increase in pensioners and working families accessing their services. [The Clydesider spoke to Maureen Cummings, founder of Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels and Chatty Café](#), who said: “Twelve months ago we had very few working families coming to us; now 25 percent of those coming in are employed. We’ve also seen a 10 percent increase in the number of pensioner households using the service.”

In Argyll, [The Lochside Press](#) shared how firefighters in Arrochar who have their own beehive have donated 12 jars of honey to Helensburgh Foodbank. The team at the community fire station have also been producing homemade lip balm from the beeswax, selling it together with honey to raise money for local charities.

Meanwhile in Orkney, recognising the impact that it’s not just people who are affected by rising food prices, [Orkney News spoke to a woman who set up a pet foodbank](#), to ensure our four legged friends don’t suffer as people are increasingly forced to choose between heating and eating.

Got a story to share?

We’re keen to hear from our readers about food related projects where you are.

Please take a moment to let us know how your community is dealing with this issue by [filling in this short survey](#).



AUGB Edinburgh at the Leith Chooses event when they brought a little bit of Ukraine to Leith. PHOTO courtesy of AUGB Edinburgh