

NEWS-FEED

Wirral Foodbank providing Emergency food for local people in crisis

Issue 1— July 2016

Welcome

to the new edition of NEWS-FEED, this will be published on a quarterly basis. Our aim is to inform our supporters of the work of Wirral Foodbank.

In the first half of this year we saw an unprecedented demand with the number of individuals needing the support of the Foodbank up by 33% on the same time last year. The reasons for this are not completely clear however the roll-out of Universal Credit and other changes to the benefit system may have contributed to this increase.

Wirral Foodbank relies on our fantastic volunteers who give of their time freely – they undertake a variety of roles, including work in the Office, Warehouse and Distribution Centres helping with Supermarket collections and coordinating local Church food collections.

In June we celebrated National Volunteers' Week recognising the amazing contribution of our volunteers. Colin Hart, Chair of Wirral Foodbank commented:-

“On the occasion of National Volunteers Week, and on behalf of the many people whose urgent needs have been met by Wirral Foodbank, the Trustees extend their cordial thanks to all the volunteers whose efforts have contributed to this success. Every link in the chain is equally vital: those who donate or collect food; those who sort, store and deliver it; those who maintain records and monitor them; and those who meet needy people and distribute food to them. Thanks to you all.”

We hope you will find this newsletter of interest. We would welcome any suggestions of news items that you would like us to cover in future editions. For our first edition we are delighted that the Rt Hon Frank Field, MP has kindly agreed to contribute an article on the work of Feeding Birkenhead.

Richard Roberts - Manager Wirral Foodbank

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Did you know

- Between April and June 2016 we fed and supported 2,568 people, this included 801 children
- 7.46kg will feed and support a single person for three days
- 20.64kg will feed and support a family of two adults and two children for three days
- for every £10 donated we can feed and support a single person for three days and for £25 we can feed and support a family of two adults and two children for three days

Feeding Birkenhead



The Feeding Birkenhead campaign, which I set up and now co-ordinate, is leading the fightback against hunger in our town. And Wirral Food Bank has been at the heart of this campaign since it began in December 2014.

The campaign has provided free meals and fun activities for over 2,000 children in Birkenhead during the school holidays – a time of year that often brings added pressures, as well as long periods of time without a proper meal, among hard-up families.

Wirral Council has also implemented Feeding Birkenhead's proposal for all eligible children to be identified and automatically registered for free school meals. This move has ensured that 700 more children from families on low incomes are protected from hunger. Crucially, it has also delivered an additional £725,000 in Pupil Premium funding for towards their schooling.

A third move taken by Wirral Food Bank, as part of the Feeding Birkenhead campaign, has been to prevent the need for some people to make successive visits to the food bank. Local welfare rights groups are helping two out of every three people they see during a first food bank visit, to resolve their problem there and then.

Moreover, Wirral Food Bank has worked through the Feeding Birkenhead campaign to secure vital help for people who cannot afford to put money in their gas meter.

I am always working to act on the testimonies provided by Wirral Food Bank, as well as the people relying on its help, try and shape government policy for the better. Two key reforms I am currently encouraging ministers to implement are: a fairer and more efficient tax credit system, so that low-paid workers' incomes do not suddenly cease whenever their circumstances change, and a school-led programme of free meals and fun during the holidays, funded by the proceeds from the Sugar Tax. These two reforms, if enacted, would begin to make real inroads into the numbers of people in our town, and across the country, needing to use their local food bank.

Best wishes,

Frank Field MP

How we helped...

There are a variety of reasons why people need the support of Wirral Foodbank, 15% experienced changes to benefit, 33% benefit delays and 32% were on low income.

This is the story of one Client.

A client has a young child in receipt of Disability Living Allowance and receiving Carers Allowance and Income Support. Following a review of the benefits they were stopped as DWP decided that her child can now look after themselves.

This left the Client with no income to support and feed her family. The Client wrote to the feedbank and said *"The money stopped leaving me with no alternative but to ask for help from the Foodbank. For this I will be eternally grateful."*

Our Thanks

Thank you to all who donate so generously.

We receive, on average 1,200kg of food every week from local churches, businesses and individuals.

The Staff at Land Registry collect food and deliver to us every month.

Over three days at the beginning of July we collected Food from Tesco Bidston, Rock Ferry and Heswall. The people of Wirral donated just under 5 tonnes of food. We also had help from Lloyds Bank, Chester who helped in the Warehouse over two days sorting all of the food donations. What an amazing job!! Well done and thank you to Lloyds Bank and all of the volunteers who supported us.

Thanks also to Smylie Ltd for their continued support of Wirral Foodbank.



SMYLIE LTD



(a) Staff at Land Registry (b) One of our generous Donors (c) Lloyds Bank staff at Warehouse

If you would like to help please contact

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