



News-Feed

September 2024

Issue: 18



Wirral

Foodbank

Together with Trussell

A message from Phil Davies, Chair, Wirral Foodbank

As we move into the winter period, we are preparing for a busy few months for everyone connected with Wirral Foodbank. Sadly, the statistics show that demand for emergency food is still high as issues such as the cost of living continue to impact on many families and individuals in Wirral. Nationally, we have a new government which has pledged to end mass dependence on emergency food parcels and review Universal Credit so that it makes work pay and tackles poverty. Let us hope and pray that this sets us on a path to ending the need for foodbanks in the UK.

Locally, we are ramping up our efforts on tackling poverty with the appointment of Beth Saunders as Community Organiser and Campaign Manager. Beth's post is funded by Trussell, and I hope that people will engage with the important work she is doing to identify the key issues in Wirral and lobbying key decision makers.

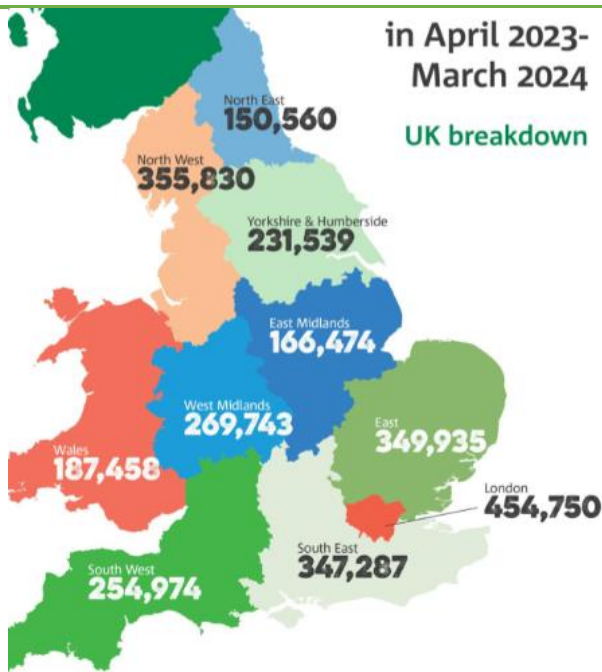
As ever, our volunteers continue to do fantastic work in ensuring that people in need are supported and help with the practical arrangements for providing emergency food. Our Foodbank Plus staff also continue to help clients with issues such as debt and benefits. Huge thanks to all our volunteers and staff who do a brilliant job in making Wirral Foodbank such an effective organisation in helping those in need. Thank you also to our donors, who give so generously; without their support we could not continue. Phil Davies

The Facts September 23 – August 24



- ❖ 15,659 emergency food parcels, 35% to households with children.
- ❖ 220 tonnes of food distributed.
- ❖ 143 tonnes of food donated.
- ❖ 96 tonnes of food purchased.

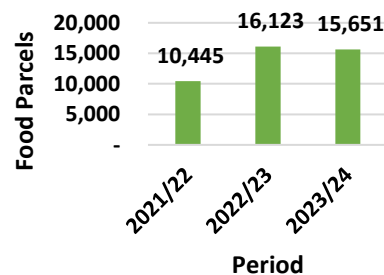
Download our [Annual Accounts](#) for 2022 – 2023



Demand for Emergency Food continues to be high

Latest data from Trussell Trust reports that outside of London, the Northwest provided the highest number of emergency food parcels. Over the past three years Wirral

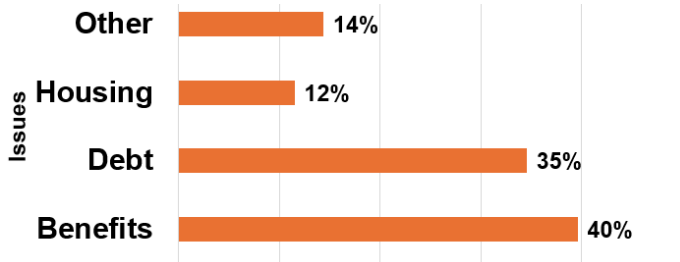
Food Parcels - year on year comparison



Foodbank has seen an increase in demand. Although there was a slight decrease last year, we are still over 50% higher than two years ago. The cost-of-living continues to have a significant impact. We believe that emergency food is not

the solution. Wirral Foodbank is committed to working towards the goal "of ending for foodbanks once and for all."






Why is there a need for Foodbanks?



Benefit and debt issues continue to be the key issues that individuals attending the foodbank tell us about.

The basic rate of Universal Credit should at least cover the cost of essentials like food, household bills and travel, but it is not currently set according to any objective assessment of what people need. The basic rate for a single adult is only £91 per week. That means there's a significant shortfall between people's living costs and their income, and it's pushing people to food banks.

The [Guarantee Our Essentials](#) campaign is calling for the basic rate to at least cover life's essentials and that it can never fall below that level.

	Food	£39
	Travel	£16
	Water	£6
	Phone and internet	£9
	Energy	£27

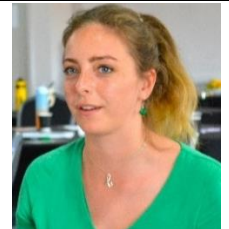
Total	£97
Shortfall	£ 6

This is the reality for individuals in receipt of the basic Universal Credit allowance, it just doesn't add up!

The Trussell Trust/Rowntree Foundation have reported that nearly half of universal credit claimants struggled to keep up with bills, with two-thirds borrowing money to stay afloat. Two-fifths said they expected their ability to afford day-to-day basics to worsen over the next three months.

Understanding the challenges that many in our foodbank are facing

In April, we welcomed Beth Saunders to our team as Community Organiser and Campaign Manager. The post is fully funded by Trussell Trust. Beth's role is to meet with individuals who have experienced food poverty, to understand the issues and barriers they have faced, such as the benefits system, access to advice and support.



It is important, when we design and deliver services that we include individuals with lived experience, and not assume that we know best. A key part of Beth's role, is to highlight the key issues, to highlight them to local and national decision makers.

Beth explained: "The community organising element means getting local people organised to take campaign actions on these issues. We need to get organised and be strategic. Who are the people in power and who can we influence to change this? How can we hold power as a group to change things within our local community and who can we work with to make these changes happen? What tactics can we use to get our campaign heard and to put on pressure? It can be a difficult thing to explain as each campaign will work differently. It could be working with one school to change their school uniform policy or it could be trying to influence MPs to stop benefit sanctions. Huge historical social changes have been achieved through communities coming together and getting organised. If we look back at civil rights movements, suffrage for women and the establishments of places such as NEO in Rock Ferry, they have all come from community organising. It's about finding out what the community wants and needs, setting objectives and taking actions to get those goals achieved!"

Could you be a Foodbank Champion?

Do you share our vision that foodbanks should not be necessary, if so, could you be a Foodbank Champion. We are looking for individuals to be a point of contact in their workplace, place of worship, club, or association, who can inform and encourage their friends and colleagues to support Wirral Foodbank. If you are interested, please contact manager@wirralfoodbank.org.uk

Wirral Foodbank Plus celebrates £1m aid milestone



Left to right, Bronwen Thomas (Enhanced Caseworker, Foodbank Plus), Richard Roberts, General Manager, Wirral Foodbank and Carol Johnson-Eyre, Chief Executive, Citizens Advice Wirral

The Wirral Foodbank Plus project, run in partnership with Citizens Advice Wirral, is proud to announce a landmark achievement—generating over £1 million in positive financial outcomes for Wirral residents since its beginning. This figure, which totals £1,086,657.37, represents direct support that has helped local families and individuals relieve financial pressures, access much-needed benefits, and address debt.

Over the past four years, the Wirral Foodbank Plus team has worked tirelessly to secure financial gains by writing off debts, challenging incorrect bills, winning benefits appeals, and helping people access essential items like white goods. The team of four specialists works across multiple Foodbank locations in Wirral, either seeing clients in person or receiving referrals from Foodbank volunteers. This close-knit collaboration with Wirral Foodbank began as a pilot project in 2018, and its overwhelming success has grown it into the full-scale initiative that exists today.

The scope of the project is remarkable. In the last year alone, one in three people who accessed Wirral's Foodbanks also engaged with the Foodbank Plus team—demonstrating the critical need for comprehensive, holistic support beyond food parcels.

Richard Roberts, Manager at Wirral Foodbank, said: "This milestone is a true testament to the life-changing work that Foodbank Plus delivers. To know that over a million pounds has gone back into our community—into people's pockets, helping them afford the essentials—is something we are immensely proud of. This has been made possible by the dedication and commitment of our volunteers and the professional support and advice of the Foodbank Plus team.

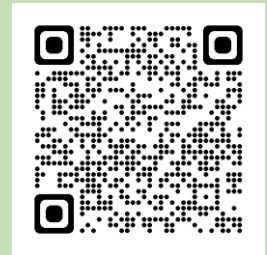
Support Wirral Foodbank

SHOPPING LIST

Items we are most in need of:

- Cereal
- Tinned Fruit
- Tinned Potatoes
- Tinned Spaghetti
- Custard

[Donate to Wirral Foodbank](#)



Thank you to all our donors.

Foodbank Plus isn't just about providing food; it's about helping people break free from the cycle of poverty and building long-term resilience."

The challenges faced by many of those accessing the Foodbank are stark. The most common issues are access to disability benefits and managing priority debts like fuel and rent. Rising fuel costs, housing pressures, and the cost-of-living crisis have driven more people to the Foodbank, often with complex, urgent needs. With fuel debts growing, forced prepayment meter installations on the rise, and housing costs escalating, the Foodbank Plus team plays a critical role in providing tailored support to Wirral residents in crisis.

Carol Johnson-Eyre, Chief Officer at Citizens Advice Wirral, said: "Our partnership with Wirral Foodbank has been vital in achieving better outcomes for local residents. By offering support at the foodbanks, we can address immediate crises while tackling the underlying causes of financial hardship. Together, we've helped return over £1 million to the community, empowering people to manage debts, access benefits, and improve their financial stability. This collaboration strengthens our ability to provide lasting, impactful support."

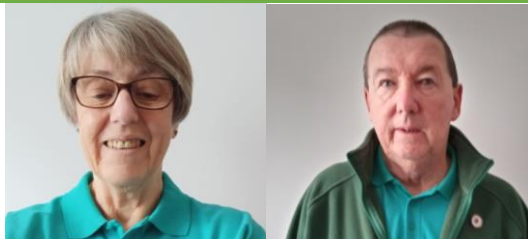
The holistic nature of the Foodbank Plus project allows the team to address not only the immediate reasons why people need emergency food but also the underlying causes of financial insecurity. Whether through benefit advice, debt management, or employment support, the goal is to empower individuals and families with long-term solutions. Wrap-around support is provided by connecting clients to mental health services, employment services, and wider sector initiatives such as schemes for accessing essential goods.

As local people who have benefited from the project's services have said:

- "You have no idea how much I needed your call today; I really can't thank you enough."
- "You have been a blessing over the last few months. Thank you and all your team for helping me back to life."
- "Thank you so much for listening and helping me. You do your job very well indeed and you have an unteachable way about you that puts me at ease almost instantly. Thank you, a million times."

These heartfelt testimonials underscore the real-life impact of the project and the vital role it plays in improving the lives of people in need across the Wirral.

Meet our volunteers



We both worship at St Catherine's Church in Tranmere. At the very beginning of Wirral Foodbank we were approached by Roy Cullen, the Minister at Grange Baptist Church in Whetstone Lane Birkenhead.

He sent us a video, outlining the idea of Wirral Foodbank and we both felt it was something we could do at St Catherine's

to help the people of Tranmere and the wider Wirral through times of crisis and the need for food. So, we started in November 2011, and over the years we have seen many changes. We not only support those in crisis with food but support them in other ways by sign posting them to other agencies, primarily Foodbank Plus and with energy issues through working with Energy Projects Plus. We are open every Friday from 11am until 1pm and operate with two teams of volunteers working alternate Fridays. We couldn't do what we do without our volunteers who work well together and are able to step into any position. So, a big thank you to them. Irene and Bob Gateley



I've been volunteering at the foodbank for quite a few months now. I have volunteered at a foodbank centre, and I now help out in the foodbank office, ringing up clients and asking if they would like any extra support.

It's such a rewarding thing to do and I thoroughly enjoy my time there.

The amount of people the foodbank has helped get back on their feet is incredible.

Danielle Smith

Upcoming events



Donation received from Clare Mount Specialist Sports College



Harvest is upon us, and we are grateful for the generous support of local churches and schools.

Tesco national food collection 28th – 30th November. Volunteers will be collecting food at Tesco Bidston, Rock Ferry and Heswall. We look forward to your support.

We have just issued our 2024 Reverse Advent Calendar. As a school, business, family, church or individual, please support Wirral Foodbank this Christmas. Download the [2024 Reverse Advent Calendar](#) and donate one item of food per day throughout November. Thank you for your support.

Stop press – Cost of Hunger and Hardship Report

Just issued: An in-depth study of hunger and hardship, commissioned by Trussell, which finds that **9.3 million people are facing hunger and hardship in the UK** – the highest number in the last 20 years. The figure is **three times the population of Wales** and includes **3 million children**. Here are the three key messages and findings from the research.

- The majority of people facing hunger and hardship are from a family where someone is working.
- Families with children are particularly at risk.
- Disability and race play a significant role in disproportionately driving people to face hunger and hardship.

Download the full report [The Cost of Hunger and Hardship](#)



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