



PRESS RELEASE

UK CHILDREN FACE HUNGER AT HOME

With poverty in working families at record levels, charity foodbanks across the UK report that families struggling to feed their children are an everyday reality. This year 20,000 children are likely to receive emergency food from the growing number of foodbanks run by The Trussell Trust charity. With 3.7 million children in poverty in the UK, foodbanks are only beginning to scratch the surface of a large, nationwide problem.

Every day UK foodbanks meet desperate parents who are skipping meals to feed their children and find themselves forced to consider stealing to stop their children going to bed hungry. This is the reality behind the statistics in today's report on child poverty by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Chris Mould, Director of The Trussell Trust says: *'It's not just homeless people who go hungry in the UK. In our foodbanks right across the country we meet parents who haven't eaten properly in weeks, children who've been surviving on nothing but toast. And many of these are people in work. It often only takes a breakdown of a car or washing machine or an unexpected bill to tip a family over the edge.'*

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report states that 2.1 million children in working families are now living in poverty: 400,000 more than 5 years ago. Recently a mother of four who works in a primary school received emergency food from a foodbank. Her cupboards were bare after her child tax credit didn't come through, making her finances so tight that she had no money left for food.

For many low income working families, a seemingly small crisis can make the difference between eating and going hungry. During December and January many foodbank clients nationwide find themselves forced to choose between eating and heating. Foodbank clients have resorted to burning furniture for heat or having whole families sleeping in one bed for warmth.

Chris Mould adds: *'We applaud The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's report for highlighting the reality for children in poverty in low income families. People in work and poor are tragically so often overlooked and it is essential that action to reduce poverty addresses the issues in a proper, inclusive way. Trussell Trust foodbanks make a vital difference to every person they help: but a network of 75 can only scratch the surface of a serious, national problem.'* Ends

Notes to the editor

- The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report on Child Poverty can be found at <http://www.jrf.org.uk/> . 58% of all UK children in poverty live in working families.
- The Trussell Trust runs a growing network of UK foodbanks in partnership with local churches and communities. There are currently 75 UK foodbanks.
- Last year Trussell Trust foodbanks fed 41,000 people nationwide, including almost 14,000 children. This year UK foodbanks are set to feed 60,000 people, 20,000 of which will be children.
- Community Nursery Nurses, Headteachers, Health visitors and other charitable organisations provide further evidence that low-income working families are often on the breadline and many struggle to eat. All these organisations refer clients to foodbanks. Today (6th Dec) a community nurse ordered a foodbox for a working family with young children who are struggling as a result of the father having his hours cut to 25 hrs p/week.
- Foodbanks give a minimum of three days nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food to people in crisis. Every client is referred by a frontline care professional such as a doctor, social worker or schools liaison officer.
- All food given out is donated by local people - schools, businesses, churches and individuals. Food parcels contain non-perishable items such as pasta, soup, tinned veg and meat, UHT milk, tinned fruit, cereal, tea, long-life juice, biscuits, rice pudding, sauces.
- We will endeavour to provide case studies where possible.
- The Trussell Trust is a Christian charity working to alleviate poverty and exclusion in the UK and Bulgaria. For more visit www.trusselltrust.org

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