

**STRICTLY EMBARGOED 16/04/2014 00.01AM**

**LATEST FOODBANK FIGURES TOP 900,000: LIFE HAS GOT WORSE NOT BETTER FOR POOREST IN 2013/14, AND THIS IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG.**

- **913,138** people received three days' emergency food from Trussell Trust foodbanks in 2013-14 compared to **346,992** in 2012-13
- Figures are 'tip of the iceberg' of UK food poverty says Trussell Trust Chairman
- 83% of foodbanks report 'sanctioning' is causing rising numbers to turn to them
- Foodbank figures trigger biggest ever faith leader intervention on UK food poverty in modern times.

Over 900,000 adults and children have received three days' emergency food and support from Trussell Trust foodbanks in the last 12 months, a shocking 163 percent rise on numbers helped in the previous financial year. Despite signs of economic recovery, the poorest have seen incomes squeezed even more than last year reports The Trussell Trust, the UK's largest foodbank network. More people are being referred to Trussell Trust foodbanks than ever before.

**Numbers given 3 days' emergency food by Trussell Trust foodbanks**



Static incomes, rising living costs, low pay, underemployment and problems with welfare, especially sanctioning, are significant drivers of the increased demand. 83 percent of Trussell Trust foodbanks surveyed recently [see notes below] reported that benefits sanctions, which have become increasingly harsh, have caused more people to be referred to them for emergency food. Half of referrals to foodbanks in 2013-14 were a result of benefit delays or changes.

The Trussell Trust's Chairman, Chris Mould, says:

*'That 900,000 people have received three days' food from a foodbank, close to triple the numbers helped last year, is shocking in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. But perhaps most worrying of all this figure is just the tip of the iceberg of UK food poverty, it doesn't include those helped by other emergency food providers, those living in towns where there is no foodbank, people who are too ashamed to seek help or the large number of people who are only just coping by eating less and buying cheap food. [See Notes below]*

*In the last year we've seen things get worse, rather than better, for many people on low-incomes. It's been extremely tough for a lot of people, with parents not eating properly in order to feed their children and more people than ever experiencing seemingly unfair and harsh benefits sanctions.*

*Unless there is determined policy action to ensure that the benefits of national economic recovery reach people on low-incomes we won't see life get better for the poorest anytime soon.*

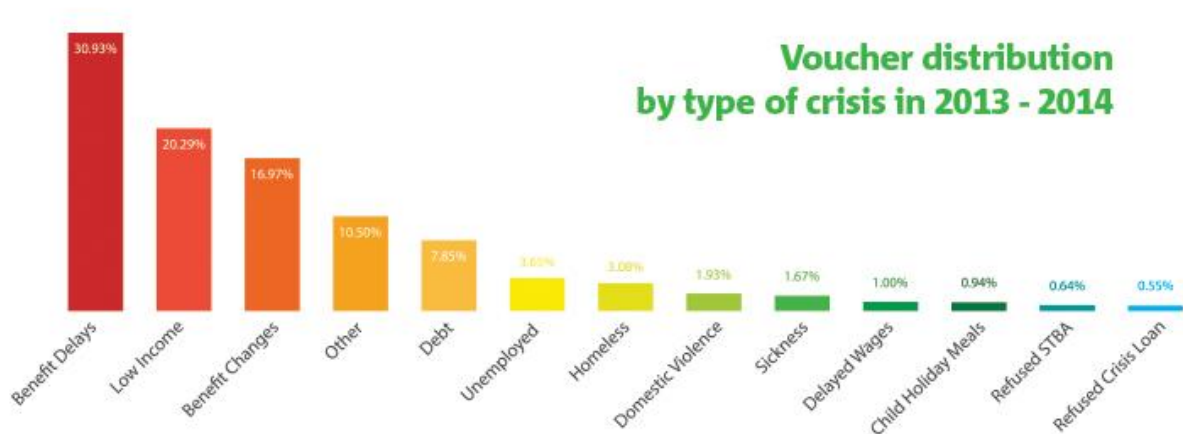
*A more thoughtful approach to the administration of the benefits regime and sanctions in particular, increasing the minimum wage, introducing the living wage and looking at other measures such as social tariffs for essentials like energy would help to address the problem of UK hunger.'*

Whilst there has been a 163 percent increase in foodbank use, there has only been a 45 percent increase in the number of new Trussell Trust foodbanks opening in the last year. The rate of new foodbanks opening has reduced from three a week in 2012/13 to two a week in 2013/14. The Trussell Trust has launched over 400 foodbanks across the UK to date.

Foodbanks that have been open for three years or more have seen an average increase of 51% in numbers helped in 2013-14 compared to 2012-13, showing that well established foodbanks are experiencing significant uplift in demand.

The Trussell Trust's figures further reinforce evidence from the recent government-commissioned DEFRA report that increased foodbank use is not a question of supply, but of meeting a real and growing need.

Increasingly, Trussell Trust foodbanks are partnering with other agencies to provide additional services such as welfare advice, budgeting help and debt support at the foodbank, helping people to break out of crisis. They are also providing essentials like washing powder, nappies and hygiene products to families who are at breaking point.



Graphic shows primary reason for referral to a foodbank as recorded on foodbank voucher

### **New letter marks biggest ever faith intervention on food poverty in modern times:**

Today a letter co-signed by 36 Anglican Bishops and over 600 church leaders from all major denominations will call for urgent Government action to be taken on UK food poverty.

The letter, initiated by End Hunger Fast, will be delivered to the constituency offices of each of the three main party leaders by three church leaders who have been fasting for 40 days in solidarity with people facing hunger in the UK. This will mark the biggest ever faith leader intervention on UK food poverty in modern times.

There will also be a public vigil led by [End Hunger Fast](#) opposite Parliament at Old Palace Yard at 6pm. At the vigil [Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner](#), Senior Rabbi at Movement for Reform Judaism, will for the first time publicly express the cross-communal support of the Jewish community for action against UK food poverty.

Academics are also expected to add their voice to the growing groundswell of public concern at the growth of UK hunger.

Chris Mould says: *'We are encouraged that there is a growing public concern over the problem of UK hunger. Faith leaders, academics, charities and MPs are all standing up to say that hunger is not acceptable in Britain, and that is what gives us hope for change.'* **Ends**

### **Notes to the editor:**

### **SUPPORTIVE EVIDENCE**

A new survey by parenting website Netmums and Trussell Trust conducted in March 2014 and released this week reveals that more working families are struggling to make ends meet

- A survey of 2,178 working families conducted by Netmums in March 2014 shows that one in five working parents have had to choose between paying an essential bill or putting food on the table in the last 12 months.
- A huge 78 per cent of parents in working families have cut spending over the last 12 months. 56 percent admit to having to buy cheaper, lower quality food.
- Forty three per cent of those surveyed admitted that they are only 'just about coping' with balancing their family budgets and a quarter stated they have suffered stress as a result of not eating properly.
- Only 1 in 40 had turned to a foodbank for help, with more than 70 percent saying that they would only do so as a last resort. This reinforces evidence from the government's recent DEFRA report which states that turning to a foodbank is very difficult for many. It also reinforces the fact that foodbank figures only reflect part of the problem of UK food poverty.

#### **ABOUT TRUSSELL TRUST FOODBANKS AND STATISTICS**

- Trussell Trust statistics are collected using an online data collection system into which foodbanks enter the data from each foodbank voucher. The system records the number of adults and children given three days' emergency food. Trussell Trust figures have always been reported in this way. We cannot measure unique users on a national scale, but recent evidence collected from a sample of foodbanks indicates that over 65 percent of foodbank users were only helped once over a six month period, and that only 7.5 percent needed four or more vouchers.
- In 2013/14 582,933 adults and 330,205 children received 3 days' food = 913,138 total.
- Evidence of foodbanks showing an increase in sanctioning was obtained from a survey carried out by The Trussell Trust in March 2014. 130 Trussell Trust foodbanks responded to the survey, providing a representative sample of foodbanks across the UK, including both rural and urban foodbanks.
- The release of latest Trussell Trust figures comes the day after the first call for evidence for an All Party Parliamentary Group inquiry into hunger and food poverty led by Frank Field, Bishop Tim Thornton and Laura Sandys MP. Chris Mould says: *We support the recently launched All Party Parliamentary Group inquiry into hunger and food poverty and hope that it will provide a more in-depth understanding of food poverty in the UK so that action can be taken to stop it.*

- 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.
- Everyone who comes to a Trussell Trust foodbank is referred by a professional such as a social worker, health visitor or schools liaison officer. Over 27,000 professionals referred people to Trussell Trust foodbanks in 2013-14, and 50 percent are statutory agencies.
- Over 90 percent of food given out by Trussell Trust foodbanks is donated by the public.
- An estimated 30,000 people volunteered with a Trussell Trust foodbank in 2013-14.
- The Trussell Trust is a Christian charity that runs the biggest network of foodbanks in the UK. For more on The Trussell Trust visit [www.trusselltrust.org](http://www.trusselltrust.org)

SPOKESPEOPLE, FOODBANK VISITS AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, CLIENT CASE STUDIES ON REQUEST.

## **CONTACT**

Molly Hodson, PR Manager – 01722 580198 – [molly.hodson@trusselltrust.org](mailto:molly.hodson@trusselltrust.org)

Hannah McMullen – Press officer - 01722 580191 – [Hannah.mcmullen@trusselltrust.org](mailto:Hannah.mcmullen@trusselltrust.org)