
FOODBANK REPORT 2021



Foodbank report

We work as a support to agencies who are helping people with longer term issues, such as housing, joblessness, or family support. We supply emergency 3-day food parcels to individuals referred to us- so working closely with agencies helps us help the individual in more ways than one. We started this year with one foodbank manager and one coordinator, who was brought on board to help us open another distribution centre in the town. How little did we know what the year had in store for us and all of us in the town. Once lockdown was announced, our operation, structures and volunteering had to respond to crisis immediately.

REFERRAL AGENCIES

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all of the referral agencies that work alongside our clients and make their referrals to us. We know that you – health, education, housing, advice and support organisations, churches and others – have adapted the way you work several times, and have dealt with a much greater workload in very difficult circumstances. We also know that many of the people you help will say thank you directly – but we see the work you do, every day, and want to say that we are very proud to be your partner.

DISTRIBUTION CENTRES

We give out food to individuals, once they have been referred to us via our voucher system through our distribution centres, open on different days of the week, all around the town centre. At the start of next year, Salvation Army Church in Cheltenham will join Cheltenham Elim Church and St Paul's Church as the next Distribution Centre of Cheltenham Foodbank. We are very excited to be partnering with this fantastic organisation, who have a longstanding reputation for helping people in need in our town. **Salvation Army Distribution Centre will open to clients on Mondays, between 11am and 3pm, and will be well placed to serve people living in the town centre. This is on top of the distribution centres at Elim (Wednesdays, 11am- 3pm) and at St Pauls (which started during COVID in the summer, and open Fridays, 11am-3pm).**

SERVICE

Sadly, there has also been a rise in the need for our service. During the first lockdown, we were **feeding 3x as many people as we normally would have done.**



We also had to go to full delivery model due to restrictions in society. Since then, the amount of people we were feeding has steadied out, but since the winter months began, we noticed an upward trend again for people needing our service. We have seen numbers double throughout November alone and in Christmas, which is our busiest time of year, we are in a great position to be able to serve and give provision to all those locally that may find themselves in need over the festive season and into 2021, where we expect numbers to grow due to uncertainty around job losses and any effects of restrictions lingering.

THANK YOU

Overnight, we had to not only change the way we operate, but we had to expand our operations significantly. We are indebted to **Pete Verry and Brooke Collison**, who have worked all year under incredibly challenging circumstance to ensure people still got fed. We also pay the highest tribute we can to all the volunteers who have been so faithful throughout this year. None of what we have achieved would have been anywhere near possible without them. Lastly, we are delighted to have added to our staff in **Rebecca Roberts and Sarah Baker**, who are already proving invaluable to this work. To everyone who has donated, we are overwhelmed by the generosity shown, thank you.

VOLUNTEERS

We couldn't give out a single item without the help of volunteers. As always, we want to say a huge thank you to all of our valued volunteers. Volunteers help us put food parcels together, give them out to clients, and help us receive, process and store donations. Your commitment and dedication has remained constant throughout all of the uncertainty and changeability that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to operations within the foodbank.

It has been an absolute joy to welcome back some old faces to our team of volunteers. During COVID, we were not allowed to have some of our trusted volunteers on site due to shielding, so seeing others step up and help out has been a huge blessing. We have also introduced some new faces to the team, who have kindly stepped in to help at an extremely busy time. It is a pleasure to work alongside you all – safely and socially distanced of course! Thank you all for all that you do. Your willingness to give freely of your time and skills are ever appreciated and your efforts are making a real difference in the lives of local people in need of our support.

DONATIONS

We have been fortunate enough to see immense support from local communities and organisations. Whether you have donated individually, as part of a harvest collection, through local street collections, or through your workplace, school or Church – we cannot thank you all enough. It is your generosity that enables us to fulfil our purpose and meet the needs of local people who are experiencing food poverty. During the first lockdown, we received donations from shops who had to close their doors overnight, and as such, we have had such an influx of donations, we have now allocated the whole of the bottom floor of the Elim offices to foodbank storage.

It is just incredible to see the time and effort put in by individuals to organise these collections and the results have meant that we are currently very well stocked. Thank you to you all! Our opening times **to receive donations are: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9.30am – 3.00pm.**

FINANCES

Every penny donated or grant funded for, goes directly to the work of the foodbank through which we feed people in crisis. We have been immeasurably blessed by financial donations this year, which has enabled us to do the following;

We have been able to purchase a van. Our foodbank manager did some fundraising, but due to some generous donations, we were able to fulfil the purchasing of a van. This has helped us continue to deliver to clients who are housebound, send food around the town to help other food providers, and collect donations from donors, such as supermarkets.

We have increased our staff through a full-time administrator and a part time worker, who deals with our collaboration work. This is on top of our part time foodbank manager, who helps oversee the distribution of food to clients, and our full-time coordinator, who has established the three distribution centres, trained volunteers and has overseen community projects such as the Christmas appeal. This has been mainly possible due to successful giving for specific purpose, so although our bank balance looks incredibly healthy, most of these monies have been funded to us to pay specifically for salaries over the course of the next year.

Lastly, it helps as **we have taken over two floors of the Elim office building.** The bottom floor is now almost exclusively for storage. The ground floor is now a space for offices and community engagement. This is where we can signpost clients to other agencies, organisations or charities that can help beyond needing help with food.

To find out how you can support us financially please see **cheltenham.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/** for more details.

End of year finances are available on request.



PARTNERSHIPS

On top of that, we now greatly value collaborations in the town, which include **the Feed Cheltenham network of food pantries and Cheltenham Borough Council**. We work closely on referring individuals to and from one another, depending on need, so that the client gets the most appropriate help from the right organisation. We have also made sure that any food donation given to us, ends up getting to someone in need. This means that we also send food to some of the other food providers in town, so that they, along with ourselves, can continue to feed people most in need.

We are in the process of creating a space at Elim, that foodbank clients will directly benefit from. This will be the space where they can receive food, but also connect with any of our referral **agencies, partners, or programmes that will help signpost them to further help**, should they need it. Programmes lined up so far, are a debt advice, mental wellbeing group, creative expression course, all on top of the normal signposting to any one of our agencies who can help in a multitude of ways.

GOVERNANCE

We are a foodbank modelled on Trussell Trust, but governed by Elim. This means that practical working procedure comes from Trussell Trust, but finance, staffing, health & safety, insurances etc are all accountable to Elim- this is why we have one bank account currently, and the trustees are all represented by Elim's leadership. We have taken the perspective, that working with other churches and individuals, whether they have faith or not, is the best way for this work to represent the whole town. So we have volunteers who come from a variety of backgrounds, and distribution centres in three separate churches, and are proud that this is a organisation run by members of the whole town, for individuals in the entire town.