

Chris Mould, Chairman of the Trussell Trust said in reaction to today's High Court ruling on Personal Independence Payments disability benefit application handling delays:



"Referrals due to benefit sanctions, changes and delays was the single biggest reason for people needing help from our food banks in 2014/15. Problems with benefit payments accounted for almost 30%, or over 300,000 of referrals in that year. [1]

"Many problems the Trussell Trust has seen in foodbanks in past years are related to appeals against Department for Work and Pensions decisions that disabled people were actually fit for work. In those circumstances people often wait months with their payments suspended whilst the review machinery grinds through its process.

"For those disabled people attending our food banks affected by Personal Independence Payments this ruling at last provides some hope that changes might be made to avoid such unnecessarily long delays in future.

"We are pleased to have something definitive said about this issue; we have been speaking out for years about the difficulties these delays can throw people into. We now hope the Department for Work and Pensions will make the necessary changes to ensure no-one on, or eligible for, disability benefit goes needlessly hungry. We are happy to work with the Government, together with the Trussell Trust network of food banks, to ensure any delays of this length are picked up and escalated.

"Just yesterday we saw the Bill Gates foundation double their spending to fight hunger globally.

"We also need to look to what we do closer to home to protect those most at risk."

Case Study: An experience of PIPs delay from a Trussell Trust food bank client, Babs, who waited a 12 months for her PIP payment to come through:

Babs is an ex-Army nurse and mother who suffers from Bipolar. Until her recent redundancy, she had always worked, and turned to the foodbank due to delays in her benefits. She applied for PIP in March 2014, and her application was still pending in December. Delays in her benefits meant she had nothing coming in:

'I have dealt with the financial problems caused during mania and exacerbated by the bedroom tax and the time taken to be assessed for higher rate ESA and PIP. As a proud tax payer for the majority of my life, to ask for help has been an added shameful exercise... I was brought up to work, I've found it so hard mentally not to.. reading about what they say about people at the bottom in the news makes it so much worse. Your dignity gets destroyed, your self-esteem takes such a hammer'.

[1] [Foodbank use tops one million for first time says Trussell Trust](#)

Ends

Notes to Editor

How Trussell Trust foodbanks work:

- 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. As part of the charity's More Than Food approach, many foodbanks also host additional services like debt/financial advice, holiday lunch and breakfast clubs. Read more on new pilot debt advice service.
- 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 30,000 professionals referred people to Trussell Trust foodbanks in 2014-15, and 50 percent are statutory agencies.
- Over 90 percent of food given out by Trussell Trust foodbanks is donated by the public.
- 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

Contact

Chris Mould, Chairman of the Trussell Trust, chris.mould@trusselltrust.org or 07881624887

Andy May, Head of Media and External Affairs, andy.may@trusselltrust.org or 07917824009