Wirral Food Bank

Unit 14

Wirral Business Centre Dock Road

Birkenhead CH41 1JW

Tel: 0151 638 7090

Email: enquiries@wirralfoodbank.org.uk

[www.wirral.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.wirral.foodbank.org.uk/)

Charity Number 1167967

 7th November 2017

**New figures show 4,531 three-day emergency food supplies given to local people by Wirral Foodbank in six months**

**Between 1st April and 30th September 2017, Wirral Foodbank provided 4,531 three-day emergency food supplies to local people in crisis. Of this number, 1,322 went to children.**

In the lead up to Christmas, there is usually a spike in foodbank use. This can be for a number of factors, such as cold weather and high energy bills, and referral agencies seeking to help people who are likely to been in crisis and in need of food ahead of Christmas. Wirral Foodbank is asking the community to help them prepare for their busiest time of year by donating urgently needed food items, as shown on their website [www.wirral.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.wirral.foodbank.org.uk)

Wirral Foodbank shares the concerns of other Trussell Trust foodbanks in full Universal Credit rollout areas about the issues people referred to the charity have experienced with the new system. The 6+ week waiting period for a first payment can contribute to debt, mental health issues and rent arrears. The effects of these can last even after people receive their Universal Credit payments, as bills and debts pile up. Wirral Foodbank is working hard to help prevent local people affected going hungry but is troubled by the extra pressure this puts on food donation stocks and volunteers’ capacity.

**Richard Roberts, Foodbank Manager of Wirral Foodbank** said:

*“Every week people are referred to us for emergency food assistance, this could be for a delayed benefit payment, debt, low income or an unexpected bill. The introduction of Universal Credit on the 15th November may well contribute to an increase in those seeking our assistance over the next six – twelve months. It is only with local people’s help that we are able to provide vital support when it matters most, and whilst we hope one day there will be no need for our work, until that day comes we will be working hard to help prevent people going hungry. Thank you so much to everyone who already donates time, food and money to help local people. If you’re not already involved, we would love to hear from you!”*

Mark Ward, Interim Chief Executive at The Trussell Trust, said:

*“We’re seeing soaring demand at foodbanks across the UK. Our network is working hard to stop people going hungry but the simple truth is that even with the enormous generosity of our donors and volunteers, we’re concerned foodbanks could struggle to meet demand this winter if critical changes to benefit delivery aren’t made now. People cannot be left for weeks without any income, and when that income does come, it must keep pace with living costs – foodbanks cannot be relied upon to pick up the pieces. Without urgent action from policy-makers and even more generous practical support from the public, we don’t know how foodbanks are going to stop families and children going hungry this Christmas.”*

**Contact:**

Richard Roberts, Manager, Wirral Foodbank can be reached on manager@wirralfoodbank.org.uk or 07947387930

**Notes to Editor**

**Wirral Foodbank:**

* Wirral Foodbank has been providing three days emergency food and support to local people since November 2011.
* Between April and September 2017, 4,531 three-day emergency food supplies were provided to people in Wirral by the foodbank. Of this number, 1,322 went to children. For UK-wide Trussell Trust foodbank statistics visit <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/> .
* The local community donated 40 tonnes of food in April to September 2017.
* Wirral Foodbank is part of The Trussell Trust network. Trussell Trust foodbanks provide three days’ nutritionally balanced food and support to people in crisis in the UK, and signpost people to other agencies and services able to help resolve the underlying cause of the crisis.
* The Trussell Trust is a charity motivated by Christian principles that runs the biggest network of foodbanks in the UK. For more on The Trussell Trust visit [www.trusselltrust.org](http://www.trusselltrust.org)