

**Under strict embargo until 00.01AM Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

## **New figures show 869 emergency food supplies (parcels) were given to local people by Harrow Foodbank in last year**

- **1885 three day emergency food supplies given to local people in crisis by Harrow Foodbank in 2016-17 – over 686 went to children**
- **Latest statistics published by The Trussell Trust foodbank network show UK-wide foodbank figures are still not decreasing**
- **Local decrease due to increased local employment (e.g. Zero Hour Contracts); signposting and additional support given at Harrow foodbank; more support available for people elsewhere in the community. However, Universal Credit is being rolled out in Harrow which is likely to cause an increase in due time.**

**Over 1885 three day emergency food supplies were provided to local people in crisis by Harrow foodbank during 2016-17, compared to 2308 in 2015-16. Of this number, 801 went to children.** The top three reasons for foodbank referral were: Low Income 33%, Benefit Delays 25% and Benefit Changes 15%.

Over the last year, local people have donated 44.978 tonnes of food to Harrow Foodbank, and over 80 volunteered. Local schools, businesses and faith groups have provided vital support to the foodbank, enabling us to give three days' nutritionally balanced food and support to people in crisis.

Harrow Foodbank shares the concerns of other Trussell Trust foodbanks in Universal Credit rollout areas about the adverse side effects the new system can have on people. The 6+ week waiting period for a first payment can contribute to debt, mental health issues and rent arrears. The effects of these can last even after people receive their Universal Credit payments, as bills and debts pile up. Harrow Foodbank is working hard to stop local people affected going hungry but is troubled by the extra pressure this puts on food donation stocks and volunteers' time and emotional welfare.

As well as providing emergency food, Harrow Foodbank provides essentials like washing powder, nappies and sanitary products to families who are struggling, as well as signposting them to other services in the local area. Many Trussell Trust foodbanks, including Harrow Foodbank, are partnering with other agencies to provide additional services such as budgeting help and debt support locally, helping people to break out of crisis. The Money Course is starting on 26 April @7:30 – 9:30pm at Elmfield Church, Imperial Drive, North Harrow. We are requesting attendees to register online so that we can order materials in advance. To register please log on to:

[www.capuk.org/search](http://www.capuk.org/search) or email: [capharrow@outlook.com](mailto:capharrow@outlook.com).

**Judy Cunnington, Foodbank Manager of Harrow Foodbank** said:

*"Whilst we are seeing a decrease in the number of emergency food supplies we provide, we are concerned that some agencies and charities who would normally refer people to us have been unable to do so because funding reductions have caused their services to be squeezed or closed. We are looking into this further, and are dedicated to ensuring that anyone in the community who hits a crisis is able to access our support. Also....*

*"Anybody could find themselves in need of the foodbank. Every week people are referred to us after being hit by something unavoidable – such as illness, a delay in a benefit payment or an unexpected bill – means food is simply unaffordable. It really is only with the community's support that we're able to provide vital emergency help when it matters most, and we hope that one day there will be no need for us in Harrow. But until that day comes, we will continue to offer the best possible service*

*to help local people facing a crisis. Thank you so much to everyone in Harrow who already donates time, food and money to help local people. If you're not already involved, we'd love to hear from you!"*

### **Harrow Foodbank Funding:**

Despite generous donations of food, there are many hidden costs to run the foodbank. Costs include Warehouse Lease, to sort and stock donated food, a vehicle to pick up donated food and deliver to distribution centres, and other overheads like utilities and insurances. The foodbank welcomes any new offers of help with funding – local businesses, organisations and individuals interested in supporting the foodbank's work can find out more at:

<https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/harrowfoodbank>

### **By the community for the community**

Ends

### **Contact:**

Judy Cunnington, Harrow Foodbank Manager can be reached on E: [Info@harrow.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:Info@harrow.foodbank.org.uk) or by calling 020 8416 7344

### **Notes to Editor**

#### **Harrow Foodbank:**

- Harrow Foodbank has been providing three days emergency food and support to local people since 2013.
- Between April 2016 and April 2017, 1885 three day emergency food supplies were provided to people in Harrow by the Foodbank. Of this number, 686 went to children. For UK-wide Trussell Trust foodbank statistics visit <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/> .
- 5.2 tons of food were donated by the local community in 2016-17.
- Harrow Foodbank is part of The Trussell Trust network. Trussell Trust foodbanks provide three days' nutritionally balanced food and support to people in crisis in the UK. We also signpost people to other agencies and services able to help resolve the underlying cause of the crisis.
- The Trussell Trust is a charity motivated by Christian principles that runs the biggest network of foodbanks in the UK. For more on The Trussell Trust visit [www.trusselltrust.org](http://www.trusselltrust.org)