

# EXETER FOODBANK

Spring 2015

## Exeter Foodbank

PO Box 661, Exeter, Devon, EX4 6JP

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T 07818 226 524

Vouchers can be exchanged at:

Monday 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Tuesday 2.00pm - 4.00pm

Thursday 2.00pm - 4.00pm

*A project seeded by The Trussell Trust.*

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



**Emergency food for local people in crisis**

## A Message from the EFB Management Team

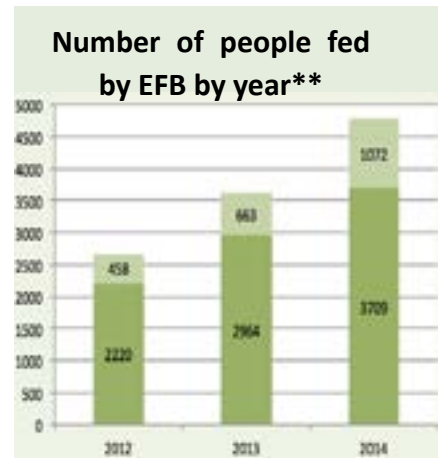
It's been hard to open a newspaper recently without encountering a debate about food poverty. The publication of an All Party Parliamentary Group report, 'Feeding Britain', in December 2014 put the issue in the spotlight in the run-up to the general election. Like the report's authors, we welcome the opportunity 'to encourage all in our society to look to our values and virtues and to begin a much larger and deeper conversation about how we live together'\*.

Here in Exeter we have seen evidence that such a transformation in social values is well under way. The foodbank receives no statutory funding, employs just two part-time staff and relies on the support of individuals, churches and local businesses. In 2014, local people donated an incredible 50 000kg of non-perishable food; our team of 100 + volunteers gave more than 7 000 hours of their time to collect, sort, transport and distribute food to those in crisis. Collectively, these efforts enabled us to feed 4 781 people\*\*. This outcome highlights the radical generosity of the local community, in which people from different backgrounds have joined together to support those within it in need.

Of course, these statistics do not show the complete picture. The increase in the use of foodbanks points to a breakdown in other networks of support – including, for some, secure and adequately-paid employment, family, and a reliable welfare 'safety net'. We are keen to ensure that Exeter Foodbank does not have a 'sticking plaster' effect – concealing the causes of food poverty beneath community goodwill. We explore this thorny issue in 'Foodbanks: Here to Stay?' on page 2.

As you read these pages, we ask you to bear in mind this difficult balancing act that the foodbank seeks to achieve: between celebrating generosity and challenging the factors that make it necessary. To everyone who has contributed on either side of the equation, a heartfelt thank-you.

\*p6, 'Feeding Britain: A Strategy for Zero Hunger in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. You can download a full copy of the report at <https://foodpovertyinquiry.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/food-poverty-feeding-britain-final.pdf>



**In 2014, EFB fed a total of 4,781 people**

\*\*Figures refer to the number of individual food parcels distributed and therefore include some 'repeat' users.

**In 2014, EFB volunteers:**

contributed **7,000 + hours** of their time.

Exeter Foodbank  
Management Team

Jay Pete Laura Ann John

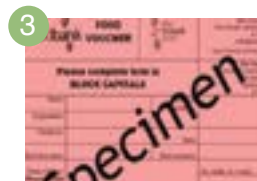
## HOW FOODBANK WORKS



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



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



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



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



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

# Foodbanks: *Here to stay?*

Last year's All Party Parliamentary Group report, Feeding Britain: A Strategy for Zero Hunger, recommended the formation of a national network - called 'Feeding Britain' - in which foodbanks, supermarkets, local councils and government departments would work together to co-ordinate surplus food, develop local knowledge and 'eliminate hunger' in the UK.

The report provides evidence of the scale of food poverty, its complex causes and the need for an urgent public response. Nevertheless, placing charitable goodwill at the heart of measures to tackle food poverty is problematic. Foodbanks are a symptom of deeper problems in society; they are not a long-term solution to them.

Exeter Foodbank is designed to provide short-term assistance to local people in crisis, relieving the immediate pressures felt by those who have fallen through various safety-nets; we do not want to become that net. We fear that the formation of a state-backed food network may risk institutionalising food poverty, making it tacitly acceptable and concealing its causes - which must be analysed and tackled if genuine change is to occur. Co-ordinating local food resources is a worthy goal in itself but hunger in Exeter is not ultimately caused by poor supply.

EFB will continue to feed local people for as long as is needed and will work closely with partners to improve services. However, we'll continue to raise awareness of the causes of food poverty too. Far from aiming to be 'here to stay', Exeter Foodbank's ultimate goal is to find itself no longer needed.

## Other recommendations in the report - designed to deal with some of those causes - include:

### Adopting a fairer, speedier and more reliable Welfare System:

delivering payments within five working days; improving access to Hardship Payments; reviewing the sanctions process, and introducing a 'yellow card system' before benefits are stopped.

**Introduction of a National Living Wage:** pursuing policies to raise the National Minimum Wage, increase take-up of the Living Wage, and to reduce the amount of tax taken from low-paid workers.

**Clampdown on 'rip-off' phone, energy and personal credit charges:** working with Ofgem and energy suppliers to establish a national minimum standard for fair energy prices; capping the overall costs of credit; introducing the Financial Conduct Authority's new rules on payday lending.

You can download a full copy of the report at

<https://foodpovertyinquiry.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/food-poverty-feeding-britain-final.pdf>

"Due to a drop in income after paying bills I had no money left for food and basics. I lost hours at work after being made homeless and also coming out from a violent relationship. I can't believe that I have to use the Foodbank at my age (50). If it wasn't for the Foodbank I would have starved. People need to understand what living like this is really like."  
EFB client, October 2014



## Christmas at EFB

We were overwhelmed by the generosity of local people in the run-up to Christmas. It was great to see such an outpouring of Christmas spirit as the local community pulled together, showering us in donations of food, mince pies, advent calendars and Christmas treats.

Highlights included:

-A lady who saved up a whole week's wages to buy a range of food from our 'wanted' list.

-Exeter College students, who collected, wrapped and individually labelled a huge number of gifts for children and adult clients. Some clients were moved to tears by this thoughtful gesture, having feared not being able to give presents to their kids.

-The DCFA who donated fresh carrots, Brussels sprouts, potatoes and parsnips so clients could enjoy proper Christmas dinners.

In the week before Christmas, we provided a record-breaking 392 people with food.

### Parcels

We've previously experienced an increase in the number of families who are referred to us during school holidays, particularly due to the loss of free school meals. By contacting schools who didn't hold vouchers, we were able to provide 42 Christmas food parcels for local families; several schools have since signed up to become permanent voucher holders.

## EFB FAQ #2: Why can I only donate certain items to Exeter Foodbank?

You may have noticed from our 'priority item shopping lists' that we request donations of very specific food items for the Foodbank. There are a number of good reasons for this.

Firstly, it is important to remember that the foodbank is a short-term crisis service. In order to be referred, clients must demonstrate that they have 'little or no food and little or no money with which to buy food.' Many may lack the store-cupboard essentials which others take for granted. Some will have limited access to cooking equipment and facilities. (A bag of bread flour is not much use to a person who only has a microwave!) Others may not have done much cooking. We therefore make up food parcels with our clients - allowing for personal tastes where possible - according to a standardised list. Each parcel contains items that can be combined to provide nutritionally balanced breakfasts, lunches and dinners plus snacks for three days. Requesting donations of specific items enables us to meet the needs of large numbers of people effectively, fairly and healthily.

Secondly, transporting food from our store outside Exeter (where it is weighed and sorted) to our city centre distribution centre (which is restocked twice a week due to very limited on-site storage) is a huge logistical challenge. In 2014, we distributed 800kg+ of food per week - so simply don't have the capacity to handle non-standard items. People also seem to prefer donating some items rather than others: the baked bean and pasta 'mountain ranges' have reached legendary proportions, while sponge puddings (top of our current priorities list) have proved less popular. By donating from our priorities lists, you help us steward resources responsibly.

The nature of our storage facilities for donated food means that we can only accept non-perishable, long-life items. However, we have developed an excellent working partnership with Devon and Cornwall Food Association (DCFA), a great charity who work with producers, manufacturers, and supermarkets to reduce food wastage by redistributing surplus items to local organisations. The DCFA now also bring frozen bread, fresh fruit and veg directly to us at the beginning of each distribution session; these are hugely popular with clients. If you have surplus food that the Foodbank can't take, do try the DCFA\*.

Inevitably, we receive some items which are not on our standard lists but we ensure that they are put to good use. After they have received their foodbank parcel, clients can choose items from our 'Extras' box. This is something of a lucky-dip: contents can range from chocolate treats to yeast, gherkins or, memorably, dried seaweed!

We are immensely grateful for all the donations we receive - and the incredible generosity of donors. A huge thank you to everyone who supports our work... but no more baked beans / pasta for the moment please!

\*You can contact Rory Matthews, co-ordinator of the DCFA Exeter Hub on 07880 814064 or email [dcfaexehub@gmail.com](mailto:dcfaexehub@gmail.com). Please see the DCFA's website at [www.devonandcornwallfoodassociation.com](http://www.devonandcornwallfoodassociation.com).

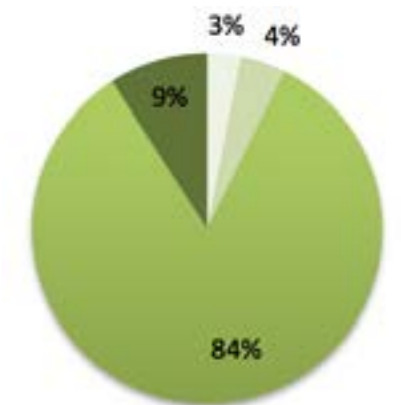
## Agency Viewpoint: Beacon Heath Children's Centre

Christmas can be a particularly challenging time for many families, with presents to buy and extra hot meals to prepare due to the children being at home. In an attempt to alleviate some of the anxieties experienced, the week before the holidays began I had the great job of delivering a substantial amount of food parcels to the families I work with in the area.

From prompt emails back and forth beforehand, to volunteers coming early to pack the mountains of bags so that they were ready and labelled waiting for me when I arrived, the Exeter Foodbank team were helpful, thoughtful and were all still smiling despite being very busy.

Being able to knock on doors and see the look of relief on parents'

## Sources of food donations in 2014



Christmas collections

Harvest Festival

On-going supermarket & church collection points

Tesco & Waitrose collection days

# 50,072 kg

The total weight of food donated to EFB in 2014

faces - overwhelmed by the amount donated - was a privilege (and made up for my achy arms!). Many are still telling me now what a difference it made for their family. Thank you to all those who gave so generously of their time and through donations - it was greatly appreciated.

Esther Duncan, Targeted Families Support Practitioner

## Meet the team

In this issue we complete our series about EFB's management team with a profile of Ann Govier:

Ann joined the management team in 2014 after working as a volunteer for several years. She's been involved with EFB from the beginning and remembers "when the foodbank first started if we served 6 clients in one session, we thought we'd been busy!"



**"It's a privilege to be part of something that makes a real difference to people's lives."**

Ann, who has been married to Steve for thirty five years, came to Exeter as a student...and stayed. Since retiring from teaching French and Spanish a couple of years ago, she's been able to get more involved with EFB: she's a team leader, not only for the distribution sessions but also for an ad hoc sorting team out at the warehouse.

Ann says she "loves being involved with the EFB; it's a privilege to be part of something that makes a real difference to people's lives." She believes that EFB's aim of 'restoring dignity and reviving hope' reflects Jesus's love and compassion for people who find themselves marginalised and in crisis. "The other volunteers are a great bunch too," she says.

## Thank you!

There are loads of people to thank this month, including:

Positive Pathways students from Exeter College, who helped sort food at the store following the recent Tesco collection and also raised funds through a raffle and book sale in the Guildhall.

Students from West Exe Amnesty International group, who raised £194.04 through a cake sale and visited a distribution session to find out more about how we work.

Vineyard church, who kindly collected and beautifully wrapped Christmas gifts for EFB adult clients and families.

Steven Godbeer, Debbie Cram and the generous people of Exminster and Alphington, who organised a huge food collection for us in the run-up to Christmas. 922 items were collected, weighing a grand total of 634.3kg.

Members of the RD&E branch of UNISON who collected and delivered 30kg of groceries.

And of course not forgetting everyone who has kindly supported us with gifts of food, time and finance throughout the year.



### Foodbank Shopping List

*Sponge puddings*

*Fruit juice - long-life*

*Loo rolls*

*Basic toiletries*

*Noodle snacks*

Why not stick the shopping list on your fridge, and choose one item from it to add to your own list next time you go shopping?

£

£

£

## Donate

Foodbanks receive no government funding and are dependent on your support in order to keep going. We appreciate whatever you can give, big or small.

You can give gifts by:

Texting EXFB12 £5 to 70070 to give a one-off gift of £5.

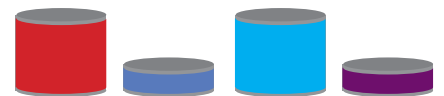
Sending cheques (made payable to Exeter Foodbank) to PO Box 661, Exeter, Devon, EX4 6JP.

To find out about giving a regular gift or leaving a legacy gift visit:

[exeter.foodbank.org.uk/donate](http://exeter.foodbank.org.uk/donate)

Please help us make your gift go further by downloading, filling out and including a Gift Aid Form if applicable. Thank you!

## Get involved



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

Sainsbury's - Pinhoe

Sainsbury's - Guildhall

Sainsbury's - Alphington

Tesco - Exe Vale

Co-operative - Cowick Street

Co-operative - Sidwell Street

Co-operative - Queen Street

Waitrose - Heavitree Road