

Press Release Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023



## **9,596 emergency food parcels provided to people facing hardship by Southend Foodbank in the past six months**

*Alarmingly more than 3,863 of the parcels were provided for children.*

- *The Foodbank, alongside the Trussell Trust, is urging the Government to use the upcoming Autumn Statement to do more to protect households on the lowest incomes.*
- New figures from the Trussell Trust show that 1.5 million food parcels were given out across the UK between April and September – *more than ever before for this six-month period.*

New figures released today by Southend Foodbank have revealed that 9,596 emergency food parcels were provided to people facing hardship across Southend & Rochford between April and September this year – with 3,863 of these going to children.

**Southend Foodbank has seen a 59% increase in the number of emergency food parcels distributed compared to the same period last year. This is the most parcels the foodbank has ever provided.**

Low income, especially from social security, debt, health conditions and issues with social security payments such as delays or sanctions were the main reasons people were left with no option but to turn to a food bank for help.

**Cass Francis, Comms & Campaigns Coordinator at Southend Foodbank said:**

“We have spent the past few months looking back at the ten years since we opened Southend Foodbank – initially with one distribution centre at Belle Vue in Southchurch - to where we are now with eight distribution centres open each week. This new data showing an almost 60% increase in parcels given out for the past 6 months is, unfortunately, no surprise; these figures are more than triple the amount we gave out during the same period in 2020, and we’re currently spending over £10,000 a month on food to make sure our parcels contain enough food.”

Southend Foodbank is part of the Trussell Trust’s network, which reports that 1.5 million emergency food parcels were provided to people between April and September by food banks in the charity’s UK-wide network. This is the most parcels that the network has ever distributed.

Speaking about the rising need for emergency food and what can be done to support people facing hardship, **Emma Revie, Chief Executive at the Trussell Trust**, said:

“These statistics are extremely alarming. An increasing number of children are growing up in families facing hunger, forced to turn to food banks to survive. A generation is growing up believing that it’s normal to see a food bank in every community. This is not right.

“Rising hunger and hardship have devastating consequences for individuals and our communities, damage the nation’s health and hold back our economy. People in work, as well as people who cannot work, are increasingly being pushed into debt and forced to turn to a food bank to survive.

“That’s why the UK Government must build on its work to protect people from increasingly severe hardship and commit to putting an Essentials Guarantee into legislation, to embed in our social

security system the widely supported principle that, at a minimum, Universal Credit should protect people from going without essentials.

“We recognise this change cannot happen overnight, which is why we are also calling on the Government to urgently confirm in the Autumn Statement that benefits will rise in line with inflation next April, and to reduce the burden of debt deductions which drive unacceptable levels of hardship.”

Southend Foodbank is grateful for the generosity the community has shown through these difficult times and are calling for people to donate if they can – whatever donation, big or small, can make a difference. Their current campaign is ‘give £10 for our 10 years’ and they are hoping to raise £10,000 to help them keep going through the winter.

The £10 for 10 donation page is here: <https://wonderful.org/fundraisers/nyMwn>

You can find more details on Southend Foodbank’s most needed items, plus donation points here: <https://southend.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

The Trussell Trust is also encouraging people to show their support for people facing hardship by signing a petition urging UK political party leaders to support the introduction of an Essentials Guarantee to ensure that the basic rate of University Credit at least covers life’s essentials, such as food, heating and bills. You can find out more here: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-involved/campaigns/guarantee-our-essentials/>

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**Contact:**

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**Notes to Editor**

Southend Foodbank has been providing emergency food and support to local people since 2013.

Below are the number of emergency food parcels distributed by Southend Foodbank, and by food banks in the Trussell Trust’s network in the six months April-September 2023

	Parcels given out 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023		
	To adults	To children	Total
UK	953,212	543,635	1,496,847
Southend Foodbank	5,733	3,863	9,596

For more info, visit <https://southend.foodbank.org.uk/>

Southend Foodbank is part of The Trussell Trust network.

