

North Belfast Foodbank Annual Report 2023/2024

NI Charity Number NIC 100175

The North Belfast Foodbank provides emergency food and support to people in crisis in the local community. Established in 2013 and part of The Trussell Trust network, the foodbank operates two distribution centres at Ekenhead Halls, North Circular Road, Belfast and Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Agnes Street, Belfast. A warehouse facility operates on Westbank Road, Duncrue.

We are a volunteer led and run foodbank that relies on donations of food and finance.

Key Figures for Year Ended 31 March 2024

- 1,314 referrals made to the foodbank, feeding 2,197 adults and 1,727 children;
- 21.6 tons of food distributed from Ekenhead Halls;
- 10 tons of food distributed from Immanuel Presbyterian Church;
- 1.8 tons of food given to assist other Trussell Trust Foodbanks;
- 112.5kgs of food given to help local organisations (Rosemount House);
- 19.3 tons of food was donated; and
- 17.1 tons of food purchased (£20,816.56).

Operations

Our volunteers give their time and gifts to help those who find themselves needing to visit the foodbank. A special note of thanks to all the dedicated volunteers who are the heart of the foodbank.

At present 47 volunteers help at the two foodbank centres along with 25 volunteers at our warehouse, two admin volunteers, and one Community Liaison volunteer.

The running of the Foodbank takes a great deal of dedication from our many volunteers, such as collecting, weighing, and processing food donations; maintaining relationships with referral agencies and donors; moving food to centres; greeting people; preparing and distributing food parcels to clients; maintaining accurate computer records of food distributed and other voucher details; and working with the Trussell Trust NI team.

The Foodbank Distribution Centres open three times per week; Monday 2.00pm to 3.30pm at Immanuel Presbyterian Church; Tuesday 2.00pm-4.00pm and Thursday 6.30pm-8.00pm at Ekenhead Halls.

The Warehouse opens each Monday night 6pm - 7.30pm to receive and process donations.

We also want to acknowledge the work of the 93 partner agencies who supplied our food vouchers during the year to those who find themselves in difficult circumstances and need the service of the foodbank.

During the year the foodbank undertook a major client project with Belfast City Council and support from their Hardship Fund. The food bank is grateful to Belfast City Council for the project and the additional support to the local community.

The Foodbank continues to prepare home and personal hygiene packs to compliment food parcels. This was funded through the Foodbank's reserves spending £7,088.17 in this financial year.

Finances

The finances of the foodbank have remained healthy and there have been no concerns regarding income. The accounts have been audited and signed off by Mr Roy Eakin.

The foodbank accounts are prepared on a cash accounting basis. Regarding the Belfast City Council Hardship Fund £10,000 was spent on food purchases and is recognised in the 2023/24 financial statements. £8,000 of the grant from the Belfast City Council hardship fund was received in December 2023 and is recognised as income in 2023/24 financial statements. The remaining balance of £2,000 was received in July 2024 and will be recognised as income in 2024/25 financial statements.

We continue to look for ways to best use reserves in line with our charitable aims and values as a Trussell Trust network foodbank. In March 2024 the committee agreed to purchase a van, budgeted at around £12,000, from reserves to support the stock purchasing and warehousing activities. This van purchase will be reflected in the 2024/25 financial statements.

Due to the increase in demand for our services the committee agreed to scope out a third distribution centre in North Belfast. A successful funding application to support this new centre with Trussell Trust has been made but is not recognised in the 2023/24 financial statements.

Committee

Thanks must also go to the Foodbank Committee who oversee the work of the foodbank. Roy Rainey (Treasurer), Beatrice Mahoney, Denise Rainey, Caroline Hamilton, Muriel Thompson, Sally Gardiner, Elaine Hogg, and Sean McCloskey (Project Manager) have worked hard and shown a real commitment to the work of the Foodbank.

During the year Beth Dickson resigned from the Committee, we thank her for her work and dedication to the committee's work.

Trussell Trust Network

As part of the Trussell Trust Network the foodbank is audited to ensure that procedures are in place and the foodbank is run in accordance with the requirements as a 'franchise' of Trussell Trust. Management of Trussell Trust have approved the running of North Belfast Foodbank.

Philip McCrea (Chair)