

New Systems....



With far fewer people visiting supermarkets (and purchase restrictions in place on long-life foods) in-store donations initially plummeted during the first few weeks of lockdown. Creative communities rallied round and organised 'neighbourhood collections' (in which items were collected from people's doorsteps) instead. Here is Reuben, aged 3, hard at work collecting food in his buggy (with help from big brother Joseph and parents).

We're pleased to report that supermarket donations are now back up to pre-Covid levels — please see below for details of our current needs.

...New Store!



If there was ever a case of perfect timing, this may be it. We are now giving out around 2 tonnes of food every week. Stock levels are good—but processing, sorting and storing all that food requires a LOT of (socially-distanced) space. We're delighted that our new, purpose-built out-of-town store will be fully in action by 10th June. A huge thank you to all who have helped make this happen.

Ways to Help

RAISE AWARENESS

Too often, food poverty can be under-reported or misunderstood. Stay informed about the latest news from EFB and issues affecting the people we work with—and help others understand too.

Share this newsletter with others, follow us on social media, and spread the word:



DONATE

EFB receives no statutory funding and relies on the generosity of local people to meet our ongoing running costs. You can help by:

- **Making regular donations:** Visit www.exeter.foodbank.org.uk to download a standing order form or set up regular giving online. Or contact us at 07818 226524 to request a form in the post.
- **Making a one-off gift:**
 - By **debit/credit card** at www.exeter.foodbank.org.uk
 - By sending **cheques** (payable to *Exeter Foodbank*) to PO Box 661, Exeter, EX2 5PS.
 - By **online bank transfer** Sort Code: 08-92-99 Account No: 65314566



A project seeded by the Trussell Trust

'Reviving Dignity, Restoring Hope'

PO Box 661, Exeter, EX2 5PS 07818 226524 info@exeterfoodbank.org.uk

Newsletter

Spring/Summer Edition 2020

'Kindness in midst of Crisis': A Message from Mark, EFB Manager



At the Exeter Foodbank Trustees' Reflection Day early in the year we were discussing our plans and strategy for 2020. During the discussions we talked about the Coronavirus and what challenges it might bring. It did indeed bring a lot of challenges—none of us could have fully envisaged what the months ahead would involve.

Before all of this started, we were busy... and then it got very, very busy indeed. We saw our average number of clients increase from about 160 a week to about 250 a week. One week we served around 350 clients. In many ways, plans and strategy have been put on hold. We have been in 'firefighting' rather than 'fire prevention' mode.

Running a charity has been a little bit like trying to service a moving car as it accelerates down the motorway. We have had to constantly make changes to keep clients and volunteers as safe and healthy as possible. We have been very fortunate to receive daily updates and guidelines from The Trussell Trust to help us navigate through this uncharted territory.

Somehow, during a time when we (temporarily) lost half our volunteers and our number of clients increased by almost 50%, we have managed. We have streamlined everything, arranged a team of delivery drivers and received wonderful help from a local church to pre-pack boxes for clients. We have also set up local provision for people in Broadclyst and Cranbook. Where there has been a need, big or small, someone has stepped in to make it work.

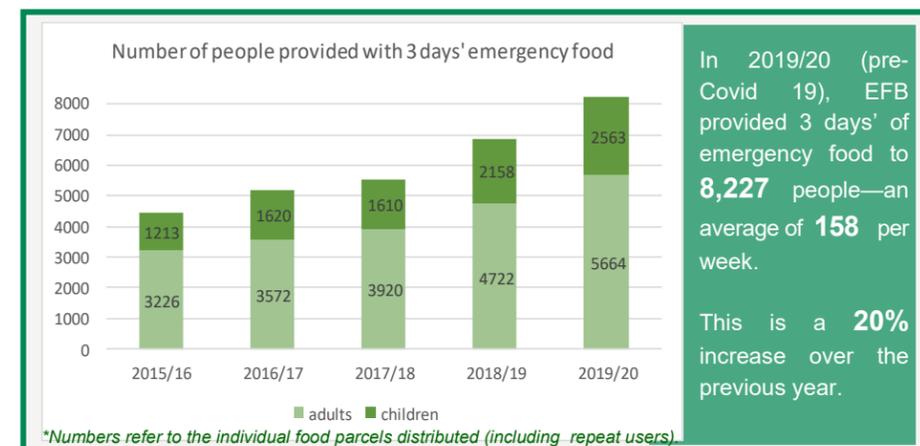
The main difference has been the number of families with children arriving at our door. There has been so much anxiety, fear and uncertainty during recent weeks. It has been wonderful to be given the trust and resources by so many people to be able to assist those who have come to us for help.

We are so grateful to the local community and to our volunteers for their support. It has been humbling to see so many people working together to serve their neighbours in need. In the early days of the lockdown there were many reports of people stockpiling food and panic buying from shops. At Exeter Foodbank, however, rather than seeing acts of fear and selfishness, we saw only extravagant examples of kindness and generosity.

While this has been a terrible time in many ways, the power and kindness of the human spirit has also been much in evidence – and we have been genuinely moved by our city's benevolence.

Thank you, Exeter.

Mark



DONATE FOOD

You can donate in-date, non-perishable food from our Priority Shopping List in our foodbank boxes, which are located at:

- Sainsbury's (Alphington / Guildhall / Pinhoe)
- Tesco (Exe Vale)
- The Co-op (Cowick St / Heavitree)
- Waitrose (Gladstone Rd)

We update our **Priority Shopping List** once a month (ish!) to reflect our changing stock needs. You can see our latest version on our [website](https://www.exeter.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/) <https://www.exeter.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>, by following us on social media or at in-store donation points. If you'd like us to email you a copy each month, please contact us at vouchers@exeterfoodbank.org.uk to be added to the mailing list.

Priority Shopping List

June 2020

- Rice (500g / 1kg)
- Tinned Potatoes / Instant Mash
- Tinned Fruit
- Jams / Spreads
- Tinned / Long-life Custard
- Microwaveable Sponge Puddings

Please note that our Priority Shopping List only shows the items we're short of—not the whole range of food we give out. Non-perishable food is also supplemented by bread & fresh fruit / veg provided by another local charity.

In addition to food, we also have toiletries, nappies, sanitary items & pet foods available. We only highlight our need for these items when stocks are low.

Please note we cannot take any donations containing alcohol (including steak & ale pies / wine-based sauces).

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.

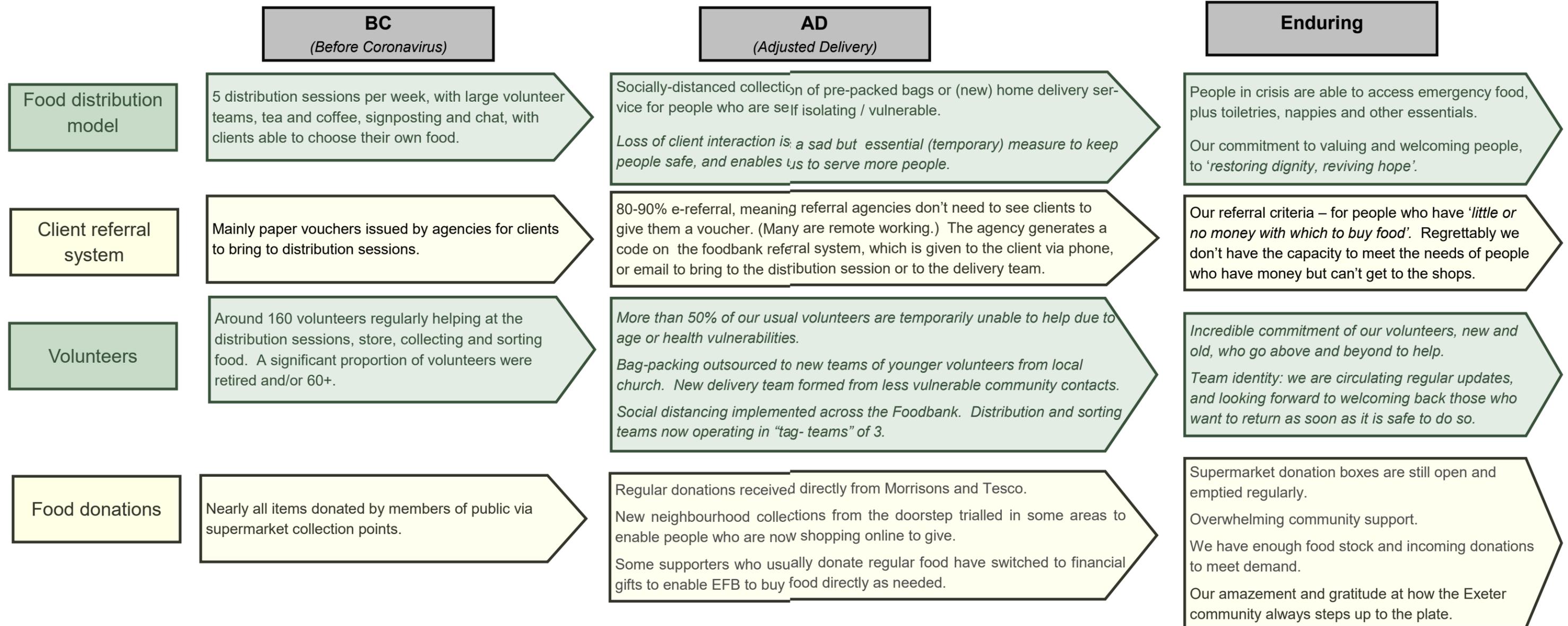
Thank you for all your support!

You can unsubscribe from this newsletter at any point by emailing laura@exeterfoodbank.org.uk or phoning / texting us at 07818 226524 with your name.

Exeter Foodbank in the age of Coronavirus

It feels as if the world has turned upside down since March, and the Foodbank, like most organisations, made more changes to its operation in the past 10 weeks than in the last 10 years. But not everything has changed: in some ways this crisis highlights the community values – generosity, resilience – that have been crucial to Foodbank support since the beginning.

Below we chart how things have changed – from BC (Before Coronavirus) to AD (Adjusted Delivery) and what has stayed the same:



Thank You Exeter!

We have been absolutely blown away by the outpouring of thoughtfulness and generosity—expressed through offers of practical help, financial donations and additional gifts for clients we have received in the past few weeks.

There are far, far too many wonderful groups and individuals to mention individually, but we're immensely grateful for every one. The following pictures give just a tiny flavour of the kindness and creativity we've seen:



Darts Farm gift boxes packed with fresh fruit & veg, cake & cordial



LOTS of them!

Easter eggs...



Kids' 'Make & Do' packs from E.C.I.

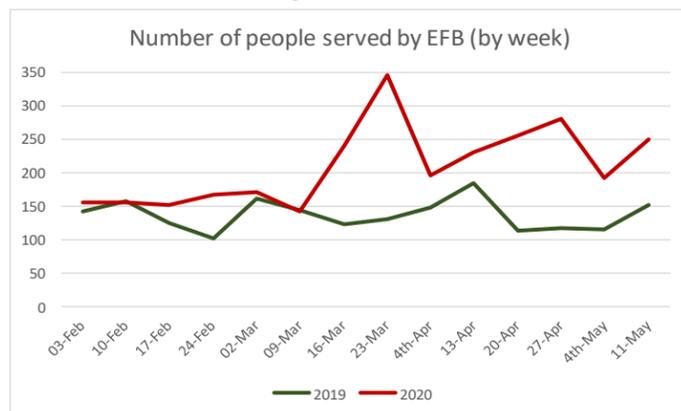


raising £500+!

George, who cycled 100 miles,



“We’re all facing the same storm - but we aren’t all in the same boat.”



During the last two weeks of March, foodbanks in the Trussell Trust network saw a soaring **81% increase** in need for emergency food parcels, compared to the same period in 2019*. Exeter Foodbank was no exception. As lockdown was declared and schools, shops and businesses closed their doors, we saw a surge in demand for foodbank support - and provided food for an unprecedented **346 people** in one stomach-churning week at the end of the financial year.

Over the past few weeks, we have seen a marked increase in people arriving at our door uttering the familiar words: *“I never imagined I’d find myself here –”*. First time visitors have included those made newly-redundant in the hospitality sector (and awaiting their first Universal Credit payment); parents facing increased food bills due to the loss of free school meals; families with both parents furloughed and unable to meet their living costs on their reduced income.

Many ground-breaking steps have been taken to support people through this crisis, both nationally and locally. The Government’s Job Retention Scheme, provision of weekly supermarket vouchers for children on free school meals, the temporary suspension of third-party debt deductions from benefit payments and rental evictions, amongst others, have shielded many from the immediate economic fallout of the pandemic. Closer to hand, Exeter Wellbeing’s excellent support network, the Devon Coronavirus emergency helpline for those deemed ‘extremely vulnerable’ and a plethora of extraordinary, community-based meal delivery schemes have been a lifeline for many.

However, with **economic recession** looming on the horizon (and an end to the furlough scheme already in sight), further, urgent action is needed to protect some of the most vulnerable from the long-term fallout of this crisis. As Emma Revie, CEO of the Trussell Trust, explains:

“Like a tidal wave gathering pace, an economic crisis is sweeping towards us – but we don’t all have lifeboats. It’s not right that this has meant some of us don’t have enough money for essentials and are being pushed to food banks. Now is the time to build on the foundations our government has laid. We need emergency measures to ensure people can make ends meet during this crisis. We have the power to come together as a country and make sure support is there to stop any of us being swept into poverty during this emergency.”

The Trussell Trust has joined forces with other key anti-poverty charities to call for a strong lifeline to those in our communities who need it. Together, this new coalition is calling on the government to implement a **Coronavirus Emergency Income Support scheme** and work with local charities to ensure it is put in place quickly, treating people with dignity, and leaving no one behind.

The proposed **Coronavirus Emergency Income Support Scheme** recommends:

- ◆ Increasing benefits that go to families to help with the costs of raising children
- ◆ Extending the suspension of benefit deductions to cover Advance Payments
- ◆ Lifting the benefit cap and two-child policy
- ◆ Ensuring local authorities in England can provide effective crisis support

Find out more: <https://bit.ly/3dvBUYI>

If you’d like to help, you can ask your MP to back the scheme here: <https://bit.ly/2XPSATY>

*Source: Trussell Trust, 1st May 2020. <https://www.trusselltrust.org/2020/05/01/coalition-call/>

Thank you to everyone at Foodbank.

This evening we sat and watched ‘Frozen’ as our girls ate Easter Eggs. The day started so badly and we didn’t know what to do. It has ended well. We have food in the cupboard. My husband and I both cried tears of relief. Thank you, xxx

EFB Client, April 2020



Meet the EFB Team: Introducing Magi Signposter & Co-ordinator of Delivery Scheme

“I started to volunteer at the Foodbank after seeing the film ‘I, Daniel Blake’ with its scene set in a Foodbank in Newcastle. I was struck by the compassion of the volunteer in the film and thought I would like to use some of my legal skills (I ran my own law firm) to help people using the Foodbank.

With Laura McIvor and Nichola Weate, I helped develop signposting materials including a leaflet for clients with information about agencies available in Exeter and online. I enjoy serving people with food and hot drinks. I often do signposting which means listening to how people have ended up having to use the foodbank and helping them think of ways forward. I have interviewed people for the research into Universal Credit: benefits being stopped when they’re in hospital; waiting for over five weeks without money; not having enough to pay rent and bills.



About half the people I talk to are working. Whatever their financial circumstances many people who I meet have experienced bereavement, accidents at work, mental and physical health problems, relationship breakdown – the sort of things that can happen to any of us. As well as talking about the support available (not as much as we might like) I find myself talking about books, films, walking, sport, volunteering. **I love making connections with people and am inspired and humbled by people’s gratitude and resilience.** I am often overwhelmed with sadness and anger too. I do my best to give people hope that things can change.

Home Delivery

On 18th March I talked to my neighbour, Sara Gibbs, a public health consultant, about how we could support Foodbank clients during the coronavirus crisis. We decided to offer to deliver food to clients who had health vulnerabilities, Covid 19 or who were self-isolating for other reasons. I spoke to Mark and Sara and I got a group of healthy volunteers aged under 70, with cars or vans, through residents’ groups and Exeter Labour Party. We drafted guidance for agencies and volunteers. Mark got us an emergency phone and by 27th March, Sara, Tony Buckley and I had taken 44 calls from agencies and arranged deliveries for 110 people.

There are now about 50 volunteers. As of 13 May we had arranged over **350 deliveries to over 800 people**. Some clients have just been discharged from hospital; many have family members with health vulnerabilities associated with poverty including asthma and diabetes. Every delivery reduces social contact, use of public transport, and stops the spread of the virus as well as getting food to people living in food poverty.

In these dark days I am grateful for the opportunity to be involved in this heart-warming community initiative. Mark and Sophie’s support with practicalities and volunteers has been invaluable. It has been a real privilege to talk to people working for Exeter City Council, schools, GP surgeries and agencies across Exeter (many ringing from their kitchens) to get help for their clients. Karen Cleave, Tony Buckley and Sara Gibbs have been brilliant covering the emergency phone. The driver volunteers are absolutely fantastic. Nothing is too much for them and they all go out of their way to make sure food is delivered safely and promptly to our fellow citizens. Thank you all.”