

EXETER FOODBANK



Emergency food for local people in crisis

'Beans and Friends':

A Story from the EFB Management Team

One morning last November, Joy walked into our little office to begin work. The room was chilly, but having an office to work in at all was a novelty; for the previous 5 years, the foodbank had operated out of her spare bedroom. Opening her laptop, Joy found an email inviting nominations for the 2015 Exeter Living Awards. She assumed that a tiny charity like Exeter Foodbank wouldn't stand a chance – but, proud of what it achieves, sent off an application anyway. She then promptly forgot all about it.

Fast-forward five months... to find Joy on stage at Exeter University accepting an award and a standing ovation! No one could have been more astonished – particularly given the large, well-established charities which made the short-list. For a charity the size of the foodbank, this accolade is truly a tribute to the power of local community, and to our amazing 118 volunteers.

Unfortunately, however, the story does not end there, with a Cinderella-style happy ending and a shiny award on the shelf after our night at the ball. For many people in Exeter – people you walk past every day – the struggle to put food on the table (and the stresses and secret shame that often accompany it) goes on. For some, school holidays can be a time of particular strain as our 'Family Focus' features inside explain. On behalf of these people, we view our award not as an end in itself but as an opportunity – to raise our voice in areas where it has not previously been heard, and to harness much-needed support in helping local people in crisis.

With that in mind, we're pleased to launch our 'Friends of Exeter Foodbank' scheme. The foodbank may have lots of (baked) beans to rub together but you can't run a van on beans. (Methane's another matter of course!) We do not receive statutory funding, yet as well as running two vans we face many hidden costs each month, including rentals for food storage and distribution, insurances, and two part-time staff salaries. If you can play a part in keeping the foodbank going through regular financial giving, please do consider signing up as a Friend. (See inside for details.)

On behalf of all the people we help, many of whom don't have the means to make themselves heard directly - **thank you.**

Exeter Foodbank
Management Team

Exeter Foodbank

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← Take a look
at our new
website!

A project seeded by The Trussell Trust.

Exeter Foodbank is a Christian charity, motivated by the loving, giving example of Jesus.

Late Summer Edition
2016

Proud Winner of



ExeterLiving
AWARDS 2016

You may recall from our Spring newsletter that we were delighted to learn that Exeter Foodbank had been shortlisted in the charity's section for an Exeter Living Award.

On April 14th, Joy, the Project Manager and members of the management team attended the awards dinner at Exeter University. Imagine how thrilled we were when we heard our name read out from the stage, and discovered that we had won!

We are hugely honoured to have received this award, which is a tribute to the immense support given by the local community and by our wonderful volunteers, who work so hard 'behind the scenes' to make the work of the Foodbank happen. Thank you all!

'Exeter Foodbank deserve huge recognition. They have fresh ideas and great community support. A real credit to the city.'

Exeter Living Award Judges

HOW FOODBANK WORKS



Non-perishable food is donated by the public at supermarket points, churches and schools.



Volunteers collect and sort the food at our storage unit just outside Exeter.



Doctors, social workers and charities give Foodbank vouchers to people in crisis.



Vouchers are exchanged for 3 days' worth of food at the Foodbank centre.



Foodbank volunteers take time to listen and signpost clients to further support.

Poverty Watch: *Family Focus*

In the second of a series of articles examining some of the issues underlying food poverty, we explore the scale of poverty amongst children in Britain today.

In 2015/16, Exeter Foodbank provided a total of **4,367** individual food parcels, of which **1,194** were for children aged 16 and under. Children comprised roughly **1 in 4** of the total number of people fed.

What is the scale of child poverty nationally?

According to the Child Poverty Action Group* (CPAG), there were 3.9 million children living in poverty in the UK in 2014/15. That's **28% of children** or nine in a class of thirty. As a result of tax and benefit decisions made since 2010, the Institute for Fiscal Studies projects that the number of children in relative poverty will rise.

How is poverty measured?*

What is an adequate income that allows one to live free of poverty? By setting the poverty line at 60 per cent of median household income, **Households Below Average Income (HBAI)** suggests that any amount over this level is sufficient to lift a household out of poverty.

In fact, what HBAI provides is information about a household's income relative to other households. But it says nothing about whether 60 per cent of median household income is adequate to allow individuals and families to enjoy a socially acceptable standard of living.

Exercises such as the **Minimum Income Standard (MIS)** project seek to fill this gap. Representative groups of the public work with experts to determine the income required to live at a socially acceptable level. This measure captures changes in lifestyles as well as the necessary resources required to live a decent and inclusive life.

If we compare the two measures for a couple with a child aged under 14, the difference is apparent; they would need an extra £43 per week to achieve the MIS.

“Any family can fall on hard times and find it hard to make ends meet. But poverty is not inevitable. With the right policies every child can have the opportunity to do well in life, and we all share the rewards of having a stronger economy and a healthier, fairer society.”*

What are the effects of poverty on children?*

- Growing up in poverty can mean being cold, going hungry, not being able to join in activities with friends. For example, **60%** of families in the bottom income quintile cannot afford to take their children on holiday for one week per year.
- By GCSE, there is a **28%** gap between children receiving free school meals and their peers in terms of the number achieving 5 A*-C GCSE grades.
- Poverty is also related to more complicated health histories over the course of a lifetime, influencing earnings as well as the overall quality – and length – of life. Men in the most deprived areas of England have a life expectancy **9.2 years** shorter than men in the least deprived areas.

A recent report** by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) on the experiences of families living below the MIS highlighted that families need **stability** - but this is undermined by irregular employment and hours, changes in benefit and tax credits, and insecurity in private rented housing.

Work does not always provide a route out of poverty.

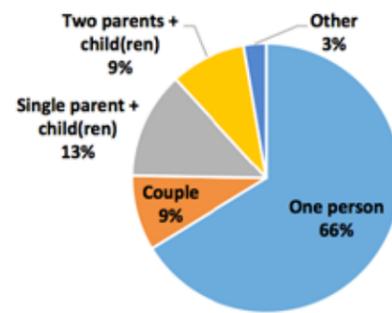
Two-thirds of children growing up in poverty live in a family where at least one person works.***

Childcare costs are UK parents' biggest weekly outgoing**



* Child Poverty Action Group <http://www.cpag.org.uk/child-poverty-facts-and-figures>.
 ** JRF - Falling short: the experiences of families below the Minimum Income Standard, 2016.
 *** Households Below Average Income, An analysis of the income distribution 1994/95 – 2015/16, Table 4.5db. DWP, 2016.

Family sizes of EFB food recipients: 2015/16



BECOME A FRIEND OF EXETER FOODBANK

Exeter Foodbank receives no statutory funding. To sustain our work, we need to cover our regular costs with regular donations.

Friends of Exeter Foodbank is a new scheme that enables you to play your part in doing just that. These examples illustrate the difference your donations could make - but all donations, of any size, are hugely appreciated!

£10 per month covers postage costs

helping us to supply front-line referrers with vouchers & communicate with food donors

£20 per month covers the rent of our main distribution centre

where hungry people come to collect food

£35 per month covers phone costs

enabling us to respond to people in crisis

£40 per month keeps the petrol tanks in the vans topped up

equipping us to transport food to where it's needed

For further details, and to sign up, please visit www.exeter.foodbank.org.uk/2016/07/30/173/ email: info@exeterfoodbank.org.uk or call 07818 226 524

You can also make one-off gifts:

By texting **EXFB12 £5** to **70070** to give a one-off gift of £5.

By sending cheques (made payable to Exeter Foodbank) to **PO Box 661, Exeter, Devon, EX4 6JP**.

By making an online bank transfer:
Sort code: 08-92-99
Account no: 65314566

Thank you!

EFB comes to Beacon Heath!

In May, we opened our fourth weekly food distribution session in a new venue in Beacon Heath. Roughly 20% of our clients live in this area.

We'll be piloting our Beacon Heath sessions until November 2016 – so if you have benefitted (or would benefit) from this service, do let us know!

Holiday Hunger

Parents of schoolchildren aged between 5 and 16 in the South West are concerned about the extra financial pressure of this year's summer holiday, with **32%** likely to worry about the extra cost of paying for childcare and activities for their children. Over **1 in 10** mums and dads surveyed by YouGov for the Trussell Trust expected to skip a meal during the six-week break so there would be enough food for their children.

“No one knows the full scale of hunger in the South West during the school holidays yet, but these figures make one thing clear: many families are closer to crisis than we think.”

Adrian Curtis, Foodbank Network Director at the Trussell Trust.

What has Exeter Foodbank been doing to help?

- **25 primary and secondary schools** in Exeter, plus **6 children's centres**, are authorised voucher distributors for Exeter Foodbank, enabling them to refer families who find themselves in crisis, with little or no money with which to buy food.
- Ahead of the holidays, EFB wrote to all Exeter schools, asking them to be mindful of families who might experience hardship due to loss of free school meals during the summer break. We have consequently received referrals for a number of additional families, who have received one parcel of emergency food, tailored to their family size, each week of the summer holidays to help **compensate for the loss of free school meals**.
- Our **summer distribution sessions** have been buzzing with activity over the break, with colouring books, comics and drinks and snacks available to keep children entertained while their parents receive their food.

An EFB Client's Story

“Our youngest daughter was born prematurely, weighing just over 2lbs, and spent 12 weeks in hospital. This made me and my wife look at our life and try to make a better future for our family. We embarked on a lifelong dream of my wife's to be a nurse and, during her 3 years at university, just managed to balance the student income with our living costs. We always believed when my wife qualified we would be better off – but we weren't. When she started working, we struggled to pay the rent, clothe and feed the kids. There wasn't always enough to feed us as well. We struggled for about 12 months, during which my partner dropped 3 dress sizes and I lost 8 inches off my waist.

We needed help - we were running out of ways to get through the month, then the week, then the day.

We approached the Citizen's Advice Bureau in February, who put us in touch with a charity to help us take control of our debts. We felt there was finally a light at the end of the tunnel - we even managed to replace the kids' shoes, which were falling apart. Then in April, 48 hours before we were due to receive tax credits, we found out that they were taking more than half of our payment away for the next couple of months due to a previous overpayment. Our Housing Benefit was also suspended until they had more details. This left us very short - we weren't getting enough money to pay the rent, let alone eat.

The CAB referred us to the foodbank, which we'd never had to use before. They were amazing – I don't know how we would have got through those three months without their support. Our finances have now stabilised; we are once again paying our priority bills, and debts, and are still able to feed the kids and ourselves. I wish I could wave a magic wand to help the foodbank help others too.”

Meet our EFB volunteers - The powerhouse of the charity



The foodbank is unique in the way in which it mobilises & channels the immense generosity of people within the local community. We receive no statutory funding and employ just two very part-time staff. Without our incredible **118 volunteers**, who tirelessly give of their time, physical effort and generous compassion, we simply wouldn't be able to function.

Last year our volunteers gave a total of 7,250+ hours of their time to make the work of EFB possible.

Our amazing volunteers come from all walks of life – university professors & lecturers, a paediatrician, other health service staff, retired teachers, barristers, mental health workers, students, grandparents, mums, dads & single people; people who have experienced grinding poverty and climbed back out of that pit, and others who will never experience the trauma of having nothing to put on the table to feed themselves and their families. The thread that runs through all the

people who volunteer is their desire to help their fellow Exeter citizens who find they have little or no food and little or no money with which to buy food.

Our volunteers work in teams behind the scenes to collect donated food, sort it in a very cold warehouse, deliver it twice a week to our distribution centre and then man (& woman!) regular distribution sessions, where people in desperate situations come to receive the food.



Thank you to our supporters!

We are very grateful to everyone who supports EFB in so many ways! This month we're highlighting two supporters in particular:



EFB was very honoured to have been chosen as **Southernhay Rotary Club's charity of the year**. The rotary club organised a broad range of fundraising events throughout the year, including a 'Valentines Hop' dance and Ploughman's Lunch, raising an incredible £3,000 for us.

Our bi-annual **Tesco Neighbourhood Food Collection** took place between 30th June and 2nd July. This is part of a national partnership between Tesco and the Trussell Trust. We collected 1,168kg of targeted food, all of which is needed to replenish our food stocks. In addition, Tesco provides a 20% financial top-up to the foodbank based on the total weight of the donated food, generating £392 for EFB. A big thank you to all the shoppers who gave so generously, to our volunteers who staffed our stall, and to Tesco for supporting & facilitating the collection so effectively.

Can you help?

Exeter Foodbank is seeking **local, dry and secure warehousing for long-term non-perishable food storage.**

Premises need to be at least 120 sq. metres, with vehicle access for a Peugeot Partner van.

Please email info@exeterfoodbank.org.uk if you can help! Thank you.

Donate Food



You can donate in-date non-perishable food from our shopping list in our foodbank boxes, which are located at:

Sainsbury's (Pinhoe / Guildhall / Alphington)

Tesco (Exe Vale)

The Co-operative (Cowick St / Sidwell St / Queen St / Heavitree)

Waitrose (Heavitree Rd)

Shopping List

Tinned Potatoes
Rice - 500g
Tinned meat
Tinned vegetables
Tinned rice pudding
Noodles / pasta snacks
Squash
Biscuits
Jams and spreads

To keep up-to-date with our changing stock needs, please see the EFB website or priority lists in-store.

Do you have a question about Exeter Foodbank that you have never had the chance to ask?

Email it to vouchers@exeterfoodbank.org.uk, tweet it to [@ExeterFB](https://twitter.com/ExeterFB) or write to us at the address overleaf. We'll feature some of the most **FAQs** in forthcoming editions of the newsletter...