



Press Release 17th April 2023

Southend Foodbank are running out of food after busiest month in its 10-year history

Southend Foodbank opened in late 2013 in response to the need for a short-term helping hand, for people that were in financial emergencies with no resources to fall back on. The food bank has become a regular contributor to local initiatives to reduce poverty and hunger in the city but has today reported it is struggling to keep up with the huge increase in demand.

This year alone, the food bank has been forced to spend nearly £30,000 buying essential food items to create food parcels. A recent stock-take has shown that Southend Foodbank ended March with less than a week's stock for most of their food. For example, the foodbank typically needs 280 cartons of UHT milk to pack food parcels for a week, but for warehouse volunteers, they're greeted by only 70 cartons on the shelves at the beginning of their box-packing shift. It's a similar picture for tinned vegetables: potatoes, tomatoes, sweetcorn, peas. Even food parcel staples like rice, pasta sauce, tea and biscuits are in dangerously short supply.

Communications and Campaigns Coordinator Cass Francis said "The stark reality is that more and more people are finding themselves at our distribution centres, because the current financial climate is adding pressure onto incomes that are already stretched to the limit. We have guests at our food bank that never dreamed this would happen to them; previously successful business owners that went out of business in lockdown, as well as people working in low-paid or zero-hour contract jobs. March 2023 was the busiest month in our ten-year history, we gave out enough food to feed 1,933 people in just one month.

"We don't want to alarm anybody that needs to turn to the foodbank, if you need us, we'll be here. However, if you're fortunate enough to be able to assist us, we could really use your help right now."

There are many ways you can support Southend Foodbank:

Donate food, donate money, regular giving, one off giving, give-as-you-shop, give-as-you-sell, gift-aid, fundraise, or ask your organisation to partner. All details of how to support the foodbank are on their website <https://southend.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/>