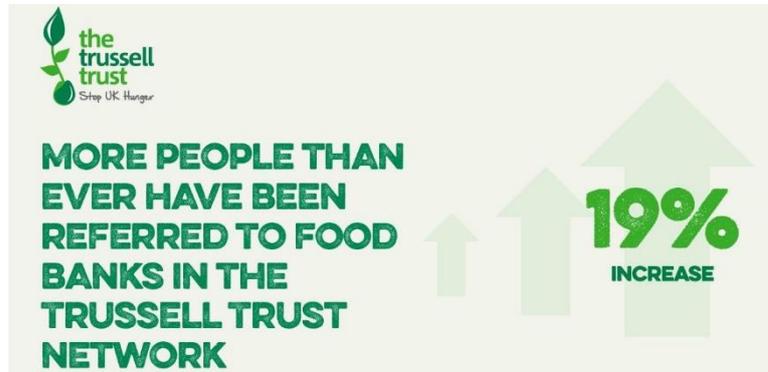


Mid-Norfolk Foodbank reports record year



The year ending 31st March 2019 was a record breaking one for us at Mid-Norfolk Foodbank. The number of people we fed during the year increased by 41% to 2,959.

This figure includes 1,111 children: an increase of 52%, which means that more families are visiting us than before. It also far outstrips the national increase (see right).



It means that we've been busier than ever at our warehouse in Rashes Green, Dereham, and at our three distribution centres in Dereham, Swaffham and Fakenham.

The keen-eyed amongst you will see, if you look carefully, that we actually have some gaps on our shelves (see left) – something that we've not really experienced since we began in 2012.

Demand has been extraordinary, particularly since just before Christmas. The period from January to March 2019, for example, saw us handle 63% more vouchers than the same period in 2018.

Our volunteers have been amazing in stepping up to the plate to make sure we are able to continue delivering the kind of service we want to and to ensure that everyone who comes through our doors is able to leave with a food parcel. It's been a stretch, at times, but we've coped!

In line with the numbers, the weight of food that we've handled this year has increased markedly. The total amount of donated food was just over 29 tonnes – an increase of 19% on last year. By way of contrast, the amount we gave out (see right) was over 33 tonnes – an increase of nearly 40% on last year.

All this means there are two key messages here: firstly, thanks so much to all who so generously support us; but secondly, we need to find ways of increasing our donations - do please let us know if you've any suggestions!



Harvest and Christmas: a bumper year



Harvest and Christmas time are always busy for us with donations from Harvest Festivals and our annual supermarket collections – both of which broke records last year.

A special mention to all the schools and churches that support these initiatives, for example, Neatherd High School, whose form-groups competed to see who could make the best Christmas hamper (see left). This is a great example of an organisation working together for its own, and the wider community's, benefit.

Current food needs

We've started a regular email update for people and organisations that would like to be kept up to date with things we're short of. If you'd like to be added to that list, please let us know, on:

info@midnorfolk.foodbank.org.uk.

It will be roughly a monthly update (we won't 'spam' you!) but it does give us an opportunity to keep you up to date with things we need.

Currently, our top priorities are:

biscuits, tinned fruit, long-life fruit juice, tinned rice pudding, savoury snacks, sweet treats, pasta, long life milk, pasta sauce / tinned tomatoes and tinned meat,

but, as ever, we're grateful for anything. Thanks so much!

Tesco collection: 29th June 2019

Here's a date for your diaries: we will be running a one-day collection at Dereham Tesco on *Saturday 29th June 2019*, between 9am and 5pm.

If you're in the area, and/or are able to re-schedule your shopping for that particular day and store, we'd be really grateful to receive any donations.

Thank you – every can helps!

Opening times: time for a change?

We conducted a straw poll amongst our volunteers to see if it was feasible to offer an additional day's opening for our Dereham distribution centre.

The result is that whilst there are sufficient volunteers to do this, we're likely to offer it on a targeted basis during our busiest periods around Christmas and the New Year.

There'll be more information available once we make a final decision, so, please do keep an eye on our website (<https://midnorfolk.foodbank.org.uk/>) for this and any other opening time alterations – especially at bank holidays.

Mid-Norfolk Foodbank pilots new fuel voucher scheme

With the help of some one-off funding, and with assistance from Norwich Foodbank, we were able to pilot a fuel-voucher scheme this winter, providing additional help to those most in need in the community. We learnt a lot from being able to pilot this scheme, and we'd like to expand it this coming winter – but we do need to find funding again. Watch this space for more news as we have it!

Finally, we'd like to say a very big 'thank-you' to anyone that's helped, in any way, this year. Thank you!