Dear Candidate,

I am writing as your prospective constituent to ask for your support in pledging to end the need for food banks in Northern Ireland.

It is simply not right that so many people in Northern Ireland are facing impossible decisions,unable to afford the essentials that we all need to eat, stay warm and dry, and keep clean.

But as the nation faces a rapid rise in the cost of living and is recovering from the devastating effects of the pandemic, families in Northern Ireland are struggling to stay afloat.

Food banks in the Trussell Trust’s Northern Ireland network **provided over 61,500 food parcels** to people from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.  This represents a **36% increase** from 2019/20. **Alarmingly, more than 26,000 parcels were provided for children**, this represents a **39% increase** from 2019/20.

Trussell Trust’s Northern Ireland network has experienced its busiest winter outside of the pandemic – seeing a 57% increase in January – February 2022 in comparison to the same period in 2020.

This is unacceptable.

We need to urgently get more money into the pockets of low-income families so no one needs to use a food bank to get by. That means tackling poverty in our communities with a cash-first approach that eradicates hunger for good.

Longer term, we need an ambitious anti-poverty strategy that ensures everyone can afford the essentials in Northern Ireland.

**Will you help us by pledging to end the need for emergency food in Northern Ireland?**

We believe this vision can start to become a reality if candidates and political parties pledge to:

Support food banks to deliver on their commitment to end the need for their services. This can be best supported through the implementation of an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland.
(b) Ensure everyone can afford the dignity of buying the food and essentials they need.
(c) Local services are supported to ensure people get the right support at the right time.

(d) Involve people with direct experience of poverty in shaping the services they need and use

The Trussell Trust’s full election briefing is [here](https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/04/NI-Election-Briefing-2022.pdf).

I would be delighted to hear from you if you can pledge support to work to end the need for food banks.

Please show your *support by tweeting: I’ve pledged my support to ending the need for emergency food in my community. If I’m elected on May 5 in #ae22, I will support the NI Assembly in developing immediate actions to make this happen. Together, we can ensure everyone can afford the essentials. @TrussellTrust*
**No-one should need a food bank to get by.**

Thank you,